

High and Exalted (4): Unto Us a Child Is Born

(Isaiah 7)

I. Introduction

- A. When I was in 8th grade, I would to a neighborhood school to play ball
 - 1. There was a group of 8-10 that would meet after school to play
 - a. We always played on the same goal... the only one with a net
 - b. Eventually they asked me to stop coming; I was just too good for
 - 2. It was a thunderous two-handed dunk (I may have hung on the rim a bit)
 - a. I should mention here that it was an 8 ft rim; these were all 6 graders
 - b. They didn't like it much when the big went all Kareem Abdul Jabbar
 - 3. **Moral:** If you want to be Kareem but aren't Kareem, play with little guys
- B. Last week in our study of Isaiah, I mentioned the reign of King Uzziah
 - 1. This was a Judean Camelot; he expanded trade, military might and borders
 - a. Judah enjoyed a prosperity that she had not seen since Solomon
 - b. What I didn't mention was that Judah was playing with six graders
 - 1) Judah's success was because Assyria had all kinds of internal issues
 - 2) Assyria was distracted, so Judah was able to dunk on the 6th graders
 - 2. But in 734 BC, Assyria finally got its act together under Tiglath-Pileser III
 - a. His Assyria wasn't Kareem or Shack or King James; it was King Kong
 - b. The Assyrian army was an army that had never known defeat
 - 1) They invented chain-mail armor and the chariot as a war machine
 - 2) They turned warfare into a science and torture into an art-form
- C. It was this Assyrian threat that is the background of our text in **Isaiah 7**
 - 1. Israel and Aram (Syria) wanted to force Judah into an alliance (**Isa 7:2**)
 - a. Pekah & Resin wanted to depose Ahaz and replace him with a puppet
 - b. Then the three kingdoms of 6 graders could stand up to King Kong
 - 2. This period in history is often referred to as "*The Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis*"
 - a. The problem was Syria and Israel; the real problem was Tiglath-Pileser
 - b. God sent Isaiah with a message of hope and deliverance to King Ahaz
 - c. As it turns out, this message was important for the whole world

II. Unto Us a Child Is Born: Isaiah

- A. God sends Isaiah along with his oldest son to meet with King Ahaz (**Isa 7:3**)
 1. This wasn't "Bring Your Kid to Work Week." This was part of the message
 - a. Names have meaning. Isaiah named his son "a remnant shall return."
 - b. This will become an important theme in Isaiah 's preaching (**10:20-22**).
 - 1) Like other prophets, Isaiah gloom and doom (*a job requirement*)
 - 2) God will punish his people, but He will never abandon them
 - 3) God will preserve a remnant; His purposes will be accomplished
 - c. Isaiah message to Ahaz, "So do not lose heart or lose faith" (**Isa 7:4**)
 2. Ahaz was losing faith fast; he fears coming war with Pekah and Rezin
 - a. He's much more afraid of joining their alliance against Assyria
 - 1) He tries to make an alliance with King Kong! (**2 Kings 16:7-8**)
 - 2) Isaiah comes to tell him he should make an alliance with God
 - b. God assures Ahaz that He has things under control (**Isaiah 7:7-8**)
 - 1) Pekah and Rezin's alliance not last, and neither would their nations
 - 2) Ahaz was worried about something was already past tense for God
 - a) Isaiah offers Ahaz a sign; Ahaz refuses (*not enough faith for sign*)
 - b) God gives him one anyway; the sign turns out to be important
 - c. If you've never heard of Ahaz, Pekah or Resin, you know sign (**Isa 7:14**)
- B. Haven't we heard that somewhere. But don't get ahead of ourselves or story
 1. Some passages in the OT prophets are "dual-fulfillment prophesy"
 - a. They point one thing in the near term and another in distant future
 - b. The first meaning and fulfillment was for people hearing the prophet
 - c. But they would have no idea that God was also pointing to later time
 2. Does that make sense? Maybe a couple of examples will help a bit
 - a. You know the prophesy of Hosea, right? Sure you do (**Hos 11:1**)
 - b. That's about the Exodus, but Matthew points to long term (**Mt 2:15**)
 - c. How about the prophesy of Joel? You know this one (**Acts 2:28-29**)
 - 1) In context, Joel is predicting punishment by God in a locust plague
 - 2) But in **Acts 2**, Peter says this pointed in the long term to Pentecost

3. **Isaiah 7:14** is a dual-fulfillment prophecy; had to mean something to Ahaz
 - a. Hebrew word *almah* means “any young woman of marriable age”
 - 1) It’s the word used for Miriam, sister of Moses (“girl” in NIV) (**Exo 2:8**)
 - 2) In Proverbs, it is used of the mystery of boy meets girl (**Prov 30:19**)
 - 3) Young women play tambourine in praise band (**Psa 68:25-26** NLT)
(Remember old Bob Dylan song, “Hey Ms tambourine girl, play a song for me)
 - b. Prophecy in short term wasn’t about a virgin but an enemy (**7:15-16**)
 - 1) Young woman will have a son; didn’t matter which young woman
 - 2) By the time he knew right from wrong, the crisis would be over
 - 3) Pekah and Rezin be dead; their nations would be destroyed
4. Why was it that the child in **Isaiah 7:14** would eat curds and honey?
 - a. Remember the point of remnant? Bad times were coming (**Isa 7:17**)
 - 1) Ahaz wanted Assyria to be their ally and defeat all their enemies
 - 2) Assyria gobbled Israel and Syria; wanted Judah for desert (**7:21-22**)
 - b. Wasn’t it a good thing there would be plenty of milk for curds? No!
 - 1) There was plenty of milk because all the young had been killed
 - 2) There would be no crops harvested; people would eat wild honey
 - c. But eating curds and honey was child named Immanuel, “*God with Us*”
5. That was the point; even in dark and dangerous times, God is with us

III. Unto Us a Child Is Born: Matthew

- A. Matthew points to the second part of the Isaiah prophecy (**Matt 1:20-21**)
 1. Joseph has learned that Mary is pregnant; he knows he is not the father
 - a. He is planning on breaking the engagement when visited by angel
 - b. Angel assures him Mary hasn’t been unfaithful; this is the power of God
 - 1) Matthew adds that this fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah (**Matt 1:22-23**)
 - 2) Matthew uses the Greek word *parthenos here*, which means “virgin”
 2. Have you ever wondered why he is given two names, Jesus or Immanuel?
 - a. Lynn wondered about me at camp; everyone called me “Charles Ray”
(*thought I was adopted; Southern thing of two names, one of them Ray or Bob*)
 - b. His name was “Jesus,” but he WAS the Immanuel-- “*God with us*”
 - c. At the center of the Christian faith is the fact that God became flesh

- B. You can't be Christian without believing Jesus came in flesh (**1 John 4:2-3**)
1. John responds to emerging gnostic idea that Christ seemed to have flesh
 - a. Greek dualism saw matter as evil; only pure spirit was pure good
 - 1) Plato's "forms" said there was only one perfect anything (chair)
 - 2) Everything that we see is an imperfect shadow of the perfect
 - b. If we are imperfect, then how can we believe God become like us?
 - c. John said that to suggest that Jesus Christ wasn't human is antichrist
 2. That's why the virgin birth is important-- shows Jesus was God and man
 - a. Half of his DNA was from Mary; the other came miraculously from God
 - b. Jesus was in every way God in the flesh; the Immanuel, God with us
 - 1) His name was Jesus ("Lord Saves") because in Him the Lord Saves
 - 2) He was Immanuel ("God with us") because in Him God is with us
 3. Isaiah again spoke of this through the fog of the centuries (**Isa 9:6-7**)
 - a. I can assure you, that Isaiah had no idea what he was talking about
 - 1) Peter says that the prophets weren't simply serving themselves
 - 2) Even angels didn't really get it; that wanted to know more about it
 - b. This message of Immanuel, the God with us, is for us to understand
 - c. That's the very point that Peter is making as well (**1 Peter 1:10-12**)
- C. We have it so much easier that did King Ahaz all those years ago
1. For him, Immanuel was nothing a timeframe and a deadline
 - a. It what when his enemies would fall, and his nation would suffer
 - b. It wasn't a message that he wanted nor really clearly understand
 2. The message of Immanuel for us is both straightforward and clear
 - a. In Christ, God became flesh and dwelt among and we beheld his glory
 - b. In Christ, all the fullness of the Deity lived in bodily form
 - c. In Christ, God made him who had no sin to become sin for us...
 3. That is all clearly set out for us, not in prophesy but in fulfillment
 - a. All we have to do is decide whether or not we are going to believe it
 - b. So, do you believe it? That is the question and the invitation today