



SESSION

1

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY



WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN SURPRISED TO FIND OUT A "COINCIDENCE" WAS ACTUALLY PLANNED ALL ALONG?

THE POINT ➤ THE BIRTH OF JESUS WAS NO MERE CIRCUMSTANCE. IT WAS PLANNED BY GOD.

▶ ISAIAH 7:10-14; 9:6-7; 11:1-5

¹⁰Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz: ¹¹"Ask for a sign from the LORD your God—it can be as deep as Sheol or as high as heaven." ¹²But Ahaz replied, "I will not ask. I will not test the LORD." ¹³Isaiah said, "Listen, house of David! Is it not enough for you to try the patience of men? Will you also try the patience of my God? ¹⁴Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.

⁶For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it

with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

¹Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. ³His delight will be in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, he will not execute justice by what he hears with his ears, ⁴but he will judge the poor righteously and execute justice for the oppressed of the land. He will strike the land with a scepter from his mouth, and he will kill the wicked with a command from his lips. ⁵Righteousness will be a belt around his hips; faithfulness will be a belt around his waist.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

DRUMMING IS THE OLDEST MUSICAL ACTIVITY.¹ PEOPLE WOULD HIT JUST ABOUT ANYTHING TO MAKE A SOUND; THEN THEY REALIZED THEY COULD STRETCH ANIMAL SKINS TO CREATE INSTRUMENTS.

Stomp is an Off-Broadway show in which the performers create phenomenal percussion beats with all sorts of random items, including brooms, garbage cans, and lighters. The show, on top of the incredible music, also has its fair share of witty humor.

Recently, I took my 10-year-old son, who loves to play the drums, to see the show for his birthday. During one song, the crew was playing an intricate piece with match boxes when, all of a sudden, one performer's matches flew out of his box. The crowd howled with laughter, but my son gasped and asked worriedly, "Did he mean to do that?"

Some "coincidences" are not coincidences at all. They were planned in order to achieve a desired effect. The life and death of Jesus Christ may seem, on the surface, to have been the unanticipated and uncontrollable result of His going against the grain. However, the truth is the life and death of Jesus were no mere afterthoughts of God—He planned them all along! The Old Testament is full of prophecies that point to the coming of Jesus Christ.



ISAIAH 7:10-14

1 Why is the virgin birth so important?

2 What are some ways God invites us to trust Him?



ISAIAH 9:6-7

3 Why is it important for believers to understand that Jesus is God?

4 How have you seen Jesus reveal Himself as wonderful Counselor, mighty God, eternal Father, or Prince of peace?

5 Which of these names for Jesus is most meaningful to you right now?

ISAIAH 11:1-5

6 How do these verses help you understand the birth of Jesus was planned by God and not just a mere coincidence?

7 How do we see Jesus fulfilling this prophecy in the gospels?

8 What does this passage reveal about God's ultimate plan?

All people feel the weight of life's hardships, but nothing compares to the burden Jesus carried in order to redeem and reign over God's people. #BSFLfullpicture





LIVE IT OUT

▶ CHRIST

In Isaiah 7:14, we read that Jesus is *Immanuel*—*God with us*. Many people see God as some far off, impersonal God, but this is simply not the case. Though sin separated people—whom God designed to live in relationship with Him—from God, Jesus came to earth in order to be with us and to allow us to be with God.

9 How have you sensed Jesus' being with you recently?

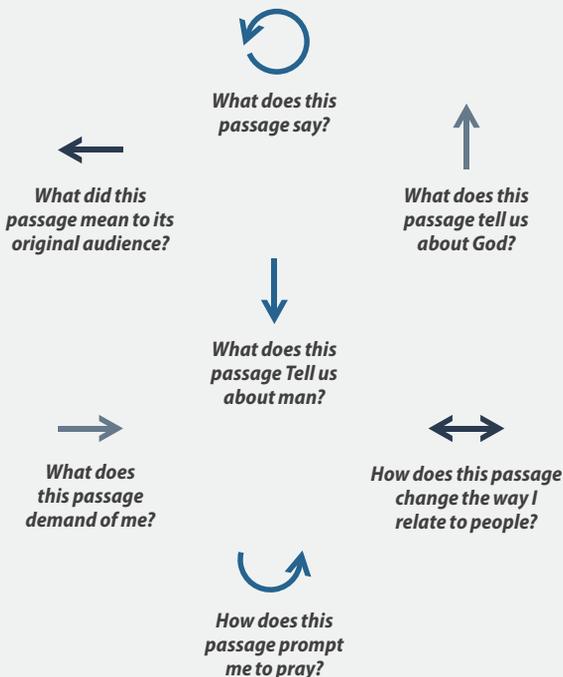
10 How do you feel God calling you to be with Him in order to grow in your relationship with Him?

Write a brief prayer asking God to draw you nearer to Him.

DAILY DEVOTIONS



THE 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING



DAY ONE ISAIAH 9:1

Because of the disobedience of His people, God allowed them to be dragged away from their homes and into captivity in a foreign land. It's difficult to imagine anything worse! Zebulun and Naphtali were tribes in northern Israel. They were the first to be taken captive and were hit especially hard by the Assyrian invaders. The Assyrians established three new provinces in that region, called Magiddu (Galilee), Du'ru (the way of the sea), and Gal'aza (the land east of the Jordan). The disobedience of God's people brought suffering, but God promised they wouldn't be forever lost in their misery and shame. One day, God would restore honor and blessing to His people. We too miss out on blessings when we fail to continually pursue God. However, the promise remains, and He will restore those who repent and turn to Him.

- **How has past disobedience affected your relationship with God?**
- **How have you seen God restore when you've returned to Him?**

DAY FOUR ISAIAH 4-5

During Israel's captivity, Assyria was the most powerful nation on earth, and from an earthly perspective, God's people were weak and helpless. The Assyrians were cruel and treated the captives harshly, and it was unimaginable to see how this would ever change. However, God promised that, when things seem impossible from a human perspective, He is powerful to bring about whatever He desires. The yokes of bondage would be broken. The instruments used to inflict pain would be shattered. God had proven this before using Gideon's small army to defeat a much more powerful enemy, Midian, and the Israelites could trust Him to do it again. At times in our lives, we may be faced with overwhelming situations. However, our Father is sovereign over even our most difficult circumstances.

- **When have you faced an "impossible" situation?**

- **How has God increased your faith by bringing you through those impossible situations?**

DAY FIVE ISAIAH 9:6-7



God promised to deliver His people from suffering at the hands of the Assyrians, and He did! However, this is only the beginning. Ultimately, He promised to send a Savior who would rescue His people from the suffering sin causes in our lives. Jesus serves us in real-life ways: He's our Counselor who helps us make right choices, He has real power to help us change, He loves us with an everlasting love, and He brings peace to our lives where there was once conflict. And perhaps the best part—when Jesus returns to establish His reign in the fullest sense, it will never end, and we'll never again experience any sort of suffering.

- **How have you experienced Christ's comfort in your life?**

- **How would you describe the eternal hope you have in Jesus?**