

1

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY



When have you been surprised to find out a "coincidence" was actually planned all along?

QUESTION #1

THE POINT

*The birth of Jesus was no mere circumstance.
It was planned by God.*



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

When I took my sons to their first NBA® game, it was a game between the Dallas Mavericks, who were having a great season, and one of the worst teams in the league. However, that night the Mavericks were not doing well. Their coach, Don Nelson, was fed up with the mediocre efforts of his players, so when he disagreed with a call the referee made, he stepped on the court and screamed at the ref. The ref gave Coach Nelson a technical foul, but he kept screaming. Nelson received his second technical foul and was kicked out of the game.

In a post-game interview, a reporter asked Coach Nelson about the technical fouls. Smiling, he insinuated he did it on purpose to fire up his team. And it worked! The Mavericks won.

Something that appeared “off the cuff” was actually planned all along!

Some “coincidences” are not coincidence at all. They were planned. The life and death of Jesus Christ 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.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Isaiah 7:10-14

¹⁰ Then 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.” ¹² But Ahaz replied, “I will not ask. I will not test the LORD.” ¹³ Isaiah 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? ¹⁴ Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.

If God came to one of us and said we could “ask for a sign”—any sign, even a sign as “deep as Sheol or as high as heaven,” I wonder what most of us would ask for. The Lord gave King Ahaz that opportunity, but he put forth a false humility and wouldn’t ask for a sign. Here was a king whose country was under attack and his people were terrified. (See 7:1-2.) God offered to give Ahaz a sign that He was powerful enough to take care of their enemies. Ahaz, however, may have been planning already to ask Assyria for help and therefore didn’t think he needed God’s help.

Upon hearing King Ahaz’s refusal to ask for a sign, Isaiah the prophet broadened his audience beyond the king. He told the whole faithless house of David that God would give a sign anyway! The house of David’s wickedness had tested God’s long-suffering patience, but God had a sign for them: “See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.”

Prophetic passages in Scripture can have multiple meanings: an immediate meaning for the initial hearers and an added meaning for future generations. Isaiah 7:14 has just such a double meaning.

1. The prophecy was a word of comfort and hope to the original recipients of the prophecy. It’s not clear who the woman and child were, but perhaps it was a child born in the king’s house. The birth of this child was a reminder of God’s prophecy and the comfort that “God is with us.”

What does God being Immanuel (“God with us”) mean for us as believers?

QUESTION #2

2. The second meaning involves a prediction of the future virgin birth of Christ. Matthew quoted this prophecy word for word as he gave an account of Christ's birth. "See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated 'God is with us'" (Matt. 1:23).

Historically, this phrase was intended to convince King Ahaz that God could rescue him from his enemies. Our sovereign God spoke something to encourage ancient Israel and inspire generations to come with the hope of the Messiah: Jesus.

What captures our attention in this passage is that "the virgin will conceive." The virgin birth of Christ is an important truth; Jesus had to be one of us—human—to die in our place, but He couldn't offer the perfect sacrifice if He was like every other human with sin nature. The virgin birth means Jesus had no human father—God is His Father—therefore, Jesus was born without sin nature. Jesus is fully man and He is fully God. God is with us!

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For 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. ⁷ The 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.

The long-awaited Messiah has been given to us. And there's something wonderful about Him: "The government will be on his shoulders." This statement implies that this son will be the royal son of King David, with rights to the Davidic throne.

A NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

Consider some of the names Isaiah used to describe Christ. Write a sentence beside each name describing how Jesus' name fulfills Isaiah's prophecy and has personal significance for you.

Immanuel:

Wonderful Counselor:

Mighty God:

Eternal Father:

Prince of Peace:

"Learn much of the Lord Jesus. For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ. Let your soul be filled with a sense of the excellence of Christ."

—ALISTAIR BEGG

Isaiah used four terms to describe the Messiah.

- ▶ **Wonderful Counselor.** Since His name is “Wonderful,” then nothing will be dull about His reign! As Counselor, He has the wisdom to rule effectively. Messiah’s wisdom is in stark contrast to Ahaz, king at the time this prophecy was given, who ruled his kingdom foolishly.
- ▶ **Mighty God.** “Mighty” means impressive in power, strength, and size. The Messiah will have all the power to execute His wise plans. This term also emphasizes His divine power as a warrior. The Messiah will accomplish all the military exploits previously mentioned in Isaiah 9:3-5.
- ▶ **Eternal Father.** The title “Eternal Father” describes the Messiah’s relationship to time, not His relationship to the other Members of the Trinity. Messiah is said to be everlasting, just as God the Father was described as “the Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:9,13). The Messiah would be an enduring and eternal provider and protector.
- ▶ **Prince of Peace.** Jesus is the Son of the One true God. The Messiah will bring wholeness and general well being to individuals and to society. The Messiah will set people’s warring hearts at rest by forgiving their sins. God’s peace is the inner-spiritual harmony we experience by being rightly related to God. We can take great comfort in the fact that Christ will keep us “in perfect peace” (Isa. 26:3)



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

QUESTION #3

Isaiah 11:1-5

¹ Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ² The 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. ³ His 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, ⁴ but 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. ⁵ Righteousness will be a belt around his hips; faithfulness will be a belt around his waist.

At first glance, verse 1 doesn't sound like the Messiah comes from very strong stock. "A shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse." A shoot was a small reed—just a twig—and, of course, a stump implies that the dead tree had been cut down. Essentially, this verse teaches us that the line of David was on its way out until the Messiah was born.

Isaiah showed us three significant characteristics of the Messiah.

- ▶ **He rules by the Spirit of the LORD.** The Spirit of the LORD came upon David when he was anointed king. (See 1 Sam. 16:13.) In the same way, God's Spirit would rest on His Messiah.
- ▶ **He judges rightly.** The Messiah would not judge by what He sees and hears. These are typical ways for a king to gain information to help him lead, but the future Messiah would know all.
- ▶ **He wears a belt of righteousness.** When a man prepared for action, he tied up his loose garments with a belt. The belt held everything in place; in a similar sense, the Messiah's righteousness holds all Messiah's other qualities. Everything Christ does is right, true, and just. When we trust in Christ, the Messiah, He gives His righteousness to us.

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

QUESTION #4

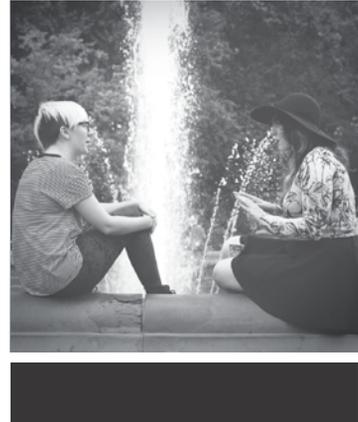
What role can our group play in carrying out the mission of Jesus laid out in this passage?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

The birth of Jesus was all part of God's plan for Him to bring us salvation and righteousness. How will you actively trust the sovereign plan of God this week? Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Praise.** God has intricately planned the glory of salvation. Praise God for providing salvation to you. Thank Him for putting His perfect plan in place so long ago to save you.
- ▶ **Give.** Many people have never heard the name of Jesus. Your church likely has a special offering to help take the message of the Messiah to the nations. Give to this special missions offering and invest in the lives of others who need Christ.
- ▶ **Share.** Ask God for the opportunity to share the good news of the Messiah with someone this week. God will supply the wisdom, compassion, courage, and words if you will be sensitive and obedient to Him.



There are certainly plenty of coincidences in life, but Christ's coming wasn't one of them. Neither is the offer He makes to you to receive His free gift of salvation.

My thoughts