

A Promised Saviour (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; Micah 5:12 & Luke 1:26-56)

22-Dec-2024

Isaiah 7:14

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Micah 5:2

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

Luke 1:26-38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." ³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy

one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail.” ³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

Mary’s Song

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

Intro

I encourage you to have your Bibles opened and follow along – there are some amazing, detailed promises in these Bible passages.

Let me pray before we continue...

This morning, we're up to the 4th part of our **six-part series** on **Advent**

[Slide-Advent]

The **Dictionary Definition of Advent** is *the arrival of a notable person or thing*.

That notable person is of course our Lord, Jesus, the Saviour of the World!

[Slide-Advent Series]

In **Part 1** – we said that **Advent** is **important** because we **need Jesus to come and be born so he can fix the fallen condition** we all have – which we inherited from Adam and Eve.

That fallen condition we inherit is sin and death

In **Part 2** – we said that God had a plan to fix this fallen condition – and **He promised a Prophet** – and **no ordinary prophet** – but the **ultimate prophet** - and that prophet was of course – our **Lord Jesus** – and we said that we can rely on Jesus – because - **He is the source of absolute truth**

In Part 3 – last week - we said **God also promised to send a King** – no ordinary King – but King Jesus – **a forever King** – and we were **challenged to make King Jesus – King of our lives**

This week – in Part 4 - we see how God promises to send a **Saviour**

So, we'd better define a Saviour

[Slide-Definition Saviour]

Dictionary definition: a person who **saves** someone or something from danger or difficulty

[Slide-Danger?]

Which **begs** the **question** – **'What danger will this promised Saviour save us from?'**

[Slide-Answer]

And the **answer** is – **This Saviour saves us from SIN and DEATH** – our inherited fallen condition from Adam and Eve

In our **Old Testament Bible readings** this morning – **God makes a number of promises about this Saviour coming.**

[Slide-Promises]

Have you ever made a promise - and then – even though you meant to keep that promise – because of circumstances – **you end up not keeping that promise?**

How did you feel? **Sad? Guilty? Ashamed?**

Breaking promises to children – doesn't go well..

One of my favourite Christmas movies is “Jingle All the Way” – you may have seen it?

It stars **Arnold Schwarzenegger** – who **plays Howard** – and he **promises his wife Liz** - that he has **bought their son Jamie** – the **top selling popular action toy** – called **Turbo Man**.

[Show Turbo Man Toy]

The only problem is – it gets to Christmas Eve – and **Howard still hasn’t bought it** – and it’s only the most popular toy of all time – and has been **completely sold out for weeks!**

Turbo man has **catchphrases** like **“You can always count on Turbo Man”** – and **“Turbo man ALWAYS keeps his promises”** – unlike Howard in the movie - who **continually breaks his promises to his son** – because - Howard always makes his job more important than his family!

Here’s a part early in the movie when **Howard misses his son, Jamie’s, Karate presentation** – which **doesn’t go down well...**

[Slide-Movie clip]

It’s **cringeworthy** isn’t it? Perhaps you can relate to it.

Unlike Howard in the movie – **GOD ALWAYS keeps His promises**.

In our **OT readings** **God makes promises** about the coming of Jesus as a Saviour – a long time before Jesus actually came...

Promised Sign of the Saviour (Isaiah 7:14)

The 1st promise then - **God promised a sign of the Saviour** - to the Prophet Isaiah... in **Isaiah 7:14**. The year is **735BC**.

[Slide-Isaiah 7:14]

*Therefore, the **Lord himself** will give you a **sign**: The **virgin** will conceive and give birth to a **son** and will call him **Immanuel**.*

As we said two weeks ago, with **prophecy in the OT** – sometimes there is a **near fulfilment** and a **far fulfilment**

The **context** of the **near fulfilment** is that God gives **King Ahaz** of Judah a “**sign**” that a by the time a young woman in the household has given birth to a son, whom she calls Immanuel, and this son starts eating solid foods and knows the difference between right and wrong (v15) - **Judah will be delivered from her enemies of Northern Israel and Syria.**

More importantly for us – is the **far fulfilment** – and that is this verse points forward to a **virgin** conceiving and giving birth to a **son**. This of course **points to the woman Mary** in the NT – a **virgin who conceives a Son called Jesus** and **boy is given the title “Immanuel”** which means “**God is with us**”.

This is important because it shows that the baby to be born is from God and God placed the baby in Mary’s womb, and the baby is not from Mary’s fiancée (betrothed husband) Joseph.

Being a child from God and not conceived by human intercourse, means that the **child is born sinless** and is **able to keep all of God’s commands perfectly**. This means when the child Jesus grows up to be a man – He is **able to be the perfect**

sacrifice for sin – and takes the punishment for sin – off of human beings – and onto Himself. Therefore, **Jesus is able to pay for the punishment of sin on the cross – once and for all.** Without the virgin birth, **there is no proper sacrifice and payment for sin – and God’s wrath for the sin of the world is not satisfied – and there is no forgiveness. The Virgin Birth is crucial to us being saved for Heaven!**

Promised Saviour is a King and Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6-7)

The 2nd promise then – **God tells the prophet Isaiah – The Promised Saviour is a King and Mighty God** – that’s in Isaiah 9:6-7. The year is 730BC.

[Slide-Isaiah 9:6-7]

*⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the **government will be on his shoulders**. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

God promises Isaiah that He will **send a son**.

No ordinary Son. But the Son of God! Jesus!

We know that this **promised son is the Son of God** - because God gives the child and because the child is called Mighty God in verse 7!

The child will also have the **government of God's Kingdom of Heaven and Earth on His shoulders** – we know that because verse 7 – **says there is no end to this Kingdom** and that it is a forever Kingdom.

This **son given** is then **described in several ways:**

Wonderful Counsellor – the word for wonderful speaks of **extraordinary supernatural acts that only God can do!** Jesus is the One most fitting to guide our lives and **should be a Christian's immediate resource as a counselor.** Jesus can help us with our problems – because when He was on Earth He suffered, so He understands our suffering - and He was tempted just like we are but never gave in. Jesus can sometimes use the presence and the words of another Christian to be our counselor, but **Jesus is our ultimate Counselor because He is the source of wisdom!**

Jesus tells us “*come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28). Jesus also tells us “*ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you*” [and the tense is to keep on asking, seeking and knocking] (Matthew 7:7)

Mighty God – This promised Son, Jesus, is **Mighty God:** He is the God of all creation and glory, the LORD who reigns in heaven, the One worthy of our worship and praise. This is a clear statement that Jesus is both the Son of God – and as part of the Trinity – He is also fully God!

Everlasting Father – The idea in these Hebrew words is that Jesus is the **source and author of all eternity, that He is the Creator Himself**. It does not mean that Jesus Himself is the Person of the Father in the Trinity. We know also from Colossians 1:16-17: *¹⁵ The Son [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

Prince of Peace - He is **the One who makes peace, between God and humankind**. **Ultimately, Jesus makes peace when He satisfied God's wrath by paying for sin by His death on the cross and then proclaiming, "It is finished!"**

Promised Birthplace of the Saviour (Micah 5:2)

The 3rd promise then – **God tells the prophet Micah – The Promised Birthplace of the Saviour** - that's in **Micah 5:2** The year is **735BC**.

[Slide-Bethlehem]

Here **God tells Micah** that **a ruler will come from the small town of Bethlehem Ephrathah** in the land belonging to the tribe of Judah (Southern Israel). There is another Bethlehem in Northern Israel in the land belonging to the tribe of Zebulun.

This **promised ruler** has **origins way beyond Bethlehem** - His origin was '*from old, from ancient times*' – pointing to His existence from the beginning of time – at Creation.

It's important that Micah identifies the **Bethlehem in Judah** because this town has a lot of Symbolism:

- Bethlehem is **King David's hometown** – and God promised the **Saviour would be a descendant of David**.
- Bethlehem is also the **hometown of Joseph** – Jesus' earthly father – and **Jospeh is also a descendant of David**
- **Bethlehem** means "**House of Bread**" – and Jesus refers to Himself as "*the Bread of Life*" (John 6:35)
- Bethlehem was **famous for shepherds raising sheep**. The **shepherds** in Bethlehem were often considered **outcasts**, sometimes accused of **stealing** and they were also **stinky**. Yet these **shepherds were the first to hear from the Angels**, the Good News that a Saviour had been born. This shows Jesus came so that everyone, even stinky shepherds, could have the opportunity to be saved for Heaven.
- Jesus referred to Himself as the "*Good Shepherd*" (John 10:11) and said **we were His sheep** – and He was **prepared to lay down His life for His sheep!**
- **Bethlehem** being only **10 miles from Jerusalem and the Temple** – supplied lambs for the sacrifices for sin at the Temple – which **points us to Jesus as the**

ultimate sacrifice for sin and to Him being “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

Promise Fulfilled (Luke 1:26-37)

Which brings us to our **NT reading** – please turn to Luke 1:26-56.

And we see the **fulfilment** of these **OT prophecies**!

[Slide-Promised Fulfilled]

V27 – The angel **Gabriel appears** to a virgin named **Mary**. There’s the **fulfilment** of Isaiah 7:14 – a virgin will conceive.

Mary is engaged to Joseph – who is a **descendant of David** – there’s another fulfilment.

V28 – The angel tells **Mary** – she is “*highly favoured and the Lord is with her*”

V31 – The angel tells **Mary** – “*she will conceive and give birth to a Son – and call Him – Jesus*”. Jesus’ name means ‘*Saviour*’ or ‘*He saves*’.

V32 – The angel goes on to say – Jesus is “*the Son of the Most High*” and “*God will give Jesus the throne of His father David*” and “*He will reign forever; His Kingdom will never end*”. Here again, we have fulfilment – Jesus is the **Son of God** and a **King** – which fulfils **Isaiah 9:6-7** – where God promised the son to be born would be “*Mighty God and King*” and “*the government would be on His shoulders*” and “*His Kingdom would be established...forever*”

We also know from Luke chapter 2 (next chapter) – **Jesus** was actually **born** in **Bethlehem** – fulfilling Micah’s prophecy too!

Understandably, when the angel tells Mary she will conceive and give birth – **she** raises a **valid question** in verse 34 “*How will this be, since I am a virgin?*”

The angel answers Mary’s question in verse 35 saying “*The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God*”

The word for **overshadow** here means “*to cover with a cloud*” – it’s like what happened to **Moses on Mount Sinai** when the presence of God covered Moses in a **cloud** – and it’s like what happened in the **Transfiguration** when God spoke to Jesus in the presence Moses and Elijah. The Jews call this cloud the ***she-kinah*** **glory** – it’s the **divine presence of God which descends to dwell among people!** So as Mary is covered in a cloud (overshadowed) – the **Holy Spirit** – places Jesus – the Son of God – **as a baby – in Mary’s womb** – **supernaturally** – so the child to be born – **Jesus** – is **sinless** – and does not **inherit the fallen condition of Adam** – of **sin and death** (Romans 5:12)

What we can learn from Mary’s response (Luke 1:38-56)

To finish up then – I’d like us to **see** what we can learn from **Mary’s response**, this morning:

[Slide-1st Response]

1st response – Look at verse 38. Mary says simply “***I am the Lord’s servant***”. She doesn’t ask for further explanation, she doesn’t debate, she doesn’t doubt. She **simply knows her position** – she is **the Lord’s servant** – which means **the Lord is her Master** – and she **simply and obediently** – **submits to Him as her Master and boss!**

Are WE able to simply say to God – ***I’m your servant – you’re the Master!***

(pause)

[Slide-2nd Response]

2nd response – still in verse 38 – Mary says, “***may your word to me be fulfilled***”.

Mary knows **God always keeps His promises**. Mary knows **what God says will happen – will happen!**

Are WE able to trust God at His Word?

Or would we rather trust a human being’s word?

(pause)

The story continued with **Mary visiting her relative Elizabeth** – who’d also received a miracle – being **pregnant** herself – **in her old age** – having been barren for a long time!

When Mary walked into Elizabeth’s house something amazing happened in verse 41 – **Elizabeth’s unborn baby** [John the Baptist] **leapt inside her womb because Elizabeth’s unborn baby recognized Mary’s unborn baby as the Promised Saviour!** Elizabeth also realizes Mary is carrying the Lord Jesus in her womb. This is **only possible because of the work of the Holy Spirit!**

[Slide-3rd Response]

3rd response – **Mary** breaks into a **song/prayer** – in verses 46 to 55.

This song/prayer is often known as the **Magnificat**. This is because verse 46 in the old KJV of the Bible says “My soul **magnifies** the Lord” rather than “**glorifies**” – and **Magnificat** is the **Latin** for **magnifies**.

What we can learn from Mary’s song/prayer is that **she had a great knowledge of God’s Word and God’s promises and God’s work throughout History**. We can’t have that unless **we spend time in God’s Word**.

The **song** can be **broken up** into **key points**:

- Mary **praises** **God** for what He has done for her – do WE do that?
- Mary **shows her** **gratitude** **for being blessed** – do WE do that?
- Mary **acknowledges** that **God** is a **merciful God** – do WE do that?
- Mary **recognizes that God is a** **God of reversal** – He **can bring people’s lives out of the pit** – and **restore them**. No one is too far gone that God cannot work in their lives. No problem is too great that God can’t act and restore and transform! Do WE believe that? Or do we doubt it? **Mary didn’t doubt!**
- Mary also **acknowledged that God ALWAYS remembers His people** – and He **ALWAYS keeps His promises** [she goes right back to God’s promises to Abraham].

If we remember nothing else of this talk today – remember – **GOD ALWAYS KEEPS HIS PROMISES.** We can claim that this morning!

- So, when God's Word says **Jesus is coming back to judge and bring those who believe to Heaven** (Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Hebrews 9:28) – we can BELIEVE His promise.

What struck me about Mary's prayer/song is that it is **GOD-CENTRED** – not **MARY CENTRED.** What are OUR prayers LIKE? Are they **ME-CENTRED** or **GOD-CENTRED?**

Let's pray...

Lord, we thank You for the example of Mary's faith and obedience in accepting Your calling. Just as she trusted Your plan for her life, help us to trust in Your will and remain faithful in all circumstances. Like Elizabeth, may we recognize Your presence and rejoice in Your goodness. Fill our hearts with praise, just as Mary's song reflects Your mercy and justice. We pray that we, too, would be vessels for Your work in this world, and that Your Kingdom would come through our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Benediction (2 Corinthians 1:20)

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so, through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Amen.