



Luther on Isaiah:

[Isaiah] disposes and prepares them to expect the coming Kingdom of Christ, of which he prophesies more clearly and more often than does any other prophet. He even describes, in Isaiah 7:14, the Mother of Christ, how she is to conceive and bear Him without injury to her virginity, and in Chapter 53, His Passion together with His Resurrection from the dead. He proclaims His kingdom powerfully and in plain language, as though it had then come.

—Introduction to
Isaiah, 1545

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Around the Word

Bible Study

Advent, 2015

Isaiah on Christmas Isaiah 7:10-16

Introduction: Isaiah lived and preached in Jerusalem for almost 60 years. His life and work were in a particularly chaotic era in Judah's history. The account of chapter 7 occurs in the days of King Ahaz (735-715 BC).

Read 2 Kings 16. What kind of king was king Ahaz? What are the marks of his wickedness? Read Isaiah 7:1-9. The LORD sends Isaiah to Ahaz to give him confidence. The Lord will not let Jerusalem come to destruction.

There is one more vital piece of background for our text. In the Garden of Eden the Lord promised the "Seed of the woman" would crush the head of the devil. This is the first promise of Jesus, and it runs through the Old Testament like a golden thread. This first promise is behind the promises the Lord gives to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah. The promise of the Seed is eventually given to King David (2 Samuel 7, see Matthew 22:42). All of the kings after David would have lived in the expectation and hope that their own son would be the promised Messiah.

Opening: Psalm 96

¹Oh sing to the LORD a | new song;*
sing to the LORD, | all the earth!

²**Sing to the LORD, | bless his name;*
tell of his salvation from | day to day.**

³Declare his glory among the | nations,*
his marvelous works among all the |
peoples!

⁴**For great is the LORD, and greatly | to
be praised;*
he is to be feared a- | bove all gods.**

⁵For all the gods of the peoples are worth
less | idols,*
but the LORD made the | heavens.

⁶**Splendor and majesty are be- | fore
him;*
strength and beauty are in his
sanctu- | ary.**

⁷Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the |
peoples,*
ascribe to the LORD glo- | ry and
strength!

⁸**Ascribe to the LORD the glory | due his
name;*
bring an offering, and come in- | to
his courts!**

⁹Worship the LORD in the splendor of |

holiness;*

tremble before him, | all the earth!

¹⁰**Say among the nations, "The LORD
reigns!**

**Yes, the world is established; it shall
nev- | er be moved;*
he will judge the peoples with |
equity."**

¹¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the |
earth rejoice;*

let the sea roar, and all that fills it;¹²let
the field exult, and every- | thing in it!

**Then shall all the trees of the forest sing
for joy ¹³before the LORD, | for he
comes,***

for he comes to | judge the earth.

He will judge the world in | righteousness,*
and the peoples in his | faithfulness.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

Read Isaiah 7:10-16

v. 10-11: "ask a sign"

The Lord in His mercy offers extra comfort

to Ahaz. Ahaz refuses. It looks, at first, like his refusal is humble. It is not. Ahaz, in his pride, refuses to listen to the Lord's Word of comfort and rule the people in faith. Instead he continues to rule according to human wisdom, trusting the alliances he's made rather than the Lord's promises.

What, in particular, was Ahaz tempted to look to for security in place of the Lord? See Isaiah 22:7–11.

v. 13: "will you weary God also?"

The Lord is not impressed with Ahaz's false humility. He reminds Ahaz that he is from the house of David, that he should look to the Lord for confidence.

v. 14: "Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign."

Whether Ahaz wants it or not, he will get a sign. This sign is against Ahaz, but it is for us. This is the most important verse in our study. "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." This is a promise of Jesus.

First, consider how this sign is against Ahaz. Being an heir of David, Ahaz might expect his son to be the Messiah. But the Lord says to Ahaz, "The Messiah will be born of a virgin. He will not have a father." This, especially, means that Ahaz will not be the Messiah's father.

Second, this promise is for us. The people of God have the hope of the Messiah. See Galatians 4:4–5.

"Immanuel" means God with us. How does this verse teach both the divine and human natures of Jesus? See Matthew 1:18–25.

How is Isaiah 7:14 fulfilled in the birth of Jesus?

The name "Jesus" means the Lord saves. See Matthew 1:21. How do the two names, "Jesus" and "Immanuel" teach us about the person and work of Jesus? How do these two names give us comfort?

"The virgin shall conceive..."

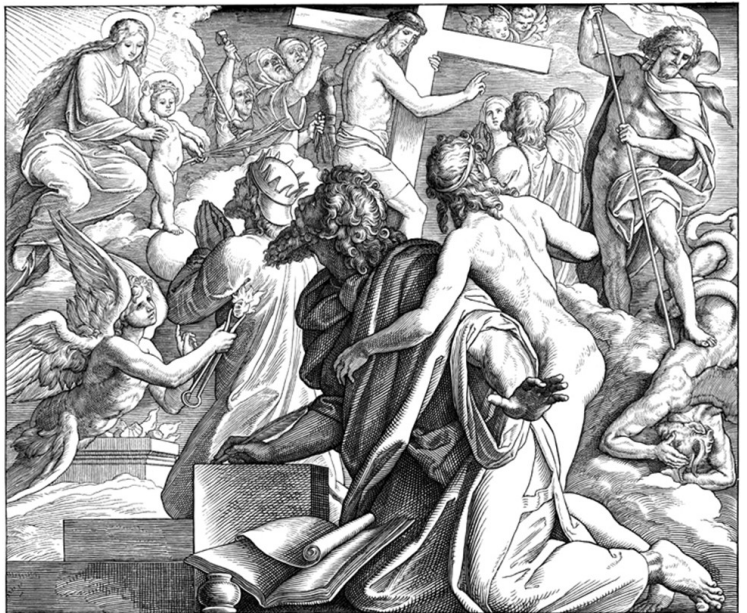
There are some Bible scholars who say this verse should be understood as "young maiden." How does the text of St. Matthew teach us to understand this phrase?

v. 15–16: "He shall eat curds and honey..."

This verse teaches the human nature of Jesus. Even though

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Jesus is "God with us," He still grows, learns, eats and sleeps (see Luke 2:52). He even dies for us.

God comes in our flesh. We call this the doctrine of the *incarnation*. If it is a surprise that the virgin conceives, it is even more of a surprise that the Lord eats and drinks.

Closing: Savior of the Nations, Come

Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Thy home!
Marvel now, O heaven and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.
Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,

Was the Word of God made flesh--
Woman's Offspring, pure and fresh.
Wondrous birth! O wondrous Child
Of the Virgin undefiled!
Though by all the world disowned,
Still to be in heaven enthroned.
—*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 95; st. 1–3

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