

Immanuel: Our Salvation

Isaiah 12:1-6

Charles Spurgeon once asked the question, ‘How do you fight and defeat a lion?’ Answer: ‘You get a bigger lion!’

We had a message last week on Isaiah 1-6, and were introduced to Immanuel, God with Us, who is Jesus.

The focus was how great a fight we were in – the problems in every direction – a battle, a warfare with a terrific beast!

But He is our Lion who brings us into fellowship with a holy heaven with holy angels – Is. 6, overcomes our hard and sinful hearts – Is. 1, the pride and idols we try to make stand – Is. 2, and the misery and mastery sin has over us – Is. 3-5.

Now in 7-12, we see Him rise up and fight all his and our enemies. That Kingdom in chapter 2, that Branch in chapter 4, and that Glory in chapter 6, is roaring and overcoming in these next 6 chapters.

“Comfort, comfort, My people says your God” here – speak kindly? Speak powerfully! Speak triumphantly! Call out to her that her warfare is ended – her sins all forgiven – her reward is twice what you can imagine!

That warfare is very much the theme before us. God’s anger against his people has shown itself in mostly military terms – War has come to Jerusalem. Syria and Israel are against Judah; then Egypt and Assyria – a far worse threat, a bigger lion to be sure.

But through the virgin-born sign Son, a child born to us, Immanuel – He is more than a match, not only to cast aside the rod of God’s anger, Assyria; but to bring in an everlasting Kingdom which is all peace!

We are no longer at the center of the issues as in 1-6. Immanuel steps in now and becomes our salvation.

Our first point then comes from chapters 7 and 8, and it is to see how helpless and foolish we are without what Jesus is and does for us.

The smaller enemies are at the gate – Samaria and Damascus have joined forces. The king is in dread, as are all the people.

But this is Immanuel’s land! And God promises to shoo them away. By the time a baby is weaned and eats solid foods, a year and a half, two years, these will be gone.

In 65 years, they both will be swept away entirely.

But here is the king, Ahaz, looking to his water supply in Jerusalem, looking to the creature rather than their Creator.

And as God offers a great sign in proof of his faithfulness – even this is rejected!

It is simply amazing who people will believe anything but the truth! They will be in wizards and spiritists who mutter and give nothing clear – 8:19, but when God speaks in His Word, or gives signs such as the children of Isaiah, or the prophecy of the Son of God come to save. That is rejected!

So the people are in great fear; they look to the dead, to themselves, to what cannot help them; they look to earthly alliances and nations for help.

When will we abandon our ways, the ways that repeatedly fail? We need life; who but the living God can help? We need comfort and not fear; boldness.

Isaiah 8:12-13 is quoted by Peter:

¹³ Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. **AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,** ¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you (1Pe 3:13-15 NAU)

The Lord is the only sanctuary in which true peace, stability, hope and life can be found.

This is a striking statement in 8:14. We find that the sanctuary is where we go to find the Lord; but here, the Lord is the sanctuary of his people! Jesus tabernacled among us, that he might be the tabernacle over and around us. Jesus said we are to abide in Him.

But we choose those cucumber huts back in 1:8. The problem is the same as King Ahaz's – we will not believe; so we will not be established, or firmly fixed in Christ the Rock. All throughout this book we are amazed at how firm the people stand in unbelief.

Now what kind of a sanctuary is he to us? How can we not believe in Him and run into His refuge and shelter? For this is a palace indeed.

We come here to the next two chapters – our second point – what is Immanuel, God with Us like?

Chapter 9 begins with the dark gloom of man's world; of man's own doings.

But behold, a light is shining over Bethlehem and points to the Savior.

Isaiah 9:6 is one of the greatest descriptions of Jesus Christ – not only in the OT, but in all the Bible! It rivals the catalogue given by Paul in Colossians 1 or Hebrews 1.

He is not just light against the darkness, but the one who banishes darkness; He sovereignly rules His shadows.

He is the gift of the Father, taking human nature to himself from the virgin.

Btw, some say virgin could be rendered a young woman of marriageable age. But how is a young woman conceiving a child a great sign of God? It is not. Thus the only proper way to translate the word is the miracle of a virgin birth.

This God man is the Wonder of a Counsellor – our wisdom, our truth. He is the mighty God revealed – who was with God and was God. He is the Everlasting Father – the Son who is fatherly in his authority, goodness, protection – and he is without time, eternal, unchangeable as God. And He is exalted as a Prince over all – to whom every knee will bow – and what is the nature of His rule? Is he a tyrant, a monster? NO – his peace knows no bounds, no ends, no close.

The throne and kingdom of Immanuel is where every believer lives.

You have been taken out of the kingdom of darkness and brought into his kingdom of life, of grace, of love, of power, and of truth. You are no longer under that old dominion of sin, condemnation, the dominion of darkness, but are freed.

It is either this, or the anger and wrath of God pictured throughout the Book of Immanuel. God's hand continues to be stretched out still in anger.

This is repeated in 9:12, 9:16, 9:21 and 10:4.

Think of this choice – to be in God's hand that has overcome death and the grave and hell, or the hand that sends you to death, the grave and after, the judgment and eternal separation from the Lord! One hand protects from every possible enemy and from which you can never be separated; the other submerges you into every possible darkness and pushes you away from His all wonderful presence.

Both hands are sovereign. None can resist Him. He takes up the Assyrian nation, uses them as a rod, staff, a stick to beat and punish wicked Israel, to call them back. And after He is finished, he punishes the stick for their arrogance in how they mistreated Israel! The Lord controls their every wicked step, on their way to the blackness of darkness forever.

And how foolish to believe they are free while in sin. Read 10:15.

Well, the sad truth is the people of Judah did not take the message to heart. They would be carried off into captivity just as Israel to the north suffered the same.

But the Lord promised to them a recovery; a being brought back to the land, and a new covenant issued with better promises. But even there, they rejected Immanuel again in such a terrible way. And still He stretches his hand out the Jews today.

This is where we arrive in Isaiah 11 and 12, our third point.

Out of this dry ground in Judah, springs a stem from the line of David.

The description of Immanuel's kingdom here is one with Isaiah 9:6-7, and his kingdom which judges the wicked while bringing peace on earth and a reversal of the curse of sin, expanded.

This King of kings is not like others kings, in that he does battle with steel and chariots.

Similar prophecy is to be found in Isaiah 61:1-3 – the text Jesus read and pointed to himself at the beginning of his public ministry in Luke 4.

Skipping down to verse 10, this marks the calling of the Gentiles, the Nations, to come – come where? To Him. See how central Jesus is Himself to His kingdom? Take Him away and what is left? Absolutely nothing!

The change in the wicked natures of the creatures is repeated in Is. 65:25, a passage rich in the final end of all things.

But Isaiah 11 has it in gospel days, present days. How do we join the two? The teaching of the already/not yet of salvation.

The creation is to be remade, a new heavens and new earth – no tears, no fears, no death, no curse, nothing will harm. That is not yet come to pass.

But the beginnings of the new creation have dawned. They are already here! How? Where? In Christ, in the Spirit of the now risen and ascended and enthroned and returning Savior!

The last enemy of the curse to be destroyed is death. Christians still suffer death. But death is not what it used to be. Death is gain, says Paul. Death brings us to the Lord. But death is not yet swallowed up in victory. But here we are, not afraid of death, because for us, it is defeated. Death is yours, said the apostle.

You and I have passed from death into life; we now have eternal life.

So these gospel days, these post first advent days, are to be fixed upon this now absent but present Savior. “You will see Me again.” “Behold, I am with you always.”

This is the day you and I live in.

The day of Immanuel, who has come lowly, humbly; Marked by full Spiritual Anointing, Wisdom, Reverence, Delight, Righteousness, Judgment, Mercy, Power, Victory, Fullness, Restoration, Call and Rest.

No wonder there is a Song, and praises arise from all over this world.

The Day has come of Joy in the Lord.

The Day of Full Forgiveness – God is no longer angry. The Day of Salvation – God Himself IS our salvation. The Day of Fearless Faith ~

I will trust and not be afraid. The Day of Satisfaction – fresh cool water drawn from the well of life and grace.

And this baby born to us, Immanuel, brings joy that spreads out far and wide. It is contagious.

In 12:4-6, we find these four things: Contagious Thanksgiving – calling others to join in the chorus. Contagious Worship – His name is exalted, people! Contagious Songs – Praise him with heart and mouth. Contagious Outreach – let this ring throughout the world. Cry aloud and shout for joy! “Great in our Midst is the holy One of Israel!” Holy, Holy, Holy indeed! We have seen His glory – the glory of Immanuel!