**Veni, Veni Emmanuel!**

Isaiah 7:10 – 16

**Proposition:** God has given us a sign to confirm His promise to deliver from satan’s power, sin’s penalty and empower us to persevere through trials.

**Application:** Rejoice in the One who has come to give life.

Years ago, a submarine was hit by a ship and quickly sank to the bottom of the ocean. The crew was trapped inside. Rescue boats rushed to the scene, but no one really knew what the crew went through in those final hours submerged in water. Men bravely clung to all the air they could get

until, slowly, it gave out. One rescue diver put his ear to the side of the submarine and heard tapping noises – a crew member banged out a message in Morse code. The message was a question: “*Is there any hope?*” Every person asks that question.

Although written over 2 500 years ago, in a land 10 000 km away, the passage we are looking at offers us hope in this part of the world and at this time in history.

*A Bit of Context*: About 250 years before this event in Isaiah, the Jewish nation had split into two

– the 10 Northern tribes called Israel or Ephraim or Samaria broke away from the Southern tribe of Judah. The king of Israel at the time was Pekah. He allied with the king of Syria (or Aram at the time) known as Rezin in order to wage war against the king of Judah, who at the time was Ahaz. Pekah and Rezin wanted to remove Ahaz from the throne of David and replace him with a puppet king. To defend himself from this threat, Ahaz allied with the king of Assyria – the superpower at the time. Isaiah stepped in to warn king Ahaz that this alliance was a bad plan. Isaiah’s prophecy is rooted in a crisis in which God’s people found themselves. In a time of crisis

why rely on a worldly leader for help rather than on the Lord God of Israel?

It is God’s will to help His people in a time of crisis. The Lord is eager to strengthen the feeble faith of His fearful children.

1. **The Sign Refused (7:10 – 12)**

*An Offer* (7:10, 11): One role of a supernatural sign is to convince us that what God has promised He will fulfill. To confirm God’s promise to save His people in a time of crisis, Ahaz was given an occasion to seek any type of sign he wished.

*An Objection* (7:12): Ahaz was not known for being godly. He brought in pagan worship in the Jerusalem temple; he sacrificed his son to idols, and he took gold and silver from the temple to win the favour of the Assyrian king (2 Kings 16:3, 8). This anxious king did not want to trust in the Lord. As a result of his unbelief, he allied with the king of Assyria to protect Judah from anger (2 Kings 16:7, 9). Ahaz was not concerned about a sign from God. He did not want to be convinced by the prophet. He did not want to renege on the deal he made with the king of Assyria. When we cease to trust God, we end up trusting in others even in our foes. Assyria was no friend to Judah. Since Judah and Assyria had a common enemy, they became allies. As the saying goes: *“The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”* Ahaz made his plan, and it did not include God. He knew full well the Lord could assure him with a confirming sign, but he turned down God’s offer with pious words, “*I will not test the Lord.*” We do not test the Lord by doing what He says. We test the Lord when we refuse to do His will. While king Ahaz was testing the patience of God, God was testing the faith of Ahaz. What was the test of faith? The test was this: *“In a time of crisis in whom will you trust? In a time of crisis will you rely on the Lord*

*or on someone or something else?”*

All of us will face a crisis of some kind in our life. We may face a health crisis, a financial crisis,

a marriage crisis, a job crisis, loss of a loved one. We may also face a societal crisis. All around us new dangers abound. There are fears of recession; fears of not be able to afford the cost of living. We are seeing the hostile advance of wokeism in our courts, in our schools, in the media.

In times of personal and global crisis, *in whom who do you trust? On whom do you rely?* God’s great concern is to help His people in a time of crisis. The Lord is willing to strengthen the feeble faith of His fearful children. He has offered a sign to confirm His promise to save. Let us not be like Ahaz trusting in our own human wisdom and saying “*no*” to the sign the Lord has freely given us.

1. **The Sign Revealed (7:13 – 16)**

*For the House of David* (7:13): God made a promise toKing David, that his dynasty would never end (2 Sam 7:16, 17). The two kings, Pekah of Ephraim and Rezin of Damascus sought to destroy the house of David and replace it with a new dynasty – in defiance to what the Lord had promised David and his offspring. Because the royal dynasty was under threat of being wiped out, God offered hope in the form of a supernatural sign. The sign the Lord put forward was more for the *House of David*than for king Ahaz. The sign was meant to give hope to the *house of David* in the face of an existential threat. Even though it may be threatened with of extinction

this sign will confirm that the house of David will endure forever If the line of David ceases to exist, so is the promise of the Messiah. God will not let that happen. Whether king Ahaz wanted a sign or not, the Lord gave him one.

*For the Human Race* (7:14): Ahaz’s refusal to ask for a sign opened the way for the Lord to choose His own sign which became the greatest miracle of hope for all people, for all time. An *unmarried woman will be with child while still a virgin.* Barring modern reproductive technologies like IVF, there is only one person in all of history who met the criteria of this miraculous sign. The only woman to conceive and give birth to a son while still a virgin was

Mary the physical mother of Jesus (Matt 1:21 – 23)

***God With Us***(7:14b): In Biblical times it was the father who named the child. Notice in this case the mother names the child. This suggests the child did not have a biological father.

Further confirming the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus. Whereas Ahaz believed the *king of Assyria*

*would be with him to save him*, God said “*No, I will be with you to deliver you.*”

It is God’s desire to help His people in a time of crisis. The Lord is willing to strengthen the feeble faith of His fearful children. He has given us a great sign to confirm His promise to save; a sign for all people, for all time. God not only dwells with us, in the Person of Christ Jesus. He also dwells in us by His Holy Spirit. He dwells in us to deliver us from the power of evil. He dwells in us to save us from the penalty of sin. He dwells in us to empower us to stand firm when facing trials. Let us receive and not refuse the sign of Emmanuel, God with us in the Person of Christ Jesus.

Isaiah was so convinced of this prophecy he spoke of it as if the event of the virgin birth was

taking place in the present.

*Fulfilled in Time* (7:15, 16): In picture form the prophet Isaiah saw the future birth of Emanuel

as a present reality. According to [Jewish law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halakha), when a [Jewish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew) boy is around 13 years of age, he

becomes accountable before God for his moral choices. Jewish families mark this milestone

with a ceremony called Bar Mitzvah. It is as if Isaiah was holding a picture of a pregnant virgin

in front of Ahaz and saying *the time that it takes for a boy to reach the age of accountability, the*

*time it takes for this boy to be Bar Mitzvahed, is the time it will take for the land of these two*

*kings to lie desolate.* In other words, within 13 years Damascus and Israel will be taken captive

and Pekah and Rezin will threaten no more. Isaiah gave this prophecy in 734 BC. Two years

later, in 732 BC, Damascus was laid waste and king Rezin was killed (2 Kings 16:9). In 722 BC,

12 years after this prophecy Israel was exiled (2 Kings 15:29). The House of David will remain

until the birth of Emmanuel.

It is God’s will to help us in a time of need and to give us hope in a time of crisis. The Lord is eager to strengthen the feeble faith of His fearful children. Just as He gave a sign to confirm His help to the *House of David,* He has given us a sign to confirm His promise to deliver us from the power of satan, from the penalty of sin and to empower us to persevere in a time of great crisis. Yet if we have no belief, we will find no relief. It is faith in God and not in human measures that brings victory. In the short term, Ahaz’s treaty with Assyria proved to be of help, but in the long run it was a disaster. Rather than seeking human wisdom as a solution to our crisis, whether personal or global, by faith receive the sign God has freely given us. All our troubles as deep as the grave and as high as the heavens are conquered because Emmanuel has come. God is with us

in the Person of Christ Jesus to deliver us from the power of evil; He is with us to save us from the penalty of sin. He is with us in the Person of Christ Jesus to empower us to persevere in a time of great trial. *Is there any hope* is the question of all humanity. There answer is *Yes*! Emmanuel has come. He has come in the Person of Christ Jesus. We can trust Him! Will you trust Him?