

God Came to Earth – Part 3

Christians Know Things

God made promises to Eve, Moses, and David that He would destroy the power of Satan, send a better lawgiver than Moses, and provide an eternal king to rule all nations of the earth. God prepared a people through whom to fulfill those promises. He prepared the nations to make the world a place where Immanuel could come, establish the eternal kingdom, and spread His message. Another process that He did was to provide signs through His prophets so the people could identify the Messiah when He came.

Through Isaiah, God announced that the one who would bless all nations would be born of a young woman that had never known a man. *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel"* (Isaiah 7:14). The prophet Micah provided the place of birth, *"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity"* (Micah 5:2). The two prophecies together teach us that the eternal one would be born of a woman with God as His father, in the city of Bethlehem in Judah, where King David was also born.

The message through Isaiah is quite clear that Immanuel would come to earth as an infant and not as a full-grown man, but would grow and mature into an adult. *"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this"* (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Hosea provided a prophecy that looked both backward and forward in time. *"When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt, I called My son"* (Hosea 11:1). Just like Israel went into Egypt for protection from hunger, Immanuel would go into Egypt to protect Him from Herod's decree. The decree caused the death of the children in Bethlehem as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:15-17 and fulfilled by Herod (Matthew 2:16-18). God sent Moses to bring Israel out of Egypt into the promised land, and God told Joseph to take the young child Jesus from Egypt to His home in Nazareth, Matthew 2:13-15. *"Jesus came and dwelt in Nazareth that it might be fulfilled which is spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene"* (Matthew 2:23). Not one particular prophet, but all the prophets, and their collective description of Messiah as being wretched and despised as in Isaiah 52 and 53. In the first century, Gallileans were disliked, and people from Nazareth were despised.

As an earthly king sends out messengers to announce his future visits, so the people can prepare to receive him, God sent a messenger to herald the arrival of Immanuel. *"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts* (Malachi 3:1). Here the prophet alludes to the Priest-King of Zechariah and the prophet promised by Moses. He is coming, get ready! And Isaiah said, *"Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."* (Isaiah 40:3-5). Malachi preached about 400 years before Jesus; John the Baptist began six months before Jesus began teaching.

One of the prophesied signs of Immanuel's presence was the rejection by the very people He came to save. Isaiah speaks of the rejection which culminated in His death, *"He was despised and forsaken*

of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him" (Isaiah 53:3). About 300 years earlier, David had sung these words, "I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people. All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head" (Psalms 22:6-7).

Around 400 BC, the revelation from God to His chosen people ceased to come to the prophets. At least the written revelation was complete. The people were prepared and looking for the signs. The nations were sorting out their coexistence as God had foreseen and prophesied through Daniel. The next sound that would arrive from Heaven would be the sound of angels announcing the arrival of The Son of God.