

The 15min Reflection for the week of December 19, 2020

Isaiah 7:10-16; Matthew 1:18-25

Isaiah 7:10-16 NLT Later, the LORD sent this message to King Ahaz: 11 "Ask the LORD your God for a sign of confirmation, Ahaz. Make it as difficult as you want—as high as heaven or as deep as the place of the dead." 12 But the king refused. "No," he said, "I will not test the LORD like that." 13 Then Isaiah said, "Listen well, you royal family of David! Isn't it enough to exhaust human patience? Must you exhaust the patience of my God as well? 14 All right then, the Lord Himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a Child! She will give birth to a Son and will call Him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us'). 15 By the time this Child is old enough to choose what is right and reject what is wrong, He will be eating yogurt and honey. 16 For before the Child is that old, the lands of the two kings you fear so much will both be deserted.

Matthew 1:18-25 NLT This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. 19 Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. 20 As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will have a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through His prophet: 23 "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" 24 When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. 25 But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named Him Jesus.

When we receive word that someone we love is coming to visit, we get excited and make preparations. Daily life changes as we add extra tasks in order to get ready. One of our children lives out of town, and when we know they are coming to visit, we plan special food and even activities.

In this text, the prophet Isaiah is concerned about the behavior of the Israelites among their neighboring people as they bargain to make alliances for survival. He's also concerned about their strained relationship with God. He reminds them that they are trying God's patience, and that God will respond.

Isaiah says, "The Lord himself will give you a sign. A virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. Before he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread, your enemies, will be laid waste."

In other words, God is coming to earth, says Isaiah, so listen to God and trust God. When God comes, there will be excitement, and God will direct big changes. Even kings and kingdoms are not beyond God's realm of change.

And what are we to do now, in today's world? We are to expect him. We are to live daily in ways that show our trust in God. We are to expect changes in our world, according to God's plan. God came

incarnated in the form of baby Jesus, who grew to manhood. Upon his ascent to heaven, he came to dwell in our hearts. And, in the future, he will again appear on earth, ready to show his power and glory. In Matthew, we see the words of Isaiah repeated centuries later. In order for the incarnation to follow God's plan, God sent angels to confirm the birth of Jesus to those players directly involved in the birth. And they were obedient to God.

What preparations are you making for God's coming? Are you willing to make changes in the world around you? What is your level of trust and wisdom in regard to God's Word? To God's promises? To God's presence in your life?

Lord, as you choose to work within peoples' hearts and lives, come into our hearts today. Open our eyes to see your vision for our world and the way you would have us live out that vision. We want to be your obedient children, as Jesus was. Amen.