

# THE RESTORATION PROMISED

**BIBLE PASSAGES:** Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-24; Luke 2:22-38

**THE POINT:** God sent His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world.

**TODAY'S PURPOSE:** To lead adults in summarizing God's promise to send Jesus to restore the relationship that was broken.

**VBS SCRIPTURE:** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by Him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. *Colossians 1:15-16*

**BONUS VERSE:** The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. *John 1:14a*

NOTES

## BIBLE STUDY

### INTRODUCTION

Do you remember some promises that others have made to you? Maybe you recall a promise a parent or grandparent made to you, perhaps to take you to a movie or a ballgame. In our last session we heard the promise God made to Satan, that one day a descendant of the woman would “strike his head.” (Gen. 3:17) What did God mean? How did He add to His promise? How did He fulfill it?

### THE PROMISE GOD GAVE THROUGH ISAIAH

(ISAIAH 7:14; MATTHEW 1:8-24)

Ahaz was the king of Judah during the late eighth century BC. About 734 BC King Ahaz found out that the kingdom of Israel and the nation of Aram were plotting to overthrow Judah. (Isa. 7:1-2) Isaiah the prophet knew that Ahaz wanted to make an alliance with Assyria to gain their protection against these two nations. (2 Chronicles 28:16) However, God sent Isaiah to King Ahaz to tell him to stand firm in his faith and God Himself would protect Judah. (7:3-9) God spoke through Isaiah to encourage Ahaz to ask for a sign as proof of what God had promised. However, Ahaz refused. (7:10-12)

Though King Ahaz wouldn't ask for a specific sign, God would give him one anyway. The sign would be that a “virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.” (7:14) Matthew 1:23 explains that Immanuel means “God is with us.” Isaiah added that before this child would be old enough to distinguish between “what is bad and ... what is good” Judah's enemies would no longer be a threat. (7:15-16) About two years later the Assyrian army invaded Israel and killed the king who had threatened Judah. God kept His promise to King Ahaz.

Centuries later Matthew referred to Isaiah's prophecy as he described how an angel spoke to a man named Joseph. At the time Joseph was engaged (or betrothed) to a young woman named Mary. Jewish marriage customs in the first century often involved three phases. First some marriages were arranged by the parents of the future bride and groom. When they were old enough, the man and woman declared that they were engaged (or betrothed). This period lasted about a year. If during this time the woman proved unfaithful to her future husband, he could legally divorce her. If the woman remained faithful, then one day the groom went and took his bride to his family's house where they held a great wedding ceremony and then lived together as husband and wife.

During this period of engagement Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant. Of course, he assumed that she had been unfaithful. Joseph could have shamed her and divorced her in a public setting, but he was a kind man and "decided to divorce her secretly." (Matthew 1:18-19) At that point God sent an angel to speak to Joseph in a dream. The angel encouraged Joseph not to be afraid of finalizing his marriage with Mary. (1:20) Clearly, everyone would know that Mary's child was born before they had been married nine months. Either they would think that both Mary and Joseph were sexually involved before their marriage or that Mary had gotten pregnant by being unfaithful to Joseph. The angel told Joseph not to fear the consequences. The angel explained that the Holy Spirit had performed a miracle in Mary's body so that the child's conception had occurred without another man. This child, this son, would be unique. In fact, He would "save His people from their sins." (1:21) That's why they were to give Him the name "Jesus," which means "Yahweh saves."

Matthew added that "all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." (1:22) Matthew then quoted Isaiah 7:14. (Matt. 1:23) What did God's promise to King Ahaz have to do with the birth of Jesus? Matthew meant for his readers to understand that God's promise had two fulfillments—the first was to King Ahaz, and the second was to Joseph and to everyone waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise to send His Messiah (Anointed One). Jesus' miraculous birth through the power of the Holy Spirit confirmed God's promise to send His Messiah and confirmed Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would be born to a virgin. Joseph obeyed the angel's command and took Mary home to be his wife. The child was born, and they named Him Jesus.

## **GOD'S PROMISE FULFILLED AND REVEALED** (LUKE 1:22-38)

In first-century Palestine there were three rituals related to the birth of a Jewish boy. On the eighth day after his birth the child was to be circumcised and named. (Lev. 12:3) Luke's Gospel noted (2:21) that this ritual was observed and that the child was named Jesus.

The other two rituals were to occur 33 days later. (Lev. 12:1-8) One was to "present Him to the Lord." (Luke 2:22) This ritual was in obedience to the Law

in Exodus 13:2 which says that every firstborn male belongs to the Lord. In a symbolic ceremony the child was to be bought back from God by giving an offering. (Num. 18:16) The third ritual was to symbolize the cleansing of the woman from childbirth. She was to bring a lamb for a burnt offering and a pigeon for a sin offering. Since a poor family might not have a lamb or be able to buy one, the Law allowed for a pigeon or turtledove to be substituted. Luke noted that the offering could be a "pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." (2:24) Apparently, that is the offering brought by Mary, a sign of her lowly economic status. Luke described how Joseph and Mary "brought Him up to Jerusalem," about five miles from Bethlehem, to the Temple to carry out these rituals.

While Joseph and Mary were in the Temple that day, a man named Simeon came in. Luke provided three descriptive phrases about Simeon. (2:25) He "was righteous and devout," that is, faithful to keep God's Law. He was "looking forward to Israel's consolation," that is, to the coming of God's promised Messiah to lead in the way of God's truth. "And the Holy Spirit was on him," that is, God's Spirit was guiding him moment by moment. In fact, the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he wouldn't die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. (2:26) Luke wrote that Simeon went to the Temple at that moment while he was being "guided by the Spirit." (2:27) The Spirit revealed to Simeon that the child Mary was holding was the One God had promised. Imagine the scene as this elderly saint reached out his hands to take Mary's child. She must have been surprised but at the same time trusted he meant no harm. Simeon then offered a benediction to God his Master (2:29-32) for keeping His promise to him. Simeon knew that this child was the One who would bring God's salvation not only to Israel but "to the Gentiles" as well.

Of course, Joseph and Mary were amazed at what was being said about their son. (2:33) Simeon offered his blessing to them but also a warning. Jesus' destiny was to change lives, "to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel." (2:34) Those who put their faith in Jesus would "rise" while those who rejected Him would "fall." (John 3:18,36) Their responses to Jesus would reveal "the thoughts of many hearts." (2:35) Evil men would attack and kill Jesus. Having to watch her son be crucified (John 19:25) would feel for Mary as though "a sword" had pierced her soul. (2:35)

In addition to Simeon another elderly saint was also in the Temple at that moment. Her name was Anna. Luke described her as "a prophetess." (2:36) Even though she had been widowed for 84 years, she served God in the Temple day and night worshipping "with fasting and prayers." (2:37) Perhaps she was there with Simeon while he was holding Jesus. She also "began to thank God" for fulfilling His promise and for His allowing her to see His Messiah. She wanted others to know about Jesus, so she walked around the Temple area to tell those who also believed God's promise and "were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem." (2:38)

NOTES

SESSION 3



NOTES

## APPLICATION

God faithfully kept His promise to send His Messiah to reveal His truth and to provide a way of salvation. Everything Jesus did fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies, including that He would be born of a virgin. As Jesus' followers, we can share the good news that God kept His promise by sending His Son, Jesus, to restore the relationship that we have broken.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- Why do you think God gave such specific prophecies and then made sure they were fulfilled and documented?
- Why is Jesus the only One who could restore our broken relationship with God?