

Your Isa. 7:14 Reason to Wait With Holy Hope

What is the longest you've waited for something you wanted? In this age of instant gratification, "wait" is a four-letter word in more ways than one.

The oven takes too long, so we microwave our food ... then stand in front of the microwave, counting off the seconds because even that takes too long!

Dial-up internet service wasn't fast enough, so we converted to DSL, only to replace DSL with high-speed internet.

Remember the days when we waited to see the photographs we took? We developed the film and printed pictures from the negatives. Polaroid film provided photos within minutes, but even that took too long. Now we can see our digital photos instantly.

Since we work hard at not having to wait for anything, it can be difficult for us to understand how long ancient Israel waited for her Messiah. The original prophecy for His coming can be traced all the way back to Genesis 3:15 in the Garden of Eden. But the prophet Isaiah spoke of Him by name: "Emmanuel."

'Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

The ancient Latin hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," translated by John Mason Neale, has its roots in Isaiah's prophecy. "Emmanuel" is God with us. Today, Christians understand the historical reality of Jesus' coming and experience the presence of His Holy Spirit.

But 700 years before the first coming of Jesus Christ, Isaiah spoke an amazing prophecy of the one who would be born of a virgin—God incarnate. Beginning with this prophecy, the hymn writer included other names and characteristics of Emmanuel. He was the Son of God. The Dayspring who brings light. Wisdom personified. The “desire of nations” who would someday bring peace.

The saddest part about this is not that Israel waited 700 years for Isaiah’s prophecy to be fulfilled. No, the saddest part is that when Jesus came, the religious leaders failed to recognize Him as the one for whom they had been waiting.

Have you been waiting for peace and wisdom and light in your own life? Don’t be like the religious leaders of Jesus’ day. Recognize the source of all these things is Jesus Christ, and Him alone.

Enjoy the planning, preparations and anticipation while you wait for Christmas to arrive. But as you check off the days, recognize that you no longer have to wait for the answer to your deepest needs. “Emmanuel” has already come. {eoa}

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