

# LESSON 1: HE WAS BORN TO BE GOD WITH US

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## DAY 1: DIFFERENT ROLES (ISAIAH 7)

Have you thought about all the roles you fill every day? Most of us carry multiple roles. Simultaneously, we can be a spouse, a parent, a grandparent, a friend, a boss, and a worker. Then there are additional roles we take on, such as chef, gardener, house painter, decorator, chauffeur . . . You're probably nodding your head as you read these. We are busy, busy people who struggle to fill the roles and expectations that are placed upon us. Roles and expectations are not bad things. In fact, these roles most often define us and create our identity. Many of these roles bring great joy and fulfillment.

When Isaiah wrote about the coming of One from God, he described the various roles that this One would fulfill. This Advent study is based on those roles . . . and that He was born to be God with us; human like us; our Servant; our Light; and our Savior. Further evidence of each of these roles is provided in Matthew.

Read Isaiah 7 and reflect on what information is given in this chapter that describes the One who was to come. And pray that God will use this time of study to help you come face-to-face in a new way with the One who was sent to be with us.

## DAY 2: PROMISED RELIEF (ISAIAH 7:14)

How many times have you heard someone say, "If I can just get through (this project, this week, this problem), things will get easier for me"? We all look to the future to find relief from whatever it is that overwhelms and threatens us. Surely, given enough time, things will get better. That's one way to define the word "hope." We hope that things will get better if we just hang in there long enough.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel had already fallen to outside invaders. During Isaiah's time, the Southern Kingdom of Judah was being threatened by neighboring countries as well. The king and the people of Judah were terrified that what had happened to Israel would happen to them. In the midst of these threats, God sent them a message of hope through Isaiah. God promised that He would one day send His Son Immanuel to them. Immanuel . . . God with us.

Read Isaiah 7:14. Consider what message of hope that was for the people of Judah, and what message of hope that is for you. How should that impact you during Advent?

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## DAY 3: FOOD FOR BABIES (ISAIAH 17:15A)

Gerber and other manufacturers have developed huge lines of food products designed to meet the developmental needs of growing babies. Some of these have focused on providing the best food available, and proudly label their products as “organic.” Those come at a higher price, which many parents are willing to pay in order to provide the best for their babies.

Read Isaiah 7:15a. Centuries ago, curds and honey were common foods among the poor of Middle Eastern culture during King Ahaz’s day and beyond, and were given to babies and young children for their physical development. So, possibly Isaiah used these to show that the One who would come would be poor and humble. Or, perhaps he referred to the fact that after Judah was overrun, the crops would be devastated and there would only be curds and honey to eat.

Or, maybe Isaiah referred to eating curds and honey not only for physical development, but for spiritual development as well. The child, along with the people as a whole, would be reminded of their dependence upon what God gave them rather than what they could produce themselves. It would drive them back to being with God.

Think about the food you eat. What does your diet convey about you? Do you see your diet as God’s provision for you? Why?

## DAY 4: CHOOSE GOOD (ISAIAH 7:15B-16)

Probably the hardest thing to teach our children is the difference between right and wrong. The lines between the two seem blurred to toddlers and children. And if we’re really honest, we’ll admit that those lines are often blurred for adults as well.

Read Isaiah 7:15b-16. Here, Isaiah referred to the boy’s development in making obedient decisions. Immanuel would come and show the people how to listen to and obey God, rather than to ignore and disobey Him. God desired for His people to be restored to choosing good (the things of God and the ways of love) rather than evil (the things of self and selfishness).

How do you see right and wrong? Good and evil? Do you see spiritual development in your life in understanding these concepts?

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## **DAY 5: COMING TO BE GOD WITH US (MATTHEW 1:21B-23)**

How often have you heard or read the Christmas story? Probably more than you can count. Go through the story in your head, remembering as many details as possible. Then, focus on the role of Joseph in the story. How did God show His favor on Joseph?

Read Matthew 1:21b-23. God showed His favor on Joseph in multiple ways. God chose Joseph to be the one to raise His Only Son. God sent an angel to Joseph to explain what was happening, and to give Joseph the name for the child that would be born to Mary. What an amazing moment that must have been for Joseph. He was chosen to have a role in the birth and life of God's Son. And as the Jewish father, Joseph had the responsibility to naming the child, or in this case, passing on the name that God had given him.

Read Isaiah 7:14 again. What does it suggest to you that God personally gave Joseph the name for the child that fulfilled the promises He had given Judah?