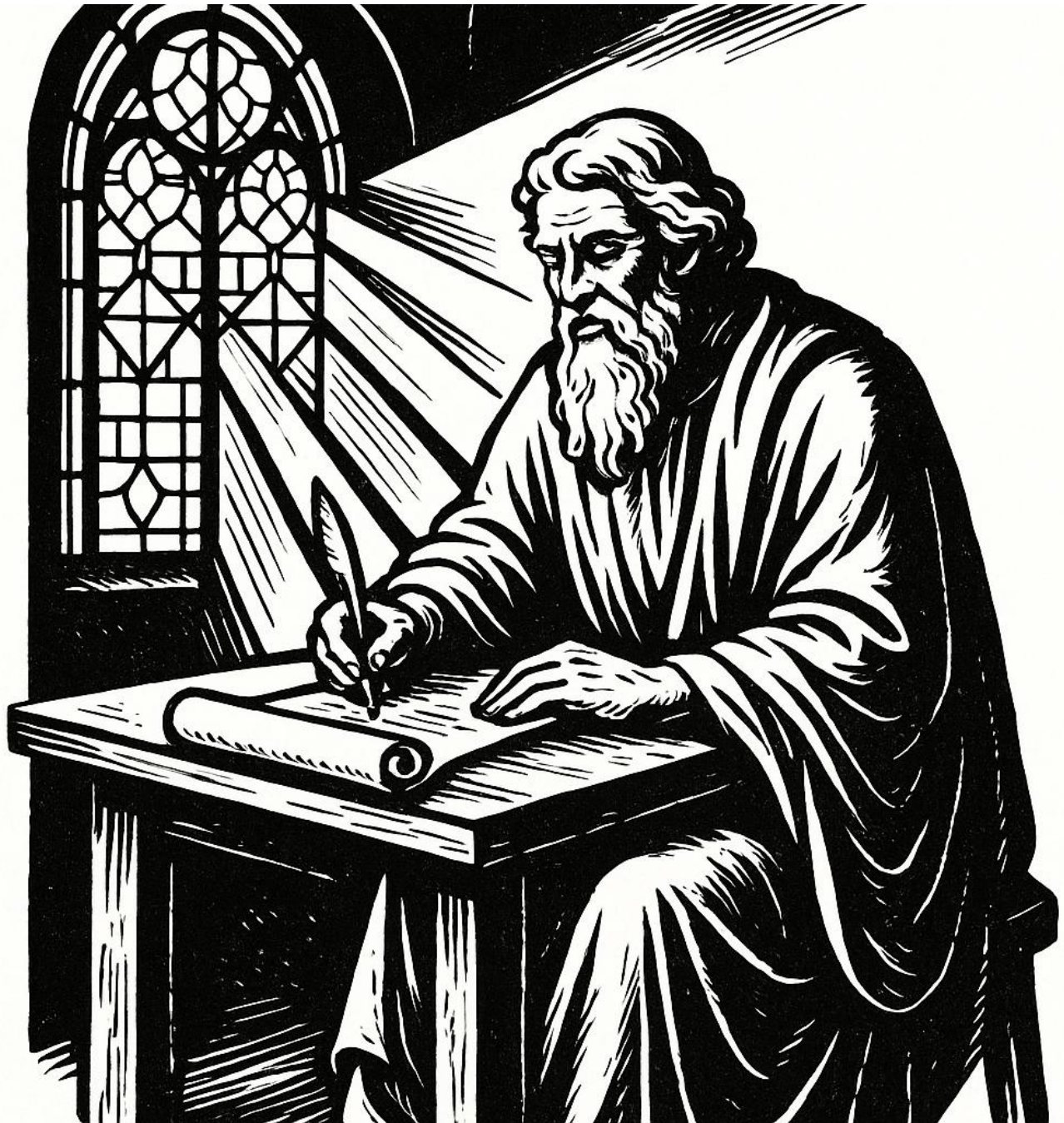


THE FIFTH EVANGELIST:

Ten Gospel Windows in Isaiah

Lesson 3 – “God-with-us” Grace



Calvary Lutheran Church
Dallas, TX
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THE FIFTH EVANGELIST:

Ten Gospel Windows in Isaiah

“Isaiah... foretold so many things about Christ and the Church that one would think he was composing a history of what had already happened rather than predicting events to come.” — Augustine

Isaiah is unlike any other Old Testament prophet. He preaches judgment with fearless clarity, yet in almost the same breath unveils Gospel promises so vivid that the early Church called him **“The Fifth Evangelist.”** Long before Matthew or Mark ever wrote their accounts of Christ, Isaiah was already painting Him before our eyes: the Child born of a virgin, the Light shining in deep darkness, the Branch rising from Jesse’s stump, the Servant who would suffer for sin, the Anointed One proclaiming good news, and the God who will create a new heavens and a new earth.

The New Testament writers treat Isaiah not as background noise but as a central voice. They quote him at Jesus’ birth, ministry, passion, death, resurrection, and mission to the nations. In some ways, the Gospels feel like Isaiah in narrative form. When you study Isaiah, you are listening to the Gospel decades—centuries—before Bethlehem.

But Isaiah never proclaims the Gospel in a vacuum. Each of his Gospel promises emerges from the debris of judgment. First comes the mirror: God exposes false worship, pride, self-reliance, idolatry, and injustice. Only then comes the window: God’s astonishing grace, spoken into the very places where human efforts collapse.

This class will honor that rhythm. Each week we will encounter:

- **The Mirror — the Law’s honest diagnosis**
- **The Window — a Gospel gem, unique in its beauty**
- **The Fulfillment — how Christ completes Isaiah’s vision**
- **The Life — how this grace speaks into our world today**

We will explore **ten major Gospel windows**—ten “facets” of Isaiah’s proclamation of Christ. These ten themes form the backbone of our ten-week journey:

1. Cleansing Grace — Isaiah 1
2. Transforming Grace — Isaiah 6
3. God-With-Us Grace — Isaiah 7 & 9
4. Re-Creating Grace — Isaiah 11
5. Victorious Grace — Isaiah 25
6. Restorative Grace — Isaiah 35
7. Tender Grace — Isaiah 40
8. Missionary Grace — Isaiah 42 & 49
9. Substitutionary Grace — Isaiah 52–53
10. Transformational/New-Creation Grace — Isaiah 61 & 65

The goal is not simply to understand Isaiah’s book. It is to let Isaiah preach to us—to see how each Gospel promise in Isaiah points us to Christ and strengthens our faith today. To learn the rhythm of Law and Gospel in prophetic literature. And to deepen our own devotional life through the ancient and beautiful practice of the **Collect**—a prayer form that gathers God’s promises into a single, structured petition.

Welcome to **The Fifth Evangelist**.
Let Isaiah show you Christ.

LESSON THREE — “GOD-WITH-US” GRACE

Isaiah 7 & 9

“The virgin will conceive... the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.”

OPENING DEVOTION & ORIENTATION

2. MIRROR — The Law Section

Isaiah 7:1-13 — Fearful Hearts & Refused Grace

Read the passage aloud (multiple voices).

Let’s read it with multiple voices so the fear and tension of the original moment is heard.

Group Prompt:

In one or two words, describe Ahaz’s heart.

Write 1–2 words:

Observation:

- What crisis opens the chapter? (vv. 1–2) Who is attacking? How does Judah respond emotionally?

- What does God tell Isaiah to say to Ahaz? (vv. 3–4) Why is that surprising given Ahaz’s spiritual condition? Note the pastoral tone: “Be careful. Keep calm. Don’t be afraid.”

- What future does God predict for the two enemy kings? (vv. 5–9) Why is that an insult, and why is it also comfort?

- What warning does God give? (v. 9) What does this say about the true danger facing Ahaz?

- How does Ahaz disguise his unbelief? (vv. 10–12) What sounds pious but is actually rebellion?

Comprehension:

A. The Mask of Fear

- List 2–3 ways Ahaz tries to appear faithful while actually rejecting God’s help.

- _____
- _____
- _____

B. The Psychology of Unbelief

- Why would Ahaz prefer political alliances to divine promises?

C. The Mirror Today

- Where do modern Christians imitate Ahaz? Put a check mark in the box of the one that strikes closest to home or that you perceive is most prevalent in the context in which you live:

- Religious language masking distrust** (*A Christian says, "I'm just waiting on the Lord," while privately ignoring every Word He speaks about repentance, reconciliation, or trust. They use pious vocabulary to avoid actually obeying God or depending on Him.*)
- Relying on strategy instead of Scripture** (*A church council debates a problem, and the first instinct is: "Who do we know? What can we fix?" Budgets, networking, and planning are discussed for an hour before anyone asks, "What does God say about this? Have we prayed?"*)
- Assuming God's promises fit our calculations** (*A believer says, "I know God will provide...but only if the numbers work out, ...and only if He leads me where I already planned to go." God's promises are treated as supportive footnotes to decisions already made.*)
- Pretending confidence while shaking inside** (*A parent facing a medical diagnosis tells friends, "I'm fine. God's got this," but lies awake night after night imagining worst-case scenarios, too afraid to admit fear or ask others to pray for them.*)

- Write one sentence that explains your choice:

D. God's Gracious Warning

- How is God's statement in v. 9 both Law and an invitation?

Summary:

Isaiah 7 opens with a frightened king and a nation shaking violently like trees in a forest. Yet the real crisis is not the advancing armies but the unbelief lodged in Ahaz's heart. He hides behind pious-sounding words, refusing the very promise God holds out to him. Instead of trusting the Lord who stands ready to help, he turns to human strategies and political alliances, convinced he can secure his own future. Isaiah exposes this spiritual pretense for what it truly is: not caution, but unbelief; not humility, but distrust. **This is the mirror.** It reveals how fear drives the human heart away from God rather than toward Him, and how readily we disguise our doubts with religious language. Before the Gospel promise is spoken, Isaiah makes clear that Judah's greatest danger is not the foreign powers at its borders but the refusal to trust the God who desires to be with His people.

3. WINDOW — The Gospel Section

Isaiah 7:14 & 9:1-7 — The Child Who Enters the Darkness

Read aloud Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:1-7:

Listen for **who** acts and **what** He gives.

Group Exercise: “Fear’s Answer = Presence”

In pairs, list contrasts between what Ahaz wants and what God promises.

Ahaz Seeks

God Gives

Observation:

- What sign does God give (7:14)? Why is this sign so much bigger than Ahaz’s immediate crisis?

- How does Isaiah describe the world in 9:1-2? List phrases that highlight human hopelessness:

- What does God do? List the action words Isaiah uses to describe God’s saving work (Gospel verbs) in 9:3-7:

1. _____	6. _____
2. _____	7. _____
3. _____	8. _____
4. _____	9. _____
5. _____	10. _____

- What change do you see in Isaiah between vv. 5 and 8?

Comprehension:

A. Why a Child?

- Why would God choose incarnation instead of angelic intervention?

B. Grace Outpaces Judgment

- How is God’s response to Ahaz “bigger than Judah deserves”?

C. “The Zeal of the LORD”

- What does this phrase teach about salvation’s source?

D. Darkness and Light

- Why is the imagery of light central to understanding God-With-Us Grace?

E. Titles of the Messiah (9:6)

- Pick one: **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**
Write one sentence about how this title answers Ahaz’s fear.

Summary:

Ahaz refused God’s promise, but the Lord did not turn away. Instead, He offered a sign far greater than the moment’s crisis—a child born of a virgin, God Himself entering the world He came to save. The people walking in darkness would see light not because they sought Him, but because He came to them. Isaiah reveals a God who does not comfort from a distance but comes close to us in flesh and blood. The answer to Judah’s fear is Immanuel: the Lord with His people when they cannot steady themselves. **This is God-With-Us Grace—not merely pardon, but presence.**

MOMENTS WITH THE TEXT:

1. Immanuel — God with us and for us _____

2. The plural “you” in 7:14 _____

3. Darkness and great light _____

4. Joy rooted in salvation _____

5. The battle of Midian (God alone saves) _____

6. The Child as the Savior (9:6) _____

4. FULFILLMENT — Christ Connection

Where Isaiah's Vision Meets Its Yes in Christ

Read NT passages:

- **Matthew 1:18–23** — the virgin conceives
- **Matthew 4:12–17** — light dawns in Galilee
- **John 1:14** — “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”
- **Hebrews 2:14–18** — Christ shares our humanity

Discussion:

- How does Matthew interpret Isaiah 7:14? Why is “God with us” the heart of the Gospel?

- How does Jesus’ ministry fulfill Isaiah 9:1–2? Where did He shine His light most directly?

- How does the Incarnation answer the Mirror of Isaiah 7? Contrast Ahaz’s unbelief with God’s initiative.

- What does Immanuel mean in suffering? Identify one moment in Jesus’ ministry where His presence dispelled someone’s fear.

- Sacramental Fulfillment... How do Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord’s Supper embody God-With-Us?
 - **Baptism:**
 - **Absolution:**
 - **Supper:**
- Write one sentence on how one sacrament has been “Immanuel” to you:

Confessional Anchors:

- * *“He has taken upon Himself the nature of man... that He might be our Redeemer.” AC III*
- * *“The two natures are so united that there is one Christ and one person.” FC Ep VIII*
- * *“The Gospel offers eternal righteousness, life, and peace.” AC V*
- * *“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Ap IV*
- * *“He was made man, in order that He might be the Mediator, to reconcile the Father to us, and be a sacrifice not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of men.” AC III*

5. APPLICATION & PRAYER — Life & Devotion

Real Lives Before the God Who Draws Near and Delivers

Group Project: From Fear to Immanuel

Step 1 — Identify the Fear (Mirror)

In groups of 3–4, list several fears that commonly tempt Christians toward Ahaz-like thinking (e.g., **family** [parents & grandparents], **health** [all ages but especially seniors], **finances** [young adults & mid-life adults], **congregational concerns** [all generations], **cultural pressures** [teens & adults], **aging** [seniors], **hidden anxieties** [all ages], **job insecurity** [young adults], **raising children in a hostile world** [parents], **navigating retirement** [seniors], **loneliness or isolation** [empty-nesters & seniors], **fear of failing expectations** [young adults], **caring for aging parents** [mid-life adults], **fear of irrelevance in a changing world** [older adults], **pressure to perform or achieve** [teens & young adults])

Rewrite each fear in the voice of Ahaz—how might fear disguise itself as caution, strategy, or pious language?

Example:

Fear: “I’m worried about my child drifting from the faith.”

Ahaz-voice: “Of course I trust God’s promise—but this is different. I can’t wait for Him to act; I need to take control before things get worse. Asking God for help sounds right, but I need something more certain, something I can do now.”

Step 2 — Exchange the Fear for the Promise (Window)

For each Ahaz-like fear your group identified, write a brief “Immanuel response” using the promises in:

- **Isaiah 7:14**
- **Isaiah 9:2**
- **Isaiah 9:6–7**

Each response should express how God’s presence answers fear:

Example:

Fear: “I’m worried about my child drifting from the faith.”

Immanuel-Response: “The Lord Himself has given a sign: Immanuel — God with us (Isaiah 7:14). He has stepped into the darkness that surrounds us and our children; His light is stronger than the shadows we see (Isaiah 9:2). The Child who is Wonderful Counselor and Mighty God rules with a peace that does not depend on my control or my timing (Isaiah 9:6–7). He is with my child—and He is with me.”

Step 3 — Share One Exchange

Choose one fear and one Immanuel-response from your list to share with the class.

6. MUSIC THAT ECHOES ISAIAH'S VISION

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.”— Isaiah 9:2

These pieces echo the movement of Isaiah 7 & 9: **fear that trembles, a promise spoken, a Child given, a light dawning, a kingdom of peace that will never end.** Use them as a devotional guide this week—listen for the steadiness, the nearness, and the triumph of the God who draws near.

♪ Handel: “For Unto Us a Child Is Born” (Messiah)

Isaiah’s Child who is Mighty God

Handel’s jubilant setting takes Isaiah 9:6 and sends it sweeping through layered voices. The repeated lines capture Isaiah’s astonishment at the Child who bears divine names—Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

“For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given...”

Handel gives the sound of God’s answer to fear: a Savior whose reign rests on His shoulders, not ours.

♪ Bach: “Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light” (BWV 248)

Light that breaks into real darkness

Bach’s chorale expresses the gentle certainty of Isaiah 9:2—light coming from outside, piercing what we cannot dispel ourselves.

“Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light,
And usher in the morning.”

The music feels like dawn: quiet, steady, unstoppable. Exactly the way Isaiah says God brings salvation—by His zeal, not our strength.

♪ Luther: “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”

Immanuel who enters our fear

Luther sings Isaiah 7:14 in cradle-song form: the Lord Himself gives the sign, and the sign is His Son. This hymn is a meditation on God-With-Us—God stepping into human weakness to bring peace.

“This is the Christ, our God and Lord,
Who in all need shall aid afford.”

The Incarnation becomes personal: the Savior who comes near on purpose.

♪ Papa & Boswell: “Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery”

Christ’s two natures—human and divine—our true Immanuel

This modern hymn is one of the clearest Christological texts written in recent years. It echoes Isaiah’s titles: the Child who is Mighty God, the Light who overcomes darkness, the Redeemer who breaks every yoke.

“See the true and better Adam,
Come to save the hell-bound man...”

It captures the awe of Isaiah 9:6—deliverance wrapped in flesh and given in grace.

Reflection Prompt

As you listen or read this week, reflect on one question:

Where is the Word taking me from trembling fear to trust in His presence?

Consider writing down:

- one fear that makes you sound like Ahaz (Isaiah 7),
- one promise of Immanuel that breaks into that darkness (Isaiah 7:14; 9:2),
- one title of Christ that steadies you (Isaiah 9:6),
- one place in your life where His reign brings peace (Isaiah 9:7).

CLOSING PRAYER (Collect Style)

Collect for God-with-Us Grace:

Last week you learned the structure of a traditional collect:

1. **Address** — to whom we pray
2. **Basis / Relative Clause** — who God is or what He has promised
3. **Petition** — what we ask
4. **Purpose / Result** — why we ask it
5. **Conclusion** — through Christ our Lord, etc.

This week you will **complete** a collect based on Isaiah 7 & 9.

Write Your Own “Address” to God

(Examples from earlier weeks: “Holy God,” “Lord of Hosts,” “God of Mercy,” etc.)

Address: _____

Write Your Own Basis / Relative Clause

(Examples: “who sent Your prophet with a promise,” “who gives light to those in darkness,” “who draws near to Your fearful people,” etc.)

Basis / Relative Clause: _____

Collect for God-With-Us Grace

(with the Address and Basis / Relative Clause left for you to fill in)

_____,
_____,
_____ ,

calm our fearful hearts with the promise of Your presence
so that we may walk in Your light and rest in the reign of the Child You have given,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Which Address and Basis Fit Best for Isaiah 7 & 9 — and Why?

Choose **one Address** and **one Basis / Relative Clause** that best match the moment in Isaiah when God gives His trembling people the promise of Immanuel.

Address Options... My Address choice: _____

- Immanuel
- Mighty God
- Prince of Peace

Basis / Relative Clause Options... My Basis choice: _____

- who calms the fears of Your people
- who gives light to those in darkness
- who enters our world with saving peace

Why these fit Isaiah 7 & 9:

Why: _____

WRAP-UP

Key Points:

- **Isaiah 7 holds up the mirror:** Ahaz faces real danger, yet the deeper crisis is unbelief—a heart that uses pious language to avoid trusting God.
- **God’s judgment is sobering:** Isaiah exposes how fear can displace faith and how human strategies, alliances, and self-protection cannot secure the future God alone governs.
- **God opens a window to grace:** Into a trembling world, God gives a sign far greater than Ahaz’s crisis—**Immanuel**, the promise that God Himself will be with His people.
- **Light breaks into darkness:** Isaiah 9 announces that the people walking in darkness will see a great light, shining not because they seek God, but because He comes to them.
- **The Child is the answer to fear:** The titles—Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—show that God’s presence is not symbolic, but saving. A kingdom of peace rests on His shoulders, not ours.
- **God still works this rhythm today:** Our fears expose our unbelief, His promises steady our hearts, and His presence in Christ brings light, peace, and confidence.

WORK AT HOME

Preparing for Week 4: Re-Creating Grace (Isaiah 11)

Reading:

Read **Isaiah 11** carefully this week, especially:

- **Isaiah 11:1–5** — the Branch from Jesse: righteousness, justice, and the Spirit’s fullness
- **Isaiah 11:6–9** — the re-created world: creation restored to peace
- **Isaiah 11:10** — the Root of Jesse who gathers the nations

Reflection Questions:

1. Ahaz trembled before armies, but his greater danger was distrust. Where do you see fear tempting you toward self-reliance instead of trust in God’s promise?

2. Immanuel means “God with us”—not only in a general way, but in the person of Christ. Where this week do you need to remember that God is with you—not distant, not delayed, but “with us”?

3. Isaiah describes people walking in darkness who are suddenly met by light. What forms of “darkness” do you see today (in yourself or the world), and how does Christ’s light answer them? ___

4. The Child of Isaiah 9 bears divine names and rules with peace. Which title—Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—do you need to hear right now, and why?

5. Fear often disguises itself in pious language, as it did in Ahaz. Can you identify a place where your fear sounds polite, cautious, or practical—but is still fear?

ART FOCUS: The Peaceable Kingdom (Isaiah 11)

This black-and-white woodcut-style image portrays Isaiah's vision of the *Peaceable Kingdom* (Isaiah 11:6–9). Its stark lines and high contrast are in the style of Dürer and other early Reformation woodcutters/engravers.

At the center stands a child, unafraid among the wolf and the lamb—creatures once at odds now living in harmony. The serpent at the child's feet reflects Isaiah 11:8, where even the symbols of danger and the curse no longer threaten. Every creature rests under the righteous reign of the Branch from Jesse.

This simple, unadorned style puts the focus where Isaiah puts it—on the Child who brings God's restoring peace: **God's Messiah brings a world made new.**

