

## Reflection for December 21, 2025 – “Predictions”

### Inspired by Isaiah 7:10-16 and Matthew 1:18-25

From **Isaiah 7:14** we heard, **“The Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.”**

The Prophet Isaiah predicts of the coming of Jesus the Messiah, God’s love incarnate in the world some 730ish years before Christ’s birth. Other prophets did the same.

**Micah 5:2: (740-698) But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel.”**

**Zechariah 9:9(520)**

**“Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey.”**

In those times, 2500 – 2700 years ago or thereabouts, conflict was as common as it is today. Nations were at war with one another. To say that there was civil unrest would be an understatement.

In Isaiah’s time, Syria and Israel were attacking Judah. Micah prophesized during the reign of three kings when Judah was living through occupation and economic revolution. In Zechariah’s time, not long after the Babylonian conquest, Judean exiles began to return to their homeland.

Gospel writers like Matthew brought us the stories of Jesus’ birth that we are more familiar with.

**“She will bear a son, says the angel Gabriel in Matthew’s text, “and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”**

Into the bitter, corrupt, immoral landscape he came. Into the divisiveness, conflict and oppression he preached. Into a world of chaos, anarchy and military rule, he lived out his ministry. Unjustly perceived as a threat, he was given into the hands of ignorance to be dealt with and to be silenced.

Predictions of Immanuel’s coming were given a very long time ago. Now, and during Advent we are reminded of the promise of love incarnate wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. A child born to very average parents who were poor. Parents who were commoners. A miracle child. Immanuel, **“God with us.”**

Who would expect that such a child would turn the world on its head, forever being remembered as the prophesy of love itself? Who would expect it? God did.

As we approach the birth-time of Christ again this Advent season, we are excited and filled with hope that the love Jesus preached fills every Christmas stocking. But we are also apprehensive because of present day circumstances and predictions. Continuing conflict between Israel and Palestine, heightened aggression by a tyrannical Russian leader and growing fears of war in Europe. Ultra conservatism bordering on extremism in the United States. As many as 40 nations are now struggling against insurgency and civil war.<sup>1</sup>

Isaiah, Micah, Zechariah, Matthew and others predicted a saviour. He came, he led and preached, he healed and forgave. And then he was martyred.

Removed but never forgotten. With Christ was born a hope in the world that would last throughout millennia. A light that, despite chaos, evil and hatred just refuses to be extinguished. It is a light that continues to grow within the hearts of those that care, and it thrives in spite of all else. That is because Immanuel lives!

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<sup>1</sup> [Countries Currently at War 2025](#), World Population in Review, accessed December 20, 2025

Immanuel's have come into our lives throughout history. Some of them have had particular notoriety like Mother Theresa, Florence Nightingale, Mahatma Gandhi, Desmond Tutu, Rosa Parks and Oscar Romero. Most of them however are not well known, they are not celebrated historical figures.

Mostly they are rather ordinary folk. They could be your friend or neighbour or a complete stranger. You might see them at a bus stop, at the airport, in the park, at the grocery store check out line, or waiting for a flu shot. They are the individuals who care about others and care about what is going on around them.

They are likely to smile at you, give you a hello or a good day. They are the folks that will listen to your concerns or patiently hear you share your grief. These individuals are the Pastor Greg's, the Jack's, Lily's, Mrs. Parker's, Tommy's, Maya's and Mr. Thompsons" you heard from this morning in the Christmas story, "The Gift of Love."

These are the Immanuel's, the Christ's of our time, this time. These are the disciples who look to Christ's birth as a reminder, a reminder that hope, love, peace and joy are possible regardless of predictions. These are the Immanuel's sitting next to you in the pews this morning.

Yes, we are in difficult times with much uncertainty and fear. Unfortunately, we don't have to predict that this will continue. Because we know that it will.

But I believe there is an antidote. It comes in a different kind of prediction, the prediction that love is housed in the Immanuel's among us.

The celebration of Christ's birth holds up the prophesy of love in tumultuous times. That love lives vibrantly in all of you, Immanuel's who try to make a difference in you own small and unique way.

That is a modern-day prophesy.

On this fourth Sunday of Advent, the sabbath celebrating love, I predict the Immanuel in all of us continues to break into the chaos of our times in hopeful, joyful spirit. It spreads the good news, Jesus Christ is Born, "In Excelsis Deo."

Thank you for listening this morning, Amen