

Isaiah 7:10-14

December 20, 2009 – Children’s Christmas Service

Promises...Promises...Promises !!!

- ⌘ **the toughest yet**
- ⌘ **the most repeated**
- ⌘ **the fully fulfilled**

In the name of Jesus, God’s greatest Gift to all, dear children of the Promise:

It was a cool spring morning in northeastern Montana. My friend Dave Rabenberg was in the cab of the family tractor getting ready for field work. I was walking around this monster machine marveling at wheels taller than I when I heard a sudden, “Tsssssss.” Instinctively I jumped back. And there he was, coiled up where the curve of the tire meets the ground. I shouted, “Dave, there’s a rattlesnake down here!” He went to the rear of the tractor, then crawled back over the engine holding the longest steel bar I’ve ever seen, used for breaking rocks out of the implements. He lay down over the hood of the tractor and used the bar to coax the critter out. I’ve never seen someone so intent on killing as when Dave raised the bar and struck the serpent. Instinctively, it tried to bite the descending rod. But the first was its last. And every blow from Dave thereafter smashed the head of the serpent deeper into the ground. Six inches under, he climbed down, cut the body loose and threw it in the road. My first rattlesnake was dead.

God spoke the first Gospel promise to the serpent used by Satan to tempt Adam and Eve. Their rebellion brought sin, suffering and death into the world. So it must have been welcome news when God leaned down and said to the serpent: **“I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel.”** (Genesis 3:15)

They thought their first son would be the great Deliverer. But Cain turned out to be the first murderer. Family grief began early. And the disrespect we show each other at home reveals generation after generation that we are the sinful sons and daughters of Adam.

Many people make promises. But God’s Gospel promise was **the toughest yet**. It would take the death of God’s own Son to keep that promise. Only the sinless Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the blessed womb of the virgin Mary could offer up His innocent life to save a world of sinners. But Jesus was not forced by His Father. Jesus volunteered to come in deep humility to this sin-cursed earth, suffer God’s wrath in our place and free us forever from sin, death and hell. Satan struck His heel on the cross. And Jesus crushed the serpent’s head when He died and rose again from the dead.

Many people make promises, and most forget them. In fact, the tougher the promise, the more likely people are to hope you will never remember. They’ll give a promise like a rebate that costs more time and effort to claim than it’s worth. But listen to the children this morning as they share centuries of detailed prophecies of **the most repeated** promise ever made. God never wanted anyone to forget. Not even wicked King Ahaz. Can you see him stomping his foot here in Isaiah?

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, “Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.” Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:10-14 NIV)

Imagine my friend Dave shouting back at me, “Kill the rattler yourself! I’m busy.” He was high above me, safe and sound. The Lord did not have to come down to rescue us. But He came so sweet and mild that little children rejoice to tell the story again today in words and songs of the Baby born in Bethlehem. This is the Good News story of God’s promise of a Savior – **the toughest yet, the most repeated, and the fully fulfilled** promise...almost.

There is one more promise in the big promise yet to be. Christ Jesus has promised to come again to take all believers home to heaven and to give all who rejected God and His Son their wish. To those who choose Satan, God will say, “Thy will be done.” He will let them spend eternity, cast out from God into the **“eternal darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”** (Matthew 8:12) It’s not God’s will. It’s their will. God’s will is that everyone **“should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”** (1 Timothy 2:4) And He proved His will when **“Christ died for all.”** (2 Corinthians 5:14f)

When I think of my friend Dave with blood in his eye going after that rattlesnake, I think of my Lord Jesus whose zeal to save my soul and yours would not stop until He kept God’s promise fully and completely. Let your logic figure this out. If God would keep such a promise to come in humility, to suffer and die in shame for a world of sinners, if He could die and raise Himself to life again as promised, what could possibly keep Him from coming again in glory on Judgment Day?

Listen to the children. Listen very carefully to these priceless words of life from God. Keep your worship folder and read it again in these blessed holy days of Christmas. God wants you to be ready, so that these songs of Christmas will ring in your heart and life for time and eternity.

Promises...Promises...Promises !!! – the toughest yet, the most repeated, the fully fulfilled – all for you, for me, for all. Praise the Name of Jesus, Immanuel, *God with us*. And let your life be a glorious, “Amen!”