

# Who is the King?

## The Virgin Birth

### Foundation

#### **Bible passage : Isaiah 7.13-14 & Matthew 1.18-25**

The promise: Isaiah was a prophet who lived 750 years before Christ. He also lived long before the events we have looked in units 1-15 in this module and before the Israelites had been defeated by the Babylonians. But he lived at a time when the people of Israel had been disobeying God and so the people were threatened by the mighty Assyrians. God spoke through Isaiah about the immediate threat and judgement, but also about the future defeat by the Babylonians and how God would restore them, and about the promised King who would one day come.

**“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel.”**

In chapter 7 the Assyrians were threatening Jerusalem. The then king was to ask God for a sign, but in false piety refused to do so. So God announced a sign about a young woman who would have a child. It sounded, and was a reassuring word that Jerusalem would not fall at that time but that the mighty Assyrians soon would (v16). But in these words God was also revealing something about the promised king who would come in the future. The natural inference of the words “young woman” in the prophecy was that she was a virgin and that is how it was translated before the time of Jesus.



*A relief in the British Museum showing the Assyrians besieging a city. Their siege of Jerusalem prompted the promise of the virgin birth and the fall of their mighty empire.*

Jesus' birth was unique because He is unique. Mary and Joseph were told separately that the baby would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit so that whilst He was fully human He was more than that, He is the eternal Son of God who became man. It therefore became clear that this was long planned by God and that Mary was the virgin who had been prophesied. Moreover, the name prophesied of the child, Immanuel, meant more than just “God is on our side” but He was literally God with us - the Word made flesh.

Matthew records the birth of Jesus from Joseph's perspective in 1.18-25. Joseph had discovered that Mary was pregnant but knew the child was not his. However, in a dream he was told by an angel that the child was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then the angel quoted the prophecy through Isaiah making clear that Mary was a virgin and the special nature of the child to be born.

Jesus would be the promised King, but as the words to Joseph show, far more than just King.



**The promise through Isaiah, fulfilled in Jesus' birth, shows that Jesus is the promised King and far more than just a king.**