

Advent 4A

December 18, 2022



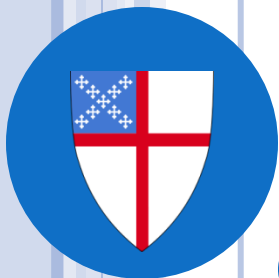
Isaiah 7:10-16
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

William Lloyd Garrison



Maria Miller Stewart

St. John's Episcopal Church, Centreville VA
Adult Lectionary Forum 2022



William Lloyd Garrison & Maria Miller Stewart



William Lloyd Garrison (10 Dec 1805 – 24 May 1879) was a prominent Christian, abolitionist, journalist, suffragist, and social reformer, best known for his widely-read antislavery Boston newspaper *The Liberator*, founded in 1831 & published until 1865 when the 15th Amendment abolished the Peculiar institution in the U.S. He also promoted *no-governmentism* & rejected our government's inherent validity, arguing its engagement in war, imperialism, & slavery made it tyrannical & corrupt. He initially opposed violence in principle & advocated Christian nonresistance against evil. When the Civil War erupted, he modified his earlier stance, embracing both armed struggle & Lincoln's administration. A founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society, he promoted immediate/uncompensated--as opposed to gradual/compensated--emancipation of slaves. Author John J. Chapman writes, "The source of Garrison's power was the Bible. From his earliest days, he read the Bible constantly & prayed constantly. It was with this fire that he started his conflagration." Like fellow abolitionist printer-publisher, the martyred Elijah Lovejoy, Garrison's anti-slavery views repeatedly put him in danger. Once imprisoned & burned in effigy in Baltimore, a gallows was erected in front of his Boston office, & the state of Georgia even placed a bounty on his head. Following the passage of the 15th Amendment, Garrison turned his attention to promoting women's suffrage. Despite his reformist views, his biblical study had a dark side--anti-Semitic sentiments that appeared in some of his works. He died of kidney disease.

Maria Stewart (1803 – 17 Dec 1879) was an African American abolitionist, feminist and public speaker. Born Maria Miller in Hartford, CT, she was orphaned at age 5 & went to live with a minister and his family as one of their house servants. She later moved to Boston & married James W. Stewart. Widowed a mere 3 years later, she was cheated out of a considerable inheritance. This prompted her to embark on a short (1831-1833) writing and public speaking career, for which she is best known. Her most famous speech was *Religion and the pure principles of Morality The sure Foundation on which We Must Build*. This and others were published in William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*. She later moved to New York and Washington, DC, where she became head matron of the Freedman's Hospital.

Collect for Advent 4A

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



Prayer for Advent 4A [William Lloyd Garrison & Maria Stewart]

God, in whose service alone is perfect freedom: We thank you for William Lloyd Garrison and Maria Stewart, who witnessed that all are made in your image and likeness. Fill us, like her, with the perseverance to break every chain of enslavement that, by your Holy Spirit, your people may overcome bondage and ignorance; through the merits of Jesus Christ our redeemer, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

IMMANUEL
GOD WITH US

Look, the young woman is with child & shall bear a son & shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds & honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil & choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil & choose the good, the land before whose 2 kings you are in dread will be deserted."

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ADVENT 4A: DIVINE FORECASTING! [ISAIAH 7:10-16]

My Lifetime or Yours?

-Vv1-9 = predicament of Judaeen King Ahaz in 733 BC who Rezin of Aram, & Pekah of Israel want to ally vs Assyria

- ARAM ~ King Rezin N of Israel
- ISRAEL ~ Samaria and Galilee in Jesus' time = 10 tribes that rejected Solomon's son, Rehoboam I in 922 BC. Pekah is its current king.
- JUDAH ~ 2 tribes, Benjamin & Judah.
- ASSYRIA ~ 400-500 mi. NE, regional superpower, threatens all 3

--YHWH tells Isaiah to assure Ahaz he has nothing to fear, because Rezin & Pekah will fail to take Jerusalem

--All the irreverent Ahaz must do is trust YHWH's promise

--Isaiah warns noncompliance = failure

--V11: in OT, God leans twd judgment & NT toward grace; here we see a NT God of 2nd chance—of grace

--IAW Deut 6:16: says don't test YHWH

--1st: YHWH--not Ahaz--offered the test

--2nd Ahaz misuses Deut 6 taboo as excuse for refusing to name a sign

—Ahaz already decided to trust Assyria vs YHWH; no intent to change his mind

--V14 controversy over Aramaic word *almah* ~ a young woman or a virgin

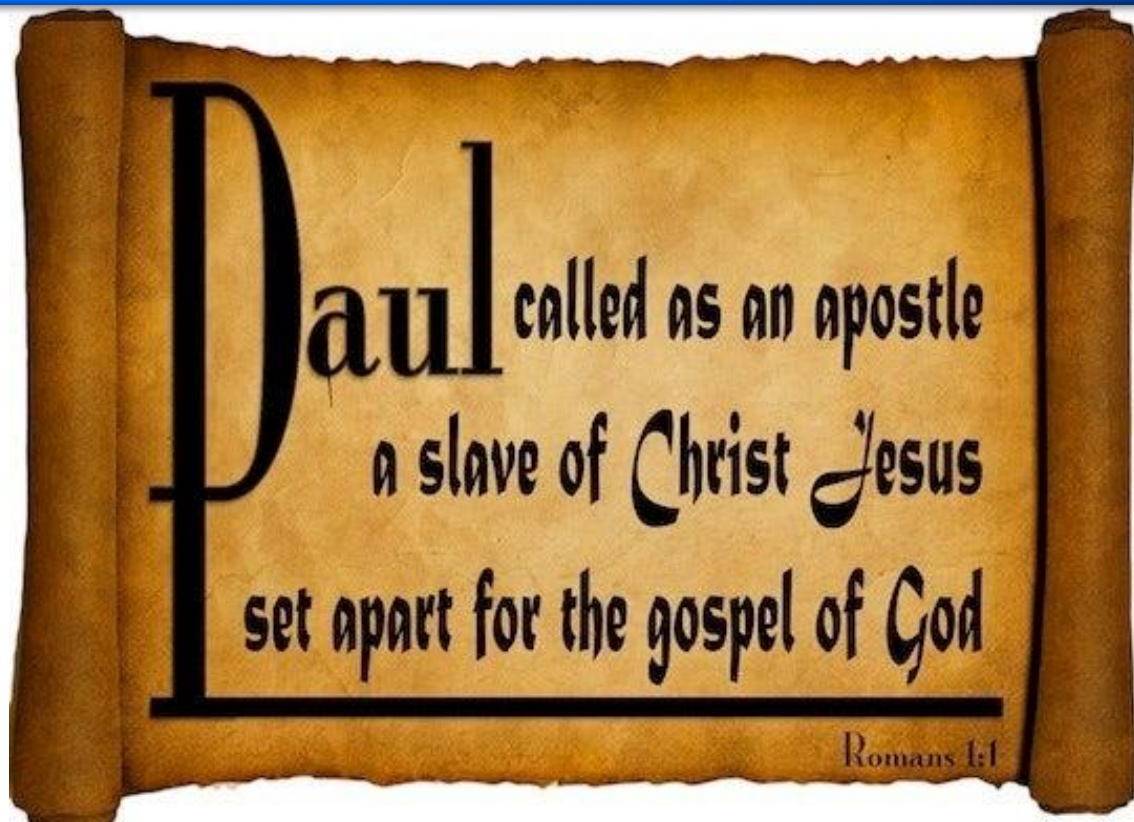
--At issue: Does Isaiah predict the birth of a child during Ahaz's life or is this a messianic prophecy pointing to Jesus' birth. Or do we get a twofer here?

--You be the judge!



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Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh & was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead,



ADVENT 4A: SELECTIVE SERVICE I (ROMANS 1:1-7)

A Pharisee Set Apart from Others

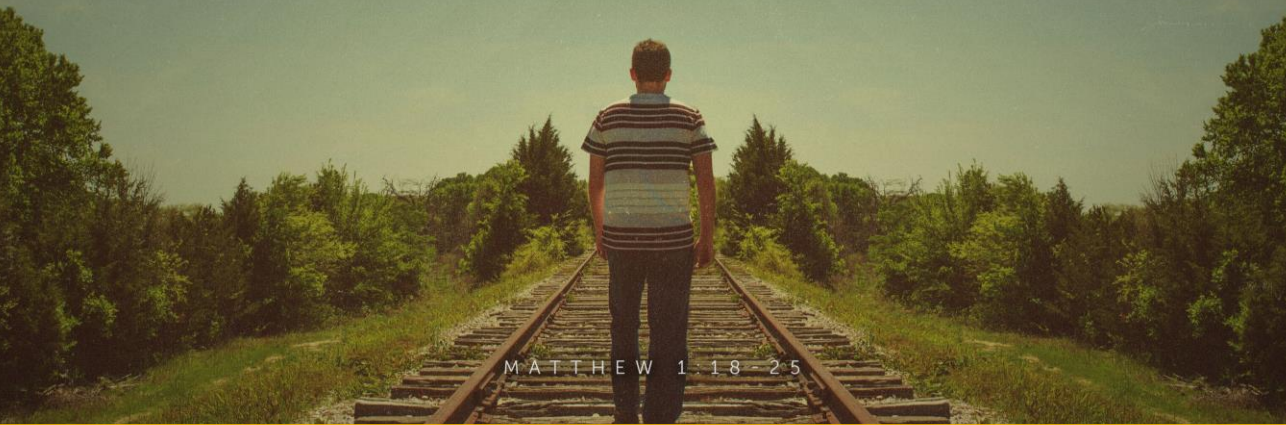
- Paul's salutation differs from his other epistles largely because of his relation to the church at Rome vs. that with the churches that he established
- Not personally acquainted with Rome's Christians, he is more cautious in establishing bona fides
- He hopes to visit Rome on his way to Spain & clearly hopes for their support
- In other epistles, Paul includes fellow travelers in his greetings. Omitting co-senders makes him solely responsible for the letter's content & makes it more personal than most
- V1: Pharisees tended to stay apart from common folk, a separateness that became an matter of spiritual pride. -- But Paul, called to be an apostle, has been set apart, not by his choosing, but by the will of God
- V4: Grace is unearned favor, of which Paul is a grateful epiphinal recipient
- V6: Our lives bring honor or shame to those close to us.
- Paul tells Romans they are among those Gentiles he has been called to serve
- While not the founder of the church at Rome, he speaks with authority since he is obeying his Christ-given call.
- V7: Saints in NT = quality of life to which believers are called as well as to the community to which they belong



Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace & apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all Gentiles for the sake of his name, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you & peace from God our Father & the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

A FATHER ON THE RIGHT TRACK



All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive & bear a son, & they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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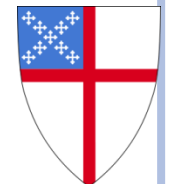
Opening Act

--We usually link annunciation, ICW the announcement to Mary that she would bear a child (Luke 1:26-38)
--In Matthew, it is Joseph to whom the angel appears. Luke tells us of Mary's obedience (Luke 1:38), but Matthew tells us of Joseph's obedience (v. 24).
--Luke features Mary, but Matthew favors Joseph because, through him it links Jesus to David's line
--Yet Matthew's flirtation with God's grace includes 5 women in his genealogy:

1. Tamar who had a sex with Judah, her father-in-law (Genesis 38)
2. Rahab, a harlot (Joshua 2:1)
3. Ruth, a Moabite (Ruth 1:4)
4. Bathsheba, identified only as “the wife of Uriah” (1:6) despite David's adultery with her and murder of her husband (2 Samuel 11) and
5. Mary, a fine, Godly woman whose public reputation was at risk because of her pregnancy.

--This annunciation has deep OT roots

1. An angel tells Hagar she would bear a son whose name would be Ishmael (Genesis 16:7-14)
2. God tells Abram that Sarah will bear a son whose name would be Isaac (Genesis 17:15—18:15)
3. An angel tells Manoah's wife she would bear a son (Judges 13:2-25).



ADVENT 4A: SELECTED SERVICE [MATTHEW 1:18-25]

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