
Getting the most at Christmas

Isaiah 7:13-14 ¹³And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, **and shall call his name Immanuel.**

Matthew 1:18-25 ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. ²⁰ But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. ²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. ²² Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, **and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.** ²⁴ Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: ²⁵ And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

More to Christmas

I love Christmas. It is a great time of the year to hang out with friends and family while making much of Jesus. I do like the things we do that brings friends and family together like decorating, eating, watching our favorite Christmas movies, shopping, going to see lights, and attending parties. All those things are so much fun! Yet if I ask if you celebrate Christmas or believe in Christmas I am not asking if you celebrate or believe in those things. I am asking do you celebrate Jesus Christ as Lord. If I told an unbeliever that those things are the elementary things of the season it would seem inappropriate and unbelievable. Unaccepted or accepted the truth is there is so much more to the Christmas season than what is nominally observed. There is so much eternal truth to receive and rejoice in. It is such a wonderful time for the church to find reason to assemble and not disassemble. When it comes to Jesus there is always more to stand in awe of, more to reverence, and more to celebrate. I pray that you will join me

weekly during the month of December to get the most out of Christmas this year!

God is not Weary in Pursuit of Man

Isaiah 7:13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

One great truth to celebrate at Christmas is that God is not tired of pursuing people and God is not tired of You. At the time of Isaiah, king Ahaz had made the patience of stronger nations thin against the nation of Israel and although all the sins of Israel and their royal court deserved God to punish them, God decided to pursue them even further. Isaiah was saying "your attitude and actions can cause weaker kings to react without compassion, but the eternal King will still do as He pleases with you." The sin of man does not dictate, nor does it manipulate the wisdom and power of God. God does what He wants and there is frankly nothing you can do about it. That means as hard as you may try to out run or out last God you cannot escape Him! You have not wearied Him, and He is not tired of you! All this is great news. Our sin, although great, did not stop God from choosing sinful people to be redeemed and placed in His family.

The God who gets Very close

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and **shall call his name Immanuel**

Wait there is more. What does God do instead of withdrawing from Israel and the nations of the earth? He comes close to them in a very real way. God elects to come to them. Not through a representative. God sends a Word, an angel, signs, and prophets, and now He gets even closer by sending Himself! Immanuel is "GOD WITH US". Not God above us, below us, or around us, but "with us"! Now before we get so happy in this truth let's answer a few questions that may come to your mind, so they will not put a damper on our party.

1. *How would the Creator get close to the Creature?*

First, I need to point out that God the Father wanted to get close to His creation because He has always been a loving relational God. Jesus

said in **John 17:24** "thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world". God the Father is a loving and relational God. Before He created anything, He had a relationship and loved eternally in that relationship and had fellowship in that relationship. God is not God because He created. He is God because He is! The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is complete and lacks nothing. We are not the key to God's fulfillment and happiness, but we are His choice to love, not out of some animal like natural compulsion, but from free will He loves us. God then freely chooses to come to us as we are to be as we are, so we can be as He is! He gets close to us by being born as we are through a virgin womb. There was no avenue for man to "be with God" so God came to "be with us"!

2. *How do we know that the Word "virgin" means "virgin" and not young woman?*

It would not be much of a "God given sign" if a young woman had a baby by natural means. Young women get pregnant every day, truly virgin women do not give birth to a baby. Matthew verifies Mary was a Virgin and there is zero evidence to doubt his testimony. There is no reason to believe Mary was not a Virgin and reason to believe she was a virgin.

3. *Could Joseph had been the true father of Jesus.*

No. Such teaching undermines teaching of scripture and wrongfully destroys Jesus's Sonship and therefore attacks God's Fatherhood and from there the gospel is torn to pieces and there is no good news and no Christmas. God is Jesus's Father.

What are the implications of "God with us"?

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

I would like to share three implications that Christmas brings with it

- 1) God wants to be with us- God "with us" is the opposite of what we deserve. God is full of grace and truth and we see that in Jesus Christ. His birth means that God desires you. Christmas means God desires man. God's desire for you is seen in "the Word became flesh and dwelt

(tabernacle) among us" (**John 1:14**). He came in such a way that His followers "Beheld His glory". God desired man to the point that He became "the Son of Man" so that He may "seek and save those that are lost" (**Luke 19:10**). The birth of Jesus reveals the heart of God in a clear way. God's choice of us is clearly seen when He became like us.

- 2) God "with us" brings much to us (**Isaiah 9:6 and Matthew 1:21**)- Isaiah says it is "unto us a child is born, unto us a child is given". He is born for us and brings salvation to us. Jesus has come not to observe mankind and formulate a report, He has come to bring to us Himself and with Him comes SO MUCH! He has come to set right the government by bearing it upon His shoulders. The bickering about right and wrong is swallowed up in Jesus. What He is called reflect what He is and does. He is wonderful because all that He does is mysteriously great. He is counselor in that He knows all that you need, when you need it, and He is always available. He is Mighty God and imparts strength in weakness to make our infirmities glorious. He is Everlasting Father therefore He knows how to care and give good gifts. He is Prince of Peace so in chaos you can be calm! He is with us and with Him comes all that He is.

- 3) God is instead of us (**Matthew 1:21**)- Matthew says He shall save His people! How is the work of salvation wrought on our behalf by Jesus? Our Christ became His, our wrath His, our shame His, our rejection His, our suffering His, our sin His, and our death HIS. Instead of us it was all God! In our stead He stood bleeding and suffering. He traded to us His royalty for our poverty. Bleeding He died in our stead no greater love is known to man! God in our stead such a glorious story! God in our stead revealing His glory. God in our stead our hymns extol He carried and buried our sin and love He bestowed! What a God! What a Savior! What a gift! Thank God for Christmas.

- 4) God with us for eternity (**Revelation 21:3**)- It is God that will be "with men" for all eternity. This planet is sin cursed and not our home, as it is. Yet it was originally our home and will become our home once again. God's intentions are to set up His headquarters on a New, most believe, renewed earth that has been purged with a fervent heat (**2nd Peter 3:10**). Christmas is the gift that keeps giving us HOPE and

TRUTH! God is with us, for us, in us, and is all these for eternity!
Rejoice with me! Worship God with me. Sing with me!

Ask yourself: Will you worship God this Christmas season? Will He be your priority?