**Jesus**

***18****Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothedto Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.****19****And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.****20****But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.****21****She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”****22****All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:*

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

*(which means, God with us).****24****When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,****25****but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25, ESV)*

 God sent Jesus so that He[[1]](#footnote-1) would dwell with us and save us from our sins. Christ is born and revealed, good tidings to you and to us, blessed is the revelation of Christ! Greetings on this occasion of both Nativity and Epiphany as we discuss the topics of God’s Presence and the forgiveness of sins, both through Jesus.

 God brought our Savior-King to this world in a beautiful, clear, and safe way. Humanity, however, even His chosen people, were not able to accept Him by and large. Jesus started out with very little. Yes, God was with us, but we as humanity were not with God. We did not (immediately) accept Him as King or Anointed Savior. Despite that, however, within that brokenness, God made His greatest intervention (by Jesus’ Birth) at least until our Lord’s crucifixion and resurrection. God came and dwelled with us even when we as humanity hadn’t yet recognized Him. Today, we’re going to speak about the purpose of Jesus’ birth once again – first about Him being Emmanuel, and then about His name, “Jesus”. Let’s talk about God dwelling within us and among us now…

 In Jesus’ birth, God limited Himself down to our state of being so we can recognize Him through His Presence in Jesus. Many wonder as to why God brought about His Son’s birth with such care and multiple interventions. The answer to the question was that Jesus was to be born because God was once with us before Adam’s sin – He walked with us, He talked with us – but sin had marred that reality. Thus, once again, God through Jesus began to walk and talk with us, to rejoice, to eat and drink with us, so that we through the Apostles would know Him again. In a word, Jesus was born so that God could be with us.

 For example, if someone knocked on your door and you asked their name and they gave you their name without any purpose for their presence, you would probably not accept that person into your home. Similarly, Jesus’ birth needs an explanation or introduction for us to accept.

 The Apostle Matthew does that for us through a quote from the prophet Isaiah: *“The virgin will be pregnant, and they will call His name Emmanuel”*. In other words, given that even the translators of the Old Testament used the word “virgin” in the Greek Translation of Isaiah centuries before Christ, they must have understood the gravity of the miraculous nature of the event of the birth of the Savior. Jesus’ name was not Immanuel, but His presence was “Immanuel.” His presence among people showed God the Father’s Presence among us. The above truth needs to be a great reality for us. What Matthew was affirming was what Isaiah was saying: that the birth of Jesus is God the Father coming to us at last in rescue. God the Father finally got to us through Jesus. Thus, in knowing Jesus, we do not dare say that God is so far away that He does not understand us, or that He does not have any idea of our state of being. From now on, any excuse or argument against recognizing Jesus’ Divinity is invalid because He is Emmanuel. Again, in Jesus’ birth, God limited Himself down to our state of being so we can recognize Him through His Presence in Jesus.

 Second, through Jesus’ birth, God brought the means of the forgiveness of our sins to us. In Hebrew, Jesus’ name, Yeshu’a or Yehoshu’a means “God saves,” or that He will save, or “God salvation”. The Jews by that time period were accustomed to naming their children with their hopes and desires for them. The name would both be a blessing and a wish or vision for them. Jesus, through His God-given name, showed one of those purposes for His life - to save us humans from our sins. He began with His own people the Jews, and after being rejected, the door of salvation opened up to the entire world (all of humanity)[[2]](#footnote-2). Thus, Jesus’ name pointed to God’s saving act through Him, and also to peoples’ need for salvation.

 Imagine for a moment that a sick person is suffering but is not accepting of his or her doctor’s thoughts and prescribed medications. To be healed, the patient would need to first accept that he or she is sick, and then they must also recognize that the doctor is, in fact, a doctor with all the meaning that comes with being a doctor (i.e., a person that works to heal people). Similarly, when Jesus was born, people first needed to recognize that He was both God-with-us and Savior, but then also accept the fact that they needed salvation. Today, we are in that same boat.

 If we do not simply accept Jesus’ identity, then it becomes nonsensical to believe that a human can save you from your sins, since that person cannot make intercession before you to God for your salvation[[3]](#footnote-3). A human being prone to sin since Adam and Eve cannot atone for your sins. If, on the other hand, you recognize that Jesus is God and Savior, but you do not accept that you need salvation unto a new life-direction and walk, then your knowledge of Jesus is (once again) imperfect and incomplete. Why is this the case(?) - because Jesus is “God-With-Us”, Omnipotent and Powerful, and also our Savior from our sins. We must see Jesus as both, to have a new life.

 Jesus is God-With-Us; He is Emmanuel. Jesus is The Savior.

 May the Lord make these two truths into practical realities in our life, so that we both walk in God’s Presence as well as live a life that is free from sin (to the best of our human abilities).

 Christ is born and revealed; great tidings to you and to us! Amen.

1. Meaning the Father through Jesus, without taking away the fact that it was Jesus whom we know in the flesh. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Note, if all Israel had accepted Jesus, then they would have been the means by which the world was evangelized at first. As it was, only a dozen or so disciples and then mostly pagan converts would be the evangelists to the non-Hebrew world. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. After all, they have no payment for sin that is pure and acceptable (hence the necessity for Christ’s blood sacrifice!). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)