



# Immanuel: Jesus!

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW  
Isaiah 40:1-5 Galatians 4:4-7 Matthew 1:18-25

December 16, 2018

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The **Gospel of Matthew** begins with the “*genesis*” of Jesus: *His beginning*. Jesus begins the “*new Creation*”, the New Era of Salvation where Jesus will overturn and restore everything that Adam corrupted and destroyed in the original creation.

Matthew then traces Jesus’ family line through the Old Testament showing that He is the *Son of David* and the *Son of Abraham*. Jesus is the promised *Messiah* of the Old Testament: He is the “*Christ*.” He is the One anointed by God to *bless the entire earth* and *who will rule over an eternal Kingdom!* He is the Savior of the world!

**Matthew** then tells the story of *the birth of Jesus* – which we heard in our Gospel lesson for today. Matthew focuses on Joseph’s side of the story – specifically, he highlights that there are **two witnesses** that prove *Jesus is the Christ*; the Son of David; the Son of Abraham. The first witness is the **angel sent from God**, and second witness is an **Old Testament prophecy** from the Word of God itself.

The story begins with Joseph and Mary being engaged. In Old Testament times engagement was a legally binding agreement that would have prepared the way for their marriage. But Mary started showing signs that she was pregnant; the baby wasn’t Joseph’s, and he assumed that she had committed adultery. At this point, he had no idea what had actually happened. Joseph has no idea that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and will be born of the Virgin Mary.

**Joseph needs someone to tell him...just like we needed someone to tell us about Jesus.** You don’t learn about Jesus in the created world, nor in your own thoughts and conscience using your own wisdom and understanding.

Rather...

**Jesus is revealed to you through the Word of God;  
IN THE GOSPEL!**

Like Joseph, the Lord sent someone to you who explained who Jesus is and what He has done for you. *It's a meaningful exercise to make a list of those people and thank the Lord for them!* Who are the people that the Lord sent to you to explain who Jesus is and what He has done for you?

**Also**, we live in a world full of “Josephs”. It is safe to assume that most people in your life don’t know or understand Who Jesus is and what He has done for them. **BE THE ONE TO TELL THEM!** Tell them that Jesus is the Savior God sent for them!

For Joseph, the Lord sent an angel to explain who Jesus is and what He will do. The angel explained it to Joseph like this:

"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. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name **Jesus**, for *He will save His people from their sins.*" MATTHEW 1:20-21

The Lord, through His angel, names His Son “Jesus”. The name **Jesus** means “Savior” --- *He will save His people from their sins.*

Our sins have put us in danger, and that is why we need a Savior: someone to rescue us. The word “sin” means **missing the target**. In this word picture, God's **10 Commandments** are the target, and you are the archer. Every time you sin you “**miss the target**”; you break a Commandment, and you are way off the mark.

You **miss the target** when you do not love the Lord your God with all of your heart. You **miss the target** when you do not hallow God's Name, and You **miss the target** when you fail to worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth; and you **miss the target** when you disobey His Holy Word.

You **miss the target** when you disobey authority, when you hurt, harm or hate someone, when you sin sexually, when you steal, when you hurt someone’s reputation, and when you fail to guard your own heart from coveting.

When you **miss the target**, you sin. **In fact, in sin, we are all blind archers who never hit the target!** That is why you are in danger; that is why you need a Savior!

The name **Jesus** is meant to teach you that *He is your Savior* --- the One who will rescue you from the danger of **sin** and from *missing the target*.

Jesus will save you by **NEVER SINNING** ---

He **NEVER** *missed the target*,  
rather He always hit the bullseye every moment of every day.

He completely and fully obeyed the 10 Commandments. His perfect life is credited to you as holiness. And when He died on the cross, He took upon Himself every single sin you have committed!

**Every time you *missed the mark* it fell on Jesus,  
and He was punished for it when He died on the cross.**

He died, so that you will live. *Jesus is the Savior who saves you from your sins!* That is why God sent His Son into the world; that is why Jesus was born in Bethlehem! This is what Christmas is all about! The true meaning of Christmas is that Mary's child is named **Jesus**: because *He will save us from our sins!*

Not only does the angel reveal this to Joseph, but it is **confirmed** with a messianic prophecy from God's Word in the Old Testament.

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name **Immanuel**" (which means, **God with us**).

MATTHEW 1:22-23

**Immanuel** is an Old Testament name that means "**God is with us**<sup>1</sup>." Not only is Jesus the son of Abraham, the son of David, and the son of Mary, but **He is the only begotten Son of God**. He is both true God and true Man at the same time Who came into the world to do the work of salvation for us. God is with us in the Person of Jesus Christ! We confess this in historic creeds of the Holy Christian Church when we say He was "**conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.**"

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<sup>1</sup> One of the fascinating things with the Gospel of Matthew, is that he bookends his Gospel with this idea of "**God with us**." He introduces Jesus as Immanuel in the first chapter, and then he ends the Gospel --- *the very last verse* --- with Jesus' promise "Behold, **I am with you always**, even to the very ends of the earth! (28:20)" The same Immanuel that came into the world to save us in Bethlehem is the same Savior who promises to *remain with us* as we live our lives as His disciples!

**Jesus, the Savior, born of Mary,  
IS Immanuel, GOD HIMSELF,  
conceived by the Holy Spirit  
to do the work of salvation for us!**

Next time you look at a manger scene, take time to think of the theological significance of what is going on: it's all for you and your salvation! The manger is not just a cute couple having the misfortune of having their baby in a stable! The manger is a sign of God's great love for you: **God Himself** coming into the world to save every single person from their sins--- *including you!*

Jesus Christ is  
**True God**  
begotten of the Father from  
eternity; and also  
**True Man**,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
and He is my Lord.  
Martin Luther's Small Catechism  
2<sup>nd</sup> Article of Apostles Creed

**God is with us to save us!** In order to teach that to Joseph and to us, Matthew uses two names:

**Immanuel, JESUS. God is with us to save us!**

Matthew ends his account of the Christmas story with Joseph hearing and believing the Word of God. The Lord revealed to Joseph that Mary did not commit adultery, but that a miracle had taken place. Joseph learned from two witnesses that the entire Old Testament was being fulfilled with the baby that He would be legal guardian over! The baby was conceived by the Holy Spirit and will be born of the Virgin Mary. And that baby is

**Immanuel, JESUS. God is with us to save us!**

Today, we are less than 2 weeks from Christmas. The Gospel of Matthew has prepared us for Christmas by

- + Revealing that Jesus is the **New Creation** who ushers in the New era of salvation.
- + Jesus is the **Christ**; the long-promised Messiah of the OT
- + He is the **son of Abraham**, Who will bless the entire world.
- + Jesus is the **Son of David** Who is a great King with an eternal Kingdom;
- + Jesus is **God Himself**; conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

Today may you hear what Joseph heard and may you believe what Matthew writes: Mary's baby is **Immanuel, JESUS. God is with us to save us!** Amen!