

Christmas, The Gift of Immanuel

Luke 2:1-7

The word Immanuel, according to Matthew 1:23 means God is with us, in human form. Why is the fact that God became a human such an important Christmas gift for us concerning salvation? As you are aware, the cradle leads us to the cross in the Christmas story! Luke 2:1-7 shines light on the birth of Jesus, the God man.

The Situation for the Birth (Luke 2:1-3) Jesus was born under Roman rule. Caesar Augustus and Quirnius are in power. The Jewish people are oppressed people and they don't want to give honor to any type of Roman rule, but God's sovereignty is at work. God used this situation to fulfill the prophecy of Micah 5:2, a prophecy written four hundred years before the birth of Christ. ***"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."*** (Micah 5:2) This situation was not ideal for the King of kings to enter the earth, but He came to be our gift for our salvation!

The Setting of the Birth (Luke 2:4-5) Bethlehem was around 70 miles from Nazareth. Both places were insignificant towns at that time. As stated last week, Nazareth had a bad reputation. Joseph's lineage was from King David and required them to go to the city of David, Bethlehem. We see in 2 Samuel 7 that Jesus would be from the line of David and the throne of his King would last forever. Though this setting is unique, it was all rigged by God for this to be accomplished.

His Sacrifice for Us is the Reason for His Birth (Luke 2:6-7) Jesus is born where no child should be born. The God of this universe is laid in a feeding trough. Luke records what Jesus himself would say later in life concerning comforts, "Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." (Luke 9:58). From the very beginning, the King of kings did not come in kingly fashion. He came to suffer for us. Old Testament prophecies clearly indicate that God had to come in human form to be our Savior and to pay for our sins. Isaiah 7:14, Micah 5:2, Hosea 11:1, Psalms 22, Isaiah 53, and so many more. Hebrews 2:14-15 shines light on why Jesus came in the form of man, why Immanuel is such an important amazing Christmas gift. Listen to these two verses: ***"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."*** (Hebrews 2:14-15)

Three reasons Jesus became a man.

1. To be our sacrifice. Jesus connected to us to be the ultimate sacrifice. (Hebrews 2:14) ***“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,”***

2. To feel our suffering. Jesus connected to us to experience our hardships and pains. (Hebrews 4:15) ***“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”***

3. To be our Savior. Jesus connected to us so that we could be adopted. (Galatians 4:4-5) ***“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”***

Because of the gift of Jesus, we are free from the fear of death. God has justified us. Satan cannot overturn that. If we do not need to fear our last and greatest enemy, death, then we do not need to fear anything. We can be free. Free for joy. Free for others.

What a great Christmas present from God to us! And from us to the world!