

THE PERSON OF THE MESSAGE

We all have our quirks, don't we? We all have certain things that we **do...or say...or think** that makes us different from other people. Some are "extremely important"—like which way the toilet paper should be put on the roller—or the "proper" way to squeeze toothpaste out of the tube! I'm kidding, of course!

I know I have some **preaching** quirks—one of which is how much I **use my hands!** I was filling the pulpit in Neillsville years ago and there was a man sitting in the congregation that looked familiar to me. We talked afterward and he reminded me who he was and how we knew each other. And then he said this, "I recognized you right when you started preaching because of how you used your hands!"

Along those same lines, when the sermons are recorded on Facebook—and transferred over to YouTube—the video will be "frozen" and show up as a picture of me "in action." And—many times—my hands are up in the air! I obviously don't realize I do it—and hopefully it is not too annoying or distracting to you!

Another idiosyncrasy I have is this: I don't like to preach messages I've **already preached** before! I like it to be "new" to me—which in most cases will make it "new" to you, too! But...that's getting difficult to do when it comes to Christmas! Why? Because even though this is only my 8th Christmas here, I bring multiple Christmas messages each year. And I'm not just talking about the main Sunday morning message. There is also the Sunday school hour...and afternoon services...and Wednesdays. All told—yes; I keep track and counted them up 😊—I've brought over 50 Christmas lessons or messages already!

I said all that to say this—I am not bringing you **something new** this morning! That doesn't mean it is a message I've preached before—but it **does mean** you will hear things you already know! But that's okay, isn't it? We need to be **reminded of things** we already know! Maybe you remember—but maybe you don't 😊—that Peter said that very thing in II Peter 1:12 "Wherefore I will not be negligent to **put you always in remembrance** of these things, **though ye know them...**"

Last week, we looked at John the Baptist. Who was John the Baptist? He was the son of a priest named Zacharias, whose wife Elisabeth was a relative of Mary's. That meant John and Jesus were relatives! We also know from Luke 1 that John and Jesus were only 6 months apart in age—humanly speaking, anyway.

But the emphasis of the Bible is not on John and Jesus **being relatives**—it is on John being the **messenger** of Jesus. John was the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3 "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

How do we know that? Because all four gospels point out that truth! In fact—as mentioned last week—John the Baptist is talked about in the gospels more than Mary and Joseph are!

But **why?** Why did God put so much emphasis on making sure we understand that John the Baptist was the voice of the one crying in the wilderness? Because the announcement of the messenger in Isaiah 40 was "Get ready—**God is coming** to visit you!" And since John was the messenger that announced "God is coming"—and **Jesus is the One** John was talking about—that means **Jesus was God**—and He came!

Last week's message, then, was about the "Proclamation of the Messenger." This morning, we are going to look at "The Person of the Message." Or—to put it in the words of a song: "Who is He in Yonder Stall?"

Who is the One whose coming John announced? Who is the "**Person** of the message?" This morning, we are going to look at three names—three titles—given to Jesus **before or at the time** of His birth. "Jesus," of course, was one of them—and that is the one we will start with.

Please take your Bibles and turn to Matthew 1; follow along as I read verses 18-21.

1. "And thou shalt call His name Jesus" comes right out of vs 21.

--**Who**—in this passage—is told to call Mary’s child Jesus? **Joseph** is told that!

--**Who** gives Joseph the message that the baby is to be called Jesus? Vs 20 says, “the angel of the Lord” — which was probably **Gabriel**. Why do I suggest that? Because Gabriel appeared **to Zacharias** and told him about the birth of John the Baptist—and Gabriel appeared **unto Mary** and told her she would give birth to Jesus.

--**Did Joseph** call the baby, Jesus? Yes, he did! We see that in the end of vs 25 “...and he called His name Jesus.” The name “Jesus” occurs 942 times in our KJ Bibles—all in the New Testament. Although not all 942 refer to Jesus of Nazareth—there are at least two exceptions (Col 4:11 and Hebrews 4:8)—99% of them do!

A. The meaning of the name “Jesus”

What does the name Jesus mean?

Jesus comes from the Greek word “Ee-ay-soos” and is the Greek form of the Hebrew name “Joshua.” “Joshua” is a combination of **Yahweh**—the name of God—and “**Yasha**” which means “to save” or “to deliver.”

Putting those two thoughts together, the names **Joshua** and **Jesus** mean “Yahweh saves” or “Yahweh is salvation.”

B. What Jesus saves us from

What does Jesus save us from? Verse 21 tells us, right? “For He shall save His people from their sins.”

But what exactly does **that mean**?

--Does it mean that once Jesus saves us, we **don’t sin** anymore? If that’s what it means, **I’m** in trouble—and so are **you!**

--Does it mean that once we are saved, Satan doesn’t bother us anymore? No; it doesn’t mean that either! In fact, I believe Satan attacks us more **after** we are saved than he did **before** we were saved!

--So if we are not saved from **sin** or from **Satan**, **what** are we saved from?

And the answer is...the **punishment** of our sins, right?

There is a price tag for sin...there is a punishment...there is a payment. It is not just **disqualification** from heaven—it is **condemnation** in a place called hell! That truth is taught in numerous places in the Bible—especially **by Jesus Himself!** Here are several of many examples.

--**Mt 25:41** “Then shall He [Jesus] say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into **everlasting fire**, prepared for the devil and his angels:”

--**Mt 25:46** “And these shall go away into **everlasting punishment...**”

--In **Mark 9:43 and 45**, Jesus refers to hell where there is “**fire that shall never be quenched.**”

--In **Luke 16**, Jesus spoke of the rich man who died “And **in hell** he lift up his eyes, **being in torments**” (vs 23).

--And in **John 8:24**, Jesus said “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall **die in your sins**: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”

To die in your sins means to die **unforgiven**—and to die **unforgiven** means you pay the penalty for your sins! What is the payment? **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is **death...**” **Death** is not just a cessation of life—it is an eternal separation from God! **Revelation 20:14-15** “And death and hell were cast into the **lake of fire**. This is the **second death**. ¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the **lake of fire.**”

But Jesus came to **save us from that penalty** by being punished in our place! He was the **Lamb of God** that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29) ...the **Good Shepherd** that laid down His life for His sheep (John 10:11) ...and the **One who loved us**, and washed us from our sins in His own blood (Revelation 1:5).

Did Jesus die for **everyone**? Yes; He did! But not **everyone** will go to heaven after they die, will they?

Why not? Because we need to **personally receive** Jesus ourselves, don’t we?

C. Our response to the Savior

Knowing these truths in our head is not enough! We need to have Him (I John 5:12) ...we need to receive Him (John 1:12)...we need to call upon Him (Romans 10:13) ...we need to come to Him (John 5:40). **John 5:40** “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” are some of the saddest words Jesus spoke.

--What about **you**? Have you personally come to Christ? If not, you need to.

--What about your **family members**? Is your **spouse** saved? Are your **siblings** saved? Are your **children** saved? What about your **grandchildren**? If not, are you burdened for them...and praying for them...and witnessing to them?

--Jesus came to save people from their sins, but we need to be getting that message out, don't we?

Next, let's consider... **2. "And they shall call His name Emmanuel"**

We're still in Matthew 1; notice what it says in vss 22-23. I don't think I'm going out on a limb to suggest that a whole sermon could be preached on the significance of Jesus being Emmanuel—"God with us"—just like I could have said much more about Jesus **saving us** from our sins.

Here are three of the many truths that are wrapped up with God coming to earth in the form of man. The one we just looked at is this... A. Jesus is absolutely essential for salvation

Is Jesus **the only way** for us to be saved? Yes; He is! How do we know!

Because **God tells us that** over and over in His Word! Here is one most of us are familiar with: **John 14:6** "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: **no man** cometh unto the Father, **but by me.**"

There is also a **logical reason** that Jesus is absolutely essential for salvation. Is God **against logic**? Obviously not because **He gave it to us!** What's the **logical reason** that Jesus is essential for salvation?

Because it **makes no sense** for God to leave heaven...and come to earth as a man...and be mistreated by His own creation...and die a horrible death by crucifixion if we could be saved in a different way!

But we can't—and that's why the Bible says in **Acts 4:12** "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is **none other name** under heaven given among men, **whereby we must be saved.**"

Here's a second truth wrapped up in the name Emmanuel, God with us: B. God is approachable

--God is Holy—and dwells in the high and holy place the Bible says in Isaiah 57:15.

--He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity the Bible says in Habakkuk 1:13.

--He dwells in the light which no man can approach unto we read in I Timothy 6:16.

--God's people were "scared to death" when He spoke to them from the top of Mount Sinai prior to giving Moses the 10 Commandments

And yet, we see God **is approachable** because people were not afraid to **approach Jesus!** He had **compassion** on those that were blind...and deaf...and lame...and mute! He **loved children**—and rebuked His disciples for discouraging parents who wanted to bring their children to Him!

The **heart-broken** came to Him for comfort—and repentant **sinner**s came to Him for forgiveness! In fact, the only ones who found Jesus **unapproachable** were those who **were proud!** Why? Because "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5)!

What about you? What is your view of God? If you are a child of His, He wants you to **meditate on** the reality that He is your Father—and that you can come to Him with all your needs!

Matthew 7:11 "If ye then, being evil [sinful], know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore **come boldly unto the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

I Peter 5:7 "Casting all your care upon him; for He careth for you."

What is the significance of God with us? First, Jesus is absolutely essential for salvation. Second, God is approachable. Third... C. Jesus is always with us

What was one of the last things that Jesus...Emmanuel...God with us said to His disciples before returning to heaven? **Mt 28:20** "...and lo, I am **with you always**, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Hebrews 13:5b "...for He hath said, I will **never leave thee**, nor forsake thee."

Do difficulties... and problems ... and trials come? Yes; they do!

Does **God leave us** when those difficulties and problems and trials come? No; He doesn't!

Although He may not always **remove troubles** from us, He **never removes Himself** from us!

Isaiah 43:2 "When thou **passest through** the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou **walkest through** the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

Of this verse, Spurgeon wrote: "Bridge there is none: we must **go through the waters** and feel the rush of the rivers. The PRESENCE OF GOD in the flood is better than a ferry-boat. TRIED we must be, but TRIUMPHANT we shall be; for JEHOVAH HIMSELF, Who is mightier than many waters, shall BE WITH US (IMMANUEL!)." (<https://www.preceptaustin.org/matthew-1-commentary#1:23>).

Don't despair! Don't doubt! Don't lose heart! And when you look back over your life, you'll realize that the times you **thought God left you** because there were only one set up footprints were the times when Jesus was carrying you!

Lastly, let's consider a third name that Jesus is called...**3. The King of the Jews**

We see that in Matthew 2:1-2. So why is Jesus being the King of the Jews important **to us**? What difference **does it make to us** that are Gentiles—meaning non-Jews? Here are two reasons that this title is important.

First, it is... A. An end-times reminder of unfulfilled prophecy

We're in Matthew 2; take your Bibles and turn to Luke 1. Notice what it says in vs 30-33.

--Did Jesus **rule from a throne in Jerusalem** when He was here on earth? No; He didn't!

--This prophecy—and many, many others—have not been fulfilled...**yet!** But **they will be** in the future! Here are just a few of the pronouncements that Jesus will someday **reign on earth as King**. For the sake of time, I'm not able to give you the context but you have the verses and I'd encourage you to look them up on your own.

--God—speaking of Christ—says in **Ps 2:6** "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

--Is Jesus seated as King right now in Zion—the city of Jerusalem? No, He's not—but He will some day!

Isaiah 2:4 "And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Is that true right now? No, it's not—but it will be some day!

Joel 3:16-17 "The Lord also shall roar out **of Zion**, and utter His voice **from Jerusalem**; and the heavens and the **earth shall shake**: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

¹⁷ So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God **dwelling in Zion**, my holy mountain: then shall **Jerusalem be holy...**" Those things aren't true, today, are they? God is not dwelling in Jerusalem—& Jerusalem is not holy.

But...it will be some day! God has a future plan for the nation of Israel—and part of that plan is Jesus being a literal king over the Jews in the city of Jerusalem!

Why does that matter to us? Because Revelation 20:6 says that true believers "shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years." And after those 1000 years have ended, then comes the new heaven and the new earth because the first heaven and the first earth will pass away (Revelation 21:1).

But that is all in the future. Why does it matter now—**today**—that Jesus was born King of the Jews? How does that truth apply to us? Here is one very important way: That the wise men are... B. An example of worship

You're in Luke; please turn back to Matthew 2.

Why did the wise men come to visit the young Jesus?

--Vs 2. "We have seen His star in the east, and are come to **worship** Him."

--Vs 11. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and **worshipped** Him..."

Where they Jews? No, they weren't! So **why** did they worship Him? Because He isn't just the King of the **Jews**—He is the **King of kings and Lord of lords!**

What did their worship consist of—besides bowing down before Him? Two things:

1) Giving to Him. We see that in the mid of vs 11 “...and when they had opened their treasures, they presented **unto Him gifts...**”

Can we **physically go to where Jesus** is and present gifts to Him? No, we can't!

But...we can give **money** to support His work...and we can give our **time and talents** to serve Him! We can—as Paul wrote in Romans 12:1—“present our bodies as a living sacrifice” to Him, to use in the way He desires.

How else did they honor Jesus as king? First, by giving to Him. Second, by...

2) Obeying Him. We see that in vs 12 “And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.”

--Does God **warn us** about things—and people—that will harm us?

Yes; He does!

--Does God **use dreams** to do that? No; He uses His Word!

God has declared—in His Word—His **thoughts!** And God has declared—in His Word—**His will!**

I think you'd agree that our problem is not that we **don't know** what God wants us to do—it is that we don't really **want to do** what God wants us to do!

What about you? Is Jesus the King of your life? If so, you should worship Him...and give that which you value to Him...and obey Him. Are you doing that? We should, shouldn't we? It is certainly our “reasonable service!”

What would God have us do with what we've heard? What decisions would God have us make?

1. First, Jesus came to save us from the penalty of our sins—but not everyone will be saved.

Why won't everyone be saved?

--Because **knowing about** Jesus is not the same as **having** Jesus!

--Do you **have** Jesus? Do you **possess** Him? Has He personally **saved you** from the penalty of your sins?

Oh, may He not say to you: “And you would not come to me, that you might have life!”

2. Second, He is Emmanuel—God with us! Do you trust in Him being with you at all times and in all places—or do you doubt? Don't let circumstances or troubles cause you to doubt.

I am with you always; I will never leave you nor forsake you!

3. He is King—but is He **your** king? Do you offer to Him your gifts...your talents...your time...yourself?

--Have you submitted to Him as the authority in your life—the One you want to please?

--Don't just give Him “lip service”—make Him the king of **your** life!