

Matthew 1:22–23

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### “God with Us”

#### Matthew 1:22-23

What is Christmas really all about? Christmas is all about a phrase we find in **Matthew 1:22-23**. **“So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”** Christmas is about “God with us.” Christmas centers on God, the Son, entering into human history as an infant with a mission to glorify the Father and to redeem lost sinners. Today, we will explore what it means that God came to be with us.

**I. Jesus Came Because God Always Wanted to Be with Us.**

**II. Jesus Came So That God Could Always Be with Us.**

**III. Jesus Came So That We Could Always Be with God.**

**I. Jesus Came Because God Always Wanted to Be with Us.**

A. When we come to **Matthew 1:23**, we tend to think about Christ’s virgin birth. While the virgin birth is vitally important, today we will try to catch the emphasis the Apostle Matthew put on this text. He quoted from **Isaiah 7:14**. What does Matthew say? **“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”**

B. Why did God want to come and be with us? We find out in the very beginning of the Bible, in the first chapters of the book of Genesis. God created humankind in the first place because he wanted to be “with us.”

1. You remember how God created the world? He made virtually everything by simply speaking it into existence. However, God formed man with His hands out of the dust of the ground and He breathed in him the breath of life. Adam became a living soul. God created man in His own image so that man and woman could fellowship with Him. We even read how that God would come in the cool of the day and walk in the garden that He might be with man and fellowship with him.

2. Then SIN entered the picture. Humankind lost many things when Adam and Eve sinned. We lost some very precious things.

(1) We lost our perfect dominion over all creation. Thorns and weeds are the expression of creation's rebellion against man. They are a symbol of the curse that sin brought. It is not by accident that Pilate's men put a crown of thorns upon our Savior before He went to the cross.

(2) We also lost our immunity to sickness, pain, and death. God decreed, ***"In the day you eat thereof you will surely die."*** And as soon as Adam and Eve ate of that tree, they died spiritually and began to die physically.

(3) The greatest loss we suffered because of our sin was that we lost our relationship with God. God could no longer be "with us." The relationship of "withness" is described over and over again in the Scriptures by the phrase: ***"I shall be your God and you will be my people!"***

3. When Adam and Eve sinned, God was not unprepared. God had a plan. In ***Genesis 3:15***, the first Christmas verse, God lifted a corner of the divine tarp to show Adam and Eve a tiny glimpse of His plan. ***"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*** A person would come and He would once and for all take care of the sin problem. He would put away sin so that "God could be with us again!".

C. While God's plan was certain, the plan would take all of history to unfold. As God progressively revealed His plan, He kept showing His people a picture of what would happen in His plan.

1. In the wilderness, after The LORD delivered His people from Egypt through Moses, God spoke to Moses one day and said, ***"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."*** (***Exodus 25:8***) The LORD instructed the Children of Israel to build a Tabernacle which would become God's "dwelling place with His people." Again, in ***Exodus 29:45 and 46*** the LORD said, ***"I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the LORD their God."*** Although the people were sinful, the Tent was to be pitched in the middle of the camp. God could abide there because there was a separation between the Holy God and His unholy people.

2. They could not come directly into God's presence. They must come to God constantly through an intermediary, the priests, and always with sacrifices. Once a year, only one person, the High Priest, could come and then only with blood into the very presence of God in the Holy of Holies. This was so serious because within the Holy of Holies stood the Ark of the Covenant. On top of the ark were

two golden cherubim. Between the cherubim above the mercy seat dwelt the Shekinah glory of God, which was the visible presence of God with His People.

D. This was an imperfect arrangement, imperfect because the people could not enter directly into the presence of God to worship Him. God was separate from them because of their sin.

E. Our sin always separates us from God. Sin was what broke our relationship with God in the first place. Sin is what keeps us from God still. Although the arrangement was not perfect, it showed how God wanted to be WITH HIS PEOPLE.

## II. Jesus Came So That God Could Always Be with Us.

A. Coming to the New Testament the emphasis is the same. God desires to be with His people. In order that He might be with us, God the Father sent His Son into the world to be born of a virgin, to become Emmanuel, "God with us." John caught a vision of this as he wrote his nativity passage **John 1:14. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."** The word translated "dwelt" means "to pitch His tent." This takes us back to the greatest tent in history, the Tabernacle. God was in the tabernacle dwelling "With His People." Now in the Lord Jesus Christ He entered human history to be "with us" again.

B. Why did He come?

1. He came in order to bring us back to our God. He came to erase the sin problem and make it possible for us to once again fellowship with God. We cannot speak of the manger without also speaking of the cross. Jesus came to die.

2. The only way the sin problem could be solved was through the shedding of innocent blood. This is why we hear a strange word on the lips of our Savior on the cross. "It is finished." The words mean "completed, over, mission accomplished." The penalty of sin was paid.

## III. Jesus Came So That We Could Always Be with God.

A. There is one more aspect of this that we must not overlook. Jesus not only came so God could always be "with us," He came so we might always be with God.

B. In **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**, we read how the Lord will come back for us. ***"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord HIMSELF will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ***

***will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.***” We shall always be with Him!

C. Remember where we began in the Garden of Eden? We see how it all will end in ***Revelation 21:1-3. “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is WITH men, and He will dwell WITH THEM, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be WITH THEM and be their God.’***” This is what will make heaven, heaven. It will be the way God always intended for it to be. He will be “with us.”

Why did Jesus come?

He came because God always wanted to be with His people.

He came so the Father could be with His children.

He came that we might always be with Him.

This is why when Matthew quoted ***Isaiah 7:14*** he underlined the name! ***“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, [now I especially want you to get this part so let me translate the name for you!] which is translated, ‘God with us.’”***

And that’s why there is a Christmas day.

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