

Synopsis 009d – The Birth of Jesus [Matthew 1:18-25]

This passage calls our attention to two of the many names by which our Lord and Savior is called. Names were given in the OT were given to reveal the characteristic of a work, person, or ministry. Jesus had many name. Each one of those names reveal some particular phase or ministry of our Lord. He said, “I am the door”, “I am the way”, “I am the truth”, “I am the good shepherd”, “I am the bread of life”, “I am the water of life”, and as we looked at a few weeks ago, most importantly, he said, “I Am!”

We have two names referred to in this passage. In verse 21, Joseph is told by an angel of the Lord that “Mary shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Then, in verse 23, we’re told that as according to the prophet Isaiah, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us”. For our thinking and meditation today, we’re going to look at these two names. I want us to start with the name Emmanuel. Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, “God with us”.

We often look around and marvel at the attainments of man. I often think about how man attained not only heavier-than-air flight, but attained space flight, and then about 40 years ago actually walked upon another body, the Moon. Stop and look at the moon some time, and think about men from Earth actually walking around on it, it’s truly amazing, and there’s nothing wrong with. But, we should be dwelling upon and thinking upon something that’s much more important, and that is the thought of God himself leaving the heaven of heavens and coming here to this Earth and walking around on it! Can you conceive the thought of the almighty God coming down and walking around and living and communicating and fellowshiping with his creatures?

Isaiah prophesied that ***the*** virgin (not ***a*** virgin; ***a*** virgin is incorrect; there’s just one) shall bring forth a son and shall call his name Emmanuel, because he’s going to live with us. In the original creation, God created the heavens and the earth, and after an indeterminable period of time, God created man in the likeness of his own image. He then place man in the garden that was especially prepared for him. Then, there came a time when God took woman out of the man, made her separate, then brought her to him as his bride, and said, “The two shall become one”. He put them together in the garden, and every provision was made for their comfort, joy, and happiness. Everything was prepared for them that the human, in all three parts of body, soul, and spirit could desire. We’re told that God himself walked with them and talked with them (he fellowshiped with them) in the cool of the day.

God was walking with his creature. However, sin soon entered into the garden, and man was banished from it. Man no longer had the access to God that he had prior to letting sin enter in. After that, man could only approach God through a sacrifice; a sacrifice of an innocent creature; one that had to die and shed its blood.

I want us to look at three prepositions, in relation to this passage. A preposition is a word or phrase that is typically placed before a substantive (a noun or a noun equivalent) and

indicating the relation of that substantive to a verb, an adjective, or another substantive, such as the English words *at*, *for*, *by*, *with*, *from*, and *in regard to*.

So, we find then that after sin had entered in and man was expelled from the garden that God was ***for*** man. From time to time, God would appear to man, but he didn't walk with man and talk with him and fellowship with him the same way he had prior to the entrance of sin. In John chapter 1, we're told that when he came into the world, he came unto his own, and his own received him not. He was here, in this world, and he manifested himself unto his own (the children of Israel), but they didn't see or recognize him.

In the OT, we have in the God for man. He represented and counseled man. He was ***for*** him.

There came a day, however, when God was ***with*** man. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and told him of the approaching birth of this son, he was to call his name Emmanuel, which means what? It means, "God with us". This introduces us to the most important aspect of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. This answers the question that Jesus asked his disciples at Caesarea Philippi. It answers the question that Saul of Tarsus asked on the road to Damascus. Jesus asked, "Whom do ye say that I am?" Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" The question surrounding the birth of this baby is, "Who is this person?" Who is he?

I can tell you frankly and briefly that if you haven't seen and recognized him as the Lord God Almighty, then you've missed the entire point of the story. His name is Emmanuel. God gave that name to him, and an angel came from God and told Joseph, "His name is Emmanuel!" He told him what his name would be, not what it should be. That name means, "God with us".

The scene that transpired when the heavenly hosts came and when the angels came and appeared unto the shepherds and apprised them of the fact that there had been born in Bethlehem in a manger in a stable this one who is called Lord, Savior, and Christ. God had made his entrance into the world in the person of Emmanuel, or Jesus the Christ. He was God.

The wise men attested to the fact that they were wise, when they made their confession of him. About two years after his birth, they came into the house where the young child was with his mother, and they fell prostrate there before this child and they worshipped him. They didn't worship his mother or his father. They worshipped ***him***, and they gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

That was in the day when gifts were significant. The bible doesn't tell us that Joseph and Mary jumped up and ran around in a panic, saying, "What are we going to do? They brought these gifts and we don't have anything to give them. Well, we can give them something next year and catch up. Gifts were significant. They had meaning. They were prophetic.

Gold symbolized deity, authority, sovereignty, and royalty. When those wise men gave gold to him, they were confessing to the child, and to those around him, and to everyone from that generation until today that this child was God almighty himself. That's what the gold symbolizes.

Not only did they give him gold, but they gave him myrrh. Myrrh was used in the embalming process when someone died. Think about the story in which we're told that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took 100 pounds of myrrh and aloe and how they swathed his body in preparation for burial. When these wise men offered myrrh to this child, they were telling the parents, that generation, and every generation since that this child was to die and the prophecy was that it was to be for all mankind. They've already confessed him to be God, and now they're confessing that God is going to die.

Once many years ago, there was a furor created when a seminary professor, in seeming agreement with Nietzsche, announced that God was dead. It's amazing how many Christians don't associate death with God. This professor was right when he stated that God had died, but praise God, he didn't stay dead! He arose on the third day, but he did die. God died, God poured out his blood on the cross, and God purchased the elect with his own blood. We're told these things in Scripture. The wise men are professing that this child is God, and he's going to die.

In addition to gold and myrrh, they also offered this child frankincense, which is associated with sacrifice. We're told that the odor of the incense drifting upward that makes the smell of the burning flesh acceptable to God. It could bury the odor. The NT tells us that the prayers of the saints drifting upward to God is the incense that makes the odor of this sin-filled world fit to stand in the presence of God. So, this gift of frankincense gives us a picture of the priest. The wise men are confessing to this child and to his parents and to everyone, that this child is to be our great high priest.

This child, who is the very God himself; this child, who is the king of kings and the Lord of lords; this child who is to be a sacrifice for our sins; this child is to be our great high priest. That's the significance of the gifts that these wise men gave to the child in this home there in Bethlehem. God with us!

No wonder the heavenly hosts sang! No wonder the angels were present and rejoicing! No wonder Jerusalem was disturbed! No wonder that Herod sought after him that he might exterminate him and put him out of the way. The king had come! God almighty had come. From that moment on, for about 33 years, God was with us, so to speak.

He spent time in one household, then another; he raised one here from the dead; he cast out a demon there; he caused to stretch out and made whole a withered arm; he brought sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb. God with us!

The celebration of the birth of Jesus should be a celebration of the time when God left heaven and dwelt among man. Think of the privileges and opportunities to have sat with the disciples who were actually living with him for three years or so. Think about the

scene when the Lord and the disciples were on a boat, crossing over to the other side; the Lord was wear, so he went to sleep. Satan, seeing him asleep, seized upon the opportunity to dispose of him. When Satan couldn't keep the seed from being born, he did his utmost to do away with the seed; here, he saw an opportunity. The Lord is asleep, and the disciples were unbelieving (he knew his disciples and he knows us!), so Satan brings up this storm; he's going to wreck the boat and drown the seed of the woman. The disciples grew very afraid; the waves were rolling over the boat, they were tossed about, and the Lord was sleeping soundly. So little was their faith, they woke him, and said, "Wake up! We're perishing!"

Satan had to be in the storm, because personality was involved in reference to the storm. "Where is your faith", he asked them, in a form of rebuke, and he spoke to the storm, and commanded the storm to be still, and it was still. God was with them.

Can you imagine yourself being alive when Jesus walked the streets? Can you imagine walking down the street, hand in hand with the Messiah?

But, there's another preposition. So far, we've looked at the OT; He was for us. At times he would be here, then he would be gone. Then, there came that time that God was with us for about 33½ years. God was with us; he was present in the person of Jesus. He was Emmanuel; God with us. Then, he went back into the heavens.

The dark ages of this whole universe were the ten days between his ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Ten days; God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit, none of whom were here upon the Earth. Ten days in which man was alone, but something happened at the end of the 50 days; the Holy Spirit of God came from heaven and we entered into the third experience of God's presence, and there we have the preposition "in": God in us.

We might long for the days in which God was with us, but it has pleased God to put us in the days in which God is in us. He was for them for a while and he was with them for 33½ years, but from the day of Pentecost until today, he has been in his children. God in us, in the form of the third person of the trinity.

So, as you celebrate and meditate upon the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, just remember that you're celebrating the time when God left heaven and came to dwell among his creatures. He was God with us.

He came with us. Why did he do that? That's set forth in the name that's in the 21st verse. [Matthew 1:21] Jesus. Jesus means, "God saves". God is salvation. We have three interesting words in the Bible.

First, there's a word that simply means salvation in a general sense. After sin entered Eden and after the world settled in darkness, there was something known to the people as "salvation". Some time, some place, somehow, there will be salvation; that's what they knew. This was a hope toward which they looked and longed. Then, we come in contact

with the word “Jeshua”, which means “God saves”, from which we get the name “Jesus”. Then, we come to another word, JeJeshua, which means, “God is the savior”. Not only is there going to be salvation, and not only is God going to save, God is going to be the salvation himself.

This was dramatically portrayed in the sacrifice of Isaac. As Abraham and Isaac were going up the mountain, Isaac had the load of wood placed upon him and Abraham was carrying the knife and the fire. During their course of their Journey, Isaac, who was about 21 years old (not a little babe and certainly not less than 21 years old) said, “Father, here’s the wood, there’s the fire; where’s the lamb for the offering?” And Abraham replied in very prophetic words: “God shall provide himself a lamb for the sacrifice.” God himself shall provide. This can also be translated, “God will provide himself to be the lamb.”

That’s the meaning of the word “Jesus”. You shall call his name Jesus, because he’s the one who is going to save *his* people from their sins. He’s going to be the one. There are many christs, gurus, priests, prophets, witches, etc. There are many; but there is just one name under heaven given by men wherein you must be saved, and that’s the name of this child of whom we’re speaking: Jesus. (Acts 4:12)

The significance of this name, first of all, is that it applies to his humanity. Keep this in mind: He did not receive the name Jesus until he had a body of flesh and bones. The name “Jesus” is that which signifies his humanity. Jesus is the one born of the virgin Mary; Jesus is the one that grew in wisdom and stature with God and man; Jesus was the one nailed to the cross and poured out his blood; Jesus was the one who was buried, his body raised, and ascended into heaven. The name “Jesus” belongs to the body of flesh and bones and cannot be separated from that body.

If you talk about Jesus the Christ today, you’re talking about God manifested in the flesh. When you talk about Jesus Christ being in heaven today, you mean that you believe that his body is in heaven today at the right hand of the Father, where he lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). If you don’t believe that, don’t use the name Jesus, just use the title “Christ”. Jesus is the name of his humanity.

She will bring forth a son and you shall call his name Jesus. He was Christ from eternity, but Jesus from the time of his conception, and throughout the rest of eternity. For his body, which he received from Mary, *the* virgin, is the same body in which he is today at the right hand of God the Father and the same body he will have forever. He will never be without that body, and the wounds in his hands and feet and side will be evidence forever that he suffered, bled, and died for us.

“Jesus” is the name of his humanity. In the Bible, sometimes we read of Jesus Christ; sometimes, we read of Christ Jesus. In one name, the emphasis is upon Jesus, who was upon this earth in his body of flesh and bones, and went to heaven. In the other name, you should be thinking of God, who left the heavens and took on the body of Jesus. The name denotes the direction in which the move was made. Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ.

The disciples and others had difficulty in accepting Jesus as the Christ. When Jesus asked the disciples, “Whom say ye that I am?” Peter replied, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”. When Saul of Tarsus saw him on the road to Damascus, Saul said, “Lord, who art thou?” The answer is very, very significant. He didn’t reply, “I am the Christ” or “I am God”. Saul knew that this was some manifestation of the God-head, but which one, he did not know. “Lord, who art thou?” The Lord replied, “I am Jesus”. He didn’t say Jesus the Christ or Christ Jesus; he simply said, “I am Jesus”.

I’m the one born of the virgin Mary; the son of a carpenter; the one you persecuted; the one whose followers you persecute. “I am Jesus.” Saul didn’t believe it. So many of the children of Israel don’t believe it still today. They don’t believe that this Jesus is the Christ.

Who is Jesus? There are those that believe and teach that deity came upon Jesus at the time of his baptism and continued on until his crucifixion and then his deity left him. But, that contradicts the Bible, because here is God talking to Paul, and he is saying, “I am Jesus.”

Stephen, in recounting the exploits of God with the children of Israel, before the Sanhedrin, said, “I see heaven opened”. I believe Stephen. He said, “I see heaven opened”; I see an opening and I see Jesus. He didn’t say, I see Jesus Christ or Christ Jesus; “I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God”. They tore their hair, rent their garments and said, “kill him; get rid of him”. He said, I see the son of man there in the presence of God. They took him out and stoned him because of that confession that that body of flesh and bones was in heaven. You shall call his name Jesus.

[John 14] He was God with us when he walked the earth. He went to heaven and he said, “don’t panic; don’t be disturbed; I want to tell you something. If I go away, I will not leave you orphans.” In [John 14:18], which says, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you”, that word “comfortless” is literally “orphans”; it means bereaved of parents.

Jesus is telling them, “don’t worry, you won’t be orphaned”. If I go away, I will send you another comforter. That word “another” is interesting. There are two different Greek words for “another”. One signifies another of a different nature and character entirely. The other word means another exactly the same. That’s the word that’s used here. He’s saying, “If I go away, I send you another comforter, just exactly like me”.

The identity of the God the son with God the father, and the Holy Spirit with God the son is manifest on every page in the Bible. Look with me in John 14:9. Phillip said to Jesus one day, “Lord, show us the father”. Pull back the curtain just a second and let us glimpse the father. What did Jesus respond? [John 14:9] Look at me if you want to see the Father! He and I look exactly alike. Look at me! You’ve seen the Father.

Jesus is as much God as the father; the Holy Spirit is as much God as Jesus Christ and God himself, and Jesus said, I'm going to send you another comforter just exactly like me. When he has come, he's not going to appear occasionally and then leave, neither is he going to come and walk with you and live with you, but he will be in you and he will dwell in you forever when he has come.

I want you to get one thing straight: When you accepted Jesus as your savior, the Holy Spirit (the third person of the trinity) came into you to abide forever and he is in you, has been in you, and will be in you and will stay in you forever. That's settled.

In Psalm 51:11, David prayed, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me". That was back in the day when the Spirit was here and gone and here and gone, but we're living in a day in which he is in us to abide forever! You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

[Galatians 1] I want to show you a verse in this connection. This is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, [Galatians 1:4]. He gave himself for the sake of our sins. We read in Matthew, "You shall call him Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins". Now, how does he save us from our sins? It says right here: He gave himself. That involves a trade or an exchange. He traded himself to me for what? For my sins. He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do; I'll give you my perfect, immaculate self for all of your sins".

He traded himself to me for my sins, and that's the way he saves me from my sins and the way he saves you from your sins. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Think about Abraham and Isaac going up the mountain. Abraham took the wood, which symbolizes sinful humanity, and piled it upon Isaac. Isaac was a type or picture of Jesus Christ, and putting the wood upon Isaac shows a picture of the Lord laying our sins upon Jesus Christ. God almighty took all of my sins and piled them on Jesus! The Lord has laid on him the sins of us all. He died for the sins of the world. How did the Lord save us from our sins? By trading himself to us for our sins.

What is the verse that represents everything surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ or the Christmas season? "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son..."

I don't know if anyone has ever taught you how to spell "love", but very few people know how. That word "love" is used an awful lot today; "love, love, love". It's hard to explain, but you know what I mean. How do you spell "love"? G-I-V-E. God so loved that he gave.

We have two love gifts in this Christmas story. God's gift of love to us is one of the love gifts. What is his love gift to us? His love gift to us is the Lord Jesus Christ. If you've ever watched children open gifts at Christmas time, you can watch them open a gift, push it aside, open another, push it aside, then they ask, "Is that all?" They never look at most of them again. There's a moral here, if you see it.

We've been given a gift of which we cannot dispose, nor can we rid ourselves of it: Jesus Christ. Now, you can accept or reject that gift. You often hear from Acts 20:35 that "it's more blessed to give than to receive". That's true. But, it's more difficult to receive than to give. It's easy to give a gift, pat yourself on the back, then go on. But it's difficult to receive; that makes you beholden to that person. "I wonder what's behind this gift?" It's a gift that's being offered, and you can accept or reject that gift, but you can never get rid of it once you've received it. It's more difficult to receive than to give, but it's more blessed to give than to receive.

God has given a gift; that gift is Jesus Christ. When you celebrate the birth of Jesus, you're celebrating the giving and receiving of a gift. Have you received that gift? I have, and it fits me just right! Well, there's another gift.

I, along with all other Christians, am God's gift to Jesus Christ. You can't appreciate this, unless you appreciate the grace of God, but he loved Jesus Christ so much that he gave me to him. You might think, "how ridiculous", or "how conceited" when I say this, but that's the grace of God, because you don't know what he's going to do with me when he gets through with me.

Jesus is his love gift to us and we are his love gift to Jesus. Now, this story surrounding the birth of Jesus is full of meaning, and even though we all should know that the day of his birth is uncertain although we do know the approximate time of year, this story draws me closer to the one who is God who left his home in the heavens and came down here to be with us. It should draw you closer to him also. We should all rejoice in him! It's a special event, and I certainly hope you appreciate just how special it is.

I'm not going to ask you who is saved and who isn't, but when you pray, when you drive, when you work, or when you do anything else in your daily routine, think about God's love gift to you. That love gift is Jesus Christ. Think about gifts that you may hand out and how you would feel if the one to whom you offered the gift slapped it out of your hand, rejected it utterly, and turned away. God has given you his son, Jesus Christ, that you might have everlasting life. Aren't you joyous that you have accepted that gift?

Seated where you are, if you've never done so, say, "Lord, I accept your gift; I don't want to reject the love gift of your son who gave the ultimate sacrifice."