

12122021 Final Every Christian alive today is anticipating the second coming of Jesus at the end of the age. We already know that Jesus has come among us as the Messiah, We celebrate the Lord's Supper recounting His saving death and resurrection. And, finally, we enter into the mystery of the birth of the babe of Bethlehem with all that birth entails.

Yet in all our celebration and anticipation there is a subtext – God is coming to us. He is coming down from heavenly places to become involved in our lives – in his birth, in his ministry on earth during his life among us, in the mystery of the Lord's Supper, in his judgement of the world at his second coming.

Yet, this is only half the story of Jesus. Let me suggest the other half of the story which, in my mind, is the most amazing part of the story. It is also the part of the story that is most often neglected. God is not merely sending us a His “message” in the person of His Son. Nor is God merely sending us “help” in the person of His Son. The other part of the story is that the Incarnation is the manner in which humanity through Jesus is actually united to God himself. This is what Jesus Incarnation, what all of Christmas recalls and calls us to: the actual union of humanity with God. All too often, we think of the Incarnation as being one-sided. We think of God coming down to involve himself and participate in our concerns, our needs, our tragedies, our failures.

We neglect the other part of the story, the truth that humanity itself is caught up into the life of God through Christ who is born, lives, ascends and will return to us.

In Christmas Christ comes to us. He comes to us bearing within himself our humanity – my humanity, your humanity, your neighbor's humanity. He comes with that essential humanity in the manger of Bethlehem. He comes with that essential humanity in his

life among us. He comes with that essential humanity in his appearance at the end of the age. He comes with that essential humanity in bread and wine, body and blood. As he comes to us in that essential humanity, he also comes to us bearing the essential nature of God.... **It has always been God's plan**

NLT John 1: 1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He existed in the beginning with God. ³ God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. ⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

And he comes not angry with us. He loves us.

John 3:16 “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

John 1:14 So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.

This is the Christmas story...Heaven comes down...This is what happened

NLT Matthew 1: “ “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel,^[i] which means ‘God is with us.’”

- **It is an amazing and wonderful thing to realize that God devised His plan, created us, and is perfectly executing the plan, so that we could be with him forever...**

- **Jesus the God of creation entered into our fallen, messy, disorganized, troubled world...**
- **It is the great thought of the Christian faith that we have a God who knows the life we live because he too lived it and claimed no special advantage over ordinary people.**
- **It is one thing to talk about “the God above us,” that far away power, that is able to create the world. And to speak of the “God within us,” that inner, conscience-making force that is personal and intimate. But what gives real, sustained hope, is “God with us.”**
- **This is the God who can be trusted, in our times of despair or of just feeling “ordinary” – nothing special.**

NIV ISA 11: 1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—

I find this a hopeful message. Somehow, I keep expecting loud and impressive events to convince me and others of God's saving power; but over and over again I am reminded that spectacles, power plays, and big events are the ways of the world.

God plan is hidden yet Carried out in plain sight...why?

- 1. First it is God's general method of working in people is an job first! Nothing to stand out in the world...for God's work and calling is an inside job first ...Jesus in Mary and Jesus in you and i....**
- 2. Second His plan is then overlooked and disguised from the enemyuntil God is ready to reveal it...! This keeps the enemy off balance... it is his principle of operation.. Paul tells us**

NLTCol 1: 25 God has given me the responsibility of servng his church by proclaiming his entire message to you. ²⁶ This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God's

people. ²⁷ For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.

The work of our salvation...healing...Jesus in us! takes place in the midst of a world that continues to shout, scream, and overwhelm us with its claims and promises. But the promise is hidden in the shoot that sprouts from the stump, a shoot that hardly anyone notices...in people whom hardly anyone notices...

3. God who became man to bring Our salvation to heal us comes from something small, tender, and vulnerable, a baby hardly noticeable to someone hardly noticeable.

And this is how it happened

NLT Luke 1:26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.

- **Mary also was a descendent of David also fulfilling the prophecy the Messiah would come from the line of David...**

NLT Luke 1: 28 Gabriel appeared to her and said, "**Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!**"²⁹ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ³⁰ "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "**for you have found favor with God!**"

- **She is stressing...heart racing, adrenaline pumping...fear stricken.....he must have the wrong house and wrong person...**
- *******So How does God favor me??? I am a peasant Jewish teenager... no power, or position, or wealth, or social status...marrying a carpenter living in a small blue collar podunk town ...Nazareth located in Galilee... living in a town and a**

province looked down upon by the religious...for we have way to many gentiles among us...

- The angels does not address her emotional distress at all...and continues with God plan for her! Almost as if it does not matter at all...apparently it does not Why? Because God says she is fvoredthe angel does not care what her perspective is on that!

LK 1: 31 ¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

He is the branch from the stump of Jesse

- You will bear the son of God...the Messiah! ...and name him Jesus means "the Lord Saves" or God's salvation or God saves...
- *******There is no greater favor than God taking his Humanity from her DNA...**
- **How will he ever be great? I am a nobody...and the Romans are in charge...there is no Jewish King of Israel**
- **But let's start with basic biology**

LK 1: 34 Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

- (how will I be pregnant and a virgin at the same time) "how will it happen"... Born to a virgin woman...
- **This will be a hard sell...she will ear the weight of being morally suspect...her whole life ... the exact situation which would cause Satan to overlook this person and child everyone else also.....apparently God was good with the burden she would have to bear...**

- **in fact 33 years later on this reproach of his mother would be thrown in Jesus face by the religious leaders at the Temple of Jerusalem..**

John 8:38 I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father.”³⁹ “Our father is Abraham!” they declared. “No,” Jesus replied, “for if you were really the children of Abraham, you would follow his example.⁴⁰ Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing.

⁴¹ No, you are imitating your real father.” They replied, “We aren’t illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father.”⁴² Jesus told them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me.

Back up 33 years to Mary and Gabriel

*LK 1:35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. (supernatural... outside of our dimension) So the **holy one** to be born **will be called the Son of God.***

*³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.³⁷ **For nothing is impossible with God.**"*

- ...remember Miracles are common place with God...
...not only what men think impossible! But all the angels, and demons also **Mary’s pregnancy would be a miracle...from the Holy Spirit of God..His God DNA would be combined with Her Human DNA...thus fully God and Fully man...**
- **Joseph would not be the father nor would any man...why??? fulfill prophecy... he would be God with us**

ISA 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (God with us)

Jesus would be the only person ever born who lived prior to his conception And therefore would not need a human father...just a mother to carry him...

A sage once said, " What is the difference between people who make a difference in the world and people who choose not to? Are they any smarter, have superior upbringing, better educated, older, younger, black, white, male, female? What is it? The answer is none of the above. The answer is the ability to make a commitment and take action."

********* *Luke 1:38 Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.*

what I like about Mary her commitment was more important to her than her mental capability to understand the ways of God

- She was first and foremost God's servant...not God's supervisor
- **There is nothing better nor harder than serving God...I mean what could be better or harder than to parent the Son of God... And ...that is the crazy thing about serving God...there is nothing better and there is nothing harder**
- **Serving God is anything but comfortable...it is always inconvenient, troubling, confusing, risky and costly fom our perspective...yet the most rewarding thing we can ever do....**

End

End

the details...The three stages to a Hebrew Marriage

In those times an **Engagement** was often made when the couple were only children...

- It was usually made by the parents or a professional match maker...
- Marriage was considered far too important to be left to the dictates of the human heart...immaturity or lack of judgment
- **The Pledge or betrothal**...was when the ratification of the engagement became official...the girl could call it off...but at this time they were considered in a legally binding marriage...although they would not be wed for one year...the year was spent in preparing for the marriage...home etc. but no living together or marital relations were allowed
- During this time a man and woman would be considered a husband and wife
- To break the pledge would require an official divorce...
- The third stage was the **“Marriage Proper”** which took place at the end of the year of betrothal or pledge

MT 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

Emmanuel I am with you!!!! Jesus is the I am with you of every generation!! For every generation is in great distress and need!! and in the face of that distress he is loving and compassionate, kind and understanding...

Whatever you need I am your source! I am the eternal provider of the Human race... His resources and His power his desire to help people are as inexhaustible as His love; and they are poured upon every generation.

- Are you afraid? Jesus says I am your protector... are you grieving? I am your comforter, I collect your tears.
- Are you empty, Jesus I am your fullness...Are you depressed? I am the lifter of your head ...are you in bondage? I am your deliverer...Are you in need? I am your supply....are you in sin? I am your forgiver....are you lost? I am your savior....are you in trouble? I am your helper...are you sick? I am you healer
- Are you weak? I am your strength....are you confused? I am your wisdom.....are you exhausted? I am your rest... are you defeated? I am your victory...are you lonely? I am your friend

Whatever it is you need ...I am is here as we celebrate His coming know this He is still here

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[Matthew 1:23](#) *"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means '**God is with us.**'"*

John 14:19 Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. ²⁰ When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

John 17:21 I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

John 17:26 I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them.”

God’s love for us is very peculiar...he wanted us in His family... even while we were still his enemies...

RO 5:8 But God demonstrates *his own love for us* in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Go to:

1JN 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

This is a very peculiar love...He wants us to be his children...

- and the world does not know him as the Father....so they will not know us as His children...
- and what we will become has not been made known yet, it is a work in progress...
- so don’t be surprised that you do not know what you will be yet...
- your fullness is a future event...”when he appears”

we practice righteousness and love because we are in relationship with God...the relationship is one of family

- We are His children...it is what we really are...that is truth
- And we shall be like him ...that is truth

Paul the Apostle says it this way...

*PHP 3: 20 **But our citizenship is in heaven.** And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, **will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.** ^{PHP 4:1} Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!*

And Again....

*EPH 2:4 **But because of his great love for us,** God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ **and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,** ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

*COL 3:1 **Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.** ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

Emmanuel I am with you!!!! **Jesus is the I am with you of every generation!!** For every generation is in great distress and need!! and in the face of that distress he is loving and compassionate, kind and understanding...

Whatever you need I am your source! I am the eternal provider of the Human race... His resources and His power his desire to help people are as inexhaustible as His love; and they are poured upon every generation.

- Are you afraid? Jesus says I am your protector... are you grieving? I am your comforter, I collect your tears.
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- Are you weak? I am your strength....are you confused? I am your wisdom.....are you exhausted? I am your rest... are you defeated? I am your victory...are you lonely? I am your friend
- Whatever it is you need ...I am is here as we celebrate His coming know this He is still here..and he is still Blessing...
- so in the OT....Every morning and evening an assembly of the people was called and sacrifices made...at the end of the meeting a blessing was to be pronounced on the people...
- God wanted His people to know in every twice a day..that their identity was not a name given by people...but that they belong to him... and He has a purpose for them as they make their pilgrimage on this earth toward home with him.**

- **The blessing as recorded in Numbers 6, involves a spoken message — To convey a blessing, the words must attach high value to the person being blessed. And paint a special future for the person being blessed...**

NIV Numbers 6:22 **The LORD said to Moses,** ²³ “Tell Aaron and his sons (the priests), ‘This is how you are to **ble**ss** the Israelites**. Say to them: ²⁴ “The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.’” ²⁷ “So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

- **owning This blessing will change your life ...our family our generation... ...for we cannot give away what we have not received and owned first.**

this is the message of Christmas...Good news God is with us because he is for us! end the Blessing

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”

God is not angry with you. He loves you.

Wishing you a Blessed Advent filled with Christ’s love.

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Indeed, we have reduced the Incarnation to a construct in which Christ is merely the means by which God reveals His will and purpose to us and who then assists us in carrying out that will and purpose in our lives and in his creation. Moreover, we sometimes are concerned that God is coming among us... and he is angry.

Indeed, according to the Athanasian Creed, this is how we are to understand the nature of God, the nature of the Trinity, and, indeed, the nature of Christ and the Incarnation for, “although he is God and Man; yet he is not two, but one Christ. *One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by taking the manhood into God.*” Once we see the Incarnation in these terms, our theology must assume a different shape.

The manner in which we look at the men and women around us must take on a different perspective. Perhaps most importantly, the way that we look at ourselves and our worth in the sight of God must undergo a change.