

Introduction:

- The amazing fact of Christmas is simply this: God became a man to be near to us.
- Photographer Oliver Curtis has spent several years going to famous tourism objects and landmarks and pointing his camera in the opposite direction, therefore purposefully capturing the famous landmarks without the actual landmark. The above pics is The Great Wall of China, looking the other way. Stonehenge, Western wall Jerusalem and Buckingham Palace. **APPLICATION** The locations of the world's most famous landmarks are pretty mundane without the presence of the landmark itself. So why would anyone want to turn their back on a landmark? Who is interested in a world of the mundane, the ordinary, absent of any obvious object of import or significance? That same question could be asked of those who live their lives without God. To turn your back on God is to reject the One who adds true meaning and significance to an otherwise meaningless life. Turn your back on the "babe" and the manger scene is just another barn.
- *""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.' ""* (Matthew 1:23, NLT)
- *"This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger"* (Luke 2:12).
- All of December we will be in a series entitled: Immanuel God with Us. You have to get this message for the others in this month to make the most sense!

I. What Does 'God With Us' Mean?

- A. Mt 1:23 is being quoted from Is 7:14. It was a prophetic word given to king Ahaz. Mt. 'picks up' on this scripture and quotes it at the start of his Gospel.
 1. Expectations are every where! Hope arises out of prophetic word. A son will be born! A man child! A king! The Word creates expectation. The mother of this child will have expectations! A righteous ruler excites the expectations of the people! Jesus as fulfillment of this scripture creates Wonder!
 2. le. What makes Christmas fun for children? Presents! Do you wake up on Christmas morning and say, "Oh, I just love this wrapping paper!" "Mom, Dad! This wrapping paper is so awesome!" You don't care about the wrapper, it is all about what is wrapped up inside!
 3. le. On Christmas morning you want the gift, not the wrapping! The gift of life isn't the wrapper it is what was inside.
- B. What is inside the wrapper is what we call the "incarnation." God becoming flesh. "This spectacular truth, at the center of what we celebrate at Christmas, we call "the incarnation,"...God himself taking human flesh and blood and all our humanness. Christmas is when He adds humanity to his divinity, and does so that He might rescue us from our soul-destroying rebellion, and lavish us with the everlasting enjoyment for which we were made." John Piper.
- C. "God with us" has to be one of the most comforting phrases in all of scripture... in all of history!
 1. It is a good feeling when you know that one who is all powerful and knows all things is with you and for you.
 2. le. We had this basement in our house as I was growing up. And it was dark, and there was this furnace that made strange noise. (Just like in Home Alone.) I hated going down there by myself but when my mom or dad would go down there, I had no fear at all.

3. I.e. When I got my first car, I was always nervous to work on it without dad. Dad could fix everything. If he was around I could tear right into it. If he wasn't I was always nervous I would break something. What was the difference in each case? I had someone with me! Are you seeing the power of "God with us?"
 4. Man is lost without God! Man will perish without God! Man is destined for a devil's hell without God! So to hear: "Immanuel, God is with us!" Now that is comforting!
- D. "God with us" means that the Creator became a creature (flesh and blood...like us) with us! That astounds me!
1. Christmas is not about the worth and goodness of humanity, but about the mind-blowing mercy of God. The mercy that He would come and reveal himself to us. Die for us. And on the third day rise and save anyone who would believe in Him.
 2. He became poor that we might be made rich. He became sin that we might become righteous.
 3. There can be no greater picture of humility than in the One who became flesh! God with us.
- E. The Word Became Flesh or God became as one of us. God became flesh.
1. *"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."* (John 1:14, NLT) Let me break this down for us.
 2. This means he was not flesh before this moment of His birth, and that he entered into the world in the flesh as a man at a specific point in history. Jn 1:14
 - a) The point of God putting on of flesh was so that he could die. It was about our redemption.
 - b) Up to this point, there was no way for God to die.
 - c) Now, he will always be a man. He raised his body when he ascended. (Jn 1:19) Paul says the same thing about Jesus and about us in Phil 3:20-21. We will have a (new and glorious) body forever too!
- F. And He Dwelt Among Us
1. Two thoughts:
 - a) The word, dwelt - means to live in a tent, a tabernacle - a temporary dwelling, Jesus lived for a while among us in the flesh. Long enough to show us what God is like and long enough to die and long enough to establish a history.
 - b) He "dwelt among us" means he drew near to us. It's about proximity. (Jn 1:14)
 - c) Christmas is about God becoming man so that he might die so that he might be near his people.
- G. "God With US" Means that God can be seen, spoken to, and interacted with. It means that God is highly personal! Richly personal! Intimately personal. He knows the hairs on my head, what I had for breakfast and what I was thinking of last night and with all that He knows, He still wants to talk and walk with me!

II. 'God With Us' Means I Get To Know Him...Know God Know God...That is better than knowing Beyonce! Knowing Bon Jovi, or knowing Donald Trump.

- A. What can I know about God from Matthew 1:21-23? What can I know about this person with me?

1. The meaning of the names tells us lots.
 - a) First, Jesus is the greek form of Joshua or Yeshua - the Lord is salvation, or Yahweh saves!
 - b) 2nd, Emmanuel - Hebrew meaning...God with us. The name symbolized the fact that God would demonstrate his presence with his people in this deliverance. Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In Tyndale Bible Dictionary (p. 628). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
 - c) Therefore Jesus is with us and He is here to save!
2. "The interpretations given to the two names ("he will save his people from their sins" and "God with us") invite the reader to reflect on the nature of the Messiah's mission." France, R. T. (2007). NICNT Matthew (p. 53). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co. Reveal God and save people!

B. "God with us" means to us that God is knowable.

1. John 1:1-18 (For studiers) Jesus in Jn 1:1 is called the Word. And Jn 1:14 said that the Word became flesh. The fact that God is invisible to men makes the revelation the Lord Jesus all the more meaningful.
 - a) The Word existed as far back as you can go and beyond. ("in the beginning," Jn 1:1)
 - b) "The Word was *with* God, and he was God." (Jn 1:1)
 - c) "All things were made through him." (John 1:14) Jehovah's Witnesses think Jesus was God's first creation, the first thing made. John writes that last line (vs17) to deny that claim. The Son made everything in the category of "made." Therefore, He could not, himself, be made.
 - d) ***John writes: "*No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.*" (John 1:18, NLT) Jesus the unique One, who is God himself...He has revealed God to us.
2. Jesus said this about himself: "*If you have seen me you have seen the Father.*" Jn 14:9
 - a) Then Phil makes a request: "*Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."* Jesus replied, "*Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?*" (John 14:8-9, NLT)
3. "*Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. ...* (Colossians 1:15, NLT) God is knowable!
4. "*Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory.*" (1 Timothy 3:16, NLT) God is knowable! You can know Him too!

- C. Two things we get to know are grace and truth. We see the glory of God's grace and truth. vs. Jn 1: 14 and repeated in 17.

III. **God with Us Impacts Us Four Ways** He Became a Man Heb 2:10-17 "it was fitting/ it was only right/ it was proper

- A. There are four things in Hebrew 2 that God saw 'fitting' for His Son. Fitting simple means that there is no other way it can be designed. This is the best! It means that it 'fits' with Himself!
- B. First, He became human because we are human.
 1. "*Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood.*"

2. God has always wanted a family. Even before the beginning began.
 - a) *"For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."* (Romans 8:29, NLT)
 - b) *"Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, ..."* (Hebrews 2:17, NLT)
 - c) *"So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters."* (Hebrews 2:11, NLT)
- C. Second, He became human that He might die.
 1. *For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death."* (Hebrews 2:14, NLT)
 2. God could not die. But the "God man" could die. When God took on flesh or became flesh it enabled Him to die. But because there was not death in Him, He could rise from the dead. It was therefore, 'fitting' or right that Jesus die.
- D. Third, He became human "that (by dying) he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.
 1. *by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death."* (Hebrews 2:14, NLT)
 2. The power of death, hell and the grave are destroyed by Christ! The devils authority is taken away.
 3. But in the death of Christ, God *"He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross."* (Colossians 2:14, NLT) The devil was disarmed, rendered powerless. His weapon of accusation was taken out of his hand. It was gloriously fitting, that he be destroyed in this way through Christ's death and resurrection.
- E. Fourth, He became human to "deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."
 1. *"Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying."* (Hebrews 2:15, NLT)
 2. Now, when believers look into the cold dark face of death, they say, *"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"* (1 Corinthians 15:55). No more fear. No more bondage. Now. Or ever. A life free from fear is a life given to the Saints.

Conclusion:

- God with us means God is knowable!
- He took the first step in getting to know us and be known by us.
- God himself arrives not only to save us from sin and death, but to rescue us *to himself*.