

Introduction:

- After the Trump election, Jenna Wortham, a staff writer for the New York Times, asked herself a penetrating question as she worked through her surprise of the 2016 presidential election results. "Is social media disconnecting us from the big picture?" Ms. Worthan was surprised at the results, and even more surprised that she was surprised. Astute to politics, she didn't understand why she didn't see the end results more clearly before they happened. Then it hit her – social media. She had worked hard over the last several years to customize her preferences. The Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram algorithms did their job and filtered out all the news and feeds that were outside her circles. To her, it appeared that the results would be clear – but they were not. She points to an ever-growing trend happening in America to filter our experiences based on our preferences, only to find that our perspectives become isolated from challenge or expansion. We don't see the "truth," but rather a filtered edition, our own version of the truth.
- **APPLICATION:** Here is the point... We haven't just insulated ourselves from political messages, as in the raucous 2016 election. Rather, we've taken to insulating ourselves on every level. Take the Christmas story, for example. These days, at Christmastime, we have Instagram churches telling Instagram stories of an Instagram Jesus in an Instagram manger. But the picture is bigger than that. Just outside the frame of the filtered stories we tell, are the realities of sinful men, a gruesome death on a cross, and a gospel that reaches into the gutter of where men live. This is the unfiltered story of the incarnation. **This is the real story of Christmas.** "Is Social Media Disconnecting Us From the Big Picture?" by Jenna Worthan, published NOV. 22, 2016, The New York Times.
- In a very focused way, I want to share with us this morning the true meaning of Christmas. Another way of saying that is: What is the purpose of Christmas? Or Why Christmas? Our Text: Matthew 1:18-23.
- **"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."** *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:* (Matthew 1:21-22, ESV) Three things I want us to look at: A child is born! God is with us! He will save us!

I. A Child Born!

- A. Have you ever noticed in scripture that when an Angel shows up something "BIG" is 'going down!' It is like, 'God is on the move!' Get Ready! When this happens...
 1. Something decisive is being announced. In other words, It's decided and happening!
 2. Something highly revelatory is being spoken. Insight into where 'things' are going is revealed.
 3. It serves to inform and to alert those who have an ear to hear, to prepare and act. It's a call to all today!
- B. It happened to Mary in Luke 1:28-33. And here is the announcement:

1. Lk 1:28 Gabriel shows up to Mary.
 - a) Hello highly favored one! The Lord is with you!
 - b) Don't be afraid! You have God's Favor. Many times people are afraid of God's movement in their lives because they do not understand:
 - (1) How God will work.
 - (2) How it will affect them.
 - (3) And what does this mean to my future. Mary had these questions.
 - c) The Holy Spirit will come upon you to accomplish this!
 - d) You will conceive and bare a son, and call Him Jesus! He will be the Son of the most High God. Whoa! A child is born.
 - (1) Here is OT passage: "*For to us a child is born, to us **a son is given**; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*" (Isaiah 9:6, ESV)
- C. A son is given is covenant language.
 1. Often when a covenant was made between Kings or tribes they would give their son to their covenant partner as a pledge of their loyalty and commitment to the covenant. It was called an exchange of sons.
 2. IE. Abraham offered up Isaac as a sacrifice. God stopped him and said because I now know I can trust you and I will greatly bless you!
 - a) The exchange of son was: Jesus who was set aside from the before the foundation of the world. Abraham was willing to give his son to God...knowing God would raise him from the dead. But....God provided a ram for Abraham and His Son for Isaac!
 - b) A child born and a Son given is HUGE! It is a covenant making move on God's part.
 3. The child is born and the child is named. He shall be called Jesus and Immanuel. These two names invite the reader reflect on Messiah's mission.

II. God With Us!

- A. A child is born is huge, But "God with us!"... is just plain amazingly wonderful!!!
 1. For years Israel was waiting for Messiah. 400 years of silence they waited.
 2. Boom! Angel shows up and announces
 - a) "*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel*" (which means, *God with us*). (Matthew 1:23, ESV) It's big because it is a virgin who is pregnant! It was spoken nearly a 700 years prior! And God is announcing it starts now.
 - b) "*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive*

and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14, ESV)

(1) In Isaiah, Adoni (The Lord God) shall call Him Immanuel. He purposed to make this a reality for us.

(2) In Matthew, *"they shall call Him, Immanuel!"* And in the Gospels that is how they see Jesus. God is with us, through this anointed man. And God literally was.

B. With us! Because God is with us, we have the assurance that we will never be separated from His love.

1. In love... *"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:38-39, ESV)
2. In representation... *"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,"* (1 Timothy 2:5, ESV)
 - a) Mediator - "one that reconciles differences between disputants."
 - b) Advocate - the one who supplies strength and counsel. Wonderful Counselor! *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* (Isaiah 9:6, ESV)
3. Not only is He with us but He will save us!

III. He Will Save Us!

A. *"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for **He will save his people from their sins.**"* All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:"

(Matthew 1:21-22, ESV) He will save us!

1. Many people do not realize they need saving! Why? Because...
 - a) They are so wicked they can't see themselves saved. Or they are so hard hearted it does not even register with them. They think they are too bad to be saved.
 - b) They have never heard they were lost. If you never hear about eternity you never think about it unless you go to a memorial service.
 - c) They are basically good people that do not see themselves as needing saving. So many lost people fit in this category. They are good, do good and don't realize they need a Savior.
 - d) But when you realize that all have sinned and need a Savior, you start looking. When you realize that the wages of sin is death, you start looking for a Savior.
- B. To both Joseph and Mary, the angel Gabriel says, *"**You shall call His name Jesus.**"*
 1. The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew word, Joshua (Yeshua), which means Savior. "The full name in Hebrew is a sentence name: "Yahweh saves." Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., &

Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 361). W.B. Eerdmans.

2. While the name Jesus expresses Christ's humanity. Jesus literally arrives as the agent of Salvation. Our Dread Warrior who has come to save us!
3. His mission will culminate in his death! To provide for us...
 - a) As a ransom for many, "...*To give His life as a ransom for many.*" (Mt 20:28)
 - b) And for the forgiveness of sins. "*for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*" (Matthew 26:28, ESV)
 - c) He will not be what everyone expected. He is God who became man! Humbling himself to death on a cross both proving His love and providing our salvation!

Conclusion:

- A child is born, God is with us, He will Save Us...these three are Christmas!
- The prophet Isaiah said, "*It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'*" (Isaiah 25:9, ESV)
 - He is the One you have been waiting for.
 - Is 53:6
 - He will save His people. You must be one of them.

"That reality should have sent an earthquake through everything Isaiah and his hearers had known about God and the world. The God who made, rules, and upholds the world would now come down into the world. And not as the highest, strongest, and most powerful, but as the smallest, weakest, and most obscure. God was coming not on the clouds, but in a swaddle – fullness of divinity in a diaper." Marshal Sigal, *Fullness of God in a Helpless Babe*.