

Sermon for December 21, 2025 – Advent 4

Matthew 1:20-24 EHV

Theme: Who is this child?

- 1) He is Jesus, the LORD's Saviour.
- 2) He is Immanuel, God with us.

*<sup>20</sup>But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>"Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel," which means, "God with us."*

Have you ever received a gift and puzzled over what it was? You needed the giver to explain how to use or display his gift, which, thankfully, most gift givers are happy to do.

God's gift of His Son is a gift many people don't understand. They wonder what makes his birth so unique that we celebrate it thousands of years later. What relevance does it have for us today?

Let us listen to God's angel use Jesus' names to explain God's gift to us, under the theme: **Who is this child?** 1) He is Jesus, the LORD's Saviour. 2) He is Immanuel, God with us.

Part One: He is Jesus, the LORD's Saviour

Our sermon text finds Joseph trying to figure out what to do with the news about Mary's pregnancy. She claimed her baby was from the Holy Spirit and that she had remained a virgin. But how could that be?

Because Joseph was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace Mary, he decided to divorce her privately.

*<sup>20</sup>But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.*

In calling him a "son of David," the angel reminded Joseph that, as a descendant of King David, he was also an heir of God's promises to him. And what did the LORD promise King David? That one of his descendants would sit on his throne forever as the divine Messiah.

The angel confirmed that Mary told the truth: her child is from the Holy Spirit. More importantly, the angel explained who Mary's child would be.

*<sup>21</sup>She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”*

The name “Jesus” means, “the LORD’s Saviour,” and that is exactly who Jesus is.

Now, our world has many kinds “saviours,” ranging from paramedics and police officers to counselors and charitable people. What would make Jesus’ work unique? The angel tells us: “*He will save his people from their sins.*”

Someone who is not Christian might wonder, “What is sin - and why do I need saving from it?”

Simply put, sin is the desire and act of breaking God’s Law. And what is God’s Law? According to Jesus: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments.*”<sup>i</sup>

And God doesn’t just demand obedient deeds. He demands a righteous heart, as Jesus would later point out, “*I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be subject to judgment.... whoever says, “You fool!” will be in danger of hell fire.*”<sup>ii</sup>

God demanded that we keep His law perfectly, so much so that the Bible says: “*whoever keeps the whole law but stumbles in one point has become guilty of breaking all of it.*”<sup>iii</sup>

Consider your life in the light of God’s Ten Commandments – not only your actions, but your thoughts and desires as well. Can you say you’re innocent of sin? I can’t, and neither can anyone else. And it gets worse: *For the wages of sin is death*, the Bible says. And not just the death our bodies experience in the grave, but that our souls experience in hell. Do you now see why you need a Saviour from sin?

But how could Jesus be our Saviour from sin? How could a human baby remove my mountain of guilt that stands between God and me? How could He do that for the entire world?

The answer to these questions is found in the child’s other name.

Part 2: He is Immanuel, God with us.

We read: <sup>22</sup>*All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel,” which means, “God with us.”*

Immanuel – God with us. What an awesome name! God himself took on human flesh in Mary’s womb. Why? So, He could be like you in every way with one exception: without sin.

Just think: the Almighty God became human so He could save you. He was tempted and tried in every way, just as you are. He knows what it means to lose a loved one to death; he knows what

it's like to be betrayed by a friend. He experienced people's hate, the devil's overwhelming onslaughts, being hungry, exposure to the elements, mental anguish, and deep sorrow. He experienced all this and more. Why? To save you, because he loves you.

He offers you the righteousness he earned through his perfect life as a gift. How do you receive it? Simply by repenting of your sins and trusting the promise God gives you in Christ. And you have every reason to do that! Why? Because He took all your sins, guilt, and shame off of you and put them on himself. On the cross he suffered their full punishment and died. But he didn't remain dead. As promised, he rose from the dead on the third day, proving beyond any shadow of a doubt that your sins are forgiven! Yes, *God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*<sup>iv</sup>

Jesus was born to be “your God with you.” He is “your God with you” in temptation, “your God with you” in salvation, and he remains “your God with you” now as you live on this earth in faith, awaiting His return on the last day.

So don't imagine Jesus as some faraway person. Remember His promise: “*Surely I am with you always until the end of the age.*”<sup>v</sup> Jesus is “your God with you” right now, as you meditate on His Gospel and partake of His Supper. He is “your God with you” every moment of your life. He is with you through every trial and triumph - praying to His Father on your behalf. Even when you don't know why God allows the painful things He allows in your life, you can nevertheless trust that He is with you. He is keeping His promise to use whatever you experience for your everlasting good.<sup>vi</sup>

You might receive gifts this Christmas that will leave you wondering what they are and how useful they will be. May that never be the case regarding God's gift of His Son. Who is He? He is Jesus, the LORD's Saviour. He is Immanuel, God with us. May these truths bring you joy as you consider what great love God has for you in Christ. May they keep you looking to Him in daily repentance and faith, as you live in the confidence of His presence and salvation. Amen.

---

<sup>i</sup> Matthew 22:37-40 EHV

<sup>ii</sup> Matthew 5:22, 43-45 EHV

<sup>iii</sup> James 2:10 EHV

<sup>iv</sup> Cf. John 3:16

<sup>v</sup> Matthew 28:20 EHV

<sup>vi</sup> Cf. Romans 8:28