

A Christmas Celebration

The Power and Glory of His Names

Christmas Eve Service PBC 2023

Texts: Isaiah 64:1-4; Matthew 1:18-25; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7

Isaiah 64:1-4

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence— ² as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³

When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴ From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.

Matthew 1:18-25

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, **being a just man** and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, **behold**, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “**Joseph, son of David**, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and **you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.**” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “**Behold**, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and **they shall call his name Immanuel**” (which means, **God with us**). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and (she) shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6-7

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. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

- This morning, I want to focus our attention on the surprising emphasis Matthew places on the names and titles ascribed to Jesus Christ in the opening chapter of his gospel.
- Matthew introduces us to no fewer than five names and titles given to Jesus, and he mentions these names (or a combination of them) no fewer than 10 times in this chapter – so clearly, he wants us to focus on the importance and significance God has attached to these names.
- Two of these names jump off the page because one of them is the most common name given to the infant (**Jesus**), and the other name is only used here in this text and nowhere else in the New Testament (**Immanuel**).
- Matthew highlights these two names by using descriptive language associated with the giving of these names. In 1:21 the angel instructs Joseph, “**You shall call his name Jesus,**” and in 1:23 Matthew cites Isaiah 7:14 and slightly modifies the original quotation from “*she shall call his name Emmanuel*” to “**they shall call his name Immanuel.**”
- So . . . what are we to make of Matthew’s unusual emphasis on these two names? More importantly, what does Matthew want to make sure we don’t miss as we examine these two names?
- **Matthew wants us to recognize and celebrate the power and glory of these names by revealing to us to how God will use the Son who was given these names to do two humanly impossible things:**
 - a. Through Jesus, God will resolve our greatest problem.
 - b. Through Immanuel, God will fulfill His greatest promise.
- With that in mind, let’s jump into the text before us and let Matthew guide us through five important parts of the story God wrote through his pen to help us see the breathtaking power and glory of these two names God gave to His Son – names that magnify God’s sovereign faithfulness and achieve powerful, gracious benefits for His people.

I. A Reputation at Risk: Matthew 1:18-19

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, **being a just man** and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.*

- The **first unusual thing** that would have grabbed their attention is the word “Christ” – Messiah. The Messiah is about to be born . . . the Son of David . . . the Son of Abraham! This is monumental!
- The **second unusual thing** that would have jumped off the page is the phrase “the book of the genealogy (generation) of Jesus Christ.” This phrase is almost identical to the way Moses identifies Adam in Genesis 5:1 – *“This is the book of the generations (genealogy) of Adam. When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.”*
- The son about to be born to Mary is not just the Son God promised to give to David and Abraham. This son is the Son God promised to give to Eve (Gen. 3:15) and like Adam, Jesus would come into the world by means of a direct, miraculous, creative act of God.
- But Joseph doesn’t know any of this yet! All he knows is that his world just blew up with the shocking news that grew undeniably before his eyes - the girl to whom he was betrothed was pregnant with someone else’s child.
- Matthew reminds us that Joseph was a **“just man.”**
- Matthew tells us that Joseph was also a **“compassionate man.”**
- So how does Matthew resolve the tension going on in Joseph between justice and mercy?
- This tension exists on a much larger scale in God’s own heart!

II. A Problem to Be Resolved: Matthew 1:20

*But as he considered these things, **behold**, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “**Joseph, son of David**, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.*

A. The Divine Dilemma Introduced – “Joseph, son of David”

B. The Divine Resolution Presented – “Do not fear to take Mary as your wife” . . . **AND . . .** “you shall call his name . . .”

C. The Divine Plan Explained – “For that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit”

III. A Mission to Be Accomplished: Matthew 1:21

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

- **Through Jesus, God** intends to save His people from their sins! Psalm 130:7-8 – O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. ⁸ And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.
- Every time you ever hear the name Jesus, God wants you to remember and rejoice in the fact that He has delivered you from the greatest and most desperate need we have - from our sin and the consequences, penalty, and effects of that sin.
- But what was it about Jesus that made this stunning ministry possible?

IV. An Identity to Be Established: Matthew 1:22-23

*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and **they shall call his name Immanuel**” (which means, **God with us**).*

- The second impossible thing God intends to do is accomplished by His intention to use Jesus to fulfill His ancient promise to dwell with His people. This is captured in the second name mentioned in this paragraph – “Immanuel.”
- So, how will God fulfill this promise? Through the birth of a Son whose name would be called “Immanuel,” which means “God with us” (Isa. 7:14).

- Isaiah 9:6 ascribes four stunning titles to this Son - “*His name shall be called*”! Two of these names speak to His Messianic mission – “*Awesome Counselor*” and “*Prince of Peace.*” Two of these names speak to His divine nature and identity – “*Mighty God*” and “*Everlasting Father.*”

V. **A People to Be Redeemed and Restored: Matthew 1:23**

... they shall call his name Immanuel. . .

- When Matthew quoted Isaiah’s prophecy, the Holy Spirit directed him to adjust the wording from “*she shall call his name Emmanuel*” to “*they shall call his name Immanuel.*”
- Who are these people that will recognize and embrace (call his name) Jesus as God with us (Immanuel)?
- They are the people who are mentioned earlier in Matthew’s text – they are “people who belong to God who, through Jesus, He has saved from their sins”!
 - They have believed what God told them to believe about Jesus.
 - They have repented and turned from their sins and called on His name for forgiveness.
 - They have made a life-long commitment to love and follow Jesus as His loyal, obedient, and faithful disciples!

Conclusion: Matthew 1:24-25

*When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,
²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

- ***Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.***
- “*He took his wife.*” Joseph married Mary and embraced her as his wife regardless of the reputational cost to his own name.
- “*But knew her not until she had given birth to a son.*” Joseph protected the paternity of the Son – he refrained from the joy of sexual intimacy with Mary for the sake of God’s desire for relational intimacy with His people!

- *“And he called his name Jesus.”* Joseph adopted Jesus as part of his family and bestowed on Him all the rights, privileges, and expectations of what it meant to be part of his family. He brought Jesus into his life, his heart, and his home.
- *How do I personally benefit from what I have heard this morning? How can I experience the power and glory of these magnificent names – Jesus and Immanuel?*
- **The very same way Joseph did.**

You have to obey what God has revealed to you in this text just like Joseph obeyed what God revealed to him through the words of the angel that appeared to him.

You have to set apart your own desires and your own agenda. You have to be willing to give up your reputation to embrace the Son just as Joseph had to do in this account.

You have to welcome Him into your life, your heart, and your home – and you do that by

- Acknowledging that you need Him,
- Affirming that you want Him,
- Repenting of your sin and turning to Jesus for forgiveness,
- Embracing Him by committing to a life-long relationship with Him.

He has the authority to accomplish all that He has promised.

- *Because His power is unlimited.*
- *Because His character is unchanging.*
- *Because His love is never ending.*

His name is Jesus and He is our Immanuel!