

Mt. 1: 18-25; Titus 3:4-8; Naming the Son I. You shall Call Him Jesus II. They shall Call Him Immanuel

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the naming of children can be a stressful event. I remember back when Allison and I would have discussions on the perfect name- one that goes good with your last name and won't be made fun of. One that rolls off the tongue- and added to that parents often consider the meaning of that name as well. Does it have an appropriate connotation? I actually found out that parents in the US have up to 1 year after their child is born to decide on the legal name! But although it can be stressful and time consuming, naming your child is very normal process. It is to be expected that parents will pick out a name for their little one- and they have great freedom to pick out a name they like. However, this freedom with name choice did not apply in our text today. The naming of Jesus was not a normal process. Not only His work- but His very name was determined of old! We are dealing with issues here that are larger than life! After 400 years of silence from God, it seems like the angelic messengers can't stop speaking! They have lots to say- as the church is moving into a new stage in redemptive history! We will consider this theme: the naming of the Son is given for the comfort of God's people. In our two points, we will look at the two names revealed in these verses.

### **I. You shall Call Him Jesus**

The first name that this son is to be called is that of Jesus. As in v. 21, Joseph is instructed by the angel to call his child- to name Him Jesus. This very common name would be akin to the OT name of Joshua, and it simply means my God saves or Yahwah is salvation. But this common name is given a very clear application- He is to be called this name because that is what He will be! He will be the Savior! He will be the one by whom God saves. His name- Jesus- tells of what He will do- that is- save. Now to save in this context is speaking about the work of redeemer and rescuer. He will be the champion who will liberate those in bondage and set free those in slavery. The one to save is this child- and this child is the only one who will save. In this task, Jesus is completely unique. As Acts 4 puts it, there is no other name under heaven- no other name given among men- no other savior but this one- Jesus. It is He that saves-

for He is Jesus! Note also the prophet ring to this title- He will save. Not a question or a doubt- but a certain fact. A future deliverance that will take place is here foretold! He will do it because God is faithful! Moving on, the angel tells Joseph who it is that this Son will save- He will save His people. In the immediate context, this word applies to the Jewish people or the Israelites. Those who received the prophecies and promises- the covenants of old. His people are the circumcised- the 12 tribes. These are the ones that Jesus came to save. But that salvation will extend beyond just the Jews- for He will save all those whom He came to save! To put this another way, those who are loved by the Father and placed into the hands of the Son will be saved. These too are His people! Those who would be the Bride of the Lamb- the church- those called to be saints. These are the ones who will be saved. But from what will they be saved? Why do they need saving in the first place? As the angel concludes in v. 21- He will save His people from their sins. He did not come to save Israel from the Romans or the Greeks- but He came to save us from our most pressing foe! From sin, death and hell! The fact remains, we are all sinners- the entirety of humanity and fallen into the depths of depravity. By our rebellion in Adam, we have fallen into sin and misery. To sin here is to miss the mark- to violate God's law- to stray from path and fall short of the expected height. It was our sin that necessitated our being saved! We had plunged ourselves into slavery- in line for death- and it was from this fate that Jesus rescues us. Making salvation more than possible- making is certain! Salvation has been accomplished! Jesus came to seek and save the lost- and He has and is doing that very thing! This brings us to our application. First of all, you need to know who you are? You are a sinner that needs to be saved! Second of all, you need to know who Jesus is? He is the savior that rescues His people from their sins! As we read from Titus 2- When the kindness of God our Saviour appeared, He saved us! It is this truth that makes Christmas so wonderful- that Jesus has come and has saved us! But there is yet one aspect to this name that we have not considered- and that is how. How is it that Jesus will be able to save a fallen people? The answer is found in the next name- by becoming one with them!

## II. They shall Call Him Immanuel

After revealing His personal name, the angel continues by linking His name of Jesus to the OT prophecy of Immanuel. Although Joseph and Mary will call Him Jesus, the people of many nations will call Him Immanuel! Found in v. 23 and quoted from Isaiah 7:14, the angel tells of a profound mystery. The name- Immanuel- simply means God with us in Hebrew. “Im”- means with; “Nu”- is “us”; and “El” is God. He is the “with us God.” God come to man to be with man- to dwell with him. There is a sense of union and communion in mind here. But it is even more mysterious- marvelous than this. Because the manner of Immanuel is attained by way of the incarnation! God comes to be with us because God became one with us- as the Son takes on flesh and dwells among us as John 1 puts it. Literally John 1:14 says that the Word became flesh and tabernacles with us. What kind of flesh did Jesus take one? He took on human flesh- earthly flesh- even fallen flesh! He became a man- taking on the form of a servant- coming to help Abraham’s seed by becoming a seed of Abraham! Coming to save Adam’s race by becoming a son of Adam! He did not take on the nature of angel- but that of fallen man- to help fallen man! This is a miracle of miracles- a completely unique event! In this the creator is united to the creature! What salvation does is this- it reconciles God and man. In taking on flesh, Jesus is God who dwells with us. Although it is true that God dwelled with His people in the OT- His presence was evident with the glory cloud, tabernacle and the ark of the covenant- what we have foretold in our passage is a presence that is greater. Although God was with man- He was never one of them. By way of the special operation of the HS- having overshadowed Mary womb- something happened that had never happened before nor would it happen again. God the Son became the Son of Mary. As we considered a few weeks back, Jesus is both God and man. He is 100% both- without confusion and without division. He remains the only begotten Son of God the Father, and He became the first-born son of Mary. A true Son of both- and yet only One Son!

But what does it mean that Jesus brings union and communion between God and man? Well, our sin against God causes a division and strife. Being holy, God cannot stand the sight of sin! And being sinful, we cannot stand the sight of a holy God! After Adam and Eve rebelled, they were kicked out of the garden of Eden. They had lost this communion with God- man and God's special presence could not remain in the same place at the same time. But as the OT progressed, a promise and picture developed. It was possible for God to dwell with man- but blood needed to be shed first- that sin needed to be atoned for and the guilt taken away. Now, as Mt. 1 equates the coming of Jesus and the coming of Immanuel it becomes clear. The only way that God can dwell with man is if Jesus saves man first from their sins! Jesus provides access to the Father and heaven itself by way of His very person and His work! His very being is a picture and promise of what He will bring- peace and fellowship- union between God and man. Therefore when Jesus promises in John 14- I go before you into heaven- to my Father's house- I will take you to be with you- that where I am you may also be. It is His very incarnation that is a foretaste of this blessed event! First Jesus comes to us, and one day He will take us to be with Him! But even now- Jesus remains our Immanuel- even now Jesus is with us! As He promised in Mt. 28- behold I am with you always. Jesus promised to be with us- forever. How does He accomplish this? By way of the Holy Spirit- the very same Spirit who secured and orchestrated the Immanuel's incarnation now provides the manner by which He remains with us today!

To conclude, the name of Jesus and Immanuel are both a source of great comfort to us today! God is with us because the Son is one of us- we can be with God because His Son has saved us from our sins. As Rev. 22 promises, the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in heaven, and we will see His face! God is already in us by His Spirit- and one day we will be with Him because of His Son! Praise God for the gift of Jesus our Immanuel!