

The Glory of Immanuel
Matthew 1:18-25

“But I, O Lord cry to you; In the morning my prayer comes before you.
O Lord, why do you cast my soul away? Why do you hide your face from me?
Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.
Your wrath has swept over me; Your dreadful assaults destroy me.
They surround me like a flood all day long; They close me in together.
You have cause my beloved and my friend to shun me;
My companions have become darkness.”
Psalm 88:13-18

The Message of Christmas is This:

You are not alone.

Your deepest sense of alienation and aloneness doesn't need to exist any longer because God has chosen to come to us in human to reconcile us to himself forever.

I. The Incarnation: Omnipotent Deity Shows Up Clothed In Frail Humanity. Matthew 1:18

“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.”
Matthew 1:18

“The Central Miracle asserted by Christians is the Incarnation... Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this... The fitness, and therefore credibility, of the particular miracles depends on their relation to the Grand Miracle; all discussion of them in isolation from it is futile.”
C.S. Lewis

Staggering Reality: God the omnipotent Sovereign Creator of the universe, the Lord over all, is born as a frail human child. He came in the weakness of our human flesh.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without him was not anything made. In Him was life and His life was the light of men... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:1-3,14

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, ‘I am.’ So, they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.” John 8:58-59

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”

Galatians 4:4-7

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things and in Him all things hold together.”

Colossians 1:15-17

Athanasian Creed:

Now this is the true faith:

That we believe and confess
that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son,
is both God and human, equally.
He is God from the essence of the Father,
begotten before time;
and he is human from the essence of his mother,
born in time;
completely God, completely human,
with a rational soul and human flesh;

equal to the Father as regards divinity,
less than the Father as regards humanity.

Although he is God and human,
yet Christ is not two, but one.
He is one, however,
not by his divinity being turned into flesh,
but by God's taking humanity to himself.
He is one,
certainly not by the blending of his essence,
but by the unity of his person.
For just as one human is both rational soul and flesh,
so too the one Christ is both God and human.

“He (Jesus Christ) condescends to assume my flesh and blood, my body and soul. He does not become an angel or another magnificent creature; He becomes man. This a token of God’s mercy to wretched human beings; the human heart cannot grasp or understand, let alone express it.”

Martin Luther

Our first reaction to feeling deeply alone and alienated is to wonder and to worship that He stooped down to our humanity.

II. Radical Initiative and Intervention: He Has Come to Save us Completely from our Sin. Matthew 1:19-21

“And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 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. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’”

Matthew 1:19-21

When Jesus shows up clothed in our humanity, we know that the seed of the woman has come to crush the head of the serpent.

“ ‘You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins’ — not simply the consequences of sin and wrath, but the poison of sin and the distorting, contaminating, idolatrous, ugliness of sin that ruins everything in life and makes me love stuff more than I love God.

I need to be cleansed of all of that, not just freed from its consequences. **I need the disease to be taken away**, not just a rescue from the consequences of its death and wrath.”

John Piper

“There is no doubt that the crucifixion and death of Christ would have been powerless had He not been truly and fully human. But there is indeed more we can, and should, say about the atoning implications of the incarnation. For, when God became incarnate, He began a comprehensively astounding work of reconciliation that healed and saved every last aspect of our fallen humanity, from cradle to grave.”

Marcus Johnson

“The incarnation is a monumental rebuke of our misguided aspirations. For the incarnation accomplishes the severe mercy of rending absurd any notion that rapprochement between God and humanity. We do not seek and find a reclusive God; He pursues and overtakes a rebellious people. We do not perforate His unapproachable light; He penetrates our unsearchable darkness.”

Marcus Johnson

God came to do for us what we could not and would not do for yourself.
He took on flesh to stand in your place to completely break the penalty, the power and the presence of sin in your life.

Fear Not!

III. Glorious Hope: God is With Us in Christ. Forever.

Matthew 1:22-25

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord has spoken through the prophet:
‘Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name, Immanuel (which is God With Us).’”

Matthew 1:22-23

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:20

“...when the fallenness of the world closes in on us and makes us want to throw in the towel—there, right there, we have a Friend who knows exactly what such testing feels like and sits close to us, embraces us. With us. Solidarity. Our tendency is to feel intuitively that the more difficult life gets, the more alone we are. As we sink further into pain, we sink further into felt isolation. The Bible corrects us. Our pain never outstrips what he himself shares. We are never alone. That sorrow that feels so isolating, so unique, was endured by him in the past and is now shouldered by him in the present.” Dane Ortlund

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham... Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

Hebrews 2:14-18

“Would you have a strong foundation for your faith and hope? Then keep in constant view your Savior's divinity. He in whose blood you are taught to trust is the Almighty God. All power is His in heaven and earth. None can pluck you out of His hand. If you are a true believer in Jesus, let not your heart be troubled or afraid. “

“Would you have sweet comfort in suffering and trial? Then keep in constant view your Savior's humanity. He is the man Christ Jesus, who lay on the bosom of the Virgin Mary, as a little infant, and knows the heart of a man. He can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities. He has Himself experienced Satan's temptations. He has endured hunger. He has shed tears. He has felt pain. Trust Him at all times with all your sorrows. He will not despise you. Pour out all your

heart before Him in prayer and keep nothing back. He can sympathize with His people.”

J.C. Ryle