

# **WE NEED JESUS. THIS IS WHY.**

Part 2 of ADVENT. Matthew 1:18-25.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. December 10, 2023.

## **MATTHEW 1:18-25**

### **This is the church season of Advent.**

- During Advent, we think deeply about the three “arrivals” of Jesus: 1) his past incarnation in humility, 2) his future return in glory, and 3) his presence in our lives by faith now.
- Today’s Bible reading reports the first Advent of Jesus.

Matthew 1:18-25 (ESV) 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” (Isaiah 7:14) 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.

## **THE BIRTH OF JESUS PROVES THAT GOD CAN BE TRUSTED**

### **The birth of Jesus is the fulfillment of ancient prophecies.**

- “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken ...” (verses 22-23)
- The prophet was Isaiah, who wrote around 740 BC.
- He predicted the birth of Immanuel (God with us) in Isaiah 7:14.

## **Our confidence in the second Advent rests in God's trustworthiness.**

- Just a couple of decades after the resurrection, people questioned the delay in Christ's return. The apostle Peter responded:

2 Peter 3:1-10 (NLT) This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your memory... 3 Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. 4 They will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? ... 8 But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. 9 The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief.

## **The birth of Jesus is the proof that God keeps his promises.**

- Jesus gave ample evidence that he was God with us.
- If you're a skeptic, take an honest look at the hundreds of prophecies he fulfilled in his birth, life, ministry, and death (see our Book Table).

## **WE CANNOT MEET OUR DEEPEST NEED, BUT JESUS CAN.**

### **A Gallup survey asked people to identify the most important problem facing our country today..**

- The results were predictable: the economy, healthcare, poverty, etc.
- These are important issues, but THE problem is much more serious.

### **Jesus said that we will die in our sins.**

- Our deepest need is forgiveness. It's a need we cannot meet.

John 8:21-24 (ESV) "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." ... 23 He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I

told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”

## **An angel of the Lord told Joseph the good news.**

Matthew 1:21 (ESV) ... you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

- Jesus is the anglicized version of the Hebrew name, Yashua, which means, The Lord Saves.
- Jesus saves us by reconciling us to God by taking away our sins.

Romans 5:8-9 (NLT) But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. 9 And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation.

- God met our need for forgiveness and reconciliation
- He did it by becoming one of us in Jesus. He lived and died and rose in our place to save us.

## **WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?**

**What the Bible claims for Jesus is beyond question. God can be trusted.**

- What is in question is how we will choose to respond.

... I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: “I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*. Simon & Schuster, 1996. pp. 55-56).

# SMALL GROUPS GUIDE

## GET STARTED

- Share some of the gifts you've bought for your loved ones this Christmas.

## DIVE IN

- Review the study guide. What were Peter's main ideas, insights, or Bible passages related to why we need Jesus?
- Review several of the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in the first Advent. Discuss how these can strengthen trust in God and confidence in the Bible's accounts of Jesus. Find a list at: <https://scottsdalebible.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Messianic-Prophecies-Fulfilled-CHART.pdf>
- Do you agree with Peter that the possibility of dying in our sins is our deepest problem, a problem we cannot fix? Explain your answer. Review John 8:21-24 for more insights.
- Discuss how Jesus met our deepest need. Use Romans 5:8-9 for insights. (Note: Peter used the NLT because it makes Paul's message clear).

## HELP AND ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

- Discuss how you might use Sunday's teaching to dialogue with an honest skeptic. In your opinion, what insights might be most persuasive?

## PRAY TOGETHER

Pray for the members of the small group, your pastors/elders, the Cornerstone family, and our outreach partners. And anything else the Lord puts on your mind.