**Christmas Sermon Merced, 2022**

**Emmanuel: God With Us**

In Matthew Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills the OT prophecies of the Messiah.

**I. Jesus is Immanuel** Matthew 1:18-23

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about….

Who had more faith here, Mary who accepted that she would be pregnant (Luke 1:38) “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Or Joseph who believed what he learned in a dream. Probably Mary!

1:22-23 All this took place to fulfill… Let’s see what it fulfills.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. Immanu come (we get the word immanent) El God

Im among or toward manu us El God

(Note: Matthew begins with God-with-us, but it ends with Matthew 28:20 “And surely I am with you always—to the very end of the age.”

Who would have thought of this?

God came toward or among us.

This is the incarnation.

What is the greatest miracle? The resurrection?

What about the incarnation????

In other religions God is distant and unknowable

In all other religions, man reaches out to God.

Islam: Alms atone for sin.

“Surely good deeds take away evil deeds” (Sura 11:114).

Charity atones for sins “He will remove from you some of your misdeeds” (Sura 2:271,277) (and, by the way, shamefully, also in Roman Catholicism)

Hinduism: Good deeds cancel out bad karma.

In Christianity God came down to us.

That is the Christian message!!!

Jesus is God who came toward/among us

The prophecy: A helpless, poor, peasant, humble virgin girl who is betrothed to be married will conceive and give birth to God-in-the-flesh.

This is a scandal to Muslims who say it is embarrassing that God gets tired or gets sick or goes to the bathroom. That someone had to change God’s diapers.

But Jesus is Son of God and Son of man, literally.

God had to become like man so that man could become like God. (Hebrews)

**II. Jesus is Savior**

Matthew 1:21 “You are to give him the name Jesus.” Matthew 1:24-25 His name was Jesus

And he gave him the name Jesus. (as commanded: 1:21)

Jesus = Joshua = Yeshua = The Lord saves.

Jesus is the new Joshua who, like Joshua who figuratively brought Israel into a relationship with God in the Promised Land as they crossed the Jordan, the second Joshua will deliver us into the Promised Land.

They were outside of God. They went through water. They were baptized into Joshua. (and they were circumcised)

Jesus is Immanuel—God who came to us. And

Jesus is savior.

Q: What did Jesus save you from? Or what does Jesus want to save you from?

Slavery to sin

Life without purpose and meaning

Ignorance.

Guilt

Trying to save yourself.

So far: Matthew 1:18-25

Jesus is God-who-came toward/among us to save us.

**III. Jesus is king** Matthew 2:1-12

The Magi (for what it is worth) are not:

Three

Wise

Did not come to the manger.

But they are men! (joke)

The Magi: 2:2 Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

Note: The first to declare Jesus to be king were Gentiles!

2:3-5 Herod is not fired up to have a new king in town.

Micah 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

God comes to a small, insignificant town. The ruler of Israel, the Creator of earth humbles himself to being born in a manger.

Jesus is a king, born in a manger, the child of peasants, one for whom there was “no room at the inne.”

How could the king of Israel be born in a manger?

Zechariah 9:9-10 A gentle and humble conqueror on a donkey. The opposite of all expectations, but that is Jesus.

Q: Is Jesus your king?

Or are you Herod, who will jealously guard your “stuff?”

Luke 2:34 Simeon says Jesus is “A sign spoken against.”

Not everyone is going to be excited about Jesus wanting to be king!!!!

Matthew 2:11-12 What is the gift you will bring to the child Jesus?

What is it that you have been holding on to that you will give to Jesus this Christmas? What is your gift?

Psalm 51:17 “My sacrifice, O God, is a broken and contrite heart.”

Jesus is God who came toward/among us as savior who would be your king.

**IV. Jesus is called out of Egypt, and he calls us out of Egypt.**

Matthew 2:13-18

Jesus escapes to Egypt and then God calls him out of Egypt.

Q: What is this about? Hosea 11:1

“Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Jesus went to Egypt—became like a slave—to save those who live, figuratively, in Egypt.

Jesus will be called out of Egypt.

Jesus will call us out of Egypt as well.

Jesus is God who came toward/among us as savior who would be king and who would carry you out of slavery to sin in “Egypt.”

Will you leave your own personal slavery in Egypt?

And if you already have, will you be careful not to look back?

**V. Jesus is the righteous Branch Matthew 2:19-23**

v. 23 Jesus is the prophesied Nazarene.

Skeptics: Where is that prophecy? Matthew is making this up!!!

*nazer* = sprout or branch He is the branch.

Jeremiah 33:15-16 In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days, Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: “The Lord our Righteous Savior.”

He is the son of David (both through his father Luke 3:23-37 and his mother Matthew 1:1-17), and therefore he is the son of Man. He is human

But he is the son of God

Zechariah 6:11-13 Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: “Here is the man whose name is the Branch (the Nazarene), and he will branch out form his place and build the temple of the Lord. (a place where God comes toward/among us)

(Isaiah 11:1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse: from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.)

He is the branch of Jesse. The son of God and the son of man.

Jesus is the righteous Branch

Matthew 1:18-2:23

Jesus is the prophesied Messiah

This child Jesus is God who came toward/among us

Jesus is Savior

Jesus is king

Jesus came out of Egypt as a baby and he is calling you out of Egypt.

Jesus is the righteous branch—the son of man and the Son of God.

Will you be like the Magi? Will you bring him the gift that keeps on giving? Will you give Jesus what is on his shopping list? Will you give him your devoted heart this morning, this year, this life?