

Sermon Notes

Reflections

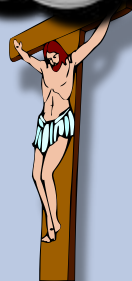
Immanuel is Come!



Unto us a Child is Born!



It is Finished!



He is Risen!



12-20-09



Reflections

The Prophets spoke of the coming Messiah in great detail. His virgin birth, His sinless life, His sacrificial death, and His resurrection are all part of the prophetic record. Centuries passed after these prophecies were given and suddenly they were validated by the birth of Christ. He was welcomed by the angels, worshipped by the shepherds, and visited later by the magi from the East. Let's let Luke's gospel give us the account of His birth in Bethlehem of Judea where Joseph and Mary were given a place in the stable because there was not room in the inn.

So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.¹² "And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:6-14 NKJ)

Returning to the prophetic declaration concerning who this special arrival would be, we read... *Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14 NKJ)* and we also find that He will be called... *Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6 NKJ)* As the angels heralded His arrival in Bethlehem, we need to be reminded that He was declared to be **Christ the Lord**, a clear reference to His deity and that He was the long-awaited Messiah. Immanuel had come! The shepherds and later the magi accepted the prophetic fulfillment that Jesus was indeed the King of the Jews and Lord of lords. Tragically, those who through their religious training should have recognized Him did not. Instead they sought to kill Him. Herod murdered innumerable young boys in an attempt to remove Him from the earth. The religious leaders sought His death throughout His brief stay on the earth and ultimately He allowed them to crucify Him on the cross of Calvary. Even then

He was in control of all the events surrounding His death. He spoke of His life as that which He would give of His own accord.

"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." (John 10:17-18 NKJ)

In this passage, He also points out that He is the Good Shepherd. He speaks of the good shepherd as one who cares so deeply for the sheep in his care that he would lay down his life for them. The response to these statements caused a division among those who followed Him. Once again, the religious leaders sought to kill Him. He, however, took Himself out of their hand. His time for being the sacrifice had not yet come. Others believed on Him from that time forward.

Jesus continued His ministry, healing the sick, raising the dead and preaching the Kingdom message. He made clear that He was the Son of God and that He had power to forgive sin. When He proclaimed that His time had come, He allowed them to finally take Him into captivity, to put Him through treatment that was meant to humiliate Him, to abuse Him, and to eventually place Him in the hands of the Romans to crucify Him in a manner that was normally reserved for those who are accursed. As He died on that cross, He cried out in great pain, as the Father had to look away from His only Son now carrying the burden of the sin of mankind on His shoulders, **"my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** He then declared that, **"it is finished"** and He died for those sins; our sins! Satan must have rejoiced to have finally "won," only to be humiliated himself as Jesus rose from the grave in power and glory, having conquered sin, death, and the grave. Jesus had, as the Scriptures foretold, crushed the head of the serpent.

From the manger, to manhood, Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature. He preached salvation, deliverance from sin, and that the kingdom of God had come in Him. He died a sacrificial death, rose a victor over sin and death, and eventually ascended to the Father to be our advocate. He did not leave His people orphaned, rather, He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell His children to provide them with the power to walk in new life in Christ. This is the rest of the story on which the celebration we call Christmas each year is focused. His arrival is a true source of rejoicing, but greater still is the fulfillment of His reason for coming; the redemption of man from the wages of sin. Let's never forget the manger, or the cross, but let's ultimately rejoice in our living Savior. **Pastor Doug**