**Advent: The Church Welcomes Christ**

**God’s Christmas Present. . . Or, How is Jesus our greatest Gift?**

*An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.” --* Matthew 1:20-23 (NIV)

The Bible does not tell us everything about a subject in one place. What we know of God and His plan has been revealed to many different people over thousands of years. But some texts, like the one above, reveal God’s purposes, and so help us understand everything else. When the angel told Jo-seph that “Jesus” would be Mary’s Son’s name, Matthew links that name with Isaiah’s prophecy so that we may know (and rejoice!) that in Messiah, God has dealt with our greatest problem, OURSELVES.

**Jesus is our greatest gift because only He is God’s Son.** “from the Holy Spirit”

Because He is God’s Son, He has God’s infinite attributes.

It is common for people to include Jesus in their list of world religious leaders or “great teachers,” but few believe that He actually is God’s Son, the second Person of the Trinity. That fact changes everything, for Jesus Christ is. . .

* The perfect storehouse of all that is God (His essence). Colossians 1:19
* The powerful creator of all things. Colossians 1:16, 17
* The coming righteous judge of all things. Psalm 2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8

**Jesus is our greatest gift because only He saves us from our sin.** “Jesus”

 Because He incarnates God’s love, He pays our deadly debt.

The angel was clear concerning the purpose of Jesus’ birth. This proclamation is about the nature of our salvation and our greatest need. So Jesus. . .

* As Sacrifice, paid (atoned) for the sins of His people. Hebrews 10:11-14
* As High Priest, cleared every barrier between His people and God. Heb. 9:11-14
* As Advocate, keeps us forgiven and in fellowship with our Father. 1 John 2:1, 2

**Jesus is our greatest gift because only He is God with us.** “Immanuel”

 Because He is God, He assures God’s eternal presence.

“God with us” is not a religious cliche, but the new reality that God has become a Man to identify with us and to create a bond between us and God. Thus, Jesus. . .

* Fully understands us, feels for us, and relates to us. Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15
* Is present (via His Spirit) to enable our victory over sin. Romans 8:9-14
* Is one with us, as Head of the Body, His Church. Ephesians 1:22, 23

***Welcoming, Unwrapping and Owning God’s Greatest Gift***

*1. Have you acknowledged your need of a Savior?*

*2. Have you said “Yes!” to God’s gracious offer to forgive your sins?*

*3. Do you speak to God daily in Jesus’ name to draw from His grace?*

*4. Are you rejoicing in Jesus and feasting each day upon His Word?*