

Topical Message

Immanuel

Pastor Mac

KAPONO: Would you join me as we pray? Lord, we thank You. We lift Your name on high. Lord, we thank You for this season, Lord, where whether people know it or not, we say Merry Christmas and happy holidays. And it all points back to You, Lord. So no matter how much this world may try to run, Lord, we thank You that everything that You've created points to You, Lord.

So we pray that people who don't know You this season, Lord, that they will come to know Your saving grace, Your love, and Your mercy. We bless Your name and we thank You so much for this time in Your word.

Now we get to see what this season is really all about, Lord. So be with Pastor Mac, Lord. Give him strength to stand on Your word and to fulfill Your purpose in his life. Lord, we thank You for this time again. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

PASTOR MAC: Praise the Lord and thank you. Please be seated. Yes, indeed. Okay. Well, good morning, beloved church.

[Congregation says, "Good morning."]

So glad to see all of you. And on behalf of Pastor JD Farag, we want to welcome you here to Calvary Kaneohe and this Sunday morning where we have a special message that we've been privileged to provide and be a part of.

Those of you joining us online, we welcome you as well. I pray that you're blessed by the message. And if we have any visitors, we also pray that you've been blessed by the fellowship that you should receive here at Calvary, Kaneohe, an overabundance of love. And we'll look forward to get with you afterwards as well.

I do want to remind everyone about our next prayer meeting that will be happening January the 6th at 7:00 p.m. here in the sanctuary. If you're able to come out and join us for some New Year corporate prayer, we would invite you to do so. If you're not able to do so, remember: Prayer, prayer, and pray. That's what we should be doing. That should be our motto. We should always be praying to the Lord.

So I would encourage you to take that into the new year, make it a resolution, even though sometimes they fade to black as soon as the 3rd comes. You know how it is, right? Let's see

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if we could do something different this year and ask God's blessing upon it and see what He does with it.

All right. So first of all, I will say Merry Christmas. I do want to make a couple announcements with that and then I'll get into some Christmas things. So bear with me. This coming Thursday, there will not be a mid-week Bible study. And then the following Thursday, there will not be a mid-week Bible study. That's New Year's Day. So we're going to give you guys the day off. All right.

So the Lord talked to me about it. (Chuckling) No. But enjoy time with your family and really spend some critical moments with them expressing exactly what Christmas is all about from the standpoint of Christ. Keep it Christ-centered. And we'll talk about that in a little bit. And before I get ahead of myself, why don't I just stick to the script?

All right. On Sundays, we have two services. This is our Second Service. And for our Second Service this morning, I'm going to ask you to meet me in the *Book of Matthew, Chapter 1*. We'll pick it up at *verse 18* and read down through *verse 25*.

I would also ask that all who are able to stand to do so for the reading of the word of God this morning, followed by a word of prayer. Again, we are going to be in the *Book of Matthew, Chapter 1*, beginning in *verse 18*. Okay, God's people?

The word of God reads, **“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.**

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary, your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’

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So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us.'

[Verse 24] Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus."

All right. Why don't we pray for the Lord's blessing on our teaching this morning? Please join with me. Loving, Heavenly Father, once again, we come to You with open arms, asking for open ears and open hearts to hear and receive Your word of truth. We are in desperate need of Your word, and we look forward to what You're going to minister to us today, especially during this time of year where we celebrate the birth of the Messiah.

And as we do so, we look forward to pulling out all of the riches that You would have us to mine from in Your word, that we have time in this time that we have together, that You've given us, that we freely give back to You.

Everything comes from You and we look forward to what You're going to bring forth. So Lord, bless our time together as only You can. And we thank You in advance, in the mighty name of Jesus the Christ, we do pray. Amen. All right. Praise the Lord. And please be seated.

All right. So our teaching for our Second Service this morning is simply titled, 'Immanuel.' And during our First Service, we looked at Mary's song known as the Magnificat, and we expounded on *verses 46 to 49 in Luke, Chapter 1*, mainly looking at the response that Mary had regarding her being told that she would conceive.

And for our Second Service, we are going to come from the prophetic standpoint of Joseph as we look into some of the events that deals with the birth of the Messiah. But before we do, like I did in First Service, I'm going to mention a couple of things as well as have a few things for us to consider when it comes to this Christmas holiday season. So bear with me because I'm going to basically repeat what I said to those in First Service with some add in, perhaps. But I think it's very important for us to understand. All right.

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First of all, instead of us digging into the pagan roots associated with Christmas, Pastor JD did a teaching back in December of 2024 titled, 'Why Some Don't Celebrate Christmas But Why We Still Do.'

Now, in that teaching, he would highlight many of those pagan origins, and he dealt with it head on. Why some — why some of the reasons why Christians do not celebrate Christmas, and why some Christians choose to. And like I mentioned, at the end of the day, it all boils down to choice. It's a personal decision at the end of the day.

And I pray that we're not so dogmatic about it or judgmental about it when people choose to or choose not to. There is no need for any of that. It's all hot garbage. Because there's one thing for sure when it comes to this time of year, specifically speaking, Christmas Day, we don't see people running to work because they're so, you know, upset about Christmas happening. Right? They definitely take the day off. Right? So if it was such a headache, everyone that doesn't believe in it, maybe you should work that day.

[Laughter]

I'm just saying. For free, by the way. But the question I ask myself regarding occasions within the faith that have some type of controversy with it, is that how can this time be used effectively in order to show the love of God? Any occasion is going to have something with it. That's the question we should ask ourselves.

So regardless what position one might hold, at the end of the day, we can use this time because of the traditions that we do have as a launchpad for us to talk about Jesus. I mean, it invites the conversation in one way or another, and I think that all of us should take advantage of that because it's all about Christ in the first place.

And I talked about even to those people that come up to you and won't say, "Merry Christmas" and they'll say, "Happy Holidays," they're indicted anyway. Right? The very word "holiday" means holy day. Right? So you got them right there from the gate because you could point them to the Holy One, and the Holy One is Christ and Christ alone.

So again, we should take advantage of it according to the word of God. We should use it for the glorification of God. And in doing so, we can bring people to God without compromising

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our faith. Do we understand, church? I pray that's how we look at this. Because at the end of the day, we are here to glorify the Lord. And if it's all about some type of holiday that we don't celebrate, but we get a chance to inject, inject it. I think that we would be honored by doing so.

Now, I also talked about even though this time period is so joyous for many people, it's also stressful and quite depressing for many people as well. And we need to really understand this as Christians. This is why it's really important that the love that we have to share is on Front Street, especially during this time of year, because people are hurting.

Some people are just distraught because of things that happened in the past, loved ones no longer being around, in debt because of various reasons, feel like they're inadequate to be able to supply for the family, not enough resources. And the list goes on and on. They've been bred that physical gifts makes the Christmas.

And that's the problem. Physical gifts are good, but the gift of God is greater. It's the greatest gift. And that's what we should be offering, all in love. It doesn't cost anything to give the message of love. So I pray that we take this on as a charge and also as a challenge. Because what are we doing if not? Are you following me?

This should be our mission. Because if it's not our mission to do it in this way, then perhaps we are just a bunch of pagans putting things under the tree and we ourselves can never get past the phrase "Merry Christmas." We say nothing else. And if that's us, that's a shame. Are you following me, church? So let's do our best to make a difference. All right. Praise God. And I pray that we make a difference today as we learn this message.

Now, with all that said or re-said, I am praying that we can come together as we celebrate the birth of the Savior and look into this account and be able to learn something new, something that we have never learned before, because the word of God is alive and active.

And with the Lord's blessing, we are going to use these verses captured in *Matthew* that we went over. We're going to expound on them in order to guide our discussion. We're going to look at some key points of Joseph as it pertains to the circumstances surrounding the birth of the Messiah, go over some key prophecies in a little detail to show how amazing the

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word of God is as we praise the Lord for providing for all of mankind this amazing free gift of salvation.

And with that, *verses 18 and 19* of our text. The word of God reads, **“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.”**

Now, one of the things that I want to focus on in *verse 18* has to deal with Mary being betrothed to Joseph, because during that culture, being betrothed carried the same commitment as being married. So for her to be found with child was a major problem, to say the least. And because that commitment was on the lines of being married, it wasn't like Joseph could just walk away.

Are you tracking with me? He couldn't just leave. There was a process that he had to go through. And the fact that she was found with child also shows that Joseph did not immediately know that her conception was by the Holy Spirit. The way it's written in *Matthew* is a, you know, it's shorthand. So he's providing for us some details upfront that had not yet been revealed.

Now, Joseph had to be shocked to find this out. So he begins to make some arrangements. And this is where Joseph may get too little attention based on what he did, which is why he is called — look at *verse 19* — **“a just man.”** Do you see that? A just man.

And I want to take a moment so we can see how God, as only He can, can do this. So in that culture, the groom, in this case being Joseph, or someone who was betrothed, would already had paid the dowry for their bride-to-be. So this was already an investment that happened. And the only way to end being betrothed was by getting a divorce.

And during that culture, in that time, if a woman committed adultery, it was required by law that the man divorce a woman by mainly putting her away as a public spectacle. This was to deter anyone else from doing it. And also by doing so, it would basically remove any second chances from her getting remarried. And that man would be considered upright and just in the sight of all of the community. He did the right thing.

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But if a man did not divorce his wife or bride-to-be in the case of adultery, in this way he was considered weak while inviting all kinds of rejection for not maintaining his family honor. And because of that, he would be made a public spectacle and have his reputation completely ruined. Are we tracking?

So Joseph's decision to put her away privately was one that appears to be well thought out. This was not some overnight process, nor was it something that he made just off of emotions because it would have went the other way, in most cases. But Joseph shows restraint as well as grace. And this will benefit him, as we will see.

And even though Mary may have not told him what had happened, at some point, she did. But how could she prove it? Right? And since putting her away secretly would have only required two or three witnesses and a bill of divorce, that would not have taken so long.

But he pondered about these things, took careful consideration based on perhaps what she said. And it goes to show his diligence and his compassionate heart that he had, knowing that by doing it this way, shame was going to follow. Because by now, everybody knew that that was his wife-to-be, not to mention the financial loss.

Remember the dowry he already paid? And his decision to put her away privately was all prior to the angel of the Lord appearing to him in a dream. Think about that. That's some careful consideration. In other words, this was who Joseph was, from the line of David, with the heart of David.

Now, another thing that we need to consider about Joseph being called a just man is that it would have been well within his rights to follow the strict protocols of the laws or customs in that day and culture. He could have done it; still would have been justified. But he chose not to. And we really need to pay attention to this. Hear me out. Because laws and customs can often be a major roadblock from exercising compassion.

Do you hear me? Black and white can be very dangerous, leaving no room for us to think. And that's a sad place to be at, by the way, knowing that there's a better way to do it, but just following rules and customs, just because.

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Are you following me, church? Compassion like this requires a spiritual understanding, and that's a gift from God. And that comes by knowing the true and living God. Why? Because God is full of compassion.

Again, this was the heart of Joseph, and it reflects what's captured here in the *Book of Psalms, Chapter 112, and verse 4*. The word of God reads, "**Unto the upright [Listen] there arises light in the darkness; he is gracious and full of compassion, and righteous.**"

Do we see this? A man after God's own heart knows the heart of God. And this is what we see here when it comes to Joseph. He did the right thing and God honored it.

Verses 20 and 21 of our text. The word of God reads, "But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.'"

Here is where Joseph is told about the miraculous conception of Mary. But notice it's while he was still thinking about these things and slept on these things with these things on his heart, that in, no doubt, he took to the Lord while he went to sleep. Think about it. And look what happened. An angel appeared to him in a dream. He took such a weighty and heavy matter to the Lord to sleep, thinking on it, pondering about it.

And look what happened. He gave it all to God. And when we do the same, the Lord will reveal whatever it is to us. Because He wants us to be guided by His will. And just like Joseph in the Old Testament, when he would receive his revelations from the Lord in dreams, we have this account with a Joseph in the New Testament doing the exact same thing.

And when it comes to that, I would encourage you to do a study on the Joseph of the Old Testament, to look at all the typology that he has with Christ. It is an amazing study worthy of all of your time to look at it. You will be so blessed. So again, I encourage you to do so.

But our Joseph here is named after him. And what we see is that he has the same kind of faith as well. But before we get into more of his faith, I want us to take a moment and see

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why he is called the “**son of David**” by the angel of the Lord. And I want to explain why that is, as well as why it is not. So first, most of you know that the “**Son of David**” is a messianic title. It speaks to the promised King that would rule over David's throne forever.

Now, the Jews know about this promise and knew about this very well. So think about this. Of the 16 times that we have this title used in the New Testament, “**Son of David**,” 15 of them are related to Jesus. And only here in *verse 20* of our texts do we see this title being used otherwise. One time.

And in conjunction to what was being told to Joseph, this would begin to all make sense to him. It all starts to come together. This was the main point of him being called the son of David. So he understood what was going to happen, not to prove that Joseph was from the royal bloodline of David, which he was. But there was an issue with the royal bloodline of David through Joseph because Joseph was a descendant of a king by the name of Jeconiah or Coniah. And because of this king's unrighteous rule, his bloodline was cursed by God.

But God would still make a way based on the lineage of David. And we know this because the account captures both the curse and the blessing right next to each other. And we see this truth beginning in the *Book of Jeremiah*, in *Chapter 22, verses 28 to 30* with the curse, and then in *Chapter 23* *verses 5 to 6* with the blessing. So we're going to look at this to see how all of this comes together for our understanding Jeremiah, *Chapter 22, verses 28 to 30*, the word of God reads, “**Is this man Coniah [This is the unrighteous king] a despised, broken idol — a vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, and cast into a land which they do not know? O earth, earth, earth, here the word of the Lord!**

[Verse 30] Thus says the Lord: ‘Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days; [And here it is] for none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.’

Do we see this? Again, this is the bloodline where Joseph comes from. So as far as him or any of his descendants being “throne” or “royalty” regarding the line of David, it can't be via the bloodline.

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But right after this, we have this word of the Lord by *Jeremiah in Chapter 23, verses 5 through 6*. The word of God reads, **“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”**

So unlike the unrighteous king Jeconiah, whose name, by the way, actually means ‘The Lord establishes,’ Behold, the days are coming when that establishing of the eternal King by the Lord will still be from the root of Jesse through the line of David, and He will be a righteous King called the Lord our Righteousness. Who? It’s Jesus the Christ. And the connection to that bloodline would not come by Joseph, but by Mary, who was a descendant of one of David's other sons, Nathan. So the cursed bloodline from Coniah is bypassed.

Now, even though there were other male descendants from the line of Nathan via David, only one was divinely appointed, which was the requirement for all of the kings. And Jesus was appointed by God through the angel, Gabriel, to Mary, by the way. And that's important to note. Why? Because the *Book of Matthew* represents the coming King. However, in the *Book of Luke*, it's where Mary is given this word. Are you tracking with me?

Captured in the *Book of Luke*, in *Chapter 1, verses 32 and 33*, the word of God reads, **[Speaking of Jesus] “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”**

So again, Joseph, being called the son of David, was the sign that he needed to hear in order to know and follow through. He understood it based on that. And what he was about to do was still going to be a most difficult calling on his life. Think about it. Don't forget, he has taken Mary as his wife and people still know that that's not his biological child. So all of that fallout that we talked about earlier was about to be amplified. And he knew it.

Also, notice in *verse 21* that we are told that Mary would bring forth a Son. Do we see that? Mary will bring forth a Son. And the reason why this is important is because it excludes

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Joseph entirely from the process, unlike what we see concerning Zacharias and Elizabeth captured in *Luke, Chapter 1, and verse 13.*

The word of God reads, **“But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.’”**

Do we see the difference? The details matter, and therefore our learning to see the specifics captured in God's word. So in other words, there are no biological ties whatsoever when it comes to Joseph and Jesus Christ. None. And when it comes to biology from the standpoint of the impact of sinful flesh of mankind, Jesus was conceived and born without any biological stains or impurities at all. He was born via the Spirit, not to mention, this is why it is written that Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father.

Do we see that? A divine conception within the physical properties of the Creator himself. And both Mary and Joseph were told what His name would be. Why? Because that gave them an aspect of parental rights that would be recognized within the culture.

So we have Mary, the privileged carrier with this conception, and Joseph, the legal earthly father, by taking Mary into marriage, which allows this one-of-a-kind union to conform within the law of God. Is there anything too hard for the Lord? All of this comes together perfectly because our God is perfect. And it's all being accomplished in an imperfect world.

And the one last thing regarding *verse 21*. Well, maybe two. Why don't we go back to *verse 20?* **“...for that which is conceived...”** You see that word, **“conceived”** in her in *verse 20?* Why do I mention that? Because conception is life. That's why I mentioned it. Not “born” of her. What is “conceived” in her is recognized as life. Follow me, church? So when people ask, “Why is your stance a certain way?” You could point to this verse.

Okay. 21. Notice that Jesus came first to save His people from their sins. Do we see that? We have to remember that when He came, He came to establish His kingdom, but He would be rejected by the nation of Israel. And again, His first prophetic calling to save was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And this would be something that Joseph and Mary would know and understand, at least to a degree.

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And we need to remember, we have to keep the Jewishness in mind, especially when it comes to the Gospels, because that's where so much of what is written and being discussed is unlocked for our learning, and it will draw us nearer to the Lord. Trust me on it.

Veres 22 and 23 of our text, the word of God reads, **“So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’** which is translated, **‘God with us.’”**

Okay. Here we are, basically, at the capstone of our sermon this morning. And here *Matthew* points out in *verse 22* that the word of the Lord was spoken through the prophet. Pick up on this detail. In other words, no word that's spoken by a prophet within the word of God is of their own. When they say, “the Word of the Lord,” this is exactly what they mean.

And I love the way *Matthew* captures this. Not to mention that the entire counsel of God's word is God breathed. But again, we have this small detail placed here because it holds a lot of weight and we're going to see how much weight in a moment.

Now, most of us are familiar with this prophecy that's found in the *Book of Isaiah*, in *Chapter 7* and *verse 14*. But it's the circumstances surrounding this prophecy that often gets overlooked. And what I want to do is for us to focus on this for a moment. So please just bear with me. It'll take a minute. Good thing we have about 20.

Now, this entire account is found in *Chapter 7*, *verses 1 through 16 or 17* that we're going to be discussing. But for a detailed look at Immanuel, I will encourage you to look and study from *Chapter 7* through *Chapter 12*. So if you want to put that in your little notes, that's the study for Immanuel and you'll be blessed by it, as with all the studies.

Now, even as we go through our text, we're not going to read all of these verses. But what I am going to do is an overview and touch on some of the main points in order for us to paint this amazing picture that the Lord has for us to see. So let's get to it. All right.

At this point in the nation of Israel's history, we have the wicked King Ahaz on the throne in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, with Pekah as the king in the Northern Kingdom, or Israel.

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Now, the Assyrians, their empire, is about to come into full swing. And the Assyrian Empire is threatening all of the other surrounding nations in the Middle East. So a nation to the north of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, Aram, they want to join forces with Israel in order to be able to fight against the Assyrians.

But when they join together, they realize they need more manpower, so to speak. So what did they do? They reached out to Ahaz, the southern kingdom, and said, "Ahaz, listen, the Assyrians are some bad dudes, so why don't you join with us? We can all get together and we can withstand them."

Ahaz told them no. So word gets back. And now the Northern Kingdom, Israel, and Aram they're mad. So they come up with a plan. "You know what? Why don't you and I just attack the Southern kingdom?" But not for the purpose to completely annihilate the Southern Kingdom.

What would that do? No, no, no. They wanted to go and attack the Southern Kingdom in order to remove Ahaz off the throne and put somebody else on the throne who would be more inclined to join forces with them. And what that would do would remove the bloodline of King David. Are you following me? That's a no-no. Big problem here, because what you're doing now is attacking God directly via his covenant with the House of David.

Now, this is kind of what it would look like. We have Aram to the north of the Kingdom of Israel, and we could see smaller Judah to the south. So now we have this evil King Ahaz — remember, he's still an evil king— shaking in his boots. But even with that, he's not seeking the Lord.

You know why? Because Ahaz worships idols. He doesn't worship the true and living God. So he's walking around preparing for this impending attack. But God, again, has a covenant with the house of David, and He intends to keep it. And the prophet Isaiah is told to go to Ahaz with a message.

And here's a detail that gets missed. Isaiah is also told to take his son with him. Pay attention. Isaiah is told to take his son with him. And his son's name is Shear-jashub. And his name means "a remnant shall return." And what he would be used for is a prophetic symbol to Ahaz.

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So in *verses 3 through 9 of Isaiah, Chapter 7*, Isaiah tells Ahaz about the plot that is against him, not just to come and attack, but to remove him from the throne and establish a new kingdom under new rulership. But he assures Ahaz that he has nothing to fear. He lets him know that no conspiracy at all would ever come against the house of David. It would never stand and that God will judge the Northern Kingdom and Aram for what they had planned to do.

But instead of trusting the true and living God, Ahaz set out to align himself with the Assyrians. So in *verses 10 and 11*, Isaiah pleads with Ahaz, and he's given a word by God to tell Ahaz to ask him for any sign from the height of Heaven to Earth. No matter what it is, ask Him and He, God, will perform it for him in order for Ahaz to trust the word of the Lord.

Are you tracking now? And what does this Ahaz do with this once in a historical time offer from the true and living God? He rejects it. Not only does he reject it, he rejects it using God's word out of context, letting us know that he knew the Word, but he still chose to worship idols. So that is the supreme diss of disses. You follow me?

When God says, "Ask me anything and I'll show you" and you say "No," all right, it probably won't end too well for you. So now the attention goes away from the wicked King Ahaz for a moment. And Isaiah now focuses on the house of David. Very important for us to understand. Are we tracking so far? All right, good.

Because this is where we pick it up in *verse 13 of Isaiah, Chapter 7*, as the word of God reads, **"Then he said, 'Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? [And here it is in verse 14.] Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel.'"**

Okay. But wait a minute. What does that do for Ahaz? Right? Oh, let's finish now. Right in *verses 15 and 16*, this is where Isaiah's son comes back into play within the context. This is why in *verse 15*, if you see on the screen, I revised it not to capitalize the word "he" or "child." Are we tracking? Because what we have here are two prophecies. One prophecy is for the house of David, and one specifically for evil Ahaz. Okay?

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And again, based on my understanding, Isaiah's own son, based on the text, was with him, and he represents the next two verses that read, *[Verse 15] “Curds and honey he shall eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. [And verse 16 is the key.] For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.”*

Do we hear that? Do we hear that? In other words, before Isaiah's son is old enough to be fully accountable for his decisions, morally, the king of Aram and the king of Israel will both be gone. Are we tracking, church? And this is exactly what would happen some three years later. Ahaz would never see the prophecy concerning Immanuel.

But we know that this prophecy was also fulfilled along with many other prophecies and several more to go. I hope that helps out church and clears up the muddy waters. But that's the circumstances around this prophecy. And we who believe truly have God with us and we should never forget how grateful we should be for such an amazing gift.

And now our final two verses of our text: 24 and 25. The word of God reads, *“Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.”*

So here, *Matthew*, by the Spirit, shows us the immediate, obedient response by Joseph, based on the command of the Lord. And seeing how our text reads after what was said to him in the dream, what did he do? Oh, he got up and made it a reality without thinking about it anymore. No more thoughts. Over with. Understand all. Execute.

And this is what the word of God should do for all of us. Once we hear it, we should heed it without hesitation. That's where the blessing comes in. And yes, that may mean we will be ridiculed. Yes, that may mean our reputations may be tarnished. But through it all and in the end of it all, God is with us. And that should be our only concern.

Also, notice the ownership that's given to Joseph as it pertains to Mary. We see that he took to him his wife. Whatever doubts that he may have had were all gone. And there's no doubt that her treatment in a loving and caring way was intensified. And what's also seen is his respect, highest level of respect towards the Lord. It's reflected in how he would honor

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her. How? By not even risking to somehow interfere with God's inner workings of her womb.

Do we see this? Think about that. Nine months was a long time, brother. (Chuckling) I'm just saying, to be betrothed and all of that, it's your wife and everything, right? Yeah, man. But no, he honored that.

And on a side note, using this as an example, it's true that the more we truly love and honor the Lord, the more we would do the same for our spouse. It would be reflective. That right there is the stage setter. That's the difference between playing Christian or being Christlike. If you love the Lord, if we love the Lord so much, our wives would know it, our husbands would know it.

Now, before everybody gets in trouble, in *verse 25*, we see that Jesus is her first born. And I want us to consider how this ties into rulership. Firstborn and rulership. Are we tracking? Because we have this passage of Scripture captured in the *Book of 2 Chronicles* that I want to use in order to make the point, and it's in *Chapter 21, verses 1 through 3*.

And the word of God reads, **“And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram, his son, reigned in his place. [Verse 2] He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.”**

[Now listen to verse 3.] Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn.”

As Immanuel, Jesus Christ is the firstborn with eternal relational ties to God the Father, a status that no one else could ever have, making Him more than worthy of His kingdom to come. And that's not all. Captured in the *Book of Colossians*, in *Chapter 1*, and *verse 15*, the word of God reads, **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn, over all creation.”**

Jesus is God, revealed to us in the life of Christ, who came into His creation, being the firstborn over all creation. A status that no one else could ever have but Him, making Him more than worthy of His kingdom to come. And that's not all.

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Captured in *verse 18 of Colossians*, the word of God reads, **“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”**

That He may have the complete authority in all things. And that's exactly what he has from His birth and His victory, living a life in perfect righteousness while being obedient unto the cross and having victory over death. This is a status that no one else could ever have, making Him more than worthy of His kingdom to come. In the end, God is too great and too good to sum up in words as well as praise.

Again, for all of us who believe, the best thing that we can do during this season is to share this amazing gift that we have been given and we have accepted, praying that others would do the same. And these teachings today are the tip of the iceberg as it pertains to the lessons, prophecies, and amazing insights of the word of God dealing with the accounts concerning the birth of the Savior of the world.

But I do pray, again, that something new was delivered to each of us that would keep each of us excited for the Lord, always knowing that God is with us. That's the key. But for those of you who do not know the Lord, God is not with you because you have not accepted Him. That's the problem.

And there's no need to use the excuse about Christmas being pagan or how some people say this and do that or do this or don't do that. All excuses. I would encourage you to be concerned about what the Bible says.

So pick it up for yourself. Look at it on your own. Take this time when you have these days or weeks off. Get with the Lord alone. Allow Him to speak to you and through you via His word. Don't allow any issues from the past to prevent you from seizing an opportunity in the present of the greatest gift to mankind.

This is not a simple story. This is what God has done. And there's nothing to be compared to it. Each and every one of us knows that we are fallen and broken. And only by being connected to God can we ever be healed and our souls fully complete. But our sin is the problem. It's a major problem. And if we remain in this sinful state, we can be found dead

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in our sins, dying in our sins. And if that happens: Eternal death. That's the issue. Eternal destruction.

And only by believing in Jesus Christ are our sins forgiven. That leads to eternal life. So again, I urge you to be saved today by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

And it is A-B-C simple to be saved, first by acknowledging that you are a sinner and in need of a savior. And there is only one savior, and that is Jesus the Christ. *Romans, Chapter 3, and verse 10* says that **“As it is written: there is none righteous, no, not one.”**

And *verse 23* says, **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** No one on their own merit will ever enter into the kingdom of Heaven. It doesn't work that way. We must be clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

And as shown in *Chapter 6*, and *verse 23*, the Bible says, **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** That's the A. And the B stands for “believe,” while the C stands for “confess with your mouth.”

Both are captured in *Romans* as well, *Chapter 10, verses 9 and 10*. The word of God reads, **“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”**

Like we talk about week in and week out, this is just a simple way of having the sin problem in all of our lives resolved. If you have not come to this point, you need to get to this point because you may leave or stop listening today and that may be the end of you. And then there will be no point. What do you have to lose? God loves us. Everything we talk about shows us how much He loves us. Take advantage of the love of God. He wants us reconciled to Him, and His Word speaks to this.

2 Peter, Chapter 3, and verse 9, the word of God reads, **“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”**

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And I pray that's exactly what you have done today, if you have never done it before, and that you have made Jesus Christ your Savior. And now you can go on with your day and from now on, knowing fully that God is with you. Why don't we stand and pray?

Loving Heavenly Father, Your word of truth is so amazing. Words cannot even be uttered enough to express how amazing Your word and You are. So I pray that this word that You have blessed us with this morning goes forth as far as possible, reaching all of our hearts and souls in a new way that we can live in a better way to represent You. We thank You for all that You have done and continue to do in and through our lives.

And as we go our separate ways and celebrate Christmas, remind us over and over again to keep You at the center of it, not just in this season, but every day of our lives. Thank You, my Lord. In the mighty name of Jesus the Christ, we do pray. Amen