

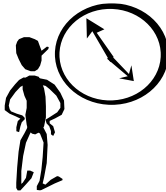
THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

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Time of Assembly



Every other Sunday:

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.

OR

Bible Study	4:00 p.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study	7:00 p. m.
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One Great Birth, Two Great Names

By Doy Moyer

We are at that time of year when the birth of Jesus Christ is on the minds of many. That much is a good thing. There are many misconceptions about His birth, but doors may be opened to talk about it and we need to be willing to do that. We do not know when Jesus was born exactly, but that does not really matter. The fact that He was born and the fact that people think about His birth at least at this time of year are both important. If people are ready and willing to hear about Jesus, Christians ought to be talking about Him.

Much can be said about Jesus' birth, but here we want to highlight two names emphasized at His birth that will impact our relationship with Him. First, consider the narrative from Matthew's account:

“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. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 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. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us) ...” (Matthew 1:18-22, ESV)

Let's take brief note of the two names here:

Jesus Is Called “Jesus”

“Jesus” is the name people know, but do we think about why that name was given? Matthew tells us explicitly that Joseph was to call His name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. The name means “Yahweh is salvation,” so the

name is quite specific to Jesus' purpose in coming to earth in the flesh. He came to save people from their sins.

Jesus is the same name as Joshua. When we think of Joshua, we think of the man who took over for Moses and brought the children of Israel into the promised land of rest. Joshua is a type of Jesus, the One who truly brings us to the promised rest. The Hebrews writer picks up on this in chapter four by pointing out that if Joshua had given rest (that is, ultimate rest), God would not have spoken of another day. We need to strive to enter that final rest with God, and the way this is done is through our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. He came to bring that great sabbath rest. He came to save us and deliver us from the evil of the world.

The significance of the birth of Jesus is that God has entered this world to bring salvation to those who are lost in sin. This is the gospel message: *"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you..."* (I Corinthians 15:1-2).

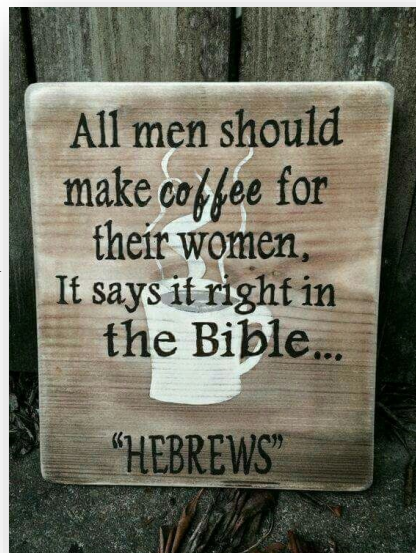
Jesus Is Called "Immanuel"

Matthew shows that the birth of Jesus ultimately fulfilled the prophecy made in [Isaiah 7:14](#): *"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*

Matthew translates Immanuel and tells us that the name means "God with us." We might think back to Eden when God dwelled with Adam and Eve before their sin. Sin broke the fellowship, but God had a plan to restore that broken relationship. The concept of God dwelling with man is a major biblical theme that is seen through the garden, the tabernacle, the temple, and through Jesus Christ. John informs us that Jesus, the Word, is God manifested in the flesh ([John 1:1-18](#)). He *"tabernacled among us"* ([John 1:14](#)). Not only is God with us in the sense of watching over us, He actually came to walk "among us" in Jesus Christ. Jesus is Himself, Immanuel.

This name signals that the curse of sin is reversed in Christ, who, as the seed of Abraham, blesses all nations ([Acts 3:25-26](#)). Instead of remaining separated from God because of sin, God is with us because He has removed the barrier of sin by the sacrifice of Jesus ([Colossians 2:13-15](#)). The church is now considered to be a dwelling of God in the Spirit ([Ephesians 2:20-22](#)).

Matthew puts both names together. Our Savior is called both Jesus and Immanuel. He saves us from our sins and He is God with us. This is worth rejoicing over and talking about with others at every opportunity!



Fire in My Bones

By Jefferson David Tant

The prophet Jeremiah faced many difficulties in his life. God assigned him to speak to the nation and warn them of things to come, and implore them to repent and serve God, but Jeremiah was persecuted and vilified. This prompted him to just shut up and not bother to speak anymore.

“For each time I speak, I cry aloud; I proclaim violence and destruction, because for me the word of the LORD has resulted in reproach and derision all day long. But if I say, ‘I will not remember Him or speak anymore in His name,’ then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it.” ([Jeremiah 20:8-9](#))

Jeremiah came to realize two things after he decided to shut up. (1) God had commissioned him to speak His word, and (2) the people needed to hear, no matter what their response.

There was yet another prophet that God sent into the world, whose name was Jesus Christ. Luke tells us of an occasion when Christ went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. *“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”* ([Luke 4:16-19](#)).

And how was the message he delivered to the people received? While some received His word well, we know that he was eventually crucified. After His resurrection, He called together His chosen ones and delivered unto them what we call The Great Commission. *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

We are all quite familiar with that passage, but have we really considered the implications that are included in the message? What were the apostles to do? They were to go and make disciples, but that was not the end of the charge. They were also to teach those whom they taught to do the same, which was to go and make disciples! Dear reader, the mission of making disciples is the mission God has given to every Christian, but too often that is considered to be the preacher’s job. And yes, every preacher has that responsibility. Yes, he may have the responsibility to teach the congregation, and we know he is out in the community making contacts and teaching. But that community outreach is no more his responsibility than that of every person sitting in the pews!

We marvel at how fast the gospel spread to the whole known world in just one generation in that first century. And how did this happen? Consider what happened following the death of Stephen in [Acts 7](#). *“Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word”* ([Acts 8:1-4](#)).

We would likely agree that some of those who had been converted at Pentecost would have stayed in Jerusalem for a time as they wanted to learn more. But now it’s time to go back home. And what did they do when they went home? They “went about preaching the word?” And who was doing this? Not the apostles, for the text says they stayed in Jerusalem. We know that Peter, and later Paul and possibly others did go “into all the world,” but not at the start. It was the ordinary Christians who went home and spread the word to their neighbors, their grocery store clerks, those who cared for their animals, etc.

In Paul’s letter to the church at Colossae, he made an interesting comment: *“If so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister”* ([Colossians 1:23](#)).

This letter was written some 30 years after Pentecost, and note that the gospel had spread to “all creation,” i.e. to the known world in one generation. No TV, no newspapers, no radio, no rapid travel, no modern means of communication. The answer? Ordinary Christians spreading the word. And there is a message for us. Do we have fire in our bones?

In the days of my grandfather, J. D. Tant, the later years of the 1800s were times of great gospel meetings. They might schedule two weeks of preaching and there were times when 25 or 30 might be baptized and they would then extend the meeting another week. In the mid-1900s, the Jule Miller film strips and Bible Correspondence Courses were very effective, and many conversations resulted. And today? With people glued to their TVs, connected to the internet, etc., and otherwise busy, gospel meetings are not attended as well, and it’s hard to get someone to commit to five nights to view a video Bible lesson.

Thus the question. Whose responsibility is it to seek souls? Who is to make the connection with the drug store clerk, the table server at IHOP, the next-door neighbor? You know the answer. It is you and me. In closing this writing, I refer to the old gospel song, “You Never Mentioned Him to Me.”

When in the better land before the bar we stand,
How deeply grieved our souls may be;
If any lost one there should cry in deep despair,

“You never mentioned Him to me.”

“You never mentioned him to me,
You helped me not the light to see;
You met me day by day and knew I was astray,
Yet never mentioned Him to me.”

Is there fire in your bones? Don't put it out!

Can We Know the Truth

By Ward Hogland

Not too long ago I received a phone call from a young preacher in Tennessee. He said, “Brother Hogland, I am in a quandary. My elders called me in on the carpet and told me to stop saying that I preach the truth. They advised me to start saying, I preach what I believe to be the truth! What should I do?”

Now, before you read the rest of this, what advice would you give to this young preacher? I must admit, for a few seconds it stunned me. After my human psyche settled down, I said, “Say both!”

If a preacher is honest, he is certainly preaching what he believes to be the truth. On the other hand, if he believes the truth can be understood, he is also preaching the truth. What say you?

If one is forbidden to say he preaches the truth, but only what he believes to be the truth, this leaves the impression that truth is so elusive that one cannot find it. This is the argument of infidels and atheists. They tell us that truth is relative and one cannot find it.

When Jesus said, “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free,” He should have said, “Ye shall know what you believe to be the truth and the truth will make you free.” But this would not make good sense, since what we believe to be the truth may not be the truth!

I understand that just because a preacher says he is preaching the truth does not make it so. However, Luke gives us the solution to the problem when he says, “Search the Scriptures daily whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). If we can't know the truth, why search the Bible to see if a preacher is really preaching the truth?

Kind friend, I don't believe it is wrong for a preacher to say he is preaching the truth. But I beg my audience to check me out to see if I am really preaching the truth. I tell them they are my friends if they will take their Bibles and show me if I am in error. This will cause both of us to get our Bibles down and study until we find the truth.

Oh yes, I agree that no man knows all the truth. But thank God that is not required to go to heaven! If it is, none of us will make it. I tell folks they may not know all the truth but they can know enough truth to get to heaven. Now isn't that wonderful?