



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
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**Why Did Jesus Come? Part 2**  
**To Be "God with Us!"**

By Tal Davis

(See Part 1 of this series at: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2019/11/why-did-jesus-come-part-1>)

The Roman Empire was one of the greatest military and political powers of all time. It lasted for over a thousand years. It had mighty leaders such as Scipio Africanus, Pompey, Crassus, Mark Anthony, Marcus Aurelius, and Julius Caesar. It also had terrible rulers such as Nero and Caligula. At its peak, about AD 117, the empire extended west to the Atlantic ocean and east to Persia (Iran). It went north to Great Britain and south to northern Africa above the Sahara desert. Its legal and cultural influence is still felt today, 1500 years later.

At one of the most significant points in the empire's history, two men were born. The first was Octavian (63 BC - 14 AD). He was the favored nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar (100 BC - 44 BC). Caesar was, of course, the Roman general who conquered Gaul, and was instrumental in the transition of Rome from a republic to an imperial monarchy. Upon his uncle's assassination, Octavian inherited great political and military power, and so became the first real Roman Emperor. He became known as Caesar Augustus ("the exalted" or "the venerable").

Augustus had tremendous administrative talent. He unified the empire under his rule and became the architect of Pax Romani – that is, "the Peace of Rome." Eventually, he was worshiped as a god by many in the empire. However, his was an

empire characterized by war and the enslavement of millions in the lands the Romans conquered. But that once mighty empire now rests in the trash heap of history – just as most others that have followed it.

Not many years after Octavian's birth, another man was born in the most humble of surroundings. Jesus was born in a stable with animals. He had no political or military status or power. He was eventually killed by Roman soldiers. Yet, in time, He won over Augustus' empire. He was the architect of Pax Dei, the "Peace of God." His empire, which now extends all over the globe and continues to expand, is one of peace, love, and freedom!

The New Testament has two complimentary versions of the birth of Christ. One is found in Luke's Gospel. Note whose name is mentioned in the first verse. I wonder if Augustus had any idea that he was an instrument of God's providence so the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem as prophesied in Micah 5:2?

*1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son;*

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*and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." 15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." 16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. 17 When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, as had been told them. (Luke 2:1-20 NASB)*

The other account of Jesus birth is found in Matthew 's Gospel.  
*18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother*

*Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." 24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, 25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25 NASB)*

In his version, Matthew tells how an angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in a dream. The angel explains to Joseph the miraculous circumstances about Mary's pregnancy and the virgin conception of her child whose name was Jesus (God is Salvation). Keep in mind that it was Jesus' conception, not His physical birth, that was miraculous. Matthew then quotes another key prophetic passage from Isaiah 7:14. In this quote, in Matthew 1:23 above, is the second answer to the crucial question, "Why Did Jesus Come?" The message relayed by the angel says "they shall call His name Immanuel." Matthew then gives the translation of the Hebrew word Immanuel, which in Greek reads *Meth' hemon ho Theos*. Thus, in our English Bibles we have the English translation of Matthew's Greek translation which is "God with us." It is this phrase that explains why Jesus came. He came to be "God with us!"

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This is important for several reasons and has eternal consequences for each of our lives.

For one, it means He was able to see us as we are. As we said in the first installment, God gave up His deity to experience human life. God does not live a sheltered life. He truly knows pain, suffering, even temptation. This means He is able to see us in all our weaknesses. He loves us and has seen and experienced our human condition.

Another reason "God with us" is essential is because we are able to see Him as He truly is. Often we Christians talk at length about the attributes of God. You know them: He is Omnipotent (All Powerful and Creator of all that exists); He is Omniscient (All knowing); He is Omnipresent (All present - everywhere and in all-time); He is absolutely Holy; and, He is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe.

These Divine characteristics are all important and essential, but even Muslims might agree with them. Years ago I was involved in producing a documentary film about Islam. In the course of filming, we interviewed a prominent Muslim scholar. In listening to his description of God (Allah), it was clear that for Islam, God is remote and personally unknowable. All that is expected is obedience to the laws he supposedly gave through Muhammad in the Qur'an. The

Christian God, however, has one all encompassing major difference. We believe Jesus Christ was God come to earth. That's something Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarians, and those in other religions simply cannot fathom.

The point of all this is that God has shown Himself to us! As the writer of Hebrews states:

*1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having be-*

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*come as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.* (Hebrews 1:1-4 NASB)

This leads to one last reason "God with us" explains why Jesus came. He came so He could bring us salvation. Matthew tells us that the angel of the Lord told Joseph that the Messiah's name would be Jesus (vs. 21). The name Jesus is the common English transliteration of the Greek name *Iesous*. That also is a Greek translation of the Hebrew name *Yehoshua* (also transliterated in English as Joshua). That Hebrew name literally means "Yahweh (God) is Salvation." This is the most important reason for God with Us! He came to show us the way, yes. But not just to show us the way, He is the way!

*"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."* (John 14:6 NASB)

Like Caesar Augustus, Jesus was born as a human being. However, He lived a sinless life, was crucified on a cross, and was raised from the dead. Augustus is long since dead, but Jesus is alive. Today (Dec. 25, 2019) is Christmas. On this day, even nonreligious people remember Christ's birth to some extent, and that's good. But it is not good enough. People must remember why He came, then make Him their own Savior and Lord. That is the only way that it really matters that He is God with us!