

**GOD WITH US!**

God's gift to the world at Christmas is God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ. God came in the flesh to be our Savior and Lord. The incarnation of the divine Son, the second person of the triune God.

The name Jesus in Hebrew, *Yeshua*, means *Jehovah saves*. His name is a fulfillment of God's promise, over thousands of years, that He Himself would be Savior of His people. Jesus said in Luke 19:10 that He came "to seek and to save the lost." His name Emmanuel means "God with us." It was fulfilled in His actual coming, as a human infant, fully human yet fully divine, because only God could be our Savior.

**1- JESUS IS GOD.** The prologue in John 1 opens with powerful, haunting, beloved words: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*" This deliberate echo of Genesis 1 speaks of the beginning of all created things. God is uncreated, has always existed, and has no beginning or end.

God enlightens our understanding that Jesus is God, referred to as *the Word*. Ancient philosophers used this Greek term *logos* to explain *reason* as the rational principle behind everything in existence, and all that can be known about us and the world. Christianity and Judaism are the only religions which can account for reliance on reason. All other religions, including atheism, derive from defective worldviews. Islam defines "Allah" as primarily omnipotent power and will, which is unknowable in the personal sense.

The God of the Bible, Creator of the world and author of Scripture, is both knowable and reasonable. He created us in His image. From Him we receive logic, by which we can begin to comprehend Him and His creation. In Genesis 1, "*God said*" reveals the Word as the very breathed-out power of God, seen in creation, in revelation, and in salvation. It is the work of the one triune God, the great architect, arranged by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit.

**2- JESUS SAVES.** The apostle John continues, *The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.*" John 1 reveals three truths: Jesus is God, Jesus became like us, and you can become like Him. As Creator, Jesus is the source of your physical life, and your light - the meaning of life, both knowledge and wisdom. The Bible reveals human beings as made in the image of God, so that we can know Him and therefore know who we are and why we are here. And it reveals how to return to right relationship with our Maker.

John presents the good news: Before Christ came as Redeemer, He first was Creator. He who made man was made man in order to save man. "*He came to His own, and His own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*"

Those who come to God's light do so only by the grace of God, through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Because "*Jehovah saves.*" This tells us God cares about His creation, and how He rescues us from our sinful situation - by being born again from above by the Holy Spirit, receiving and believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Jesus became like you! This is the incredible "incarnation" of Jesus, which we celebrate at Christmas - God being born as a man, to save us.

**3- RECEIVE JESUS.** John says: "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...For from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.*"

Grace is the undeserved favor of God. Jesus gives not just grace, but grace upon grace, multiplied over and over. The redemption in Jesus also personally reveals God to mankind, as Father, Son, and Spirit. God with us. The author of salvation becomes the agent of salvation. The Creator becomes our Savior.

We receive His grace by receiving Jesus. The Word of God brings both life and light to all who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. We receive His new eternal spiritual life, by grace through faith. This is the wonderful news of Christmas. Christ has come, with salvation! And when He comes again, as promised, He will usher us into a new experience of "*God with us*" as we will dwell with Him forever in the new heavens and new earth. Christmas renews God's promise as fulfilled, and yet to be fulfilled in all its glory. Put all your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ - and share the Good News about Him with all those around you, for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! ☐