

## **Emmanuel: God is With Us** **Jesus Came to Fulfill God's Plan**

Philippians 2:5-11

**Intro:** One reality to every Christmas season is traveling. When I was growing up, our tradition was to wake up on Christmas morning as early as possible and open all our presents. And then, around mid-morning, we'd all load up in the family van and drive the 6 hours to my grandparent's house where we'd do the whole thing all over again. The next day, we'd drive over to my other grandparent's house where we'd do the whole thing all over again before traveling the 6 hours back home to Georgia. You probably already have your travel for the next few weeks mapped out. Driving, flying, train travel, doesn't matter, many if not most of us will be traveling.

AAA projects that over 100 million Americans will travel over 50 miles this holiday season. That's nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the population. Travel & Christmas!

**Christmas:** Remember the Christmas Story in Luke begins with a journey.

*“Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.”* **Luke 2:4-5**

**Note:** Joseph the carpenter and Mary, his fiancé gathered their things and journeyed to Bethlehem (south of Nazareth 80-90 miles). This was a difficult journey under any circumstances, but being very pregnant, even more so.

Why? They were making the journey because Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor at the time, had decreed a tax on the entire citizenship and the only way to collect was to send everyone to their hometown. Due to this influx of people, there were no rooms left in the Bethlehem Motor Lodge or City of David Motel. But, there was a stable available and, exhausted from their journey, they crashed for the night. It was in that setting that the Savior of the world, Mary's little baby boy, was born. **The Christmas Journey.**

But, this wasn't the most important Christmas journey. No, it might be the first one that comes to mind, but there was journey much longer than 90 miles involved in the Christmas Story. This journey spans the infinite space between heaven and earth! Let's look at it together.

**Four Passages:** There are four wonderful passages of scripture that describe in detail what the journey of Jesus looked like. Last week, it was John 1, this week we will look at Philippians 2, next Sunday we will be in Colossians 1 and on Christmas Eve at 5 & 7pm we'll be in Hebrews 1. These passages of scripture will tell us exactly what the journey of Jesus has to do with your life and my life in the year 2015. They will connect the dots for us in a very powerful way. Last week we looked at how Jesus came to solve our sin problem. This week, Paul will show us how Jesus came to fulfill God's plan!

**Read Text & Prop:** Jesus Came to Fulfill God's Plan in Phil 2:5-11

I. **God's Plan takes us to a Bethlehem Barn** – vs. 5-6

**Note:** Paul tells us that Jesus made the infinitely long journey from heaven to a barn in Bethlehem. How did this work? Paul describes that Christ Jesus was in the form (*morphe*) of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal (*isos*) with God.

**Morphe:** Translated “form” does not mean a physical shape. This does not merely mean that Jesus looked like his daddy. It goes much deeper.

*“Morphe (form) refers to the outward manifestation of an inner reality. The idea is that, before the Incarnation, from all eternity past, Jesus preexisted in the divine form of God, equal with God the Father in every way. By His very nature and innate being, Jesus Christ is, always has been, and will forever be fully divine.”* **John MacArthur**

### **What did Jesus Believe about Himself?**

*“Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”* **John 5:18**

*“...that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, & I in Him.”* **John 10:38**

*“He who has seen Me has seen the Father...”* **John 14:9**

**Jesus believed Himself to equal (isos) with the Father:** *Isos* – the term for equal is where we get our English term Isosceles Triangle. Which you geometry geeks know refers to a triangle with 2 equal sides. So, when Paul tells us in Philippians 2 that Jesus was equal with God, it means that in all ways He was God. Once we see that Jesus was equal with the Father, then the next phrase becomes even more important, *“did not consider it robbery to be equal with God...”*

What is robbery? Taking something that doesn't belong to you. Jesus didn't have to rob equality with God; it belonged to Him all along. Yet, even though equality with God was rightfully His, Paul tells us that He did not hold onto it selfishly. He willingly and voluntarily gave up the comfort, safety and pleasure of equality with God to join humanity in the Bethlehem Barn.

**Illus:** You ever go out to dinner with friends and, when the bill comes, everybody begins counting the tiles on the ceiling? Nobody wants to step up and volunteer? On the other hand, I've eaten out with my pastor and mentor, Dr. Johnny Hunt a hundred times over the years and I've only paid once (wings and ranch story). The one time I paid, I had to scheme to get it done because Pastor always willingly volunteers to pay. **Imagine:** a council meeting in heaven to discuss how to rescue people from sin. In a meeting with the Father and the Spirit, the Son Jesus Christ did not attempt to hold on to His divine prerogatives as God, but willingly came into this world through the manger scene in a Bethlehem Barn!

*“Jesus went from the robes of royal glory in heaven to the linen, swaddling clothes of a cradle. In a moment, he left from the heavenly praise and magnificence and glory of all that heaven is and will be for you and me, and He is now in a cow stall. What a journey!”* **Dr. Jerry Vines**

**Trans:** Jesus came to fulfill God’s plan & that takes us to a Bethlehem Barn.

## II. God’s Plan Demands we Respond to a Jerusalem Cross - 7-8

**Jesus Emptied Himself:** Paul tells us that Jesus emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives in order to walk among us, submit to the will of His Father and ultimately suffer for our sins. He humbled Himself to be born to a humble, teenage peasant girl named Mary. He was raised in a hick-town named Nazareth. He spent most of His ministry pouring into a group of dense fishermen, tax collectors and even a thief who would betray Him. But Jesus emptied Himself to become accessible to anybody and everybody.

**Jesus Humbled Himself:** There are those who portray the cross as martyrdom. As if Jesus’ life was taken from Him...not so! Jesus agreed to die and humbled Himself to die in the worst possible way. Jesus didn’t have to die, we have to die, but Jesus didn’t have to. **He had to die in order for us to be saved and that is what Christmas is all about!**

### Billy Graham speeding ticket illustration

*“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”* **2 Corinthians 5:18-19**

**God’s Plan: Bethlehem Barn & a Jerusalem Cross.**

## III. God’s Plan culminates with a Heavenly Celebration – 9-11

**Why We’re Still Talking About It:** If Jesus had only died a sacrificial death, I doubt anybody around the world celebrates Christmas. What makes Jesus unique and what makes your salvation sure is that, 3 days after Jesus gave up His life...He took it back! Paul describes it as God highly exalting Jesus!

*“...I lay down My life that I may take it again.”* **John 10:17**

**Are We There Yet?** Kids in the car ask this incessantly. My kids want to know how much longer in the standard American measure of time: how many movies before we’re there? **Jesus’ Christmas Journey from heaven was not complete until He returned home to heaven. We’re also told that God highly exalted the name of Jesus when He returned.**

**Note:** B.C. Jesus was just an average name. Nazareth was just an ordinary hick-town. Jesus of Nazareth < Bubba from Keezletown! But, A.D., Jesus is no ordinary name. It is the name that is above every name!!! It is the name before which every person will bow and confess His sovereign Lordship!

**Concl:** Paul describes three groups of people that will worship Jesus on the Day of Judgment:

- **Those in Heaven:** The angels and the redeemed believers who have died prior to Jesus’ return (Revelation 4:8-11) will continue their uninhibited worship of Jesus face to face.
- **Those on Earth:** There are two subgroups within this group.
  - **Redeemed:** Those who have turned from their sin and placed their trust in Jesus will continue the worship they have enjoyed since the day they were saved.

*“When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.”*

### **2 Thessalonians 1:10**

- **Unredeemed:** Unwillingly & in terror, the unredeemed will be forced to bow their knees before Jesus as He judges.

*“In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”* **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**

- **Those Under the Earth:** Fallen angels and unredeemed dead who are awaiting final judgment and eternal punishment.

*“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.”* **Revelation 20:12-13**

**The Question Remains:** Where are you when every knee is bowing and every tongue is confessing? Doing so with the redeemed or being forced to do so with the unredeemed? Those in heaven & those under the earth have their future fixed...what about you?

**Christmas teaches us that Jesus Came to Fulfill God’s Plan, will You submit to God’s plan for your life?**

### **Jesus Came to Fulfill God’s Plan**

**Monday:** John 5:30

**Tuesday:** John 8:28

**Wednesday:** Micah 5:2

**Thursday:** Matthew 1:18-25

**Friday:** Matthew 2:1-23

**Saturday:** 2 Corinthians 5:12-21

**Sunday:** Revelation 4:1-11