

Ancient Words—God in Control: O Immanuel!

Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Psalm 2:6-7 “I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill...You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”

Christmas Day is the most celebrated day of the year and has been officially set by the US Congress since 1870. The “today” in Psalm 2 is the specific, planned, and divine appointed day for Jesus to be born of woman and we call that day Christmas. This day exists because 2,016 years ago, world events, both great and small, planned by God, came to a convergence and a culmination in a small animal feed trough, a crib, known as a manger. God controlled the skies for this event and sent the Star of Jacob as a navigational guide to lead a royal caravan from the east for a two year period over thousands of miles to arrive just after the birth of Immanuel and present Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. God controlled the descendants from nations of the earth for Shem, Ham, and Japheth to be represented by this entourage of Tarshish, Sheba, and Seba royalty. God controlled the ascension of the Roman Empire to include Caesar Augustus and even Governor Quirinius of Syria to the point of ordering a census of registration in one’s family town—requiring Joseph and Mary to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. God controlled the angels and heavenly host in the dark, early morning of Christmas, to sing in a spectacular display of song and light to shepherds in fields nearby: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

God controlled the courtship of the young Joseph and Mary. These two may have been the only two on earth who could pursue matrimony while being both descended from King David; Joseph was from the line of Solomon and Mary was from the line of Nathan, both sons of David. And lest we forget, David came to be because of the courtship of Ruth and Boaz. From this marriage, God controlled the exact town, known for shepherds, Bethlehem Ephrathah, meaning House of Bread, to be the very place of birth for the Living Bread, the Lamb of God, and the

Lion of Judah. God controlled the gifts to be brought, not to Mary or Joseph, but to the infant in the crib. These gifts, given by God thru kings, were specifically selected to identify royalty of purpose, sweetness of performance, sacrifice of praise for the Savior of the world. They were gifts from the Father to his only begotten Son, not to the parents. The timing of that first Christmas day was established by the eternal one. Gabriel gave Daniel understanding of 69 sevens to know when the Anointed One would come and this knowledge would be passed down for generations to come. God controlled time, nations, kings, gifts, stars, a courtship and even the barren womb of a virgin girl to produce that glorious occasion we call Christmas. Jesus came forth; born of woman yet conceived by the Father thru His Spirit. This is the only day (Christmas Day) on earth that his royal, divine existence will be recognized. From this day forward Jesus will be one to bear sorrows. No other time in the next 33 years will he be recognized as King and Lord with the splendor and majesty of this day. There will be days of miracles and recognition by some, but largely he will endure scorn, threats, and mockery as King and Lord and eventually will suffer death on a cross as "King of the Jews"!

The Psalm of David, 148, perhaps extols the celebration of Christmas Day in prophecy like no other scripture and doing so, gives us the reason to celebrate Christmas praise today: Praise the Lord (Immanuel) in the heavens...Praise him all his angels and heavenly hosts...Praise him all you shining stars...Let them praise the name (Jesus) of the Lord (Immanuel)! Praise the Lord (Immanuel) from the earth...Praise him lightning, hail, snow, and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding...Praise him mountains, hills, fruit trees and cedars...Praise him animals, cattle, small creatures, and flying birds...Praise him kings of the earth and all nations, princes and rulers on earth...Praise him young men, maidens, old men and children. Let them all praise the name (Jesus) of the Lord (Immanuel) for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens. Christmas Day is a day of celebration, a day of joy and praise, for salvation has come down! All of creation attended the first birth day of the Son of God and set the pattern for us today! Merry Christmas!! O Immanuel!!

Sj-12/16