

**Christmas Eve Communion Service 2011**  
"Angles on the Incarnation" • Matthew 1:18-25

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**Introduction.** There are many things available today that we didn't have when I was a boy.. **Instant replay...** different angles to get the full picture. The incarnation of Jesus is like that.

### I. The HISTORICAL Angle

1. Last year I have Kristy a temporary subscription to Ancestry.com - *how far back can you go?*
2. Jesus' genealogy - 42 generations (see Luke 3 for MORE - all the way to Adam!)
3. Fulfilled prophecy - **Isaiah 7:14**
4. The birth of Jesus is no legend or myth — *real space-time history*

### II. The SUPERNATURAL Angle

1. I love telling my kids about the days before internet (esp. wireless) and cell phones - I don't fully understand how they work; but I know there is an explanation
2. "*what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit*"
3. Theologians call this "the hypostatic union" - two natures
  - (1) **Philippians 2:5-8**, "*5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!*"
  - (2) **Hebrews 1:3**, "*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*"
  - (3) **Colossians 1:15, 19-20**, "*15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation... 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*"
4. **QUESTION:** When describing the two natures of Jesus, why do the NT authors then talk explicitly about the cross? *the perfect mediator to accomplish redemption - rep. God and man*

### III. The THEOLOGICAL Angle

1. When I was in HS, two of the linemen on our football team were named Big and Huge — nicknames
2. In ancient times, names had significant meaning
3. The same is true with the name Jesus

- (1) **Jesus** is the transliterated form of the Greek *Iesous*, which is the Greek/Hellenized form of the Hebrew name, *Yeshua*. *Yeshua* means, "The Lord saves" (Lit., Yahweh saves)
- (2) *Yeshua* is the original form of the transliterated name **Joseph** (Remember him from the OT? - *the suffering savior of the world*)
- (3) So, Jesus was coming to be the ultimate Joseph!
4. Now, we understand why the angel would said to give the baby that name -- because of it's **meaning** -- "*he would save his people from their sins*"
5. **How?** Not by being a moral teacher, but a legal substitute — *that is what the cross is all about - **SUBSTITUTION***
  - (1) Usually I think I need to be saved/delivered from:  
—> Financial stress; marital conflict, nagging parents, low self-image, failing health...?
  - (2) Ultimately —> my **sins** - *Then I'm reconciled to God & can face everything else knowing that God is with me.*
  - (3) Hymn, "How Firm a Foundation" --  
*When through fiery trials, thy pathway shall lie,  
My grace all-sufficient will be thy supply  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless  
And sanctify to thee thy greatest distress.*

### IV. The PERSONAL Angle

1. Another name that is super significant is **Immanu-el** — a Hebrew name that means "God (is) with us" - *El-shadai, El-elyon*
2. Now, for some of us, that is not a happy thought — **The ancient Greeks and their myths - why the gods came down, they came down to enforce judgement**
3. **Billboard** —> "Don't make me come down there!"
4. **When the Greek gods came down, they came to punish the lawbreakers; Jesus came down to be punished for the lawbreakers**
5. **This** is the God who says that he is WITH his people - but HOW?
  - (1) **John 14:15-17**, "*15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor (cum forte - strength/power) to be with you forever-- 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*
  - (2) In Galatians, Paul tells Christians to "walk in/by/with the Spirit"

**[conclusion next page - Ten years ago, we lived in Tupelo, MS...]**

**Conclusion.** Ten years ago, we lived in Tupelo, MS... I have a specific memory of taking my son, Schaeffer, to the park - he was 3. We played all afternoon— monkeybars, swings, a big playfort. When it was time to go home, we had to walk up a really big hill to get back to the car. Halfway up he began to show signs of fatigue — so I held out my hand and we walked up the hill together...

**Jesus is holding out his hand — a nail scarred hand.** He walked a hill that I'll never have to walk... and now he holds his hand out so that we can walk together.

**For some,** this will mean taking his hand again... for others, for the first time.

—> **Communion** -- *opportunity to personalize the good news and begin walking with the Spirit*