

Chris Starn / General

Christmas - God With Us / Revelation 21:3

› Slide #1

Christmas is such an incredible time to pause and reflect on the amazing truth that God is with us. It's more than just the lights, gifts, or traditions we love—it's about celebrating a promise God made long ago and kept in the most beautiful way.

We saw the first week of this series that in [Isaiah 7:14](#), God said through the prophet,

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[Isaiah 7:14](#)

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Which means “God with us.” That promise wasn't just words; it became reality when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Think about that for a moment. The Creator of the universe didn't stay distant from our struggles. He came close—stepping into our messy, broken world as one of us. Jesus' birth wasn't just a sweet story; it was God's way of saying, “*I see you. I love you. I'm here for you.*”

Jesus' birth shows us just how much God loves us and how far He's willing to go to be with us.

Christmas is a reminder that God's presence isn't some vague or far-off idea—it's personal. Through Jesus, God came near to walk with us in our joys and struggles, bringing hope and light into the darkest places. The manger in Bethlehem points us to the bigger story of what Jesus would do—His life, death, and resurrection to restore our relationship with God.

And here's the best part: the story doesn't end in Bethlehem. Through the Holy Spirit, God is still with us today—guiding us, comforting us, and giving us peace. And one day, Jesus will come back, and we'll experience “God with us” in the most complete way possible—forever.

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Revelation 21:3

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

The hope of [Revelation 21:3](#) is the culmination of the entire biblical story—a promise that God will dwell with His people forever, completing the work of redemption. This vision of eternity is not just about a restored world; it is about the perfect and permanent presence of God among His redeemed people.

Throughout Scripture, God's presence has been central to His relationship with humanity. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed unbroken fellowship with God until sin brought separation. From that moment on, God's plan of redemption has been about restoring what was lost. The tabernacle in the wilderness and later the temple in Jerusalem symbolized God's presence among His people, but these were temporary and limited. Even when Jesus came as Immanuel—“God with us”—His presence on earth was a foretaste of something greater.

[Revelation 21:3](#) points to that ultimate fulfillment. In eternity, there will be no barriers, no sin, no distance between God and His people. The imagery of a “tabernacle” or dwelling place highlights how personal and intimate this relationship will be. Unlike the temporary structures of the past or even the spiritual presence we experience now through the Holy Spirit, this will be a permanent reality where God Himself lives with us in all His glory.

This promise completes the story of redemption. At Calvary, Jesus dealt with sin once and for all, removing the separation between humanity and God. Through His resurrection and ascension, He secured our hope for eternal life. [Revelation 21:3](#) shows us that this hope is not just about living forever—it is about living forever *with Him*. It is a return to Eden but on an

even grander scale—a new heaven and new earth where we will enjoy perfect fellowship with our Creator.

This truth transforms how we live today. Knowing that God’s ultimate plan is to dwell with us forever gives us hope in trials, courage in uncertainty, and joy in worship. It reminds us that all our longings for peace, love, and belonging find their ultimate fulfillment in Him. As we celebrate Jesus’ first coming at Christmas—the moment when “God with us” became flesh—we also look forward to His return when “God with us” becomes forever.

[Revelation 21:3](#) invites us to live in anticipation of that day when every tear will be wiped away and death will be no more because God Himself will dwell with us as our God. This is the ultimate hope of Christmas fulfilled—the promise that began in Bethlehem finds its glorious conclusion in eternity.

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The Promise Fulfilled in Part: God With Us in Bethlehem

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it was the moment God’s promise became real and tangible. [Isaiah 7:14](#) had foretold it hundreds of years earlier: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel,” which means “God with us.” And [Matthew 1:23](#) confirms that this prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus’ birth.

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[Matthew 1:23](#)

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

Think about that—God didn’t stay distant or far removed from our struggles. Instead, He came near, stepping into our world as one of us. The name *Immanuel* isn’t just a title; it’s a powerful reminder that God chose to dwell among His people in the most personal way possible.

The incarnation—God taking on flesh—is one of the most incredible truths of our faith. In Jesus, God made His presence known in a way we could see, hear, and touch.

Imagine the humility of God becoming human.

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[John 1:14](#) says:

John 1:14

And 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.

Jesus didn't come in power or majesty but as a baby born in a manger. His birth points to something much bigger—His mission to restore what sin had broken. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus made a way for us to be reconciled to God.

Think about it this way: Imagine being trapped in a deep pit with no way out. You cry for help, but no one can reach you—until someone climbs down into the pit to rescue you. That's what Jesus did for us. He didn't just shout instructions from above; He came down to save us.

But Jesus' birth in a manger in Bethlehem was only the beginning. Through His life, He revealed God's heart—His love, compassion, and truth. Through His death on the cross, He took on the punishment for our sin, and through His resurrection, He defeated death once and for all. Because of this, we can now experience God's presence not just around us but within us. Look at Jesus' promise in

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John 14:16–17

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

So when we celebrate Christmas, we're not just remembering a baby born in Bethlehem; we're celebrating the beginning of God's plan to bring us back into relationship with Him. We're celebrating that God didn't leave us alone in our brokenness but came near to rescue us. And through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, He made a way for us to live with Him forever. Isn't that incredible?

Celebrate that God came near to us in our brokenness and provided salvation through Jesus.

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God With Us Now: The Promised Experienced

Even though Jesus ascended to heaven, He made a promise that still brings us comfort today

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John 16:7

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

The Holy Spirit is God's presence within us—a constant companion who comforts, guides, and strengthens us. [Ephesians 1:13-14](#) describes this beautifully:

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Ephesians 1:13-14

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Think of it like this: In ancient times, kings would seal letters or contracts with their personal mark to show ownership or authenticity. The Holy Spirit is God's seal on our lives—a mark that says, *"You belong to Me."*

Imagine carrying around a photo of someone you love dearly—it reminds you of their presence even when they're far away. But unlike a photo, the Holy Spirit isn't just a reminder; He is actively present in our lives.

It is through the Holy Spirit we experience "God with us" in a deeply personal way.

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Through the Holy Spirit

- We find comfort in our struggles.
- We receive guidance when we feel lost.
- We experience strength when we are weak.

The Holy Spirit is an incredible gift—God's presence isn't just something external; it's within us, shaping our lives from the inside out.

But as beautiful as this reality is, it's not the fullness of what's to come. We still live in a broken world, and even though we have the Holy Spirit with us now, we long for the day when we will experience God's presence fully and completely. That longing points us forward to the hope of eternity, when God will dwell with His people face-to-face.

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God With Us Forever: The Promise Yet To Come

While we experience God's presence now through the Holy Spirit, there's an even greater promise ahead. Again [Revelation 21:3](#) gives us a glimpse of eternity:

Revelation 21:3

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

This is the ultimate fulfillment of *Immanuel*. One day, we will live face-to-face with God in perfect fellowship forever. There will be no more pain or separation—only joy in His presence.

This is what humanity has been longing for: no more separation, no more barriers caused by sin, just perfect fellowship with God forever.

When we look at the overarching story of the Bible, this promise ties everything together.

In the beginning, in Eden, God walked with Adam and Eve. That was humanity’s original design—to live in unbroken fellowship with our Creator. But sin shattered that relationship, creating a chasm between us and God. From that moment on, the story of Scripture has been about God’s plan to restore what was lost. Through Christ, that restoration began.

Jesus came to bridge the gap between humanity and God by dealing with sin once and for all through His death and resurrection.

But even now, as we experience “God with us” through the Holy Spirit, we know it’s not yet complete. We still live in a world marked by brokenness and pain.

[Revelation 21:4](#) paints this beautiful picture:

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Revelation 21:4

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

This promise gives us hope for today because it reminds us that no matter how hard life gets, our future is secure. As Paul says in

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2 Corinthians 4:17-18

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

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Living in Light of This Promise

So how do we respond to this incredible truth? Here are three ways:

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1. Live with Hope

Life can be challenging—filled with trials and uncertainties—but knowing that “*God with us*” is both our present reality and future hope gives us strength to endure.

When we fix our eyes on what is unseen—on the eternal reality of being with God forever—we can endure the challenges of this life because we know they are temporary. Our future is secure, and that hope anchors us no matter what storms come our way.

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2. Live with Purpose

If we know this good news—that God came near to save us—how can we keep it to ourselves? Share it! Every act of kindness or word of encouragement can point others toward Jesus.

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Jesus gave His followers a mission:

Matthew 28:18-19

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Think about it like sharing your favorite meal at Christmas—you wouldn’t want anyone to miss out on something so wonderful!

We’re called to share this promise with others so they too can experience the gift of salvation and the hope of eternity with God. Every conversation, every act of kindness, every opportunity to share the gospel is part of living out this purpose.

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Live in Worship

Finally, let this truth fill your heart with worship. Just as the wise men bowed before Jesus at His birth, let your life be marked by gratitude and praise for who He is and what He has done.

Christmas reminds us that *God is with us*. Through Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, through His Spirit dwelling within us now, and through His promise to live among us forever—we are never alone.

While we live here on earth, our hearts should be fixed on eternity.

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Philippians 3:20

**But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior,
the Lord Jesus Christ**

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Let's live as citizens of heaven—people filled with hope, driven by purpose, and overflowing with worship.

Let's endure trials knowing they're temporary, share the gospel boldly because others need this hope too, and worship God daily as a foretaste of what's to come.

Let's live each day filled with hope for eternity, driven by purpose to share His love, and overflowing with worship for our Savior.

Let's Pray