

Why celebrate Christmas?

1. After hundreds of years of being unfaithful to their covenant promise to God, the nation of Israel irretrievably broke the Mosaic Covenant, which resulted in their expulsion from the Promised Land by 600 B.C. The prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah all witness the nation's loss of the promise of land. While they all prophesize of God's judgment of Israel's infidelity, they also speak of God's New Covenant which will bring His people back to the Promised Land. According to Ezekiel, why is God making this New Covenant?

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord God says: "It is not for your sake, house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I show Myself holy among you in their sight. For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the lands; and I will bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.'" (Ezek 36:22-25, NASB)

2. At the start of the New Testament, when Mary was pregnant, an angel instructs Joseph to name their newborn son Jesus. What is the meaning behind the names?

But when he had thought this over, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son; and you shall name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN WILL CONCEIVE AND GIVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND THEY SHALL NAME HIM IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he named Him Jesus. (Matt 1:20-25, NASB)

3. What does Jesus say about Himself?

Therefore they said to Him, "What are we to do, so that we may accomplish the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." (John 6:28-29, NASB)

Now Jesus cried out and said, "The one who believes in Me, does not believe only in Me, but also in Him who sent Me. And the one who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. I have come as Light into the world, so that no one who believes in Me will remain in darkness. (John 12:44-46, NASB)

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Teacher Notes

1. After hundreds of years of being unfaithful to their covenant promise to God, the nation of Israel irretrievably broke the Mosaic Covenant, which resulted in their expulsion from the Promised Land by 600 B.C. The prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah all witness the nation's loss of the promise of land. While they all prophesize of God's judgment of Israel's infidelity, they also speak of God's New Covenant which will bring His people back to the Promised Land. According to Ezekiel, why is God making this New Covenant?

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Encourage the student's observation of the passage by underlining / circling why God is making the New Covenant. Discuss what God is saying.

God is NOT making the New Covenant for the sake of Israel!

Because the nation of Israel portrayed God as no different than any other dead pagan god, God is making the New Covenant to restore His holy name. God is separate from any other god, because He is the living God Creator and Redeemer of human beings.

Through this New Covenant, the whole world will know that the God of the Bible is holy, the living Lord God.

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Ask the student: write down what an angel of the Lord tells Joseph about the translation of the Hebrew name Immanuel.

God with us.

Ask the student: do you recall the Hebrew basis for Jesus? Do you recall what the Hebrew name means?

The proper name "Jesus," translated from the Greek name "Iēsous," originated from the Old Testament Hebrew name of "Yēšua'." The ancient form of Yēšua' was Y^ehōšûa' which is the oldest name containing God's memorial name Yahweh, and it means "Yahweh is help" or "Yahweh is salvation."

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Encourage the student to discuss all of what they observe in these passages. Then have the student attempt to include the meaning of Jesus' name into their observations. Here is an example:

Everyone who believes in "Yahweh is salvation" will be saved. God does literally vindicates the holiness of His great name. Through Jesus Christ, all nations will see God Himself and the holiness of His agapē love.

4. Why celebrate Christmas?

Ask the student, what is the relationship of the birth of Jesus with the New Covenant? Encourage discussion of this significance.

The birth of Jesus Christ announces the imminent commencement of the New Covenant. Jesus Christ fulfills the function of the Mosaic Covenant making salvation possible for all.