

abandon it as hopeless. He is actively involved in human history. He is at work in all things to bring about the redemption and restoration of His creation. **God is with us!**

The very name given to the child born of Mary tells the whole story of history according to God's perspective. He is named *Immanuel* in the prophecy of Isaiah and *Jesus* by his adopted father Joseph. *Immanuel* means "God is with us." And *Jesus* means "God saves us."

Jesus is the goal of all history. History is in fact "His Story." In the fullness of time the Son of God became man and dwelt among us—not to condemn us but to save us, to love us, to redeem us, to heal us. All of history moves toward Christ, He is beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega. Jesus is **God with us!**

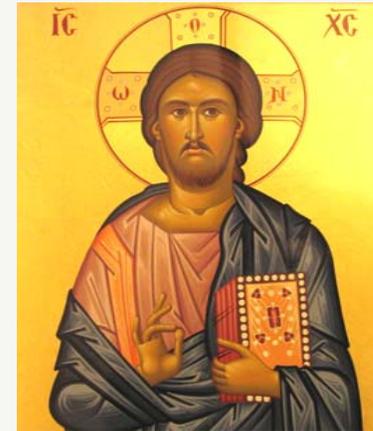
Conclusion

Because God is with us, because God is at work in human history to bring about salvation and healing, we can also say that He is with you and me. God is at work in our own history—in your life and my life—to bring about good and to heal us.

Instead of living in the hopeless fact that nothing is getting better or that we are doomed to repeat the same mistakes and sins of the past over and over, and in the end there is only death, we need to hear the words of our text "**God is with us!**" As Christians we can keep our eyes on the author and finisher of our faith, we can follow Jesus, not in an endless circle going nowhere, but on the straight and narrow road that leads home—to a perfect and wonderful destination. Does history tell us that things are getting better and that there is hope for mankind—absolutely, but only if you see it as the story of Jesus Christ.

Looking at your own personal history, are there good things ahead? Is there hope for your future?—absolutely, but only if you follow Jesus. The greatest gift that God has given to mankind; to you and to me is Jesus Christ—He is living proof that **God is with us** and that **God saves us**. To "His Story" there is always a happy ending!

..... *Amen!*



GOD IS WITH US

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Homily given at All Saints Orthodox Church
on the Sunday Before the Nativity
of Christ, 2008
by Fr. Nicholas Sorensen

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus (Matt. 1:1–25)

Introduction

Looking at the genealogy of our Lord, we are urged to compare the view of History from Man's perspective with History from God's perspective. One way sees history as an endlessly moving point on a great circle—condemned to repeat itself over and over again. The other way sees history as a story with a beginning, middle, and conclusion; a story moving in a linear, purposeful fashion toward an end goal of joyous and triumphal victory. One is the hopeless repetition of man and his corruption; of greed and selfishness, the other is the story of God's love—the story of Jesus Christ—history seen from this perspective is truly "His story."

I. History—Looked at from Man's Perspective

If we look at the history of man realistically, honestly—from a purely human perspective, we do not see much change; it's the same old evil, generation after generation. Look at our world today:

- Greed, power, selfishness still rule. Are things getting better or worse?
- There are still wars and rumors of wars. Are things getting better or worse?
- Diseases are conquered, but new ones take their place (one demon cast out—7 return Lk. 11:26). Are things getting better or worse?
- Today life expectancy is 74 for males and 79 for females but look at life expectancy in Genesis (Methuselah 969 yrs old—Noah 950 yrs old). Are things getting better or worse?

The same sins are around today as in the beginning of the world. If we are being honest we are making the same mistakes today as yesterday. The only real change that we may see is that things are getting worse not better. History from a purely human perspective is running in circles, doomed to repeat itself, going nowhere, hopeless, meaningless.

II. History—Looked at from God's Perspective

But when we look at history as Matthew looked at history in our text, we see a story of God's love and mercy and grace for His sinful people. We see God at work in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in Ruth and Boaz; David and Solomon; Joseph and Mary. We see God at work in each generation to bring about the salvation and redemption and reconciliation of mankind. We see a history that is going somewhere—a history that has a goal, a purpose . . . to save mankind! A history that demonstrates **God is with us!**

God did not create all things and then just walk away. Nor did He watch while the devil and humanity brought evil and death and suffering into His creation and then just