

Sharing the good news of Jesus and His Kingdom and equipping the church to do the same.



Greg West, Evangelist

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

ISAIAH 9:6-7

Update: Book Study Questioning Evangelism

We're more than halfway through our online book study. *Questioning Evangelism* is provocative and tackles major topics such as the problem of evil and suffering, hypocrisy in the church and people's resistance to welcoming GOD as a higher authority than themselves. Jesus so often asks key questions to show people new things, to expose their motives and to increase their hunger for GOD and truth. We want conversations to go deep; to get to ultimate reality rather than dealing with surface issues. Yet, we must meet people where they are, seeking to understand them and then "speaking the truth in love."

I encourage you, this month especially, to ask people: "What does Christmas mean to you?" Be ready with follow up questions to understand them. Usually, they'll ask for your insights and this becomes a great opportunity to share how GOD came into the world at Christmas.

Are we sanitizing Christmas?

Elva McAllister wrote a powerful and insightful Christmas poem called "On Fragrant Hay." In it, she shines light on our attempts to sanitize that first Christmas in art and recreations of the scene. In doing so, we distort reality and minimize the breathtaking humility and awesome grace of God as He willingly comes into our messy, fallen world.

"'Sweet infant,' trills the smiling choir. 'He sleeps on fragrant hay.' And Christmas card Madonnas smirk all thoughts of pain away. How was it really when He came? Did Mary moan and scream and grind her teeth and retch (Poor wretch) before His star could gleam its gleam above that inn yard barn? He slept on fragrant hay. Perhaps. But sheep and cows were not made then of plastic, nor of Styrofoam and paint. Half-rot-

ten straws and stinking wet manure were surely winter odors Joseph smelled, not sweet new hay, nor clover blossoms. No dainty crèche had been prepared and kept detached from stench of urine-mingled mud where ox feet stood, where ox teeth chewed or dribbled fodder. God did not come to antiseptic scented neatness, but to a winter barnyard's muck and filth. God always comes; to things as they are and not to wished-for rearrangements of the facts."

Let's welcome Jesus anew into our messy lives and let Him bring His order, His cleansing and His life into ours! Also, during this time of year people are more open to talking about the meaning of life and about Christ. Jesus will lead us if we are willing to follow.

Bags for the Homeless



Suggested items:

- Socks
- Wet wipes,
- Tissues
- Water
- Granola bars
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Gum
- Deodorant
- Chapstick

Prophecies Fulfilled by the Birth of Christ Jesus

Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. This was written more than 700 years before Jesus's birth.

- **Prophecy:** "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel." - *Isaiah 7:14*
- **Fulfillment:** "How will this be?" Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God'" - *Luke 1:34-35*

Isaiah's prophecy that the Christ will reign forever on David's throne.

- **Prophecy:** "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this." - *Isaiah 9:6-7*
- **Fulfillment:** "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Ja-

cob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." - *Luke 1:31-33.*

Hosea's prophecy that the Messiah would be in Egypt was written more than 750 years before Jesus's birth.

- **Prophecy:** "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." - *Hosea 11:1*
- **Fulfillment:** "So he (Joseph) got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'" - *Matthew 2:14-15*

Micah's prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem was written more than 700 years before Jesus's birth.

- **Prophecy:** "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." - *Micah 5:2*
- **Fulfillment:** "So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." - *Luke 2:4-7*



Who Got the Birth Announcement?

<https://youtu.be/U19ao-WU0z4>