

IMMANUEL

ISAIAH 8:7-10

Perhaps you've seen the You Tube commercial this year done by the British grocery chain, Sainsbury. It's about the fraternization that occurred in no man's land on Christmas Day, 1914. *Hashtag #ChristmasTruce.*

It relives the impromptu ceasefire that occurred in WW1 on the Western Front when British and German troops sang Christmas carols on Christmas Eve. The next day both armies laid down their weapons and exited their foxholes to celebrate Christmas together.

They swapped handshakes and chocolates, and for a brief reprieve celebrated what they had in common.

But in the annals of warfare this was an exception rather than the rule. For over the centuries some of the harshest battles have been fought at Christmas time.

One of the most acclaimed victories of the American Revolution occurred when Washington's Continental Army crossed the Delaware River on Christmas Day to surprise German mercenaries at the Battle of Trenton. When Tecumseh Sherman and his Union Troops ended their march to the sea with the capture of Savannah, he telegraphed Washington presenting the southern port as a Christmas gift to President Lincoln.

In WW2 the German offensive that led to the Battle of the Bulge was intended by the German high command to be a Christmas victory for Adolf Hitler.

And in 1972, in a failed attempt to hasten the end of the Vietnam War, President Richard Nixon ordered the infamous Christmas Bombing Campaign of Hanoi.

My point is, despite the message of hope promoted in the “[Christmas Truce](#)” video - more often than not, Christmas and war have been regular companions.

In fact, that first Christmas was quickly followed by King Herod’s brutal and barbaric attack on the babies of Bethlehem. The slaughter was a jealous reaction to the worship of the wise men at the feet of King Jesus.

Today, when we think of Christmas we envision cozy images of friends singing carols, and families around the Christmas tree exchanging presents. But this is not the picture painted in the earliest Christmas scenes...

For several weeks we’ve been searching the prophecy of Isaiah for portraits of Jesus - and in Isaiah we’re stunned with a different kind of Christmas image.

The Prophet Isaiah, writing around 700 BC, connects Christmas to *a vicious army, a brutal siege, a broken people, a bloody conflict, but a surprise victory*. Once again though, war and Christmas go hand in hand.

This AM, I want to recount one of the most important stories in the OT. And the OT is full of famous, inspiring narratives. There's [Moses at the Red Sea](#), [Joshua's defeat of Jericho](#), [David's triumph over Goliath](#), [Jonah and the whale](#), [Daniel in the Lion's Den](#)... But there's one story that's equally dramatic, yet for some reason enjoys far less notoriety... [Hezekiah and the Angel](#).

This story was so important to God, He chooses to record it three times in Scripture - [2 Kings 19](#), [2 Chronicles 32](#), and in [Isaiah 37](#). The event is also referred to in several other prophets and in the psalms.

In fact, the story's background is found in the text I've chosen for us to study this morning, [Isaiah 7-9](#).

Here's the story in a nutshell... The Assyrian army was on a rampage. After successful sieges against the Syrian capitol of Damascus, and the Israeli capitol of Samaria - in 701 BC the Assyrian king set his sights on Judah's capitol of Jerusalem - put the city under siege.

At least 185,000 troops camped outside Jerusalem's walls poised to strike. For comparison, 200,000 troops would be about the population of Columbus, GA.

The Assyrian king hoped the mere threat of such a vast army would intimidate the Jews into surrender. His hope was to conquer Jerusalem without firing a shot.

But that's not what happened.

Isaiah the prophet and *Hezekiah the king* dropped to their knees, and prayed for a miracle. The people of Jerusalem went

to bed on the brink annihilation, but the next morning they awoke to a pleasant surprise.

That night an angel of the Lord fought for Judah. A single battle-hardened angel - a one-angel wrecking crew - slaughtered 185,000 seasoned Assyrian troops.

2 Kings 19:35 provides a play-by-play, "On a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses - all dead." I love that line. Talk about stating the obvious, *most corpses are dead!*... But remember, this writer is in a state of shock. He can't believe what he sees.

For weeks he's been looking over the walls at ferocious troops, but this time he can't believe what he sees - the valley is littered with dead Assyrian soldiers!

2 Kings finishes, "So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home (he tucked tail), and remained at Nineveh." It was a devastating, embarrassing defeat that sent the proud king reeling...

George Byron immortalized the Angel's victory in a poem... "The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, and his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.

And the sheen of their spears were like stars on the sea, when the blue waves roll nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green, that host with their banners at sunset were seen.

Like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown, that host
on tomorrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread His wings on the blast, and
breathed in the face of the foe as he passed.

And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill, and their
hearts, once heaved, forever grew still!"

And there lay the soldiers distorted and pale, with the dew on
their brow, and the rust on their mail.

And their tents were all silent, their banners alone, the lances
unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the Assyrian widows are loud in their wail, and the idols
are broke in the temple of Baal.

And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword, has
melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!"

It was a mighty triumph by the one true God!

But what makes this a Christmas story you might ask? It's
the name Isaiah attaches to the Angel of the Lord who does the
defending, and fighting, and killing.

The Hebrew term "**Angel of the Lord**" simply means
"**messenger**" - whether *human* or *divine*. But we know this
messenger was more than *human* - even more than *angel*. For in
our text this AM, Isaiah names this messenger, "**Immanuel**" -
which means, "**God with us.**"

The same name given to Jesus, the newborn Savior.

Let's read our text, and as we do, I'll provide some running commentary, that'll help you follow the action.

For in Chapter 8, Isaiah is acting like a war correspondent... a reporter imbedded among the troops as the conflict unfolds. Let's begin in verse 7...

“Now therefore, behold the Lord brings up over them the waters of the River, strong and mighty - the king of Assyria and all his glory; he will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks.” The strong river is the Euphrates, and its capitol of Nineveh. Nineveh was the home of the mighty Assyrian empire - with its ambitious kings and their fast and ferocious troops.

The Assyrian army marched across the Fertile Crescent like a tidal wave. Their troops poured into the land of Israel. It was like a devastating tsunami.

Verse 8 tells us, **“He will pass through Judah, he will overflow and pass over...”** The Invader camped in the south - the area of Judah - at the gates of Jerusalem.

And **“He will reach up to the neck...”** The Assyrian army will put a choke hold on Jerusalem. The enemy will strangle God's people. They'll be overwhelmed.

Like a huge vulture stretching out its wings, hovering over its prey, the Assyrians will swarm the holy land.

And notice to whom the Assyrian threat is directed. “And the stretching out of his wings will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.” Immanuel? Isn't this the Christmas baby? Isn't this the reason for the season?

How is Mary's Infant connected to an ancient battle?

It's a provocative thought, but notice, though He wasn't yet born, Jesus was already a property owner. Isaiah refers to the land as "*Your land, O Immanuel.*"

This is a truth with modern implications. The land that's currently being fought over in the Middle East, the land we call *Israel, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, Gaza* - it doesn't belong to Israelis or Arabs.

The name on God's deed is "*Immanuel.*" It's His land. And Jesus will prove it when He returns.

It's interesting, though He won't be born for another 700 years, Isaiah warns the Assyrians that the owner of the land they've invaded might not be happy with their intrusion! They don't want to anger "*Immanuel.*"

Isaiah goes on, "*Be shattered, O you peoples, and be broken in pieces! Give ear, all you from far countries. Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces.*" Isaiah shouts to the nations of the Earth to look at what's happened.

Because of their rebellion, Israel was shattered and broken. Even though Judah and Jerusalem armed and girded themselves, they were still brought under siege.

And if God is not afraid to judge His own, why would He hesitate judging the other people of the Earth?

Verse 10 is directed to the invading Assyrians, “Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; speak the word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.” And what does this phrase, “God is with us,” mean in Hebrew?

It’s “Immanuel.” It’s the name given to Jesus.

It was Jesus who made sure the counsel and the battle plans of the Assyrians came to nothing - that the orders barked out by her generals, would “not stand.”

It was the pre-incarnate messenger, the yet-to-be-born Jesus, the “Immanuel,” who delivered Jerusalem.

Remember the Christmas text, the Gospel writer, Matthew, quotes the Hebrew prophet, Isaiah. Matthew 1:22 recites Isaiah 7:14. After the angel had appeared to Joseph, Matthew explains, “Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”

Matthew alerts his Gentile readers to the significance of this Child by translating His Hebrew name, “Immanuel” - “God with us.” The baby conceived in Mary’s womb was *God incarnate* - in Jesus *God came to Earth in flesh and blood*. Jesus was *the God-man*.

But Matthew was communicating far more than that.

For his Jewish readers - those familiar with their nation’s history - the name “Immanuel” meant more.

It harkened back to King Hezekiah and the Prophet Isaiah, and the Assyrian invasion of Judah. *Immanuel* was God's answer to a national calamity of life and death importance. *Immanuel* was a Hebrew hero.

Imagine the carpenter, Joseph, when he heard the Angel say the name, "*Immanuel.*" Joseph was a good Jew familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures. He knew the prophecy in Isaiah. What went through his mind when he learned Mary's baby was the Ancient Warrior?

One thing is for sure, it made God's humility, *that Immanuel became a infant*, all the more amazing!

The Baby Joseph held in his arms, had once held a sword, and slaughtered a city-size army of evil men.

Here's the part of the Christmas story that seldom gets told. Mary's baby was not a newcomer. He had been here before. **The Babe had been to battle.**

To really appreciate Christmas we have to leave Bethlehem and travel three miles north to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was *God's city* - the Jews *God's people* - Hezekiah *God's king* - Isaiah *God's prophet* - and the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, was *God's enemy*.

At Christmas time warm fires and blinking lights are common sights. But from the walls of Jerusalem, the only flickering lights the Jews could see were the campfires of an army of assassins readying for battle.

There were no reindeer-drawn sleighs - only war chariots. Sennacherib was the general of a bloodthirsty army. The mighty Assyrian juggernaut had moved into place at lightning speed. Nation after nation had fallen.

The major cities north of Jerusalem - Hamath, Arpad, Damascus, and Samaria had all been conquered. Now the Assyrians had their sights set on Jerusalem.

Realize, the ruthless Assyrians turned cruelty and intimidation into an art form. Whenever they conquered a city they made examples of their defeated foes.

They skinned their prisoners alive (*like you would a fish*). They cut off hands, feet, ears, noses - plucked out eyes, pulled out tongues. These Assyrian butchers lopped off heads and piled up mounds of skulls outside the city gates just to terrorize the neighbors. They were sending the message, *“You could be next.”*

Supposedly Hitler’s torturers derived inspiration from ancient Assyria. Rape, pillage, brutality were their only ambitions. With Assyria on the warpath this was not a time of *“peace on earth and goodwill toward men.”*

One of Assyria’s chief wartime tools was propaganda. Sennacherib had such a fierce reputation he was able to bully and frighten cities into surrender.

And this was his strategy with Jerusalem.

He sent his spokesman to scare the Jews and their king into capitulation. In 2 Kings 18 He reasoned with them, *“Has any of*

the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Who among the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem?"

Sennacherib reasons, *All of Assyria's defeated foes had prayed to their gods for deliverance; yet none had come to the rescue. Why did the Jews think they were different? How dare the citizens of Jerusalem assume they were more righteous than their neighbors?*

Sennacherib's spokesman was being politically correct. He was giving *all nations* and *all religions* equal treatment. He believed in the [Fairness Doctrine](#).

Sennacherib's propagandist echoed today's mantra, "[Don't dare exalt one belief or god above another!](#)"

Heaven forbid that we ever imply that one man's religion is superior to someone else's religion - or that another religion is wrong. *Let's not offend anyone!*

And this is what bothers me at Christmas time.

People are so concerned with offending someone, they're reluctant to even say, "[Merry Christmas.](#)"

It's "[Winter Break](#)" or "[Happy Holidays](#)" rather than "[Merry Christmas.](#)" A friend of mine told me a waitress saw her Christmas pin, *and whispered to her, "Merry Christmas."* Then *she said she had to be cautious uttering those forbidden words - lest she lose her job.*

Every year it blows my mind the extremes to which people go to skirt around the mention of Christmas.

There're always "After Thanksgiving" sales. *I wonder what comes after Thanksgiving?* Can we not say it?

"Only 25 shopping days left..." *left until when?* The advertisers refused to even finish the sentence...

One year, Amazon had a "Twelve Days of Holiday" sale... Macy's "The More the Merrier Sale," but left us to wonder "*Merry What?*"... Old Navy wasn't even close with an "Extravaganza humongous honkin' three day BIG weekend sale." That's the ultimate insult, the birth of the Christ eclipsed by a "*honkin' weekend sale.*"

The equal treatment policy people observe today is the same mistake made by Sennacherib and Assyria.

No one asks, **what if all religions aren't equal?**

Sennacherib was knocking off nations *one after the other* - exposing fraudulent gods *one after the other* - proving the futility of their prayers *one after the other*.

But he failed to consider that he could attack a city *whose God was true* and *whose God had the power to save!* Sennacherib's oversight is about to cost him...

Hezekiah prayed and *Isaiah prophesied* that God would come to the defense of His people. In fact, God gave the house of David an outlandish sign. In Isaiah 7 it reads, "**The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son...**"

In 9:6, “Unto us a Child is born, until us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder.”

But this special Child was already on the scene.

As the Angel of the Lord - as the pre-Bethlehem, pre-incarnate Son of God - Jesus came to avenge God’s people and fight for His holy city. In Chapter 8 Isaiah speaks of God’s warrior by name - it’s “**Immanuel.**”

Again in 8:8 Isaiah predicts “(Sennacherib) *will pass through Judah, He will overflow... (and) fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.*” The overflowing Assyrian army will finally meet its match - *in Immanuel’s land.*

In the next verses Isaiah taunts the Assyrians, “*Gird yourselves, but be broken to pieces. Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; speak the word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.*” or **Immanuel!**

Immanuel will save the day for God’s people.

2 Kings 19, the passage we read earlier, describes a night you’ve probably never associated with Christmas Eve. God sends His mighty warrior - no doubt Isaiah’s *Immanuel* - into the camp of Assyria with sword drawn.

And when the day finally dawns, 185,000 corpses lay on the battlefield. Immanuel had saved His people.

Despite Sennacherib’s propaganda the God of the Jews, the God in Jerusalem, *Immanuel*, was willing and able to defend His people, and overpower Assyria.

We learn from Sennacherib that if you just assume, and you don't pay attention to *the moves you take* and *the decisions you make* you can get into real trouble.

Sennacherib was just cruising through life taking out cities, kings, false gods... *He never once dreamed he would run into the one true God.* Fake gods were no match for Sennacherib, but everything changed in "Immanuel's land." Immanuel was one tough hombre.

Offend Immanuel, and He cuts you down to size.

Here's a part of the Christmas story you really need to know. Mary's baby was *Immanuel* - the warrior of Isaiah's day that proved the Hebrew God was true and dispensed with the evil Assyrians. The babe Mary *laid in the manger hay*, had already *made hay* in battle.

Seven centuries earlier the Babe of Bethlehem came brandishing a sword. *With fire in His eyes* and *justice in His heart* - Jesus flashed His steel, and by the time He returned it to its scabbard it dripped with rebel blood...

This first blood Jesus spilt was not His own. *Before Mary's baby cried, He had already yelled a battle cry!*

Folks today can be like Sennacherib - cruising along treating all religions as equal... *Don't all paths lead to God? Don't all religions worship the same God? As long as you're sincere in your belief, aren't you fine?*

Muslims pray to Allah...

Hindus pray to Vishnu...

Buddhists look to the Buddha...

Mormons think they'll become their own gods...

Christians trust in Jesus...

Hey, what's the big deal? Nobody has a monopoly on God?

But here is the really big deal!... One of those religions just might actually be true and right!

And in your attempt not to offend anybody you might commit the greatest sin of all, and offend the one true God before whom, one day, every knee will bow!

This is the mistake Sennacherib made. He thumbed his nose at the true God in heaven, and God sent Immanuel to cut down a proud man. Reject or ignore Jesus and you can get yourself into big league trouble.

It's interesting to me that just before Jesus was born God identified Him to Joseph as "*Immanuel*" - and Matthew recorded that strategic detail in the Scriptures.

It's a notation that could've just as easily been excluded. But it was important to God to document it.

When Joseph held that baby, God wanted him to know Who he was really holding! Certainly, without this detail, Joseph would've marveled at God's humility. That the Almighty became a man... *what compassion.*

But because it was "*Immanuel*" Joseph knew the baby He was holding was not only *humble*, but *holy*.

Twelve years later when Joseph found Jesus teaching the scholars in the Temple, he recalled that Jesus had taught the Assyrians a lesson or two.

Still later, when Jesus took the whip and ran the greedy moneychangers out of the Temple, I'm certain someone saw a little of **Immanuel** rise up within Him.

When the Romans crucified Jesus it perplexed the disciples, knowing He didn't have to take a beating. **Immanuel** could've just as easily dished one out! Yet He bore the pain, *as if sacrificing for someone else.*

And when Jesus rose from the dead suddenly everyone realized **Immanuel** had been at war, but with a different Sennacherib. Jesus had defeated death.

Here's the deal with Jesus... *He's a baby in the manger - He's a child in the Temple - He's a teacher from Galilee - He's a servant - He hangs on a cross...*

But look in His rearview mirror and He's **Immanuel.**

Jesus desperately desires to save us - *He's been dying to prove it...* but if we rebel against Him, He's not afraid to pull the switch, and bring down God's judgment. *He's done it before, and He'll do it again.*

This is the message of Christmas everyone needs to realize. Jesus is not someone to ignore, or marginalize, or trivialize - or dismiss as irrelevant, or obsolete. Don't ever make the mistake that He's like any other god...

Jesus was a teacher, a healer, a servant, a miracle-worker, even our sacrifice. But Jesus is more than all the above. He's *Immanuel* - He's Lord and King.

He enforces righteousness and punishes evil.

Jesus is patient now, but in the end He takes guff off no one. He is "Da Man." Everybody - great and small - high and low... every human being who's ever lived will one day give an account of their lives to Jesus.

As the old man, Simeon, said when he saw the baby Jesus, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel..." In fact, *this Child* will decide the eternal destiny of every human who's ever lived.

I don't want Christmas to lull us to sleep.

In one sense it's *a quaint story* about a birth, a baby, a manger, a star, some shepherds... but it's also *a war story* - about a rough and ready Warrior who invades hostile territory to retrieve what belongs to Him - what was stolen from Him by greedy, selfish, sinful people.

The Christmas story that starts so innocently, ends so violently - *and I'm not talking about the crucifixion.*

No, Jesus throws the last punch in this fight. He allowed the Romans to beat Him up and nail Him to a cross for our salvation. But He never takes a beating again. Next time Jesus will dish it out. His punching bag days are over. *Immanuel* will do battle a final time.

Flash ahead to Revelation 19...

A day will come when heaven opens and we'll see Jesus. He is the good guy. He's riding a white horse.

This is an event still future.

It's been a long time since Jesus walked the Earth - and bled and died to earn our forgiveness. Since that time Jesus has been doing all He can, through His Spirit, to convince people to repent and turn to Him.

But here's the truth. Most people don't want to follow Jesus. They're proud, and stubborn, and selfish, and want to try and control their own lives. And it's their sinful stubbornness that's going to send them to hell.

In Revelation 19 Jesus returns to Earth, and the nations rally against Him. People don't want Jesus to rule over them. Thus, they choose to fight against Him.

And Revelation tells us, He doesn't back down. **"In righteousness He judges and makes war."** With fire in His eye - and with crowns on His head - and with His clothes splattered with His enemy's blood - and with a sharp sword protruding from His mouth - once more *Immanuel* will go into battle flashing a deadly sword.

Jesus didn't start this fight. It was man who rebelled against God - God *didn't* and *hasn't* stopped loving mankind. Man started this brawl, but Jesus will end it.

Jesus doesn't care about the Fairness Doctrine, or being political correct. *Offending* is not His worry.

Revelation tells us Jesus ends this battle by crushing His opposition. The baby in the manger returns to Earth to destroy the folks who dare to resist Him. Then He throws the rebels into Hell, along with the devil...

And I can hear the objections... *"I can't believe you're saying a loving God - the Christmas Child no less - would send anyone to hell!"* Some people could never imagine *the Baby Jesus* doing such a thing!

But don't be naive. The "Baby Jesus" is *"Immanuel."*

Let me say, a loving God has no other choice but to send certain people to hell - *if He's truly loving...*

In reality, God doesn't send anyone to hell. Folks choose to go there. Hell was never intended for human beings. Jesus said God created Hell for Satan and his demons. Folks make bad choices and end up in Hell.

The Bible teaches *Jesus will forgive anyone from anywhere who's done anything...* If you'll bow to Him, He'll forgive your sin and you'll live with Him forever.

But if you think you're smarter than God - that Jesus is too narrow - that you're going to live life your own way - then God will send you to a place where that's accepted and desired behavior. The place is Hell.

If you hate Jesus and don't want to follow Him - how is it *loving* for God to make you go to heaven where you'll spend all day,

every day loving, and obeying, and serving Jesus? That's cruel and unusual punishment.

Hey, if you choose to distance yourself from Jesus - God will give you exactly what you've chosen.

You'll spend eternity as far from Him as possible.

It's interesting when Jesus was on Earth He did nothing but love people, and forgive people - and serve, and heal, and give... yet evil men killed Him.

When Jesus returns to Earth He'll come to redeem and restore. He establishes righteousness and peace. He'll come again with good intentions. Yet once more evil people will rally against Him and try to kill Him.

Revelation 20 fast-forwards to the distant future.

By now Jesus has reigned for 1000 years. The Earth is a utopia, a paradise. Yet the devil is let out of Hell for a short time, *and guess what men do?* They rally to Satan and rebel against God. And again, they try to kill Jesus. I'm just saying, *some people are incorrigible.*

And what does God do with people who never want to change and love Jesus? Do you want unrepentant pedophiles, serial killers, thieves, and rapists to be in heaven with you forever? That's not heaven - *it's hell.*

A loving God has to stop sinful people once and for all, or He wouldn't be very loving to the rest of us.

Hell is sin's only logical solution.

If you still have a problem with Hell I'm going to ask you to be honest... If you were in Jerusalem and Hezekiah was your king - and the vile and vicious Assyrians were outside the walls preparing to *invade your city, and burn your house, and torture you, and rape your wife, and take your kids into slavery...* Would you believe in a hell for them? I think you would.

The word "**Immanuel**" means *God with us*. That's God's desire. But hell is the choice to be *without God*.

I know it's still the Christmas season! And you want to think about "**On earth peace, goodwill toward men.**"

But don't you want to know the whole story?

Jesus is no longer the baby in the manger. He's all grown up now. He's climbed out of the manger and onto a white horse! And He doesn't mess around.

In Matthew 21:44 Jesus compared Himself to a rock.

He said, "**Whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.**"

When my kids were little we'd wrestle. If one of the kids fell on me, *no problem...* But if I fell on one of my kids, they ended up crying. A 200 pound dad can hurt.

And likewise, come broken to Jesus and He'll bring healing - but come stubborn and you'll be broken.

In the last chapter of your Bible Jesus declares, "**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the**

Last...” This means that our Lord Jesus is to be the last and final word of God to man.

Everyone who comes after Jesus is a deceiver.

Everyone who contradicts Jesus is false... that includes Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses, the Oprah Channel - *you name it!*

Jesus is as exclusive as you can get. He doesn't say, “**I am one way,**” but “**I am *the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.***”

I know that's not a politically correct statement - and this is the 21st Century - and we live in a pluralistic culture - and we should never, ever offend someone.

But quite frankly, the person I'm concerned about offending is God. He's called me to tell you the truth.

Like Sennacherib I've discovered not all religions and gods are equal. Look in the Bethlehem manger and you'll find ***Immanuel.*** Remember at Christmas, when the baby first cried, *it may've been a battle cry!*