

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

21 December 2025

God Over Us

Scripture Readings: *Genesis 1:1-31, John 1:1-14*

Text: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." *John 1:1-2, 14.*

Today is the twenty-first day of December the year of our Lord 2025.

How did that tiny, dependent baby, who grew up and lived an earthly life just like us, get to be so important that the calendar was changed to mark his birth?

History is marked by everything happening either before or after this event, which we celebrate at this time of the year every year.

How in the world did this happen?

One begins to get the impression that there is more here than meets the eye.

We have seen the Baby; we have heard his cry.

We have seen him learn to walk after many stumbles, falls, and tries.

We have seen the young man attend the synagogue to learn from the rabbis, and we have seen him nailed to the cross.

Yet it is 2025, "the year of our Lord".

How in the world?

There must be more to it!

And there is.

This Son is no normal man's son.

His Father is Yahweh, Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Jesus shows us not only that God is for us and with us but also that God is over us.

A look back.

A well known theologian of the twentieth century would say that these sermons have been preached in the wrong order.

He might contend that before we knew that God was for us and with us he was God over us.

And he would be correct.

God over us in, point of fact, was first.

But the chosen order makes a point for this year.

God over us is first, and thus Christmas points us back.

This Baby, who grew up to be the King of the only eternal kingdom of civilization's history, reveals the God who is Almighty, Creator, Redeemer, and Sovereign Lord.

God is the one who addresses humans and makes himself known to us.

God is the personality who speaks.

We are addressed by God and demanded to respond to his call.

He meets us as the absolute Lord who claims us unconditionally for himself.

God reveals himself as the one who has an absolute right to lay his claim on us.

God has now spoken through his son, and the demand for obedience is undeniable and inescapable.

His coming makes our responsibility unconditional.

We must say yes or no.

We are summoned to carry out his will and his demands.

He is "God over us."

Thus the birth of Jesus points back to the God who laid the foundation of the world, who is Almighty, Creator, Redeemer, and Sovereign Lord.

That Baby in the manger is no less that "God over us."

A look forward.

The birth, life, ministry, and death of Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God.

The dominant concept of Jesus' message is the reign of God.

Jesus proclaims its immediately impending eruption.

Everything is swallowed up in the single thought that God will rule.

Because God is King, Jesus calls for radical obedience.

He makes a demand for decision.

Now is the last hour.

Now it can be only "either-or."

Now the question is whether a person really desires God and his reign or the world and its goods; and the decision must be made.

"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

"Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

"Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

Thus Jesus calls for radical obedience to God's will.

The birth of Jesus brings in the reign of God.

In the birth of Jesus, "God over us" takes on new form.

Jesus calls each person to radical obedience to a love that has no boundaries and needs no instructions.

That is why the road to salvation is narrow and few will travel it.

So Christmas points us forward, and again we encounter God Almighty: the one who created and calls; the one who redeems, rules, and reigns; the one to whom we respond with obedience because he is "God over us."

The Lord God Almighty is for us, with us, behind us, beside us, before us and all of this is possible because He is "Over us" now and forever more.

Amen!