

**She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus. (Matthew 1.21-25 [NRSV](#))**

Benjamin Garrison tells about a computerized chess game his wife gave him for Christmas. One night, he found himself shouting at this amazing scientific toy, "All right, you idiot, if you're going to cheat, I won't play with you any longer." But the computerized chess game had not cheated. It had simply made a decisive and game-challenging move several minutes before, a move Garrison had not caught. It let him go on making his moves, some rather good, other quite bad, all the while edging toward its own inevitable victory.

Garrison goes on to write: "This is quite like what God had done in the serious game of life and salvation. Sometime back--nearly 20 centuries ago--God made the decisive but mostly unnoticed move, in sending Christ into the world. That move secured the future. That move guaranteed the outcome. Meanwhile, we are free to go on making our moves on the chess-board of life, some rather good, others unbelievably bad. Yet all the while God is edging us toward the inevitable triumph--not over us, but in us.

"That is the message of Christmas. God has not forgotten His people. In this uncertain and fragile world, there is one thing we can be certain of. God is still in charge of His universe and He is nearer than any of us can imagine.

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**Dear God, thank you for Christmas and bringing me the gift I really needed, a savior. Amen.**

Ron Newhouse

**Prince of Peace**  
*Jesus* Messiah  
*Redeemer* Holy  
King of Kings *One*  
*Wonderful Counselor*  
**Jehovah** SAVIOR  
Awesome Lord **A**  
**Immanuel** **MORE**  
*Living Water* **MORE**  
**MOST HIGH GOD**