



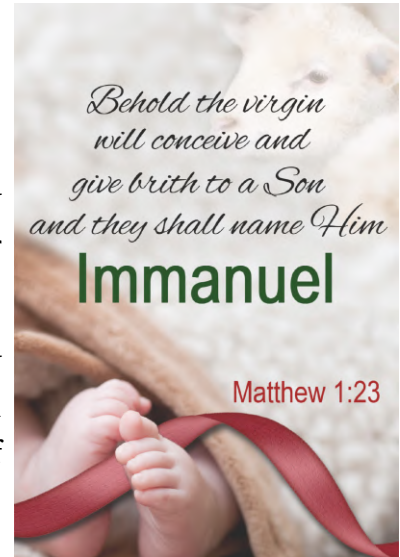
20 December 2024

## Jesus, Immanuel

During Advent millions of people have sung “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” and “Emmanuel.” We know Immanuel means *God with us*, but let’s pause and reflect on it today, just five days before Christmas.

First, a bit of *housekeeping*. *Immanuel* is the Old Testament Hebrew word brought into English. *Emmanuel* is from the Greek word used for the Hebrew word. Same word, same meaning.

When the angel told Joseph that Mary had conceived by the Holy Spirit he told him to name him *Jesus* (*God is salvation*) “for He will save His people from their sins”, and that Isaiah’s prophecy of Immanuel, *God with us*, describes Jesus.



We start with Isaiah’s prophecy in chapter 7. A coalition attacked Judah. God sent Isaiah to assure Judah’s king Ahaz that the coalition’s plan “shall not stand nor shall come to pass.” God told Ahaz to ask for a sign to confirm this, but Ahaz refused. Then God Himself gave him a sign,

“the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and she will name Him Immanuel  
... For before the boy knows enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose  
two kings you dread will be abandoned.” (14, 16)

God would be with Ahaz and Judah.

The immediate or near term fulfillment was in that time when an unmarried woman, a virgin, would marry and have this son Immanuel (also see chapter 8 for the possible fulfillment).

God directed Matthew to cite the Isaiah 7 sign and state that its ultimate fulfillment is in Jesus, He is Immanuel, *God with us*.

What does this mean, what is its significance? Let’s note four aspects of Jesus being Immanuel.

- First, Jesus, God with us, lived out, displayed to us what God is like. We read in John chapter 14 that Jesus said,

“‘If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.’ Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you for so long a time, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, “Show us the Father”’?”

Do you want to know what God is like? Read the gospels where Jesus shows us what God is like.

- Then, Jesus, God with us, saves us from sin to life with God. Jesus told us, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give *His life as a ransom for many*” (Matthew 20:28). The apostle Paul picks that up in his first letter to Timothy, telling us Christ “gave Himself as a ransom for all” (2:6). By being truly God and truly man — God with us — He, and only He, was qualified to ransom us, pay the penalty for our sin.
- As well, Jesus, God with us, as one of us experienced life on earth, and so can identify with us, experientially understands what we go through. We read in Hebrews chapter 4, “we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin” (15). Because of that we can “approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need” (16).
- One more for today, Jesus, God with us, ushered in a new age of Him being with believers, with us always, forever. Recall His words that close Matthew’s gospel, “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” He is always with us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as He said,  
  
“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, so that He may be with you forever; the Helper is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him; but you know Him because He remains with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

We’ve just scratched the surface of this wonderful, beautiful truth. Reflect on it, explore it. Praise and thank God that Jesus is Immanuel, He is *God with us, with you*.

Pastor Lyle