

Immanuel: God With Us

Matthew 1:18-25

(Black Bibles p. 807; Children's Bibles p. 1154)

There are two key verses in our passage today:

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).”
-Matthew 1:22-23, quoting Isaiah 7:14

Jesus is Immanuel = “God *with* us.” What does this mean?

[1] “God *for* us” = God is on our side, and for our cause and well-being.

- The Isaiah context, chapters 7-8, displays this meaning. In Isaiah's 8th century BC, God was *for* the nation of Judah (“us”), even though two nations had allied against it.
- Pushback: But isn't God always *for* us?
 - Sometimes God states his independence from being too closely allied with anyone! See Joshua 5:13-14.
 - And sometimes, terrifyingly, God says, “*I am against you.*” See Jeremiah 50:31; Ezekiel 13:8, 26:3, 29:3; Nahum 2:13. See especially Ezekiel 5:7-8, where God surprisingly says He is even against Jerusalem!

[2] “God is *present with us*” = God is not merely *for* us, as important as that is, but is *right here*. He is present with us, in all our challenges, sorrow, suffering, and sin.

- Pushback: But isn't God *always* present with us?
 - In one sense, yes, since He is omnipresent. (Heb 4:13; Ps 139:7-10).
 - But in another sense, as a judgment upon the evil of humankind from the beginning (Genesis 3), God's presence hasn't been fully *perceptible* or *available* to us.
- Incarnation! In Christ, God becomes human. He is truly with us humans, becoming one of us.
 - Quite a *literal* fulfillment of “God with us.” Not just a *fulfillment* of Isaiah 7:14, but we might say a *superfulfillment*!
- Why the incarnation? Why the God-Man? Hebrews 2:9-18 is one of the longest answers to that question in Scripture:
 - He needed to truly suffer and die, and this *for our sins* (Heb 2:9, 2:17)
 - He is now a sympathetic high priest, understanding firsthand human temptation and weakness (Heb 2:17-18)

“So great a salvation...” (Heb 2:3) That's the final word on Immanuel, God with Us!