

WE SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL (MATTHEW 1:18-25)

He Shall Be Called Jesus and They Shall Call Him Immanuel

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus."

The title of our message today, "We Shall Call His Name Immanuel", which means "God with us". That was not the literal name of whom we know now as Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. Joseph and Mary didn't mess up by calling Him Jesus (Yehoshua, "Jehovah is salvation"). "They shall call His name Immanuel", "God with us", and is meant to be a characterization or representation of our Lord, God, and Savior, and we, as children will call Him Immanuel, God with us. We can only rejoice in Immanuel, God with us, after first acknowledging, what was first written, "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." He will save His people from their sins and we shall call Him Immanuel, for God is with us. While God certainly is and has always been with mankind as David acknowledges in **Psalms 139** saying, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell [sheol], behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me." (**Psalms 139:7-10**) That can be bad news for some people, knowing that nothing escapes His knowledge and presence, and a great blessing to others, just as Jesus spoke to His disciples after He had risen from the grave and had given His disciples the Great Commission, He assured them "lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (**Matthew 28:20**)

King David, while acknowledging God's omni-presence, he also longed for more of His presence saying, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple." (**Psalms 27:4**) Then David also said, "When You said,

"Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, Lord, I will seek." (**Psalms 27:8**) Even though Moses was with God and had conversations with God on the top of Mt. Sinai, he knew there was more to God as he said to God, "Please, show me Your glory." (**Exodus 33:18**) Moses ended up having to wear a veil over his face because it glowed from his faint glimpse of the glory of God. "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" and "His Name Shall Be Called Immanuel", God with us. Are you looking forward to that? After Jesus had given the parable of the wheat and the tares, and the angels will separate the (bad) tares from the (good) wheat, Jesus said, "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (**Matthew 13:43**) Ah, Yes Lord, show us your glory! Immanuel, God with us!!!

As the Christmas season is upon us, as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, we are reminded of how the Israelites in times past were waiting for the promised Messiah yet they mistakingly were also looking for the promised ruler who would be Immanuel, God with us. Yet by the wisdom of God and by His incredible grace, the Israelites were blinded from the truth of Immanuel so that all the other nations, the Gentiles, could find Him and receive Him as their Lord, God, and Savior, as it is written, "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." So for us, those who have believed on Christ Jesus and received Him, now we are waiting for His RETURN, so that we may have more fully Immanuel, God with us, to see His face, to see His glory. Since, from our perspective, after the first coming of the Messiah, Lord Jesus, we still live in a world full of sin, depravity, godlessness, and while we believe on Jesus as being the Christ who died on a cross for our sins and that God is with us, just as He was with the Israelites up through the days of Christ Jesus on the earth in the flesh, it will be nothing like what is to come. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" (**Psalms 34:8**) We're just getting a taste of the goodness and glory of God. **Revelation 21:1** tells us, "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea." Then **Revelation 21:3-5** says, "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God [no more confusion, mysteries, uncertainties, or our living by faith—could our situation be any more right and blessed than to dwell with our Lord, God, and Savior?]. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." That's great! That's awesome! But Immanuel, God with us!!! If you love God you know what I'm talking about. God with us!!! And He said to me [the Apostle John], "Write, for these words are true and faithful." We are all, hopefully, waiting on Immanuel, and not just

individually, but as the family of God, and He will make all things new. We are all also, hopefully, living an active faith in Christ Jesus. Hopefully we all ARE abiding in Him, as He is the vine and we are the branches, He is our very life-source (**John 15**), and without Christ Jesus we can do nothing, that goes for physically as well as spiritually as He "upholds all things by the word of His power" (**Hebrews 1:3**). At any given time He can say, "your time is done" or it can go the other way too, where He says, "keep going, I've got you", just as Jesus tells us, that He is "**the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through Me.**" (**John 14:6**). You ever look at that as being a promise from God. Christ Jesus is our Way, He is our Truth, and He is our Life. He's going to get us there, to the ultimate promised land! He is our Immanuel, who will makes all things right, all things new, AND He is also our Immanuel who is our Way, Truth, and Life, from the beginning of our lives, to our new life in Christ, to when, as we are told, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He [the One] is revealed, we shall be like Him, for **we shall see Him as He is**" (**1 John 3:2**). He will make all things new and He will be with us and be our God (more fully, so to speak, than presently, as we will see Him as He is) and we shall be with like Him and with Him for all of eternity.

Therefore we are all, hopefully, looking unto Him, in all our ways, as He is the author and finisher of our faith (**Hebrews 12:2**). Even as the Israelites were told, according to the Old Covenant, to "cling to Him for He is your life and the length of your days" (**Deuteronomy 30:20**), so must we, who are now living our new lives in Christ according to the New Covenant that is IN HIM. Hopefully, we are all then living in and according to His Righteousness and not just doing our own thing independent of Him. As the Apostle John tells us, "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him." (**1 John 2:29**) While Christ alone is our righteousness, making us "right with God", we are then expected to live according to His righteousness. For as a child of God, who has believed on Jesus being Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and then receiving Him, by being born-again, that is, by being born of the Spirit, receiving the Holy Spirit, so as to be a child of God, we are living our new lives in Christ with the understanding that we are to "reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin [meaning we stop sinning against God], but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (**Romans 6:11**)

Meaning then, that as a child of God, we seek His will and His Way, not our own. One cannot say I just can't help it, I was born that way. Guess what? We were all born unto a sin-nature, with a propensity to sin. That is why we must be born-again, born of the Spirit of God. Whether one says they can't help it that it just is in their heart or mind, as it is written, "The heart is deceitful above

all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (**Jeremiah 17:9**) And then "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." (**Romans 8:7**) That is why we are told, or rather God is pleading with us, as the Apostle Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (**Romans 12:1-2**) That changing of our heart and renewing of our mind comes about as we submit ourselves wholly (completely) to God. As the Apostle James tells us, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." The Apostle Peter said basically the same thing in **1 Peter 5:6**. We are to be humbling ourselves before God, seeking His will and ways for our lives as we are His. Jesus Himself said, in part of His "Sermon on the Mount", which is in **Matthew 5-7** (some of it also is in **Luke 6**), "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But **seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness**, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (**Matthew 6:31-34**) Just before that Jesus told His listeners, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (**Matthew 6:19-21**) An Old Covenant similarity to that, of which Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also", Abram, later renamed Abraham by God, was told by God, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (**Genesis 15:1**) To those who really don't know God or know Christ Jesus, that may not mean a lot to them. One may say, "I'm just trying to make it into heaven". Yet God's ways are not like that. He has revealed to us, His great love for us. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him **should** not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him **might** be saved." (**John 3:16-17**) By faith, according to the Word of God, as it is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, we then respond by loving Him as He first loved us (**1 John 4:19**). With that being said, we are told, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." (**1 John 3:1**) We can then, apply to that to what Jesus tells us further, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—" (**John 14:15-16**)

Right after that Jesus said this, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (**John 14:23**) A summary of the doctrine or teachings of Christ can be summed up by Jesus saying the Great Commandment of God is to love Him with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind and then the second that is like unto it, to love our neighbors as ourselves. (**Mark 12:29-31**) Jesus expounded upon what that means to love our neighbor by saying, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (**Mark 5:33-35**) What is going on there is really explained by the Apostle Peter saying, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (**2 Peter 3:9**)

Yet no matter what our situation is, it is most important for us to hold on to His promise of Immanuel, God with us. One of my all-time favorite passages of Scripture is in **Psalms 18**. David says, "I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, [then we wait] who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies." "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" and we shall call His name Immanuel, God with us!