

**Engage**

- This Sunday is our annual Name and Word Sunday. We hand out an annual Bible Ready schedule, Speak on the power of the Word and the name of God. This year I am looking at the name Immanuel: God with Us. It wraps up a Christmas series.... But launches us into the year with a focus that He is ALWAYS WITH US.
- Have your group read the verse below. Then go over the what the Lord leads you to take from the devotional and commentary below.
- I hope that the conversation leads to assessing why in troubled moments, we choose at times, to behave as if God is not with us.

**Examine**

**Deuteronomy 20:4** for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'

**Joshua 1:9 ESV** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

**Isaiah 41:10** 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

**Psalms 16:8** I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

**Psalms 23:4** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

**John 14:17** that 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 abides with you and will be in you.

**Romans 8:38-39 ESV** For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**1 Corinthians 3:16 ESV** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

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**The Word became flesh...**

God didn't stay way off in Heaven, but came down to live among us. **John 1:14** says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

Jesus promised his disciples, "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (**John 14:3**). Incredibly, that's how much he wants to live with us.

**Revelation 21:3** says "God himself will be with his people." Why does it say God himself? Because God won't merely send us a delegate. He won't just send down the angel Gabriel to represent Him. He himself will actually come down from Heaven to live among us on the New Earth.

**Immanuel does not mean "us with God." It means "God with us."**

Where will He be with us? In the eternal home he is preparing for us.

It's sometimes said, "This world is not our home." It's true, but it's a half truth. We should qualify it to say, "This world—as it now is, under the curse—is not our home." But we should also say, "This world—as it was originally was our home." And we should add, "This world—as it one day will be, delivered from the curse—will be our home."

When we die and go to live in the Present Heaven, we'll be with Christ, and we'll be full of joy. But it won't be our permanent home. It will be a layover, not our final destination. Those now with the Lord are looking forward to their bodily resurrection and relocation to the New Earth, where Christ will reign forever.

**The incarnation of Christmas isn't temporary; it's permanent**

. Christ rose in a glorified human body which he will have forever. It's not that Jesus became a baby at Christmas, and then 33 years later came the resurrection and ascension and then he suddenly stopped being a man. No, the second member of the triune God will be a human being for all eternity, reigning from a throne on the New Earth.

Often we think of Heaven as our going up into a disembodied angelic realm to live with God in his place. But the Bible says the ultimate Heaven will be God coming down from Heaven to live with us in our place—the New Earth. That's the place He's preparing for us.

We are made for a person and a place. Jesus is the person. Heaven is the place. And the resurrected Jesus will bring Heaven down to the resurrected earth.

One thing I love about Christmas is relaxing and celebrating and laughing with my family. Heaven will be the best of Christmas every day. We'll be able to relax and laugh and celebrate, with no tensions or arguments. The other shoe will never drop. No skeletons will fall out of our closets.

Christ paid the ultimate price so that we would be forever free from sin—and the fear of sin. All barriers between us and him will be forever gone. He will be our best friend. Jesus will be God with us, forever.

Have you ever imagined what it would be like to walk the earth with Jesus, as the disciples did? Have you ever wished you had that opportunity? You will—on the New Earth.

Jesus promised we would eat and drink with him in his Kingdom. To eat a meal with Jesus will be to eat a meal with God, because he is Immanuel, God with us.

The best part of Christmas is not the presents we receive, but the presence of God with us. Christmas can be a hint, a foretaste of the celebration God's family will enjoy together.

Christmas means that God loved us so much he came to live with us, and die for us so that we can live with Him forever.

Christ promises He will wipe away all our tears, and there will be no more death or suffering, no final goodbyes. If you know Jesus, the great reunion awaits you. God will live with you and your spiritual family forever. And that's the best Christmas present anyone could ever receive.

### Isaiah 41:10

**Fear thou not** - This verse is plain in its meaning, and is full of consolation. It is to be regarded as addressed primarily to the exiled Jews during their long and painful captivity in Babylon; and the idea is, that they who had been selected by God to be his special people had nothing to fear. But the promise is one that may be regarded as addressed to all his people in similar circumstances, and it is as true now as it was then, that those whom God has chosen have nothing to fear.

### For I am with thee / Fear thou not, for I am with thee

This is a reason why they should not be afraid. God was their protector, and of whom should they be afraid. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' What higher consolation can man desire than the assurance that he is with him to protect him?

Not merely by his essence or power, who is everywhere; or by his providence supporting, preserving, observing, ordering, and overruling all things; but in a way of special grace, to guard and protect his people, support and supply them, comfort and strengthen their hearts;

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wherefore they need not fear any of their enemies, nor whatsoever they may be called to suffer for his name's sake, even though they pass through fire and water, and the valley of the shadow of death:

**Be not dismayed** The word rendered here 'dismayed' (תַּשְׁתַּע *tîshetta*) is derived from שָׁעָה *shâ'âh*, "to see, to look"; and then to look about as one does in a state of alarm, or danger. The sense here is, that they should be calm, and under no apprehension from their foes.

**For I am thy God** - I am able to preserve and strengthen thee. The God of heaven was their God; and as he had all power, and that power was pledged for their protection, they had nothing to fear.

Be not dismayed, I am thy God; through Christ, in a covenant way, as appeared by the effectual calling of them; and therefore might depend on his love, be sure of his power, expect all needful supplies, and to be comfortably carried through every service and trial they were called unto; and need fear no enemies, or be dismayed at anything that should befall them; or become weak as water, and their hearts melt like wax within them, as the Jewish commentators generally interpret the word {n}. The Targum is,

“**be not broken;**” in spirit.

The word signifies to look about, as persons in distress, and amazed: I will strengthen thee; with strength in their souls, to perform duties, exercise grace, withstand corruptions, resist temptations, bear afflictions, suffer persecutions, and do their generation work, according to the will of God; and if God is the strength of his people, they need not be afraid of any persons or things, ( Psalms 27:1-3 ) : yea,

**I will help thee;**

help them out of all their afflictions and temptations, and out of the hands of all their enemies; help them in the discharge of duty, in the exercise of grace, in bearing the cross, in fighting the Lord's battles, and in their journey to another world; help them to every mercy, temporal and spiritual, to all needful supplies of grace, and at last to glory; whose help is suitable and seasonable, and may be expected, since he is able to help, either with or without means; has promised to help his people, as here, and he is faithful that has promised; he has laid help on one that is mighty, and set up a throne of grace to come to for help in time of need; and seeing he is their helper, they need not fear what men or devils can do unto them, ( Hebrews 13:5 Hebrews 13:6 )

**I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness;** either by his almighty power, or by his Son, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself, and the author of righteousness to his people: this is expressive of his sustentation of them, not merely in a providential way, but in a

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way of special grace; and of his powerful protection and preservation of them, so as that they shall stand in the grace of God, go on in his ways, and not fall finally and totally, but persevere to the end, though their trials and temptations may be great and many. I will enable you to bear all your trials.

**With the right hand of my righteousness** - With my faithful right hand. The phrase is a Hebrew mode of expression, meaning that God's hand was faithful, that it might be relied on, and would secure them.

### 1 Corinthians 3:16

16. Know ye not—It is no new thing I tell you, in calling you "God's building"; ye know and ought to remember, ye are the noblest kind of building, "the temple of God."

ye—all Christians form together one vast temple. The expression is not, "ye are temples," but "ye are the temple" collectively, and "lively stones" (1Pe 2:5) individually.

God ... Spirit—God's indwelling, and that of the Holy Spirit, are one; therefore the Holy Spirit is God. No literal "temple" is recognized by the New Testament in the Christian Church. The only one is the spiritual temple, the whole body of believing worshippers in which the Holy Spirit dwells (1Co 6:19; Joh 4:23, 24). The synagogue, not the temple, was the model of the Christian house of worship. The temple was the house of sacrifice, rather than of prayer. Prayers in the temple were silent and individual (Lu 1:10; 18:10-13), not joint and public, nor with reading of Scripture, as in the synagogue. The temple, as the name means (from a Greek root "to dwell"), was the earthly dwelling-place of God, where alone He put His name. The synagogue (as the name means an assembly) was the place for assembling men. God now too has His earthly temple, not one of wood and stone, but the congregation of believers, the "living stones" on the "spiritual house." Believers are all spiritual priests in it. Jesus Christ, our High Priest, has the only literal priesthood (Mal 1:11; Mt 18:20; 1Pe 2:5) [Vitringa].

### QUESTIONS

- Why was it important for Him to become like us and be born as a baby? In theological terms, why is the incarnation crucial to the gospel message?
- What are some examples of when you felt God was with you in a situation?
- What are some examples of when you have thought God was not with you in a situation?
- How would remembering that God is with you in every situation change your behavior in the moment?
- What's one unexpected way God has worked in your life lately?
- In what ways can you be more confident in God and His plan for your life?

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- Is there something God has asked you to do that you haven't followed through on? How could you take steps toward obedience this week?
- What opportunities could you create for some personal worship time this week? How would you describe the daily impact of "God With Us" in your life?