

Jesus: Immanuel

Matthew 1:18-25 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

### Conception and Birth of Jesus

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. <sup>20</sup> But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name **Jesus**, for He will save His people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME **IMMANUEL**,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US.” <sup>24</sup> And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, <sup>25</sup> but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name **Jesus**.

### Introduction

(Note: Immanuel vs. Emmanuel)

*Immanuel and Emmanuel point to the same meaning with two different spellings.*

*With the original text of the Bible not being in English, it must be translated. Different English translations of the Bible use different translation processes. The process that produces the different spelling is called transliteration.*

**Immanuel** with an "I" is a transliteration of the original Hebrew word composed of “**Immanu**” (with us) and **El** (God), while **Emmanuel** with an "E" is a transliteration of the Greek “**Emmanouel**.”

(<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/holidays/is-it-immanuel-or-emmanuel-biblical-meaning-and-significance.html>)

Do you know the meaning of your name? E.g., Christopher: Christ bearer, Zoe: Life. Michael: Who is like God? Kyewoon: laurel tree (in) the cloud. In the Hebrew culture naming was very important. When God gave someone a new name, He expected the person to live

a life worthy of the name. E.g. Abraham (Father of Multitude), Sarah (Princess), Benjamin (Son of Right Hand—Son of Strength, Power).

In today's passage, we see two names given to Christ by God. The first name was Jesus (v. 21). As soon as the baby was born, people called Him Jesus (Greek translation of 'Joshua'—the LORD saves). The other name given to the baby was Immanuel (v. 23)—*Im(m)-anu-el* (with – Us - God).

Now, let's consider the meanings of those two names. The name 'Jesus' is very appropriate for our Lord because it exactly reflects His mission on earth—He was born to 'save' people from their sins. In fact, Jesus lived His life exactly as God wanted Him to. Through His death on the Cross, He saved humanity from sin once and for all.

What about 'Immanuel'? Out of so many other names, why was 'Immanuel' given to baby Jesus? Of course, the right answer would be: to *fulfill the prophecy* in Isaiah 7:14 "a virgin will conceive a baby and the baby will be called Immanuel." Yet, I believe there is another reason why God called Jesus Immanuel. The name 'Immanuel' best sums up who Christ is to us. Everything Christ does for us and with us is packed in one word: Immanuel—God with us. Let me explain why I believe so.

## Content

I have researched on the phrase, "God with us" in the Bible and discovered the following three meanings behind the phrase: **Companionship, Care, Commitment.**

First, '*Immanuel*' means *companionship*. 'God with us' means that God pitches His tent among us (Revelation 21:3). E.g., Israel's 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. God dwelt among the people of Israel. Whenever God was on the move, so were they. Whenever God stopped, they stopped too. Wherever God's tent was pitched, so were their tents. God's tent was called the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:9)—fancy name for 'tent' or 'dwelling place.' Whenever they folded their tents and moved, so moved the Tabernacle. God was with them 24/7. Later, the Tabernacle was replaced by the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And, that Temple of God now is us: *If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.* (1 Corinthians 3:17).

You are that temple. God dwells in you through His Spirit. Now, as God dwells within us, He journeys with us. Wherever we go, so does He. He keeps us company. The

divine companionship makes our journey light (E.g., *Two are better than one. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart*--Ecclesiastes 4:9, 12).

God knows what we are up against (Remember: even the hairs of your head are all counted--Matthew 10:30). He is there whenever we need Him. He is there when we are happy or hurt. He sees our tears. He hears our groans. He comforts us (John 11:31). He shares our joys and concerns. He lends ears to our stories, even to our complaints (E.g., Prayer). He rejoices with us. He celebrates with us. He cries with us. He suffers with us. He endures with us. He encourages us to go on when we are in despair. In times of doubt, He assures us that He is in control. He knows everything in our lives. Immanuel means divine companionship.

Next, *'Immanuel' means that God cares*. He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). He provides and protects. He provides us with our daily bread. He protects us from harm. He rescues us from all troubles [as He did for Joseph (Acts 7:9-10) and for Paul (Acts 18:9-10)]. He perfectly understands our weaknesses and temptations: *Jesus himself suffered when he was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted* (Hebrews 2:18). He doesn't allow us to have more than we can bear and provides us the way out of the temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13). In times of fear, He assures us with His promise: *Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will also help you, I will also uphold you with My righteous right hand*' (Isaiah 41:10). So, next time when fear assails you, declare to God, to yourself, and to your fear: *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me*; (Psalm 23:4). Immanuel means that God cares.

Finally, *'Immanuel' means commitment*. God is fully committed to us. Even when we fail to be faithful to Him, He remains faithful to us all the way until we reach Heaven. E.g., Samwise Gamgee remains faithful to Frodo throughout the journey to Mordor. In the first movie of "The Lord of the Rings," the most moving part to me was at the end of the movie when Frodo insisted going on to Mordor by himself, Sam said that he would be with him because he promised Gandalf. Sam can be compared to Christ. Frodo is a believer. Like Sam pledged his company until the end of the mission, so does Christ us with a promise that He will be with us to the end of this age (Matthew 28:20). He never leaves us alone (John 8:29). Even when our best friends and family members forsake us, our God never abandons us. He is forever faithful.

One thing we often forget is this: During our Heaven-bound journey, God is fully committed to our sanctification in body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). He refines and shapes us into Christ's image. He is the Potter, and we are the clay. He expects nothing

but the best for us. He silently and patiently works on us taking all the time He needs until we are fully transformed into Christ's image. He will finish the good work He has started in us (Philippians 1:6). He teaches and guides us into truth (Counselor/Teacher). He empowers us to do God's will in our daily walk with Him (Philippians 2:13). He wants us to learn from Him and of Him (Matthew 3:14). He wants us to be like Him in all the things we do and say. He wants us to demonstrate His character in us. He will never give up on us until He sees in us the complete image of Christ (Galatians 4:19). Immanuel means divine commitment.

## **Conclusion**

Once I asked Sunwoo my wife what she thought of the meaning of God's being with us. Without hesitation, she said that it is the same as she and I are together in our marriage relationship. She didn't explain further, but I understood what she meant. Being with someone means covenant. It means commitment. It means faithfulness. It means protection. It means companionship. It means walking together hand in hand. God does the same things with us, only much more than we can possibly imagine or understand.

This Christmas season, let us remember the beautiful, wonderful, and eternal promise of God: Jesus Immanuel. He died for our sins. Because of Him, in Him, and through Him, the LORD became our God, and we became His people. God and we are together in a covenantal relationship. Next time, when you say that God is with you, remember the covenant that you signed with God in the name of Jesus. The covenant is about this: You obey His voice, and He is your God, and you are His people. He is with us. He accompanies us. He cares for us. He is faithful to us. This covenant lasts for eternity, not only here on earth, but also in Heaven (Revelation 21:3). Jesus Immanuel is with us throughout this Advent season and for eternity. Amen.