

## **Immanuel = God With Us!**

(Matthew 1:20-23; Isaiah 7:14)

Intro: *“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”* (Matt. 1:23). The angel’s announcement to Joseph in Matthew 1:20-23, that Mary would conceive and give birth to Immanuel, meaning *“God with us,”* expresses the wonder of the Incarnation—that God *“became flesh and made His dwelling among us”* (John 1:1, 14).

**Meaning of “Immanuel”** “Immanuel” is a Hebrew word meaning *“God with us.”* It appears only twice in the Old Testament (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8) and once in the New Testament, here in Matthew 1:23.

The significance of the title and its timing in the Old Testament was a promise God made to Judah through the prophet Isaiah to deliver His people from the menacing threats of Rezin, king of Syria, and of Pekah, king of Israel, who had formed a coalition to attack the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Matthew informs us that the ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah’s promise is realized in the virgin-born Son of God, who is named both Immanuel and Jesus. Jesus is *“God with us”* and the *“God who saves”* us from our sins.

This promise of God to send a Savior to redeem mankind is the grand theme of the Bible. It has been estimated that there are over 600 predictions in the Old Testament concerning the coming of Christ. Half of these prophecies were fulfilled with Christ’s first advent, and the remainder will be fulfilled with His second coming. This line of prophetic truth regarding God’s Son, Immanuel, is truly amazing and miraculous. I would like to briefly review ***10 important prophecies/promises*** that God made concerning the coming of His virgin-born Son, Immanuel, who has provided salvation for fallen man. The first promise is recorded in Genesis 3:15.

### 1. The promise to Adam And Eve (Genesis 3:15)

Following their fall into sin, Adam and Eve were driven away from God’s presence, but not before He promised to send them a virgin-born Savior (Gen. 3:15, 22-24).

Immediately after Adam and Eve fell into sin God said to Satan, *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”* God said,

Satan there is going to be One born into the human race of *the seed of a woman*, **He will crush your head**. Christ is the “Crusher,” to be born of *the seed of the woman*. He will inflict the mortal blow upon Satan’s head (Rev. 20:10). Theologians refer to this promise in Genesis 3:15 as the *Protevangelium* or “the first promise of a coming Redeemer.”

Though perhaps not understood then, we have here in Genesis 3:15 the anticipation of the virgin birth. Satan’s defeat, and that of *his seed* (a collective noun referring to the unbelieving world) would come from the seed of the woman. It speaks of her seed, not his (the man’s) nor theirs (the man and the woman’s). **Deliverance would come from the woman alone** without the aid of a man. The *seed* referred to here is not defined. Later revelation will do this, but the text is suggestive none-the-less. God in His grace promised to someday send a virgin-born Deliverer, who would deal a death-blow to Satan, and provided salvation for fallen humanity.

The Redeemer of fallen mankind would be born or better conceived of *the seed of woman* (*feminine singular*). This would require a supernatural birth. The Savior would not be begotten of a human father. He would come by way of *the seed of woman*. The miraculous virgin-conception of Messiah is revealed as early as the third chapter of the Book of Genesis. The Old Testament progressively reveals hundreds of additional promises that identify the virgin-born Savior of the world.

## 2. God’s provision of Seth (Gen. 4:1-26)

a. Cain and Abel—The enmity between Satan and the seed of the woman is first seen in Cain’s killing of his righteous brother Abel in Genesis 4. Abel you recall came before God with an offering from his flock, while Cain brought an offering from the fruit of the ground. God accepted Abel’s blood offering, but had no regard for Cain’s offering from the fruit of the ground. God tried to persuade Cain to approach Him in the proper way, but he refused. We read in verse 8, of Genesis 4 that Cain told his brother Abel about his meeting with God, and apparently when Abel counseled him to obey God, Cain struck Abel his brother and killed him.

The reason Cain killed Abel his brother is recorded in **1 John 3:12**—Cain slew his brother because he was of the evil one—because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous. Satan directed Cain to kill the righteous seed through whom Messiah would eventually come. The enmity between Satan’s godless seed, and the woman’s godly seed becomes a predominant theme of the Bible.

b. Seth—We read in verse 25 of Genesis 4 that God appointed another offspring of Adam and Eve to replace Abel.

**25** And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, *she said*, “God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him.” **26** And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD.

The name “Seth” is from a Hebrew word which means “to set or to appoint.” It is evident that God graciously appointed this child to resume the godly line, the line out of which the seed of the woman would come. Notice that Seth likewise gave birth to a son, and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD. The “then” here refers to the logical consequences of the birth of Seth and the establishment of the godly line of men from which the seed of the woman would come. Merrill Unger suggest “This stands in contrast to the ungodly line of Cain, who ‘went out from the presence of the Lord’” (vs. 16) [*Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. I, p. 31].

Let’s move forward several hundred years to the time of Noah

### 3. God’s promise to Noah (Genesis 6–9)

The genealogical records in Genesis 5 record the godly line from Adam down to Noah, who is introduced in Genesis 6. If there are no gaps in this chronology, then 1,656 years elapsed between Adam’s creation and the flood of Noah’s day.

Genesis 6 opens with a frightful description of Satan’s having perverted nearly the entire human race, with the exception of Noah and his family. We read in verse 5 of Genesis 6 “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” God was grieved in His heart, and determined that he would blot out mankind with a worldwide flood. Would there be any hope for mankind?

We read in **verse 8** “But Noah found favor/grace in the eyes of the LORD.” God raised up man, a preacher of righteousness, whose name was Noah. Noah and his family believe God, and for 120 years Noah warned the people of his day of a coming judgment from God, a universal flood that would destroy the human race. God destroyed the human race with the flood, but preserved Noah and his family on the ark. It was through Noah that the seed of the woman would come. But Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Which one would continue the godly line, from which the promised seed would come?

#### 4. The godly line of Shem (Genesis 9:26)

Noah identifies Shem as the son who would continue the godly line. **Genesis 9:26**—“Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.” From Shem and his descendants the Deliverer, the seed of the woman, would come, who would provide blessing to those who believe in the LORD. Shem becomes the father of the Semitic people through whom Abraham comes.

Before introducing Shem’s genealogical connection to Abraham in Genesis 11:10-26, we first read of Nimrod’s rebellion against God at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 10 and 11. Satan used Nimrod, whose name means “*let us revolt*,” to introduce a one world government which sought unity and prosperity apart from God. This is the first anti-god, humanistic assembly of a United Nations.

Unfortunately, this rebellion against God included the Semitic descendants of Shem, many of whom lived in Babylon and all of whom became involved in this Babylonian system of idolatry. But God in His grace called Abram, a descendant of Shem, to follow Him, and promised to bless him and his descendants forever.

#### 5. God’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15; 17)

God chose Abram out of a pagan world to become the Father of faith. God promised Abram that if he would follow Him in obedience, He would make *him into a great nation, bless him, and make his name great*. The promise in Genesis 12, verse 3 to make Abram a blessing to the world of fallen mankind is fulfilled in the coming of Abraham’s descendant Jesus Christ, who became the means of blessing to the whole world. As many of you know, Abraham and Sarah struggled in their walk of faith, for Sarah was barren for twenty-five years. God waited until Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90 years old before He gave them Isaac. In fact, when God told Abraham that He was going to give him the promised son Abraham laughed, and said in his heart, “*Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old bear a son?*” (Gen. 17:17). God responded in **Genesis 17:19** that Sarah would bear him a son, and told him to call his name Isaac, which means “laughter.”

Well, Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age, just as God had promised. God’s covenant promises to Abraham were to extend as an everlasting covenant to his son Isaac, and his descendants after him (Gen. 17:19). Abraham became the channel through which God would eventually send His Son to provide redemption for fallen mankind. He would be born of a virgin descendant of Abraham.

## 6. God's promise to Isaac (Genesis 25:19-23)

Abraham's son Isaac married Rebekah, who like Sarah proved to be barren. Isaac prayed for his wife to have children, and after 20 years the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived (Gen. 25:21). The children, twins it turns out, struggled within her. Rebekah asked the LORD why this was happening to her (v. 22). God answered in v. 23, "*Two nations are in your womb, And two peoples shall be separated from your body . . . and the older shall serve the younger.*" God chose Jacob over Esau, the first-born, before the boys were born in order that His sovereign choice might stand (Rom. 9-10-12). God makes it clear that His covenant promises to Abraham would be realized through Jacob and his descendants, and not through Esau.

## 7. God's promise to Jacob = *Tribe of Judah* (Genesis 49:10)

Genesis 49:10 provides further clarity on God's sovereign choice. Jacob had twelve sons, which became the twelve tribes of Israel. The promised Messiah, would come through only one son, one tribe. As he approached the time of his death, Jacob, in faith, and as God's covenant spokesman, called his 12 sons to his beside to tell them what would become of them in the days ahead.

Of primary importance here is Jacob's oracle to Judah in Genesis 49:8-11. Judah would be like a fierce lion and dominate over his enemies, and his brothers, who would praise him and bow down to him. **The oracle centers on v. 10**, which speaks of the Promised One who will appear to rule over the nations. The scepter, *the right to rule*, will not depart from the tribe of Judah, until Shiloh (He who has the right to rule as God's Messiah) comes. These verses predict that kingship in Israel will reside with Judah, and will culminate in the future reign of Messiah, who will come forth from Judah (see Rev. 5:5).

This prediction did not begin to be fulfilled until the time of King David, some 640 years after Jacob's death-bed prediction here in Genesis 49:10.

## 8. God's promise to David (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 89)

The next major promise of the coming Redeemer was made to King David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16. This is referred to as the Davidic Covenant. Just as God made an eternal covenant with Abraham, so here He provides further clarity that the coming Redeemer would come forth from David's line. David's house (dynasty), kingdom, and throne would be established forever. David would have a Son who would succeed him, and establish His Kingdom on earth. The

angel Gabriel informs the Virgin Mary in Luke 1:31-33 that her virgin-born Son would be the ultimate fulfillment of this promise to David.

#### 9. God's promise of the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:13-14)

**It was the Prophet Isaiah who stated the truth of the virgin birth so very clearly in Isaiah 7:14.** This passage on the virgin birth, provides more light on the first promise given in Genesis 3:15. In Isaiah chapter 7 we read about King Ahaz, the wicked king of Judah, who was terrified because of a coalition between Syria and Israel's Northern Kingdom = 10 northern tribes. He was fearful because Syria and Israel said they were going to destroy him. The LORD sent the prophet Isaiah to king Ahaz and told Ahaz not to worry because God was going to deliver him from this Syrian/Ephramite coalition. Ahaz's country would not be overrun by Syria and Israel. Isaiah told Ahaz if you don't believe me, ask God for a sign. Ahaz in his super spiritual and pompous pious attitude said in verse 12 *"I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!"* Isaiah says, *Listen now, oh house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?*

**v. 14**—*"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."* The virgin birth was to serve as a sign for wicked King Ahaz that Judah would remain.

This verse from Isaiah 7:14 has been regarded since the earliest Christian times as a prophecy of Christ's virgin birth. Much debate has taken place over the best way to translate the Hebrew word used here (חַמְלָה; (א, , ' *almah*). As you well know, some translations of the Bible (the *NIV* for example) say **a young woman** shall conceive. And they dispute the fact of the virgin birth by saying the Hebrew word *almah* does not necessarily mean a virgin. **It means a young woman of marriageable age.** However, you can look through the Old Testament and find that the Hebrew word *almah* ("virgin") is used about seven times. In every instance in the Hebrew Old Testament the references to *almah* refer to a virgin.

I find it most interesting that around 250 B.C. a group of 70 Hebrew scholars, equally conversant in Greek, were brought together in Egypt to translate the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, it is called the Septuagint or LXX = 70. Now, here is the interesting thing, those Hebrew scholars, seventy of them, who translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, chose the Greek word *parthenos* for "virgin." *Parthenos* clearly means virgin and is the clear translation for the Hebrew word *almah*. These 70 Hebrew scholars took Isaiah 7:14 to

mean virgin some 250 years before the event occurred in the New Testament.

As noted the last two weeks in the angel's announcement to Mary in Luke 1 and to Joseph in Matthew 1, the child conceived in Mary's womb was the fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 7 verse 14. Mary, who had never had sexual relations with a man, conceived the Son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### 10. God's promise of Christ's Kingdom Rule (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Isaiah 9:6-7 provides further insight into the birth of God's Son.

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;  
And the government will rest on His shoulders;  
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Notice how these lines build in majesty and intensity concerning this One who was to come. Isaiah declared that Messiah would come as a baby who is born and as a gift given to us by God. His government or rule over all nations will be established when He comes again. His perfections are described as follows:

***His name will be called Wonderful Counselor***—this refers to Christ's as the supernatural Counselor, who at His first coming provided words of eternal life.

***Mighty God***—This is a term applied to Yahweh. When Christ returns, He will come as the Conquering Warrior King, and defeat Satan and all evil.

***Eternal Father***—Christ is the Eternal Father to His people.

***Prince of Peace***—Jesus Christ is the One who brings perfect peace to His people. Believers can experience the peace of Christ now (Eph. 2:13-18), and one day the world will experience His peace as well (Isa. 2:4).

7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness, From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

This verse looks forward to the everlasting rule of Messiah on David's throne

that will be instituted at Christ's second coming in power and great glory. Christ will establish and uphold His Davidic rule with justice and righteousness, From then on and forevermore. Notice that the LORD of hosts will accomplish Messiah's future Kingdom rule.

So then, the promised Savior of the world would come from the seed of the woman, requiring a virgin conception, of the line of Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, a son of Jacob, from the tribe of Judah, a Son of David; and according to the promises in Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6-7, He would be born of a virgin, would be called Immanuel, meaning "*God with us,*" and will rule on David's throne forever!

Conclusion: Don't miss the central message of Christmas. God sent forth His Son, who was born of a virgin. He came as the holy Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (Isa. 53). "*He/God made Him/Christ who knew no sin to become sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God through faith in His name*" (2 Cor. 5:21). **The focus of Christmas is to be upon God's gift of His eternal Son, Immanuel.**

**There is a cemetery in London called Bunhill Fields.** A number of famous people are buried there—John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress*; Isaac Watts, the great hymn writer; and Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*. Opposite the graveyard is John Wesley's chapel and a monument dedicated to him. On the same property is John Wesley's house, where on March 2, 1791, Wesley, lifting a feeble arm in a show of triumph, opened his eyes and exclaimed for the very last time, upon his deathbed, these parting words: "**The best of all is this: God is with us.**" **God has promised to be with us in life, death, and for all eternity. Jesus Christ is Immanuel, God With us!**

**Join me in prayer:** If you have never placed your trust in the virgin-born Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, we would like to give you an opportunity to ask Christ to come into your life this morning. You can do this right where you are sitting, in the quietness of your heart. Tell God that you are a sinner and ask Jesus to forgive you of your sin and come in and take over your life and He will. Christian, are you living for Jesus as you should be living? If not, ask Him to renew your heart this morning and He will. He died for us, He loves us; let us love and serve Him from this Christmas on!

Father, thank You for sending Immanuel to die for your sins, and for empowering us to live for His glory. Help us our Father to begin singing praises to our Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, our Eternal Father, and our Prince of Peace. It is He who has defeated death for us all! **And all God's people said, AMEN!**