

"They Will Call Him Immanuel"

@ Concord Church on 3rd December 2023

Introduction: Last month, we looked at the subject "How well we know our Jesus" as we are entering into the Christmas season of 2023. I mentioned about how some people group fabricate their own stories, images and give titles to Jesus. We also looked at what did Jesus say about Himself, about life & death, salvation and about end-times. I also mentioned about a study in USA in August 2021, that found- "of the born-again Christians between the ages of 18-39 surveyed, 60% agreed with the statement that Buddha, Mohd and Jesus are all valid paths to God. {Ignoring the claim of Jesus in John 14:6 claiming "That I am the way, the truth and the life. NO ONE comes to the Father except through Me" What a tragedy and speaks volumes about how well we know our Jesus!!!

Today, I am going to reflect upon the profound promise embedded in the words of Yesha' Yahu' (Isaiah) 7:14 what is called "THE IMMANUEL PROPHECY". It reads "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel." In these sacred words, we find the essence of the Christmas message—the divine promise of God's presence among us.

I. The Promise of a Sign:

Isaiah, a major prophet of Old Testament spoke these words to a people of Israel facing challenges and uncertainties. The promise of a sign was God's way of assuring them that He had not abandoned them. In times of difficulty and doubt, God often provides a sign to strengthen our faith and lead us into the light.

God's Unusual Methods of Communicating One of the best ways to understand God's willingness to communicate to people is to note the *various methods*, some of them quite unexpected, that he has used to give his message.

Person/Group Method Reference Jacob, Zechariah, Mary, shepherds *Angels* [Genesis 32:22-32](#); [Luke 1:13, 30](#); [2:10](#) Jacob, Joseph, a baker, a cup-bearer, Pharaoh, Isaiah, Joseph, the wise men *Dreams* [Genesis 28:10-22](#); [37:5-10](#); [40:5](#); [41:7, 8](#); [Isaiah 1:1](#); [Matthew 1:20](#); [2:12, 13](#) Belshazzar *Writing on the wall* [Daniel 5:5-9](#) Balaam *Talking donkey* [Numbers 22:21-35](#) People of Israel *Pillars of cloud and fire* [Exodus 13:21, 22](#) Jonah *Being swallowed by a fish* [Jonah 2](#) Abraham, Moses, Jesus at his baptism, Paul *Verbally* [Genesis 12:1-4](#); [Exodus](#)

[7:8](#); [Matthew 3:13-17](#); [Acts 18:9](#) Moses *Fire* [Exodus 3:2](#) Us *God's Son* [Hebrews 1:1, 2](#) {Life Application Study Bible.}

As we approach the Christmas season, let us open our hearts to recognize the signs of God's presence in our lives. Just as the people of Isaiah's time awaited the fulfilment of God's promise, we too eagerly celebrate the birth of the Messiah—Jesus Christ, the ultimate sign of God's love and grace.

II. The Miracle of the Virgin Birth:

The prophecy foretells a miraculous event—a virgin conceiving and giving birth to a son. This miraculous birth is a testament to the divine nature of Jesus Christ. In the virgin birth, God transcends (surpassing/go beyond limits) the laws of nature to bring forth a Savior who would bridge the gap between humanity and divinity. { what did Jesus say about His coming to earth—read John 8:23 & 42}.

The virgin birth is a mystery that invites us to marvel at the ways God works beyond our understanding. It challenges us to trust in His sovereignty and acknowledge that His ways are higher than our ways. As we reflect on this miraculous event, let us be reminded of the profound love God has for us—a love that surpasses human comprehension.

III. The Name Immanuel:

The significance of the name Immanuel is immeasurable. Immanuel means "God with us." In this name, we find the heart of the Christmas message—the assurance that God is not distant or indifferent but is intimately present with His creation. The birth of Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promise to be with us in our joys and sorrows, triumphs and challenges.

As we celebrate Christmas, let us embrace the reality of God's presence in our lives. Immanuel is not just a historical figure; He is a living reality in the hearts of those who believe. In moments of loneliness, He is with us. In times of celebration, He rejoices with us. Immanuel is the source of our strength, the comforter in our trials, and the anchor of our hope.

Conclusion:

Dear church, as we meditate on the prophecy of Isaiah and the fulfilment in the birth of Jesus Christ, may our hearts be filled with gratitude and awe. The promise of a sign, the miracle of the virgin birth, and the name

Immanuel—all point to the divine plan of salvation unfolding in the person of Jesus Christ (Yeshua—The Messiah).

So, let us celebrate this Christmas with a renewed sense of wonder and gratitude. Immanuel has come! God is with us! May this truth resonate in our hearts, bringing peace, joy, and hope not only during the Christmas season but throughout the entire month as well as the new year in 2024, as we await His 2nd coming.