

# That's My Jesus!

## Emmanuel Part 1

**The Purpose of This Series:** Too much about Jesus gets lost in the shuffle during Christmas and in our preparations for the next year. These four messages, of this series, are to help us press through the clutter and better identify who our Jesus is. These are not your typical seasonal sermons, but they are to assist us to better equip us to know who Christ is and in that to better know who we are in Christ.

**The Purpose of This Message:** This message is one of encouragement and faith. To lightly take names given to Christ is to miss great opportunities for Him to be better revealed. As we venture into understanding the concept of “Immanuel” we will truly since God's eternal presence with us. This is a powerful revelation to grasp which will assist you as you walk a power filled life on this earth!

Guys, here are the top five gifts that women don't want for Christmas:

1. A table saw
2. A case of oil
3. Tickets to the WWF “New Year's Slamfest”
4. The Rambo Trilogy on DVD
5. A new satellite dish with sports package

Women, here are some things you probably shouldn't purchase for the men on your list:

1. The Anne of Green Gables Collector's Edition DVD with 74 minutes of extra footage
2. Tickets to the ballet
3. Any knick-knack
4. A Bath and Body Works soap basket
5. A weekend seminar on “Getting in Touch With Your Feelings”

### It's A God!

A group of **first graders** got together and decided to **write their own version of the Nativity**. It was more modern than the traditional drama. There were the familiar members of the cast: Joseph, the shepherds, and an angel propped up in the background. But Mary was nowhere to be seen. Suddenly behind the bales of hay came some loud sounds. Evidently Mary was in labor. Soon the doctor arrived dressed in a white coat with a stethoscope around his neck. Joseph, with a look of relief on his face took the doctor straight to Mary, and then started pacing back and forth. After a couple minutes, the doctor emerged with a big smile on his face and announced, “Congratulations, Joseph. It's a God.” That's pretty close to the message the angel was giving Joseph. The baby to born is God with us. And now it's time for Joseph to get on board. And he does...as soon as he wakes up.

### Introduction

The **Christian life** may be **summarized theologically in two areas of experience**—the **point of salvation** and the **process of sanctification**. Before salvation, Christ is present knocking at the door (Revelation 3:20) and waiting to be received (John 1:12). In sanctification, Christ is present dwelling within (John 14:23) and continuously completing the work He began when you received Him into your heart (Philippians 1:6).

Because of Christ, you and I are engaged in a **spiritual warfare** which we cannot win without **Immanuel, the presence of God with us. We are victorious in Christ because Christ is in us working (Philippians 2:13), and we are in Christ winning (Romans 8:37).**

- When **John Wesley** lay dying over 200 years ago, **his final words** revealed his understanding of our message today, he said: **“The best of all is, God is with us!”**

Now that may seem like a crazy last thing to say before you die, or is it? In all reality, that might have been the most brilliant thing to say, **“The best of all is, God is with us!”**

J.B. Phillips once wrote:

**“We must never allow anything to blind us to the true significance of what happened at Bethlehem so long ago. Nothing can alter the fact that we live on a visited planet.”**

**Of all the world's faiths, only Christianity announces a God who embraced our pain and ventured to journey with us in our world.**

### **Five People of Supernatural Origins**

1. **Adam** was created with neither male nor female parents.
2. **Eve's** origin involved a man but no female.
3. Isaac was born to parents both of whom were beyond the age in which they could physically produce children.
4. **John the Baptist** was born to parents who were well into old age.
5. But the greatest of the supernatural origins was that of **Jesus**, whose birth involved a virgin but no man.

**The miraculous virgin birth of Jesus Christ marked the “incarnation” of Christ. In the words of John, “the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14). Isaiah prophesies the virgin birth, alluded to the incarnation when he differentiated between a human child born and the divine Son given (Isaiah 9:6). The birth of Christ, celebrated each year at Christmas, marks the time when He emptied Himself to become a man. Though He always remained God, while on earth, the glory of Jesus was veiled, and He chose voluntarily to limit Himself in the independent use of His non-moral attributes.**

### **Matthew**

As we begin our message today, we will be looking at a few scriptures that share keen insight on who OUR Jesus is, in particular, Matthew and Isaiah. The book of Matthew is unique in the way that he **focuses his writing more on the teaching that Jesus' birth fulfills Scripture (1:22-23).** His writing is **revealing of his trust in the authority of Scripture.** The Book of Matthew provides us some **key lessons from a righteous man's obedience, the revelation of God to Joseph, while Luke focuses on God's revelation to Mary.**

### **The Birth of Jesus Christ**

***“This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did***

not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.”

Matthew 1:18-19

“But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'”

Matthew 1:20-21

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23”The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and **they will call him Immanuel**”—which means, **“God with us.”**

Matthew 1:22-23

“When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.”

Matthew 1:24-25

### Virgin- *Almah*

According to Alfred Edersheim, the great Jewish scholar converted to Christianity over a century ago, the **Jews recognize eight stages of growth**. He says that **the word *almah*** pertains to **the sixth stage**, which is **between dependent childhood and independent youth**. By its connotation of firmness and strength, the word suggests the rapid bodily growth of **early adolescence**. Thus, an ***almah* was a girl about twelve to fourteen years old**. The closest English equivalents to *almah* are **"maiden" and "damsel."** "Young woman," although passable as a translation, stretches the concept too far into adulthood.

The **rabbis taught** that a father should **betroth his daughter to his slave rather than keep her unbetrothed beyond puberty**. **A girl was normally married before she passed much beyond fourteen**. Thus, since *almah* specifically denotes a girl at the stage of growth just before marriage, the term apparently came to signify "unmarried girl of marriageable age". And since nearly all unmarried girls in ancient Hebrew culture were chaste, the term seems to have acquired the further meaning "virgin".

### Jewish Men

**Matthew writes in a way that he doesn't want to be misunderstood or misinterpreted about the virgin birth**. He is very clear to communicate **the purity in which Joseph handled himself, practicing sexual restraint**. **Matthew uses the word “righteous” in Matthew 1:19 when referring to Joseph**. In all references to him, Matthew constantly promotes his character like most first-century Jewish men who would be faithful to his future spouse in advance, awaiting marriage, and he expected the same in return.

**Jewish men** in Joseph's day generally married around the age of **eighteen or twenty**, after working to save some money (see, for example, m. 'Abot 5:21; N. Lewis 1983:55). **Jewish women** could marry as young as **twelve or fourteen**, upon reaching puberty (Jeremias 1969:365), but they could also be married much older. In ancient Mediterranean, the fathers would generally arranged their daughters' marriages through a custom called ***betrothal***. Betrothal was **much more serious than our modern practice of "engagement"**: it left the survivor of the man's death a widow, and if both partners lived it could be ended only by

divorce (for example, m. Ketubot 1:2; Yebamot 4:10).

#### **Four Reasons Joseph Could Have Divorced**

1. **A Legal Reason To Divorce:** So Joseph considered to "...put Mary away," (Matthew 1:19) which literally meant for Joseph to divorce her (NIV). When you look at the times in which Joseph was dealing Mary's issue of being pregnant, it was a Jewish and Roman law that demanded that a man divorce his wife if she were found guilty of adultery (Keener 1991a:31, 156). Roman law actually treated a husband who failed to divorce an unfaithful wife as a pimp, exploiting his wife as a prostitute (Gardner 1986:131-32; Richlin 1981:227).
2. **A Social Reason To Divorce:** Joseph had another reason to divorce her. Because others would assume that **Joseph himself must have gotten her pregnant unless he divorced her. To save his own name and a reputation** that would follow him the rest of his life was a great reason to divorce her and put her away.
3. **A Personal Reason To Divorce:** It's probable that Joseph didn't even know Mary, unlike engaged couples today. If the research and sources are reliable, **Galilean couples apparently enjoyed no privacy together until the wedding** (Safrai 1974-1976b:756-57; Finkelstein 1962:1:45; though Matthew, unlike Luke, does not clarify at this point that the family already settled in Galilee). Not only was there a legal issue, a social issue but now a personal issue, the pain of betrayal, the breach of a contract more binding than a business deal in his culture. Because a wife's adultery could imply the husband's inadequacy or his family's poor choice of a mate, Mary's apparent unfaithfulness shamed Joseph as well.

In these three circumstances, Joseph would be able to divorce Mary and remain a righteous man. If he didn't respond in divorce then it would violate law, social custom, and personal challenges. The betrayal of this type could be considered the greatest betrayal of all, in the worst manner ever conceived in his culture. In our modern Western society, we have difficulty in understanding or having little sympathy for Joseph's pain.

It is nothing in our culture to watch and even encourage marital betrayal which wounds the trusting heart, brings devastation within the homes where children should be nurtured in love. In spite of enormous efforts whole families are crushed with the despair of abandonment and betrayal.

Joseph was righteous for quietly divorcing Mary, for not bringing unnecessary shame on her. It was evident that her premarital pregnancy would likely ruin any chance of her ever marrying. This was a horrible fate for a young woman who lived in a male-centered society like theirs. If the law would have been pursued, Deut. 22:21-24, it would have mandated an execution take place for this type of offense.

4. **An Economic Reason To Divorce:** Joseph could have profited by divorcing Mary publicly. By taking her to court, Joseph could have gained all her dowry-the total assets she brought into the marriage-and perhaps recouped the bride price if he had paid one at betrothal. Even though Jewish tradition ruled that a wife could lose her dowry for infidelity or for as little as scolding her husband (m. Ketubot 7:6), in normal divorces where the wife was not charged she kept her dowry (N. Lewis 1983:56).

Joseph would have to enlist the help of a village scribe or elders to get the money, and this would increase Mary's public shame.

**Joseph trusted God and therefore obeyed Him**, and that was a costly decision. **Joseph's follow-through to marry Mary would give plenty of suspicion to on lookers that he had actually gotten Mary pregnant before the wedding. His decision was not only one that created a stink in town, but it would remain an object of shame as long as they lived.**

No simple way to begin a marriage! By waiting to have intercourse (1:25), hence failing to provide the bloody sheet that would prove Mary's virginity on the wedding night (Deut 22:15; p. Ketubot 1:1, sections 7-8; Eickelman 1989:174), Mary and Joseph also chose to embrace shame to preserve the sanctity of God's call.

### **Prophecy Of Immanuel**

**Matthew clearly understands the “God with us,” found in Isaiah 7:14.** (Matthew 18:20; 28:20). He gives us an inside perspective to the making of a Savior. Matthew never hesitates to worship this God who accepted the ultimate role to be born as an infant to poor and humiliated parents into a world hostile to his presence.

The virgin conception of Christ is one of the foundational doctrines of Scripture, prophesied between **701-681 BC and was** fulfilled about 5 BC, many years before Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. The miracle of the virgin birth is found in the supernatural conception of Jesus.

In **Isaiah 7**, we find a man by the name of **Ahaz** who was the **grandson of Uzziah, king of Judah**. Two other Kings marched up to fight against the city of Jerusalem where he reigned. Attempt after attempt the two Kings failed to overpower King Ahaz and take over the city. But the pressure of this attack was getting to Ahaz. Among the rumors that had started it was rumored that one of the two Kings had gotten reinforcements and was coming to destroy Jerusalem,

*“...so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.”*

**Isaiah 7:2**

### **Fear Factor**

When fear hits your heart you lose heart. Fear can cause motivate you to have quick responses to all of those around you. Your alert and awareness level can go up several notches when you are surprised by fear. But when fear hits your heart, again and again, you turn inward with all that added energy and it begins to make you self aware. Ahaz was shaken and so were the people. When you are faced with fear you activate a fight or flight response, but when it gets to your heart you think disaster! They were shaken, like the trees in a forest when the wind blew. They were not in charge and they knew it. They were overwhelmed.

### **Facing Your Fear**

*“Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub, to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman's Field.”*

**Isaiah 7:3**

Isaiah was an adviser to Ahaz and God instructed Isaiah to meet with Ahaz at a very specific location, "...at the end of the **aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman's Field**" (2 Kings 18:17 and Isaiah 36:2). This particular location was on the north end of the city, outside Jerusalem's walls. It was the main water source into the city and the main road from the north into the city.

**Four Things To See** at this moment in the field, the pools and on the road,

1. First, it was **a picture of potential disaster**. Although the armies had not attacked again, the potential for total disaster was there. This is the location that the enemy would attack from. They would come right down this particular road and, over the temple mount and through Jerusalem with full intention on killing King Ahaz and destroying the city.
2. Second, it was **the place of life giving water**. And if they had to endure a siege, more than likely the pools, supplying the city with water would be cut off as well, giving very little hope for survival. Ahaz was beside himself.
3. Third, it was **a picture of total purification**. At the Washerman's Field, people would spread out their dirty laundry in the shallow puddles and throw in washing soda or some other soap and then stomp on the clothes before rinsing them to make them clean.
4. Forth, it was **a picture of hopeful redemption**. The Lord gave Isaiah an unusual request to Isaiah when he was to meet Ahaz, he was to bring his own newborn son "**Shear-Jashub**," (his name means "**A remnant will return**"). Isaiah's son was a sign of hope.

When you see King Ahaz's situation, it was obvious, he needed intervention and he needed it now! All the sign's of the answer were all around him, but he couldn't see it. It was right in front of his nose but he are not aware. This was an obvious bad situation and Ahaz knew it. All the people seemed to be aware of the coming crisis, Ahaz saw their busyness, trying to get everything in order for disaster, but God was providing a redemptive plan, all around him were earthly reflections of a heavenly provision. The slapping of the wet clothes against the rocks were intended to be an attention getter, but it wasn't working. There must be something else...what would it be? Isaiah had more than a visual aid in the crook of his arm. He had a message of God on his lips

**"<sup>4</sup>Say to him, 'Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood—because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah. <sup>5</sup>Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah's son have plotted your ruin, saying, <sup>6</sup>'Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it.'"**

**Isaiah 7:4-6**

**We have potential to do Four things when the enemy is out to destroy us, here are those four ways that God warns Ahaz, two to do and two to not do:**

1. **Be Careful (Take heed)**- *shamar* H8104: to keep, guard, observe, give heed.

In Ahaz's case, his panic was about to cause him to be out of control primarily with his **eyes**. He was going to do irrational things, he was not going to be "careful." As the definition explains, when the enemy is coming against you, **do shut your eyes and**

**duck your head frantically running around in panic, “be careful.”** To be careful means to look over the situation like a shepherd would look over his flock. Here is an idea about this word “*shamar*.”

- Genesis 3:24- God put an angel guard to the way of the garden.
- Genesis 17- God speaks to Abraham to “keep” His covenant for all generations
- Judges 7:19- Gideon and his army kept watch to know when to break their pitchers and yell at their enemy.

468 times this word is used to express a firm watch, full of anticipation and aggression. It is not a passive look around, it is looking or anticipation for action!

When the enemy is threatening you life, your home, be careful, don't miss all that God is doing in the moment. Don't miss the moment where you are because there are plenty of signs of God's redemptive plan for you life.

### 1. **Be Careful**

2. **Keep Calm (Be Quiet)**- *shaqat* H8252: **to be quiet, be tranquil, be at peace, be quiet, rest, lie still, be undisturbed.**

When Joshua took the children of Israel into the promise land it said that

**“So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions.  
Then the land had rest<sup>H8252</sup> from war.”**

Joshua 11:23

See, we've been taught that if we really cared, then we would show it by the panic in our life. We don't show “rest,” the ability to be calm, that would show weakness on our part. There are a couple of things I would like to address at this point.

1. **Passivity Verses Calm:** **Actually there is a difference in passivity and being “calm.” Passivity lets everything take care of itself, but a calm person never panics when taking care of business!** Isaiah was telling King Ahaz to act as if the battle was already won and stop the panic. **Rest as if you have all the answers.**
2. **Arrogance Verses Confidence:** Again, there is a difference from arrogance and confidence. **Arrogance believes that they have all the answers, but confidence believes that the answer is available even though you don't know what it is at the moment.** “Rest!” Stop the war! “Rest!”

**When the “potential” of being attacked is the same as “being” attacked, something is wrong, you are not calm, you are in a panic, you are stirred up without an enemy! Don't go there, stop, rest!**

Here is another way to say it, “Don't show your cards.” This world does not need someone who is just like them. They need someone today that believes in something bigger than this economy, this government, your family dynamics and your ability to achieve. You are God's man and women for the moment. It sounds like a terrible thing coming down the road. There is potential that your whole life flow will perish in just a

few days, but don't do it, don't go there. Look around, God is giving you symbols of His redemptive plan to man. The cleansing and purifying water is being echoed all around, and the baby is in His arms. Be calm! Be calm!

1. **Be Careful**
2. **Keep Calm**
3. **Don't Be Afraid** (Fear Not)- yare' H3372: to fear, revere, be afraid.

**David gives us a picture of God in glory.** That's the picture that he wants us to have in our mind as we are struggling with an attempt on our life from the enemy. Don't be afraid, why? Read this scripture:

*"The highest angelic powers stand in awe of God. He is far more awesome than those who surround his throne."*

Psalm 89:7

Picture with me the sight of heaven. Of all the incredible creatures there, none is like God! Of all those who have fallen from that realm, none is so great as our Lord God. He is mighty! He is with us!

### **We Want A King**

**I Samuel 12** talks about the time when **Israel cried out for a King**. It was not God's timing for a king because Jesus was going to be their king, but they demanded it. **Samuel tells the people** of Israel about those who stopped trusting in God. **They looked for another means of having what only God could provide.** He talked about how God used Moses and Aaron to bring their forefathers up out of Egypt. **"But they forgot the LORD their God; so he sold them into the hand of Slavery."** (Vs. 9)

Again, recognized their condition of slavery so **they cried out to the LORD** (Vs. 10) and **said three things**:

1. **We have sinned**
2. **We have forsaken the LORD**
3. **We served the Baals and the Ashtoreths."**

*"Then the LORD sent Jerub-Baal, Barak, Jephthah and Samuel, and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies on every side, so that you lived securely."*

I Samuel 12:11

Could you ask for more than that?

### **Israel's Problem**

*"But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, 'No, we want a king to rule over us'-even though the LORD your God was your king."*

I Samuel 12:12

Samuel rebukes them and after a powerful demonstration of rain and thunder, Samuel encourages them to serve the Lord with all their heart (Vs. 20).

**What you fear you have a tendency to worship.**

**Websters definition of worship as: Extravagant respect or admiration for or devotion to an object of esteem**

*"But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you."*

**I Samuel 12:24**

- If you woke up this morning with **more health than illness**, you are more blessed than the **million who won't survive this week**.
- If you have **never experienced the danger of battle**, the **loneliness of imprisonment**, the **agony of torture**, the **pangs of starvation**, you are **ahead of 20 million people** around the world.
- If you can **read this message** you are more blessed than **over two billion** in the world that cannot read anything at all.
- If you **attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death** you are more blessed than **almost three billion people** in the world.
- If you have **food in your refrigerator**, **clothes on your back**, **a roof over your head** and a **place to sleep** you are **richer than 75% of this world's peoples**.
- **If you have money in the bank**, **in your wallet**, and **spare change on a dish** some place, you are **among the top 8% of the world's wealthy**.
- **If you hold your head up with a smile** on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed because the majority can, but most will not.
- **If you can hold someone's hand**, **hug them** or even **touch them on the shoulder**, you are blessed because you can offer God's healing touch to someone else.

**What you fear you have a tendency to worship.**

**Read This Out Loud Together- David's Proclamation Of God!**

*"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you (Me) from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence."*

**Psalm 91:1-3**

*"He will cover you (ME) with his feathers, and under his wings you (I) will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your (MY) shield and rampart. You (I) will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday."*

**Psalm 91:4-6**

*"A thousand may fall at your (MY) side, ten thousand at your (MY) right hand, but it will not come near you (ME). You (I) will only observe with your (MY) eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. If you (I) make the Most High your (MY) dwelling— even the Lord, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you (ME), no disaster will come near your (MY) tent."*

**Psalm 91:7-10**

*"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will*

*tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.”*  
Psalm 91:11-13

*“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*  
Psalm 91:14-16

1. **Be Careful**
  2. **Keep Calm**
  3. **Don't Be Afraid**
4. **Do Not Lose Heart (fainthearted)**- *rakak* H7401: **to be tender, be soft, be weak.**  
Used 8X's in the OT.

### **How To Go To War! (Deuteronomy 20)**

God gives the Israelites directions on How To Go To War. He tells them when they go into battle and you **face horses and chariots** and an **army greater than your own, do not be afraid.** The LORD your **God, who brought you safely out of Egypt, is with you!** (Vs. 1) Don't let your **hearts faint**, to become tender or become soft and weak.

*“For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.”*  
Deuteronomy 20:4

### **King Josiah**

In II Kings 22, Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. (Vs. 1) ten years later when Josiah was 18, a restoration project took place in the temple and there they found the Book of the Law, (Vs. 8) the first five books of the bible. One of the key men on staff under the King began to read the Bible to him, (Vs. 10-11). When King Josiah heard the scriptures read he began to weep and tore his clothes as a symbol of shame and repentance.

He told his staff to go to the priest that were serving to come quickly because there was great wrath of the LORD that was against them and they didn't even know it. He learned that his fathers fathers had not been submitting to the words of God and they needed to turn that around and learn to obey what was written.

*“Because your heart was **responsive** and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people, that they would become accursed and laid waste, and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord.”*  
II Kings 22:19

Josiah had a tender heart toward God. Here a teenager ruled the kingdom and turned the nation around because of his heart. He wept for the outcome of those living in his kingdom. He knew that they would be accursed and the land laid waste, but his tender heart moved him in a position to be heard by God and God responded to him.

Too often our hearts do not fear the Lord. We fear everything else, but not God. We do not weep for what God so detests. Too often we don't realize that we do not have any tenderness toward God. We are busy doing our "thing" asking God to bless it. But He is moved by our healthy "fear" of Him.

**Our tender heart toward God is the beginning of a righteous fear of God.**

1. **Be Careful**
2. **Keep Calm**
3. **Don't Be Afraid**
4. **Don't Lose Heart**

### **Back To King Ahaz and Isaiah**

In Isaiah 7:4 Isaiah continues to tell King Ahaz that the two kings are nothing than two **smoldering stubs of firewood**, they have attempted to tear Ahaz's kingdom apart but **it will not take place, it will not happen!** (Vs. 7)

And then **Isaiah prophesies** to King Ahaz that within **65 years**, the armies that are planning to attack them will not even exist as a people, (Vs. 8), but he warns Ahaz,

***"...If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all."***  
Isaiah 7:9

### **Fight or Die**

I remember hearing a message by Pastor Jimmy Evens of Trinity Fellowship in Amarillo, TX. He was sharing an experience that he had at one point in his ministry where all the world seemingly came crashing down. Under a huge load of pressure and pain he specifically heard the voice of the Holy Spirit speak to his heart, "Fight or Die." It was plan and simple. Either fight or lose it all. He remembered how exhausted he felt, how he didn't think there was anything left in him. He thought he was finished. But he pressed on and turned his face toward God. He grabbed ahold of his spirit and his attitude. He began to do warfare, praying with all his heart, crying out to God and proclaiming what God had spoken to his heart in the days and years before. He knew that that day was the "final" day. That if he didn't get up and change the situation then it was all over. This was the moment that King Ahaz was in. If he didn't stand firm in his faith, he would not stand at all!

I'll never forget a statement that often comes to me on darker days,

***"Never forget in darkness what you have heard in the light!"***

You and I are not promised everyday to be filled with only sunshine, but we are promised with a promise that is a theme that Matthew shares a couple of more times in his book,

***"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."***  
Matthew 18:20

He is with us! When we come together...He is with us!

***"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."***  
Matthew 28:20b

Matthew opens his book with the name Immanuel in the first chapter and he ends his book

with the very last words, *"I am with you always..."* Matthew gets it. He knows what Ahaz is having trouble with because his enemy, or I should say, the idea of his enemy is too big. Ahaz has no ability to expect anything from God. Not even a sign that God will take care of him.

**God prompts Isaiah to encourage Ahaz to ask God for a heavenly sign** to prove that what God says will come true. But Ahaz refuses to *"...put the Lord to the test."* (Vs. 10-13). But Isaiah can't hold it in and God can't wait to say it, "Here's Your Sign!"

*"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him **Immanuel.**"*  
Isaiah 7:14

This child was to be given the name 'Immanuel', which is translated, **"God with us,"** (see Matt. 1:23). This verse prophesies the divinity of the Messiah. This name is a title which the Messiah was to have, and which describes in detail the Lord Jesus. He truly was God in the flesh, totally man but also totally God. And He has come to live among us!

**Hebrews 1:3-14** is one of many passages that **reveal the divine nature of Jesus**, that **He was in fact God in the flesh**,

*"And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they."*  
Hebrews 1:3-4

- In the gospel of John 1 is another passage that speaks of the divinity of Jesus. There **Jesus is typified as being before anything was created**, and being the exact expression or **"word" of God, and then becoming flesh.**

That was an **unusual name for a son**, but it captured the highest of all position that one could hold on this earth according to the pious Jew. It was the highest of all blessings, **"God with us."**

### **Immanuel Means at least Three Things**

1. **Salvation**- In the Old Testament the presence of God was in the tabernacle. In the New Testament, the presence of God is in the person of Christ. Because Jesus was sent from God the Father He is the only bridge back to the Father. As Acts 4:12 puts it:

*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*  
Acts 4:12

2. **Security**- God will never leave or forsake His people because He is right here with us. No matter how desperate things are, God will never leave us. We don't have to go through anything alone.

*"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*  
Romans 8:38-39

3. **Sympathy**- A Pastor shared about a funeral he had done for a couple named Ashley and Joshua Gleason, they were two children who were murdered. One of the things that he focused on in his message was that God is with us. God is not some distant deity casually observing our lives from a distance. He has come to us in His Son and He is still with us today. He is God with us. That means that He is close to us. He's near to us. And He desires to walk with us through our worries and trials and grief.

The birth of the baby Jesus reminds us that we are not alone despite how coldly this world might treat us and how much pain we might endure.

*"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin."*

**Hebrews 4:15**

Immanuel means that God will meet you at your greatest point of need, whatever it is.

You and I are blessed in so many ways we may never know how much...

May God's blessing continue to be on us that we may be a blessing to others near and far. May there always be a place at our table, a prayer in our heart and a ready passion in our spirit to love on the unloveable, to help the hurting and to welcome the lost sons and daughters back home. May God have His way among us and may we always say, "My life is God's and this is His day, have your way among us!" For it is with God's help we are what we are. It is with God's grace we will be what He has created us to be. It is with God's love we have such a tender relationship with our creator. We have found favor with our God and we will not desire less than all of Him. May our hope and joy be expressed in our giving this season but more so in our living that others might find Him too. We celebrate a living King who has come, who presently reigns on High and who will return one day to take His beautiful bride home. Until then we will celebrate His life on earth, be empowered by His life with the Father and anticipate eternal life forever and ever, AMEN!

1. **Be Careful**
2. **Keep Calm**
3. **Don't Be Afraid**
4. **Do Not Lose Heart**

#### **Immanuel Means**

1. **Salvation**
2. **Security**
3. **Sympathy**