

The Deeper Significance of the Name 'Immanuel'

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

Immanuel.

Every Christmas, cards start arriving in the mailbox and songs echo at the mall with the word "Immanuel." But what does that mean?

About 700 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

Through Isaiah, we learn that God's answer to us walking away from him is Immanuel running toward us. Immanuel is a title that means, "God is with us." The promise was given that God would visit our planet by entering human history to lovingly pursue lost people. How would we know that Immanuel had come? When the virgin gives birth to a son.

The prophet Micah provided another clue, about 300 years after Isaiah. The special child would be born in Bethlehem: "But

you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days" (Micah 5:2). In the original Hebrew, "from ancient days" can mean "from eternity."

Based on these and other promises, God's people were anticipating and awaiting this miraculous visitation from God to save and redeem them. Their expectations were fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, which we read about in Luke 2:1-7.

Do you earnestly believe that Jesus Christ is the only God? If not, why not? {eoa}

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