

God Is With Us

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

“Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

“But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.

“And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

“Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

“For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

“The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father’s house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim

departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria” (Isaiah 7:10-18).

The Holy Spirit speaks, and what He says is vital. In Isaiah, the Spirit spoke to the prophet and declared, “...the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

The passage reveals that this One would live on milk and honey. His diet would be like that of the very poor. This was the case, as Jesus grew up in the impoverished town of Nazareth and made Himself subject to Joseph and Mary.

This kind of existence would make men weary, but it would not weary the God-Man. This Son shall come, the prophecy was saying, and He shall not grow weary. Neither shall He become discouraged.

The name Immanuel in the literal Hebrew translation means “With us, God.” I was thinking about this for a long time recently. For many, many years, God was not recognized as being with anyone. Between the time the book of Malachi was written until the time of the Gospels, there was only bondage and captivity

for Israel. The people could not sing because of their weeping, and they hung their harps on the willows—trees that have the appearance of weeping.

During those silent years, God was hidden. Then, He came. He was born in a manger. This was God taking on the form of a man. In this divine hypostatic union, the deity of God was incarnated in flesh, becoming fully Man.

Immanuel—with us is God!

The booklet examines this great principle of why Jesus Christ came to be one of us, to die as one of us and for every one of us. And now, resurrected, He makes us one with Him.

Chapter One

THE SEEKING SAVIOR

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:1).

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

“And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them

that are bruised,

“To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

“And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

“And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:16-21).

Suddenly, in Luke 4, there was Jesus in the temple at Nazareth. Can you grasp this? For years and years, these things were spoken of and thought about, and suddenly it was a reality. Scripture was fulfilled, and now “with us, God.”

Who are we that God should come unto us? Not one of us is righteous. No one is worthy. But He came to be with us. More than that, He came to seek and to save us because we were lost (Luke 19:10).

We were not even ready to respond. The listeners in Nazareth on that day in Luke 4 weren't ready either. They heard Jesus read the Scriptures and they heard His proclamation, but their hearts did not receive His message. Rather, they reacted in anger,

“And rose up, and thrust him out of the city,

and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

“But he passing through the midst of them went his way” (Luke 4:29-30).

His Desire Is Toward Us

The Greek word for seek, *zeteo*, means to have an earnest desire to execute the process of seeking with an intense fervency. That is a great description of Christ’s purpose on earth. Everything in the plan of God was designed to seek the lost.

We need see this about our own lives. Our old sin natures, which bring us into terrible bondage and produce troubling consequences when we make wrong choices, are used by God to draw us to Him. Our worst failures are not God’s fault, but they do become part of His process to seek and to save us. He is always seeking after the lost.

The moment Adam and Eve fell, God was about the business of seeking.

“And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of

the garden.

“And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

“And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Genesis 3:8-10).

We also see that God sought after Abraham, even though Abraham hadn’t spoken to God for thirteen years following his folly with Hagar and the birth of Ishmael.

“And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

“And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

“And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

“As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

“Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee” (Genesis 16:16-17:5).

Perhaps the greatest story of the seeking

heart of God is found in the book of Hosea. This prophet of dignity and understanding had a wife, Gomer, who left him and their children to become a prostitute. Yet, God moved Hosea to seek this woman, who was now in a desperate and defeated state. He went to the slave market and bought her back for himself.

I can picture Gomer saying to Hosea, "What do you see in me? I'm filthy."

He went to the market that day, and there she was for sale. So he bought her. The love of his youth had not dimmed. He took her home and loved her as if she had never left him.

Jesus Christ gives us this same picture in Luke 15 where He speaks of the shepherd leaving the ninety-nine and going after the one lost sheep. Once found, that lost little lamb would be carried back to the flock on the shoulders of the shepherd.

This reveals the great heartbeat of Jesus Christ. This shows why God came to be with us.

Chapter Two

THE LOOK OF LOVE

“Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

“When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

“Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest’s house. And Peter followed afar off.

“And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

“But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

“And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

“And after a little while another saw him,

and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

“And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.

“And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

“And Peter went out, and wept bitterly” (Luke 22:52-62).

Peter boasted that he would go with Jesus to the death. But things turned out to be very different. In Gethsemane, Peter took up a sword and cut off the ear of a man who had come to take Jesus away. Jesus healed the man. Then, from a distance, Peter followed the mob that took Jesus to trial. The disciple warmed himself by the fire that the guards had made.

There, by the fire, Peter was confronted by a maid, and he denied knowing Jesus. Two more times, he made denials—the last one included strong curses. Then, the cock crowed and the

Lord, passing by, turned to look upon Peter.

That look touched Peter in a very intense way. I think he saw forgiveness in the eyes of Christ, and that made him weep bitterly. Jesus was seeking Peter in love.

One of the great redemptive reports in the Gospels comes in John 21 when Jesus met His backsliding disciples at the sea of Tiberius. They had all gone back to fishing—at the leading of Peter. After working all night, there were no fish in their nets. Then, they saw someone standing on the shore.

“Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

“And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes” (John 21:5-6).

There was Jesus looking for those who at that moment were lost to their calling. Later, Jesus and Peter had a walk and a talk. The Lord was leading Peter into a new, more intimate relationship with Him. It was a precious thing for this disciple who became an apostle. He was now following God in a new way. He was changed forever.

God was with Peter, and God is with us.

He Comes to the Lonely

Several years ago, I counseled a man who had been in the CIA for fifteen years. He had trouble sleeping because of some of the things he had been involved with. He prayed with me and became a Christian. I can still recall that look on his face.

This was very wealthy and very powerful man with many important connections. On the surface, he had it all. He was a strong man, plagued by a terrible guilt complex that he tried to cover with arrogance.

He really was just very, very lonely.

I also recall hearing about an American comedian, in the 1950s, who became a sensation making people laugh. He was tremendously funny on stage. But when he got home, all went dark. He fell into a cosmic loneliness that he could not beat. He covered it up by drinking. The money, the talent, the fame, none of that helped him. He needed to know that God desired to be with him.

King Solomon had great wisdom and more wealth and more wives than anyone on earth during his day. Still, in the book of Ecclesiastes, we read the words of an empty man.

The answer for this loneliness is to draw near to the God who seeks us, the God who is with us. We can get to know the Father's heart, and the Holy Spirit will fill us moment by moment. The Comforter lets His children know that we are never alone.

Chapter Three

THE HEARING HEART

“...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (John 11:25-26).

The whole meaning of the Christian life is to win souls, disciple those souls, and bring them into new relationships in the local assembly. The Lord redeems a soul, and the Holy Spirit does the work of regeneration. And from the Word of God, we understand this great principle that he who receives Christ does not taste death.

Death goes on all around us. Things happen suddenly to some folks. Others go through slow and painful processes. In the midst of this death, Jesus Christ wants to speak to the souls of people.

Death is there. It is something each of us will

face. But as believers we will face it the way Stephen faced it when he stoned to death in Acts 7. There, we read that Jesus stood up to receive His servant as Stephen passed into eternity.

This account reveals to me just how close God is to us at that moment.

We Know His Voice

Jesus calls His sheep by name, and His sheep hear His voice. Strangers' voices the sheep will not hear.

By walking and talking with the Lord, we know when He is speaking to us. We know what His voice sounds like. In 1 Kings 19:12, it is a still small voice, and the communication He initiates toward us becomes clearer and clearer. We become so aware that He is with us.

That does not mean that we don't hear wrong communication at times. In Matthew 16:22, Peter told Jesus that the Cross was not the place He should go. Christ quickly and dogmatically answered His disciple and addressed the source of Peter's information:

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and

be raised again the third day.

“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

“But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:21-23).

One thing I treasure about walking with God is the sense of His speaking to my heart. He leads us into His fullness, His power, His love, His wisdom, His fellowship, and His provision. He gives us all that we need for life and godliness.

I know that I am on this earth for just one reason: to walk with Him. I am here to have the Holy Spirit live in me, to move me to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. I am here to have a single eye toward the Word of God. I am here to reveal a heart and a mind that thinks positively and properly with the thoughts of heaven.

Knowing the Hour

One famous preacher went to his pulpit with chest pains. He was convinced that he was going to die before his message was finished.

Yet, he felt compelled to preach the message that night.

God was with this preacher.

What came from him that night were words of great fervency and fire. Every word he spoke was touched by the Holy Spirit. His message rang out through the hall that night, and many rushed to the stage at the altar call.

Later that night, as the preacher thanked God for what had happened. He sensed God speaking to him and saying, "I wanted to teach you this great lesson: You are a dying man preaching to dying men. Do not forget this."

From that time on, every single message from this preacher was motivated by the power of love, rooted in the convictions of hell and heaven. He came to a new understanding of the reality of Redemption in the process of time. God was with him, and He let this preacher know that time is short.

CONCLUSION

We must be about our Father's business. We must see that He is with us at all times. We all have unbelievable schedules. But we must see the appointments and meetings and encounters as being before God.

Our days are numbered. The Bible says so in Job 14:5: "Seeing [man's] days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass."

At any moment, we could be face to face with Jesus. That is why it is so important that we make choices that are in accord with His Word. We need to choose to live in the purity of faith. Our purpose in Christ should be to go forward with the proper motivation of love in our details of life.

I am pleading with you, reader, to recognize the One who is with us. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Let us manifest the nature of God through our humanity and make an

invisible God visible to this dying world.

Hear the Word of God.

Follow Him.

Thank Him for every Word, for every Word
is true.