

EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

In the past, God was just that, God. Now, however, through Jesus Christ, he became God with us. There is just God, and God with us – big difference. Satan and his demons have been with us since the beginning. One could say in Hebrew *satan imanu*. Every time when sees an idol, demon-possessed people and acts such as murder, hatred etc, we know *satan imanu*. Satan and his demons knew that God was in control and intervened now and then through his Spirit in the past, but, now, God is Emmanuel. The monopoly of Satan among humans was seriously threatened. “And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God” (Luke 4:33,34). Emmanuel had to be translated into Greek, Latin, English, French and all the languages of the world because this greatest of all messages was for all humanity. “And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isaiah 40:5).

Luke 4:18 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,

The next thing we need to notice is that God did not consider it beneath his dignity to be with us. There are some humans who believe they are too important to mix with what they consider inferior people. God, however, became Emmanuel; he came to walk, talk, eat, cry, laugh, and enjoy our company. Emmanuel teaches us not to look down upon any human being for we are all made in the image of God. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:5-8). Jesus was with good people and bad people. He washed the feet of Judas even when he knew Judas would betray him. Let us learn from Emmanuel, let us not despise our fellow humans but love them.

Next, let us meditate on the profound truth that he came as a man. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5). Not only did he not despise human company, he took upon himself flesh and blood. He did not despise the form of a man. This does not mean that his body was of human origin, but he was nevertheless a man. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3). Not human flesh could destroy sin, so he came as Emmanuel in his own flesh and blood. As a man, we can all approach him. The God who had no address now had an address; the God who could not be seen before was now visible; the God who one had to pray to earlier by faith and spoke audibly very rarely, now could be asked questions and engage in normal conversation in our company. No wonder the Apostle John marvels at this intimacy and immanence of God. Immanence is the belief that the divine is present and active within the material world and all aspects of life. It contrasts with transcendence, which refers to the idea of the divine existing outside of and independent from the universe.

2Cor 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

2Cor 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

He was with us in poverty, sorrow, betrayal, etc.; in every way he is for us. He is the place of reconciliation when all hope is lost. Since knowledge of his identity is salvation, he came personally in an approachable manner to teach us. Contrast this to the mountain burning with fire in Sinai and the Ten Commandments. Furthermore, knowing that God chose to present himself as a man allows us to anticipate his return with hope and expectation. This reinforces the promise that the ultimate resolution of our struggles and the restoration of creation will come through the same Jesus who walked among us, teaching, healing, and loving. His return will not be as an abstract force but as a recognizable figure whom we met before as Emmanuel. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).

Now, the first time he came, many were unprepared. Some even tried to kill him. But the next time he comes, we will be ready. If we believe that Jesus will return as a man, it compels us to live in a way that prepares for His coming. This preparation involves embodying His teachings and values, advocating for justice, extending love and compassion, and being active participants in bringing the Kingdom of God to earth. We become bearers of

his presence, reflecting his character in our interactions with others. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:2,3). Just as He mediated between God and humanity during his first coming, he will restore all creation and bring ultimate justice and peace upon his return. In summary, the truth that God came as a man and will return as a man reinforces the continuity of His presence in the world, encourages us to live with intentionality as we await his return, and provides profound comfort and hope for our lives and the future. Be confident in this truth – God is with us. We can do anything because of this.

Romans 8:31 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*