

**Rob Mathis  
Rose Hill Church  
Sermon: “Immanuel: God with Us”  
December 27, 2020**

**Pastoral Prayer/Lord’s Prayer:**

**Sermon:**

- **Our sermon this morning is entitled, “Immanuel, God with Us”**

**Scripture Reading:**

**Today’s Scripture reading is from Isaiah 7:14 of the New International Version; “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a Son, and she will call Him Immanuel.” In the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter of the Gospel of Luke, we see the beginning of the fulfillment of this Prophecy given by Isaiah some 700 years earlier. The virgin spoken of in Isaiah is Mary, the mother of Jesus. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter of the Gospel of Luke we see many things, including the Angel Gabriel visiting Mary to give her the news that she herself is that virgin who will bear the Son of God! Mary’s response? Luke tells us that she hurriedly traveled to a small village outside Jerusalem to be with her cousin Elizabeth, whom**

Mary is told by this same angel will bear a son in her advanced age. Once there and Elizabeth begins to proclaim Mary as the “mother of My Lord”, Mary bursts forth in praise and adoration to the Glory of God, in what has come to be known as “The Magnificat” or simply, “Mary’s Song”. As I pull together Mary’s role and bring into clearer focus Who this Immanuel is, I thought a good introduction to my message would be the song, “Mary Did you Know?”

- Yam and Paul’s Song; “Mary Did You Know?”
- Let us Pray:

The word Immanuel appears only three times in the Bible. Besides the reference in Isaiah 7:14, it is found in Isaiah 8:8, and then again in Matthew Chapter 1, verse 23, which is taken from Isaiah, and reads as follows; <sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin will <sup>[w]</sup>conceive and give birth to a Son, and they shall name Him <sup>[x]</sup>Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”

Matthew, the one-time tax collector-turned-disciple of Jesus, is said to be the writer of the Gospel of Matthew, and clearly he

**interpreted Isaiah's prophetic utterance in chapter 7 as being fulfilled with the birth of Jesus Christ to Mary. Keep in mind that Isaiah served as a prophet for the kings of both Judah and Israel (they were separate kingdoms then) from about 750 BC to his death around 698 BC, so this prophecy was recorded many hundreds of years before Jesus' birth;**

- Let's ponder as we go along what this prophecy's fulfillment means; "God with Us";**
- I will be reading a number of Old Testament passages that point directly to Jesus Christ, the anticipated Messiah for all people. And I want you to take note that the Hebrew Bible from which these passages arise contains 39 books, was written and compiled over hundreds of years by dozens of writers, and yet is replete with reference after reference after reference to the One Fact in all of History; That God's plan from before time began was that He would send His Only Begotten Son into the world, to become a human being, fully human, yet fully divine, and for Him to live amongst humanity, and through His**

**life, death and resurrection, to open the doors wide to life,  
eternal life, in and through this Son.**

**1-The earliest reference to the Messiah in the Bible is in Genesis**

**Chapter 3, verse 15, which reads;**

**“And I will put enmity**

**between you and the woman,**

**and between your offspring and hers;**

**He will crush your head,**

**and you will strike His heel.”**

**This is God speaking directly to Satan, the devil, the hater of all  
humankind. It is the initial outlining of what God will do to redeem,  
renew and rebirth humanity, which had just been lost through  
disobedience because the man and woman listened to the snake, the  
devil, rather than God. And I want, before we go on, to point out  
that this rebellion, this turning away from God and listening to The  
Dark One, planted the bitter seeds of brokenness, misery, depravity  
and death that have seeped into the very DNA of each and every**

**human who has ever lived. But let us look now to the hope God gives us in the midst of this horrific lostness:**

**2-Just 9 chapters later the writer of Genesis, in Genesis 12:3, writes,**

**"I will bless those who bless you,**

**and whoever curses you I will curse;**

**and all peoples on earth**

**will be blessed through you" This is God speaking to Abram, the man whom He would rename Abraham, “the father of many nations”. God is again making prophetic reference to His Son, Who would one day be “the Son of Abraham”, and truly bless all peoples on earth.**

**3-(2 Samuel 7:12–13)."When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" This is sometimes seen as a prophecy about David’s earthly son, Solomon, but it is not. For David passed the**

**Kingship on to Solomon while still alive. It is, rather, a direct prophecy about Jesus Christ, “the real ‘Son of David’”.**

**4-(Micah 5:2) "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,**

**though you are small among the clans of Judah,**

**out of you will come for me**

**one who will be ruler over Israel,**

**whose origins are from of old,**

**from ancient times." The prophet Micah is speaking this (740-670 BC) about the birthplace of Immanuel. By the way, this prophetic message had to be very specific (Bethlehem Ephrathah) because there is another village, way up north, also named Bethlehem, though, interestingly enough, it wasn't even a town until about 25 years before Jesus was born. But of course God knew that when He spoke through the prophet Micah. But let's go a little deeper here for a moment; did you know that the place within Bethlehem where Jesus was born was in the specific area that King David, almost a millennium earlier, had directed his shepherds to raise up unblemished lambs and sheep for sacrifices in the not-too-far-off Jerusalem Temple? There are**

shepherds towers still there today, in these hills; many of them; built so that extra special care could be taken of these lambs! The unblemished lamb that was to be the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world, was literally born in and amongst the shepherds that had the task of keeping the sheep safe so they could be unblemished for use as sacrifices in The Temple in Jerusalem. Not only that, did you know that Bethlehem literally means “House of Bread”? Ephrathah itself has many meanings, but one of them is broken, as in “worthless”. Jesus told His disciples that His body, like the bread He broke with them, was broken for them (and for all of humankind).

Let me make several points here;

- You see, Everything in the universe, in all of history, points to Jesus Christ, and to the Triune God’s absolute love of and longing for reconciliation with each and every person on earth;
- The history of the Hebrew people itself. The history of humanity at the fall. Genesis 3:15 is just the beginning of the age-old work of Redemption God has been working on;

- **We humans today often feel broken, alone, untethered, and know instinctively that we have lost our way and become disconnected from the Creator. We may not admit this, but from my own first-hand experiences working with drug addicted youth and adults, serving for nearly three decades on the mean and broken streets of modern America as a police officer, and then becoming a pastor serving in rural South Africa, rural Alaska and here in Western Washington, I know this to be true.**

- **This is true for us today, and it is true for all peoples everywhere and in every time; we know we need a Savior**

**The late Dr. Don Richardson, a Canadian missionary, linguist, teacher, researcher and author lived with his wife and children in a remote area of Papua New Guinea for several years. Later they traveled the globe, working with and interviewing many tribal peoples. In his book, “Eternity in their Hearts”, Dr. Richardson outlines evidence from across the globe of people everywhere having**



**a long-held belief in “One True God. He found that many were just waiting, like the Hebrews, for the One Who would reconcile them to this God. Waiting for Immanuel, God With Us.**

**You see, Jesus is that eternity that we have always longed for and have known since ancient times that we were disconnected from.**

- **And God is up to something most magnificent!**
- **The Ancient Scriptures tell us so**
- **The specific Ancient Prophecies tell us so**
- **The Stars and planets aligning in the night sky tell us so**
- **Travelers from distant lands showing up to provide “Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh” to help pay to care for Mary and Joseph and Baby Jesus whilst fleeing Bethlehem and living as refugees in Egypt tell us so!**

- **And this is in fact what God is up to: Listen to the Apostle Paul, who writes in Philippians 2:6-11; in speaking about this Jesus, Immanuel**
- **<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature<sup>[a]</sup> God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature<sup>[b]</sup> of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!  
<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,**

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

- **The birth of this baby Jesus that we celebrate at this time of year; This Immanuel...this is a big deal. This is THE BIG DEAL. For it is this God-Man Who loves us, who is forever married to the human race, forever lives to make intercession on our behalf; This is it folks. This is truly what life is all about. Except in the context of Jesus Christ nothing in this universe makes sense.**

**So, then, what do we do with this Baby Jesus, this Immanuel, this God-Man who is with us?**

- **First, looking back over this year and beyond, and looking at where we find ourselves today; whether we be broke and broken, feeling tossed to and fro, filled with fear, sometimes regret, but always challenged; the Word of God says to turn toward Jesus not away. Mary herself gives us her response to her circumstances, being poor, from an unknown backwater not on the map town, a young girl, really, who had no rights,**

**who had no means to earn a living, finds herself pregnant and  
afraid; yet, as she too went through tough times, times like  
ours, listen to what Mary said;**

**46 And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord**

**<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

**<sup>48</sup> for he has been mindful**

**of the humble state of his servant.**

**From now on all generations will call me blessed,**

**<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me—**

**holy is his name.**

**<sup>50</sup> His mercy extends to those who fear him,**

**from generation to generation.**

**<sup>51</sup> He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;**

**he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost  
thoughts.**

**<sup>52</sup> He has brought down rulers from their thrones**

**but has lifted up the humble.**

**<sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things**

**but has sent the rich away empty.**

**<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,**

**remembering to be merciful**

**<sup>55</sup> to Abraham and his descendants forever,**

**just as he promised our ancestors.”**

**So, as we come to the end of this 2020, let us not simply look back,  
let us look forward. Let us recognize as Mary did that God Most  
High has chosen to be with us! Let us, as Mary, turn our hearts  
toward the Triune God, read and study His Word, and find in  
Him our Home.**