

## Immanuel

<sup>18</sup> This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

<sup>20</sup> As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

<sup>22</sup> All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet:

<sup>23</sup> “Look! The virgin will conceive a child!

She will give birth to a son,  
and they will call him Immanuel,  
which means ‘God is with us.’ ” <sup>1</sup>

So there you have it—that strange word *Immanuel* is three words put together—*God, with, and us*. And *how* is God with us? He is with us in the person of Jesus, named so by an angel. The word *Jesus* also has a significant meaning: “The Lord saves.”

Here is how God is with us—he sent his son Jesus to save us from the penalty of our sins.

We all know about penalties for sins. Many live in prison to pay the penalty for their sins. But what if God sent *someone else* to serve the sentence? That other person could not be guilty of the same crime. Otherwise, he would have to pay the penalty for his sins.

Here is why the life of Christ is shown in the first four books of the New Testament. We call each a *gospel*, which means “good news.” These tell the most fantastic news ever told—that “the Lord saves” (again, the meaning of the name *Jesus*). He saves us when we simply place our trust in his death to pay the penalty for our sins.

Jesus once summed up his life mission this way:

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the LORD is upon me,  
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the **poor**.  
He has sent me to proclaim that **captives** will be released,  
that the **blind** will see,  
that the **oppressed** will be set free,

<sup>19</sup> and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come.” <sup>2</sup>

Are you poor? God says we are **all** poor. Are you a captive? Whether in prison or not, we are **all** captives. Are you blind? Each of us has a spiritual blindness until God opens our eyes. Are you oppressed? Yes—but Jesus has come to set us free. As far as we know, Jesus never let anyone out of prison *literally* while he walked this earth, but he frees us from the even more severe *spiritual* prison sentence that we all serve when captive by sin.

So read the story of Jesus, and let God open your eyes to see and your ears to hear the Good News. It is the *best* news you will ever hear—the news of *Immanuel—God with us*. It also tells us how he is with us in Jesus, who saves us from our sins when we simply place our trust in him.

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<sup>1</sup> [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Matthew 1:18–23 (NLT).

<sup>2</sup> Luke 4:18–19 (NLT).