

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

[www.twojourneys.org](http://www.twojourneys.org)

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at [twojourneys.org](http://twojourneys.org)

## **God With Us**

### **Selected Scriptures**

- What did Enoch experience as he walked with God and God took him directly to heaven without death?
- What did Abraham experience as the “friend of God” as he looked up at the starry night sky and heard the promise “So shall your offspring be?” And as the Lord appeared to him as a flaming firepot and made a solemn ceremony with him that he and his descendents would inherit the land? And as he ate a meal with the angel of the Lord and interceded with him over Sodom and Gomorrah? And as he was about to sacrifice his son Isaac and the angel of the Lord stopped him?
- What did Hagar experience as she was about to die of thirst and the angel of the Lord saw her, spoke to her and saved her life?
- What did Jacob experience twice, once in a dream of a stairway to heaven, the very doorway to the presence of God, and once when he wrestled with the angel of the Lord?
- What did Moses experience in the flames of the burning bush?
- What did Gideon experience when the angel of the Lord spoke to him in the time of Midian’s domination?
- What did Samson experience every time the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power and enabled him to do astonishing feats of strength?
- What did Elijah experience on Mt. Carmel with the prophets of Baal, and on Mt. Horeb when he heard the still small voice, and in the chariot of fire that took him straight to heaven before the watching eyes of Elishah?
- What did Ezekiel experience by the River Kebar in the land of the Babylonians, when he saw an indescribable vision of the likeness of the glory of God?
- What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego experience in Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace when the angel of the Lord walked with them in the fire?
- What did Daniel experience later in the lion’s den?

- What did the disciples experience every moment of Jesus' physical life, all the way through his crucifixion and resurrection? When they stood on the Mount of Olives and watched him ascend to heaven?
- What did Peter experience with his vision of a sheet with animals and when the lord sent an angel to deliver him from prison?
- What did Stephen experience the moment he was being stoned to death, when he saw heaven opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God?
- What did Saul of Tarsus experience on the Road to Damascus, when the glorified risen Christ appeared to him?
- What did John experience on the Isle of Patmos, when he saw Christ in glory?

The unifying theme of all these astonishing experiences may be summed up in one word, the very word we're going to study today:

IMMANUEL... "God with us"

This was precisely why God had crafted a body inside Mary's womb for His only begotten Son. From the moment of His miraculous conception inside his mother until now and on to eternity, Jesus has been human. And for all that time minus the three days he was in the tomb, Jesus has been in a human body, and will be for eternity. And the purpose of it all is IMMANUEL, to be GOD WITH US

Tonight's musical: Immanuel; a tracing out of one of the richest themes in the Bible: the idea that God Himself living with redeemed humanity has always been the center of His plan and will most certainly happen in the future

And this is what I want to meditate upon with you for a little while this morning

## I. Immanuel: God With Us

***Matthew 1:23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."***

### A. Context: Mary's News and Joseph's Dream

1. Gabriel appears to Mary, tells her she will give; Mary speaks to Joseph; Joseph doesn't believe her but loves her; resolves to divorce her quietly
2. Angel appears to Joseph in a dream

***Matthew 1:18-21 "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give***

*birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

B. Isaiah's Prophecy

1. Isaiah 7: Specific prophecy about what was going on during the reign of King Ahaz and the possible invasion of Assyria
2. Matthew lifts the concept of "Immanuel" from the prophecy in Isaiah
3. This word sums up the significance of Christ's birth into human flesh

C. "God With Us": Two Different Meanings

1. God for us, to bless us
2. God alongside us, in fellowship with us

1. First: God for us

- a. God exerting His sovereign power on our behalf
- b. God could have cast us off because of our sin... He could have fought against us and we'd have been destroyed
- c. Instead, God is declaring that He is FOR us... His power will be exerted to benefit us, to bless us, to comfort us, to save us and give us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly and earthly realms
- d. Key verse, Romans 8

***Romans 8:31 If God is for us, who can be against us?***

- e. Blessings flow from God on our side

***Deuteronomy 28:2-13 All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: <sup>3</sup> You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. <sup>4</sup> The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock. <sup>6</sup> You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. <sup>11</sup> The LORD will grant you abundant prosperity-- in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground-- in the land he swore to your forefathers to give you. <sup>12</sup> The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands.***

2. Second: God alongside us, in fellowship with us

- a. This is even more intimate... a sense of the very presence of God right with us
- b. God having active fellowship with us, an active relationship with us
- c. The ability to walk and talk and eat and work and live with God Almighty
- d. This is the theme I want to trace out for the rest of the time

## II. God with Us in the Past:

### In Eden, in the Exodus, in the Tabernacle, in the King and in the Prophets

#### A. In Eden

1. From creation, this was God's deepest desire: Fellowship with us

***Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness" <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.***

2. The Garden of Eden: First and foremost a relationship

- a. God perfectly fitted a Garden of beauty and delight and food and productive work for his son, Adam
- b. There God intended to teach Adam everything he would need to know in order to be fruitful in the beautiful new world He'd made

***Genesis 2:8-15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.***

3. Adam "walked with God", had a relationship with Him; God was intensely interested in what Adam was doing

***Genesis 2:19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.***

4. Seen most clearly when it was lost: Paradise tragically lost through sin:

***Genesis 3:8-9 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"***

#### B. "GOD WITH US" In the Exodus

1. God had called Abraham his friend and had promised to give him many descendents and a Promised Land to live in
2. God also called Abraham's grandson to leave the Promised Land and go to Egypt to survive the severe famine
3. In Egypt, as Jacob lay dying, he made a promise to all Israel through Joseph

***Genesis 48:21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you and take you back to the land of your fathers."***

4. Israel in bondage: God remembered the promise he made, and called MOSES to rescue His people
5. Moses' great fears allayed

***Exodus 3:9-12 now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup> So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." <sup>11</sup> But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" <sup>12</sup> And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."***

6. The central purpose of the Exodus

***Leviticus 26:11-12 I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. <sup>12</sup> I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.***

7. The Pillars: of cloud by day and of fire by night

But the people of Israel were sinful, as they worshiped a GOLDEN CALF

8. The Threat

***Exodus 33:3-5 Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."***

9. The Promise... a boundary

***Exodus 33:14-20 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. <sup>16</sup> How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" <sup>17</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name." <sup>18</sup> Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." <sup>19</sup> And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will***

***have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. <sup>20</sup> But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."***

So we see GOD WITH US in the Exodus

### C. GOD WITH US In the Tabernacle and Temple

1. God ordained that the Jews make a Tabernacle, a dwelling place for God in their midst

***Exodus 29:44-46 "So I will consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. <sup>45</sup> Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. <sup>46</sup> They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God***

2. First, the Tabernacle... merely a tent, built by Moses after the pattern he had seen of the heavenly reality

***Exodus 25:8-9 "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. <sup>9</sup> Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.***

3. Then, the Temple

***1 Chronicles 28:19 All this," David said, "I have in writing from the hand of the LORD upon me, and he gave me understanding in all the details of the plan."***

4. In both cases, the shekinah glory of God consecrated the place as a visible reminder of the very presence of God amongst His people
  - a. "Shekinah" is related to the Hebrew word for "dwelling"; Tabernacle is the "Mishcan" or "dwelling place" of God amongst His people
  - b. The glory-cloud filled the Tabernacle and then led the people on their journey to the Promised Land... a clear, visible symbol of the Lord's presence with His people
  - c. Later, the glory cloud filled the Temple for the same reason... to show God's active presence amongst His people

5. BUT the key question

***1 Kings 8:27 "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!***

6. AND the key problem

- a. Israel's continual sin resulted in the same problem God established during the Exodus
- b. God could not continue to dwell among such a sinful people

***Psalm 5:4 You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell.***

- c. So the glory of the Lord departed the Temple in Ezekiel's day, the time of the exile to Babylon... a visible reminder that God was no longer dwelling with Israel

***Ezekiel 10:18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple***

And so we see the glory of God DWELLING symbolically but only temporarily with Israel in the tabernacle and in the temple

#### D. GOD WITH US In the King

- 1. David: God's blessing to a man, and to the whole nation through him

***1 Samuel 16:13 Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed [David] in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power.***

David had a constant and abiding sense of the presence of the Lord through all his trials:

***Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.***

David represented the future reign of Christ, a perfect reign anointed by the Spirit of God and the very presence of God with his people

David also represented the blessedness of a life in which God is dwelling, in which we have a constant sense of the presence of God, even as we walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death... David had many and varied troubles, but the Lord was with him and delivered him from them all

David was successful in everything he did because God was with him

David also had a constant sense of fellowship with God, as though God was dwelling right with him

David lived out the truth of "Immanuel"

#### E. In the Prophets

1. Central hope and promise: "I will be with them; they will be my people and I will be their God"
2. Israel's constant wickedness the backdrop
3. Two central prophets: Jeremiah and Ezekiel
4. Clear and repeated evidence
  - a. Jeremiah lamented the desolation of Jerusalem and specifically of the temple of the Lord... but God promised him that he would restore His people to the Promised Land and they would be His people and He would be their God:

***Jeremiah 31:31-34 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>34</sup> No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."***

- b. Ezekiel had the vision of the glory of the Lord departing the temple because of the wickedness of God's people... but he also had an amazing vision of the new Temple, representing God's restored dwelling place with His people

The key to this dwelling would be the purifying of His people through the death of Christ:

***Ezekiel 11:19-20 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. <sup>20</sup> Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.***

In Ezekiel 40-48, an astonishing vision of a perfect Temple, the dwelling place of God with His people

***Ezekiel 43:1-9 Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, <sup>2</sup> and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory <sup>4</sup> The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the gate facing east. <sup>5</sup> Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. <sup>6</sup> While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple. <sup>7</sup> He said: "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever.***



We have seen IMMANUEL, God with us, in the past... in Eden, in the Exodus, in the Tabernacle, in the King, and in the Prophets

## II. God with Us in the Present: In Christ, In the Spirit, and in the Church

### A. In Christ

#### 1. The Incarnation is the central manifestation of “God with us”

- a. What was merely symbolic in the Old Testament became actual in the New
- b. Jesus literally “pitched his tent among” us, dwelling with us in the most physical way imaginable

***John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning.***

***John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

#### 2. Jesus came to live with us

- a. The shepherds found the sign... a real baby, wrapped in linen cloths and lying in a manger
- b. His mother Mary watched him grow up in the normal way, as a little boy who became a twelve year old youth who became a strong young man working with Joseph as an apprentice carpenter who became the prophet who healed people miraculously and who claimed in the synagogue of Nazareth that the prophecy of Isaiah was written about Him!
- c. This Jesus physically walked with people along the road and talked with them conversationally; they heard the sound of His voice and saw the looks on His face
- d. He fished with his disciples, and they saw Him climb in their boat and tell them where to fish; they also saw Him asleep on a cushion in a storm
- e. He ate many meals with them, breaking bread and always remembering to give thanks to His Father
- f. He slept in their presence, and got weary and rejoiced and got angry... but did all of it without sin
- g. He bled in front of them; they saw His back ripped to shreds by the scourge and witnessed the blood flowing in small trickles from the thorns in his brow; and they watched Him die as normal people do

- h. His resurrection body was perfect yet human still
- i. After His resurrection, He ate at least four meals with His disciples
  - i) He walked and talked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, then sat with them and broke bread
  - ii) He ate a piece of broiled fish in Luke 24 to prove He was still fully human
  - iii) He cooked breakfast for them in John 21 on the shore of the Sea of Galilee
  - iv) He ate with them in Acts 1 during the forty day period after His resurrection when He was instructing them about the Kingdom of Heaven

These post-resurrection experiences with the risen Lord are tantalizing hints of our future lives with Christ

He is still fully human, still in His resurrection body

The little body that lay in the manger grew in stature and strength, was nailed to the cross, then rose again on the third day, ascended to heaven and now sits at the right hand of Almighty God, His heavenly Father; that same body will come back to earth at the time of the end and will establish an eternal Kingdom... there is unbreakable continuity between the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb and the Second Coming and eternal reign that we hope for

Jesus became human and will be human forever!!

And forever we will live with him

## B. In the Spirit

### 1. Christ dwells among us intimately by His Spirit

***John 14:16-18 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***

***Romans 8:9-11 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.***

2. The Trinity dwells IN us in a way we can scarcely imagine or understand
3. This means God is with us in everything we are doing
  - a. God is with you when we wake in the morning and turn off your alarm clock
  - b. God is with you when you splash water on your sleepy face to wake up more fully for your quiet time
  - c. God is with you when you go into your living room or den or study or whatever room in which you have your morning quiet time
  - d. God is with you when you read your Bible and study its words
  - e. God is with you when you pray for your family and your day and for your church and your nation and for the advance of the gospel to the ends of the earth
  - f. God is with you when you shower and dress and select the cereal you will eat for breakfast
  - g. God is with you when you venture forth into the busy day that awaits you: either at work or at school or at home
  - h. God is with you while you drive and while you work and while you eat lunch and while you talk to a non-Christian co-worker or deal with a salesman on the phone
  - i. God is with you when you eat your evening meal with your family
  - j. God is with you when you end your day and lay down to sleep

#### C. In the Church

1. God isn't with you alone, but by His Spirit He has united us all, from every tribe and language and people and nation to be a dwelling in which He lives by His Spirit
2. God lives in ALL of us EQUALLY at EXACTLY THE SAME TIME!!
  - a. In a believer in rural China who drives a donkey cart with Chinese cabbage to market AT THE SAME TIME AS HE DWELLS IN
  - b. A believer who works in a truck transmission factory in Poland AT THE SAME TIME AS HE DWELLS IN
  - c. A believer who lies sick from AIDS in a small hospital in Uganda AT THE SAME TIME AS HE DWELLS IN

- d. A believer who manages mutual funds on Wall Street AT THE SAME TIME AS HE DWELLS IN
- e. A nine-year old girl who prays for her sick grandma in the Ukraine AT THE SAME TIME AS HE DWELLS IN
- f. An eighty-eight year old man suffering from Alzheimer's in Sao Paolo, Brazil

### 3. Clear Scripture

***Ephesians 2:21-22 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit***

***1 Peter 2:5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.***

***2 Corinthians 6:16 we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."***

## III. God with Us in the Future: for the rest of history and in eternity

### A. In Our Future in the World: For the Rest of History

God has made you a simple promise and paid for it with the blood of Christ:

***Hebrews 13:5 God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."***

1. No matter where history takes us, God will still be with us
2. God knows those who are His and He will always remain in us and with us
3. The Book of Revelation clearly tells of a horrible tribulation yet to come on the earth... and of increasing sufferings for His people
4. But God will protect us and live in us and dwell among us by His Spirit and in His Son until the end of our lives and the end of human history
5. THEN the really good part comes

### B. In Eternity: The New Heavens and New Earth: Our Eternal Dwelling Place with God

***Revelation 21:1-7 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared***

*as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*

*Revelation 22:1-4 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

- We will dwell in a perfect city, the New Jerusalem, in direct face to face fellowship with God and with His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ
- We will walk with the risen Lord on the roads that connect every part of the New Earth, gazing at the cleansed and perfected beauty of that gorgeous world
- We will see the nail marks in His hands and feet, and enjoy the sound of His voice
- We will never tire of His presence or of the marvelously creative labor He will give us to perform in His name
- We will sit at His table and dine with Him, and with a countless multitude from every nation and culture on earth
- We will shine brightly ourselves with the glory of God in our resurrection bodies
- We will see the glory of God radiating through the gold and precious foundation stones of the New Jerusalem, a massive city 1400 miles long, 1400 miles wide and 1400 miles high
- We will drink whenever we want from the River of Life, flowing clear as crystal through the center of the city
- We will speak directly to the Father and He will speak directly back to us, calling us each by name

This physical and spiritual world is inherent in the promise of **IMMANUEL**

**And there is no power in heaven or earth or under the earth that can prevent it from happening!**

This is precisely why God became a man... to redeem for Himself a people with whom He could live in intimate fellowship forever and ever

## IV. Application

Come to Christ!!

Christmas time, many visit church and consider again the birth of Christ

I ask you now to consider the DEATH of Christ... His death for sinners

Trust in Him and He will enter your heart through faith and all your sins will be forgiven

And God will DWELL in you and be with you forever

### A. Enhanced Daily Life

1. "God with us" should be your experience NOW by the Spirit
2. Call upon the very presence of Christ to enhance even the simplest moments throughout the day
3. Meditate deeply on the truth of Romans 8:31

### ***Romans 8:31 If God is for us, who can be against us?***

4. Trust God to be FOR you and WITH you in every circumstance that comes your way
5. Trust that the trial that threatens to break your heart right now has come right from His hand and that the same hand that sent the trial will hold you as you walk through it
6. Worship Christ for taking on a human body, and don't despise your own body, though it is being corrupted by sin and death... this is the seed that will spring to life in a perfect resurrection body
7. Anticipate the physicality of the New Earth... the INCARNATION of God the Son is PERMANENT... read Randy Alcorn's book *Heaven*, and learn how to use God-ordained Scripture with God-given logic and imagination to fill in what it will be like to live in face to face fellowship with God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in a perfect world forever
8. Begin changing your Christmas celebration to make it more spiritual... buy fewer destructible gifts and give more indestructible ones: more letters of encouragement and gifts to the poor and evangelism and money and prayers for missions and acts of love to your family and fellow church members

Make the truth of IMMANUEL the center of your Christmas and the rest of your lives