

10 Looks: Look 10 – Immanuel (15 Dec 2024)



A popular thought game is to ask:

If you could spend an evening in the company of any person in history – who would it be?

The Apostle Paul, King David, - maybe you are political – Margaret Thatcher, Lincoln, - maybe you like church history – Luther or Calvin?

Spending an evening is one thing, but would your choice change if they were going to hang around you day and night for a whole year?

Frankly some very famous people may not be who want to spend a whole year with.

With that in mind, is there anyone you might want to spend all eternity with?

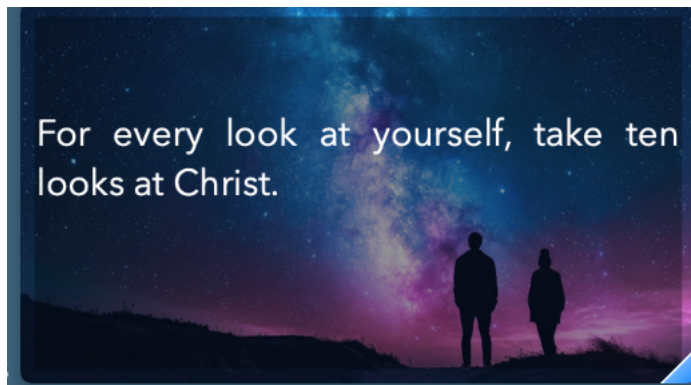
Someone you will never tire of and find forever satisfying?

I want to suggest that there is really only One.

One who will bring endless joy and satisfaction, One we were created to enjoy for all eternity.

And that one is **Immanuel**.

We are in a series based on a quote from *Robert Murray McCheyne*:



For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ.

Looking at Christ humbles the mind, magnifies the mind and feeds the soul.

It is the greatest exercise we can undertake.

This morning, the **tenth** and final look at Jesus I want us to meditate on.

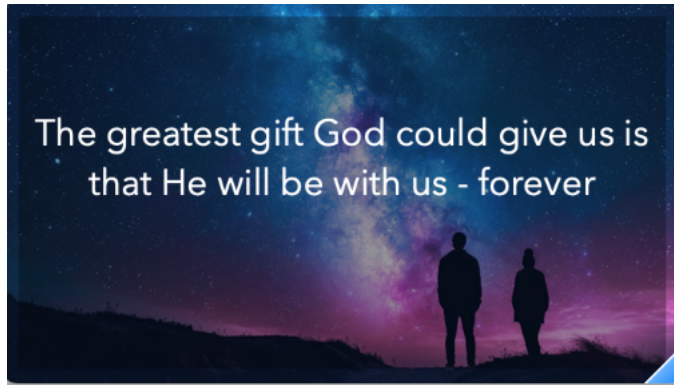
Believe me I struggled because I had to leave so many out – Resurrection, Judge, Rock, Reigning.

But I chose as our final look one that fits the season. I want to look at **Christ glorifies the Father as:**



Immanuel

Here is what I want you to understand this morning:



The greatest gift God could give us is that He will be with us – forever.

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I am sure you have heard of the trend where someone turns up to a birthday party or a wedding and announces:

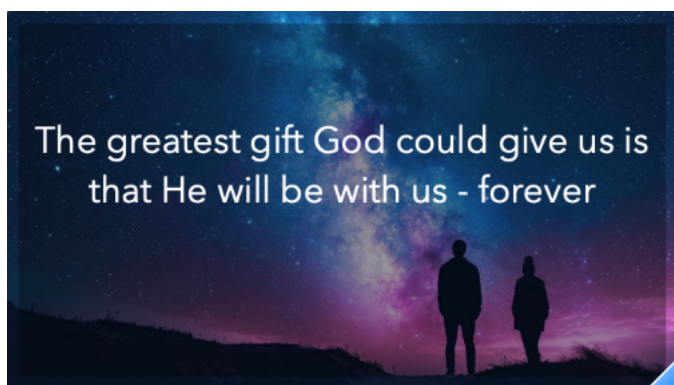


My presence is your present.

I am so awesome – me being here is the best gift I could give you.

And if it happens to you – most of us are polite and will smile and say – Oh thank you so much – so glad you are here – but you really think – you cheapskate – would it really have hurt you to get me a gift?

You will **never** think that with God.

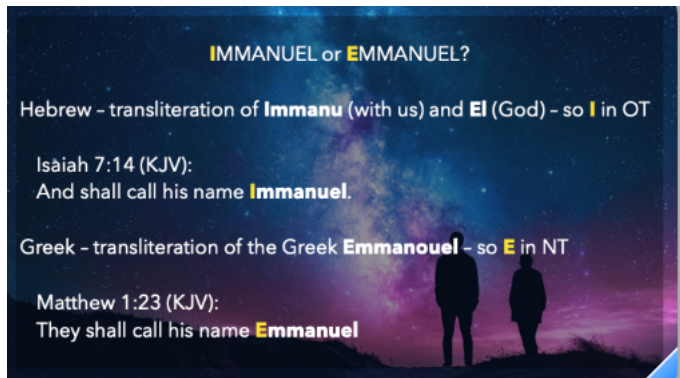


His presence **is** your greatest present – the greatest gift – possible.

This idea is summed up in a name – **Immanuel** – which literally means – **God Is With Us** – or **God with Us**.

Now – fun fact – do you spell **I/Emmanuel** with an **I** or an **E**?

Full marks if you said both.



The **KJV** translators made a decision to spell it with an **I** in the Old Testament and an **E** in the New Testament.

Why would they do that?

In the Old Testament the Hebrew words were **Immanu** (with us) and **El** (God). They felt an **I** was the closest transliteration.

So – Isaiah 7:14 (KJV):

And shall call his name Immanuel – with an **I**.

But the New Testament Greek word was **Emmanouel**. Here they felt an **E** was the closest transliteration.

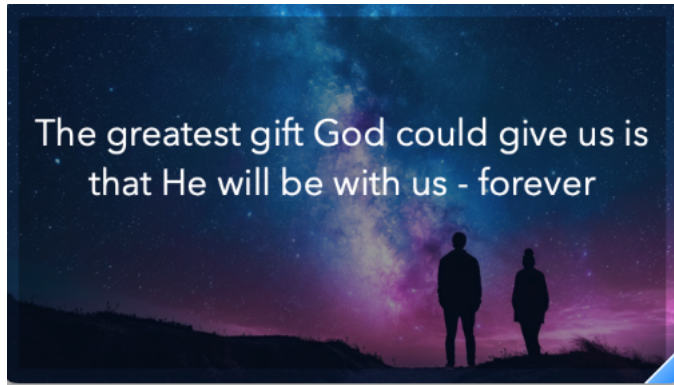
So – Matthew 1:23 (KJV):

They shall call his name Emmanuel – with an **E**.

I understand their thinking – but for me it only confuses things and is completely unnecessary.

Some newer translations still keep the **OT/NT** – **I/E** distinction.

Most felt it was confusing, so they just use one spelling in both Testaments – Usually they spell it Immanuel with an **I**.



I first encountered the name Emmanuel when I went to university.

I spent my university years at King's College.

However, right next door to Kings was Emmanuel College – that was Emmanuel with an E.

As someone who grew up devoid of basic biblical knowledge – the name of the college next door remained a complete mystery to me.

I just assumed that there was a Saint Emmanuel or some prominent Christian leader with that name somewhere in history – and that the college was named after them.

Then a month or two after becoming a Christian – I read Matthew 1:23:

See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated “God is with us.”

And there it was – the mystery of Emmanuel College was solved. Immanuel was a name that meant – **God Is With Us.**

However, as I continued to read my Bible, I began to realise that **Immanuel** – God Is With Us – was actually the plan and goal of all history and eternity.

God created this world and redeemed this world with the plan to spend eternity with us.

Think about that – God the Almighty – the Creator – the Sovereign – created you and chose you to be with forever.

That should absolutely amaze and confound us.

Why would God do such a thing?

It is not that God created beings so amazing and interesting we will dazzle Him for eternity.

Frankly – and sorry to pop your bubble – but we are not that interesting or special to be around.

Even more, we need to understand that God did not have any need to create us or have a relationship with us.

It is blasphemous to think that He was lonely or needed us to be complete or satisfied.

Without us, without any created being, God was perfectly complete and all-sufficient.

The **London Baptist Confession** puts it well:

*God, having all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, **in and of Himself**, is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient.*

Alone in and unto Himself – God is all-sufficient.

God has no need for anyone or anything. He is perfectly content to exist eternally as the Trinity.

So why create us?

Why plan from eternity past to have a relationship with us?

Great question.

My younger years were years of avid sci-fi reading.

Most science fiction authors postulate that if there were intelligent life in the universe capable of reaching earth – they would have to be so much more advanced than us – when they arrived, they would view us no more than moss – a virus – a barely sentient pest they should remove so they could enjoy the earth unhindered.

I don't believe such life exists – but even if it did – the distance between us and any created alien being is nothing compared to the distance between us and God.

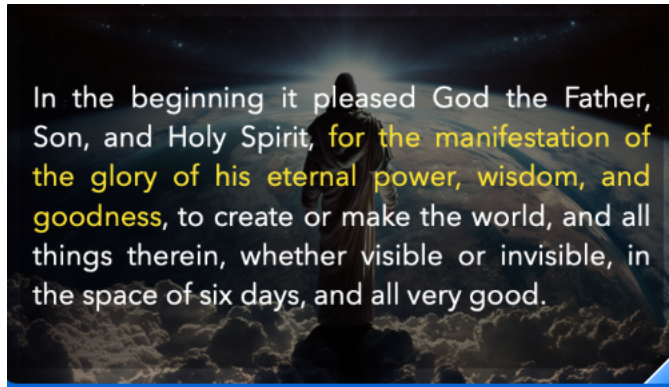
We are finite – He is infinite.

So why create creatures so infinitely inferior and then choose to have an eternal relationship with them?

It is a stunning to contemplate.

The Reformers were united in saying that God created us simply because it was a good thing.

The **London Baptist Confession** says this:



In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness**, to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

For the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness.

God created us – so His glory, power, wisdom and goodness would be manifest.

The idea is this.

If God did not create us and redeem us – He would still be glorious and powerful and wise and good – but these attributes would not be fully expressed – no one to show grace to – no one to be long-suffering toward – and no one would worship Him for these attributes eternally.

So the goodness of God led Him to create.

But God is also relational. In John 17:23 – Jesus says – the Father loved Him before the world's foundation.

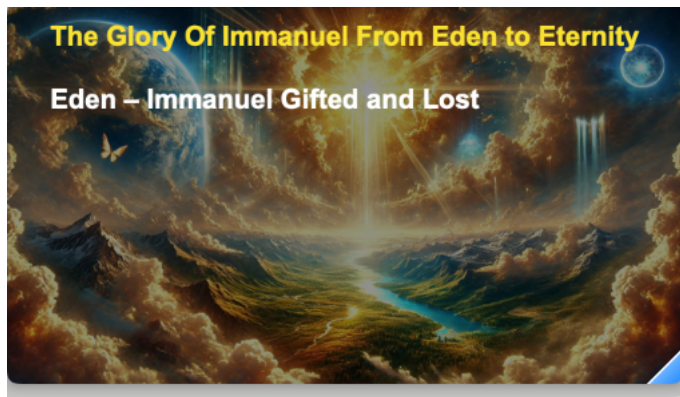
So having created us He loved us and determined to have an eternal relationship with us.

No words can express how amazing, surprising and wonderful this is.

So the story of Immanuel – God With Us – unfolds from eternity to eternity.

We will look at this story in *five* movements.

The **first** *movement* begins in Eden.



Eden – Immanuel Gifted and Lost

In eternity past, God chose to create us and have a relationship with us.

Genesis 1 and 2 describes this decree being expressed in the formation of the heavens and the earth and the creation of man and woman – those created in the image and likeness of God.

If all we had was Genesis 1 and 2 – we might be led to be deists. Deism sees God as the One who creates and then once He has created, He steps back and leaves us to our own devices.

The deist position sees God as a master “clockmaker.”

They view God as making the clock, winding it, then just leaving it alone.

You may not be aware that we have our own master “clockmaker” – Ian Wright. But even Ian’s creations need maintenance and care.

The Bible tells us that God not only has to create but sustain. Without His constant loving care this universe would simply cease to exist.

But even more crucially, the Bible portrays God as choosing to be intimately involved in our lives. To have a relationship with us – to fellowship with us.

In Scripture a Temple is a place where God dwells and where He relates to His people.

Genesis 1 and 2 uses many terms associated with the Temple.

The idea is that Eden was a Temple where God would dwell and relate to His people.

Listen to this remarkable passage – Genesis 3:8–9:

The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. So the LORD God called out to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

Although we cannot be certain, this passage seems to indicate that that it was likely God's pattern had been to walk and fellowship in the Garden with Adam and Eve.

The **Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary** puts it this way:

They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden—the divine Being appeared in the same manner as formerly—uttering the well-known tones of kindness, walking in some visible form ... How beautifully expressive are these words of the familiar and condescending manner in which He had hitherto held intercourse with the first pair.

In other words – God had chosen to condescend – come to the garden and fellowship intimately and familiarly with Adam and Eve.

The **New American Commentary** adds:

The anthropomorphic description of God “walking” ... in the garden suggests the enjoyment of fellowship between him and our first parents.

The point is that walking does not just mean a stroll around the apples and mangos. To walk with God is an expression of incredibly close fellowship.

Some have argued and said – but how can God who is spirit – walk in the garden?

But, throughout the Old Testament there are times when God does come among men and women.

Genesis 18 – God speaks with Abraham.

Joshua 5 – The Commander of the Lord's Army – the angel of the Lord.

We believe that all of these theophanies – appearances of God in the Old Testament – are Yahweh – Jesus – the second person of the Trinity.

Jesus came in the Old Testament in some kind of human form – but **not** flesh and blood.

Look, there is mystery about God fellowshiping in the garden – and appearing in the Old Testament – but don't miss the point.

God chose to come among His people.

It has to be God With Us.

It can't be Us With God.

Adam cannot ascend the heavens to God.

God has to come to earth with us.

And He did.

I have tried to imagine what this meant for Adam.

Adam wakes up. He realises he is a living, created being existing in a world created for him.

And then the Creator – who is infinitely more powerful and wise is there walking and talking with him.

He has to feel loved and cared for and satisfied.

The closest analogy I can think of is a baby bonding over the unconditional love of its mother.

But Adam is a fully formed man. He wakes and finds himself surrounded by his greatest source of joy and satisfaction – God Himself.

The glory of Eden is **not** that it is a perfect paradise with Adam as King.

The true glory of Eden is that Adam can walk with God, talk with God, learn from God, worship God, obey God.

God – is the true gift.

The picture Genesis paints is that we were created to fellowship intimately with God. And that our life is empty without that fellowship.

Without God – we just don't work right.

We are a square peg in a round hole.

We know there is something missing, so we search – often in all the wrong places – sex, drugs, religion.

All of this makes the fall so stunning.

Here is Adam – He has that intimate fellowship with God – he has that beautiful relationship – but then some snake slithers up – and says – you can have more – and He turns from God?

It is so hard to comprehend.

Again – this highlights the incredible power of temptation and pride.

Now instead of walking with God – Adam hides from God.

And some of the saddest verses in the Bible. Genesis 3:22–24:

The LORD God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

The perfect relationship of Immanuel in the garden was lost.

Adam could no longer walk with God in the garden and there was no way back.

God gives good gifts to His people – but sometimes we only realise how incredibly good they are when we lose them.

I hear it all the time. A wife taken too early. Someone who moves cities and struggles to find a good church. Going to a country that restricts the freedom to worship.

Good gifts we failed to cherish – until they are lost.

But **nothing** could compare with the immense loss Adam was faced with.

He no longer walked with God – and there was no way back.

Now here is what I need us to get our heads around.

Adam, Eve – all of us are fallen.

God says He has a plan to save us.

But – just **what is salvation?**

Western Christianity is very transactional and forensic.

We often talk about salvation in terms of what we are saved from.

We need to be saved from sin, Satan and death.

We tend to focus on the cross where sins are atoned for and Satan and death are defeated.

It is why we often put a lot more emphasis on Easter than Christmas.

Please – don't hear me wrong. The cross and the atonement are extraordinary, wonderful gifts – but they are the *means* of salvation not the *goal* of salvation.

The **goal** of salvation is a restored, intimate, satisfying relationship with God – knowing Him, enjoying Him, being with Him – forever.

It might help to think about it this way.

If God forgave you, washed you and put you in the new heavens and new earth with the other saints, holy angels, maybe your favourite animals, foods, pastimes – and no Satan. Would that be enough to sustain you for eternity?

I want to say absolutely not. I am sorry but 10,000 years of just you would bore me to insanity – unless Jesus is there.

The new heavens will not be heavenly if Jesus is not there.

The new heavens will be sorely lacking if Jesus isn't there.

And conversely, perhaps the greatest punishment in hell is that Jesus isn't there.

The one being we were created to find our satisfaction in is not there.

And so – salvation is described in the Bible in terms of God doing what it takes to restore a relationship with us.

You are saved – **to** a relationship.

We can't restore that relationship. God has to come to us be with us and restore us.

In Isaiah 7 – King Ahaz is caught between great national powers and Judah looks likely to fall.

The prophet Isaiah comes and says – where is your faith man? – God made promises to the nation – God will keep His promises.

If you don't believe it – ask for a sign.

The king says no – I can't.

So, Isaiah 7:13–14:

Isaiah said, "Listen, house of David! Is it not enough for you to try the patience of men? Will you also try the patience of my God? Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel."

This Son who will come is not named – Warrior or King or Savior – but Immanuel.

The core of our salvation is not victory over sin, Satan and death – but a relationship with God.

The hope of Israel is not to be free of oppressors – the hope is God Himself.

Now to have that relationship this coming One will have to deal with sin and enemies – but that is a means to an end. The end is a restored relationship – God and sinners reconciled.

And so – the story of salvation is a journey from Eden – where Adam walked with God – to eternity where all the redeemed will walk with God forever.

Adam fell. Sin tore the fabric of the relationship with God apart.

Today, each of us lives incomplete lives – deep within we know there is a relationship that brings peace and joy – and we are lacking it – and we need it.

We are restless and unsettled.

My grandkids are staying with us for a few days.

The first night I put one year old Lucy to bed. The bedroom and the cot were strange – she was freaked out.

But if Grandpa was there – she was fine and would go to sleep.

His presence made the world OK.

God is like that.

Adam lost that.

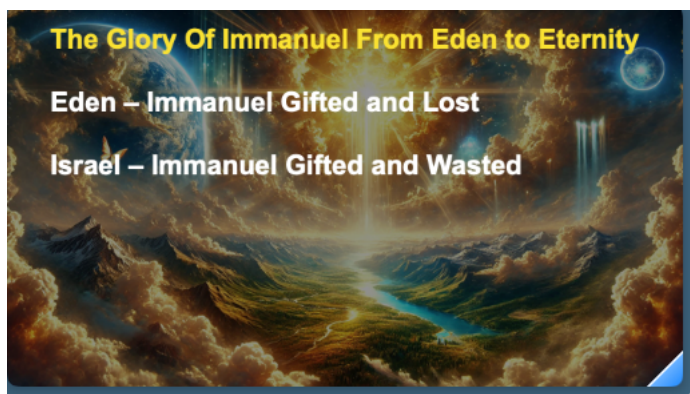
But God did not sever all relationships with man.

Throughout the Scriptures we do find statements about some men and women – like Enoch and Noah – walking with God.

But, instead of direct face to face fellowship with God – there is a distance. They could walk with God in terms of obeying Him, worshipping Him, living for Him – but not having God walking with them as He did with Adam.

However, God is gracious and has a plan to restore the glory of Immanuel.

This leads us to the **second** *movement* of Immanuel:



Israel – Immanuel Gifted and Wasted

After the fall you have events like the flood and Babel – and man's wickedness becomes extreme.

But God's faithfulness is even more extreme.

He chooses one man – Abraham. He makes a covenant with him and promises to be with Him and bless him.

That man's family enters Egypt where they become a nation. But an enslaved nation. They wonder where God is.

Then in Exodus 3:12 God appears to Moses in a burning bush and says:

"I will certainly be with you."

God has not deserted them.

God delivers His people by the power of His mighty hand and as they approached the Red Sea – God did this. Exodus 13:21–22:

The LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to lead them on their way during the day and in a pillar of fire to give them light at night, so that they could travel day or night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never left its place in front of the people.

God would be with them. His presence was demonstrated by a pillar of cloud or a pillar of fire which never left the people of God.

It is not the same as walking with God in the garden – but it is a start.

Later, God gave them instructions to build a Tabernacle and place the ark of the covenant in it.

Then Exodus 40:34–37:

The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle ... The Israelites set out whenever the cloud was taken up ... If the cloud was not taken up, they did not set out until the day it was taken up.

God would now be with His people in a more permanent way. Wherever they went the Tabernacle and the glory of God went.

Finally, when Israel had conquered the land – it was time for a permanent home for the ark.

Solomon builds the Temple. In 2 Chronicles 6:2 he says:

I have built an exalted temple for you, a place for your dwelling forever.

Solomon knows that the God who created the heavens and earth cannot actually be confined to a small ark.

2 Chronicles 6:18:

But will God indeed live on earth with humans? Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain you, much less this temple I have built.

But God would choose to put His glory in that ark – in that Temple – in that city – in that land – to show that God was with His people.

2 Chronicles 7:1:

When Solomon finished praying ... **the glory of the LORD filled the temple.**

It is not a Temple like Eden. Instead of filling the whole earth – it just fills one tiny part in one city in one small country.

But it is what made Israel special.

They were the people of God – and God was with them.

The one true God chose them, loved them and was with them.

He gave them His Law, gave them a land, gave them a promise and a future.

Once again, a people had a relationship with God.

Here is the picture. In Eden – the glory of God filled the entire creation. The relationship was intimate.

After the fall – Adam and Eve are driven out of Eden and away from the glory of God.

But now God has chosen one nation – and at the centre of the nation – there is a Temple – and in the Holy of Holies – between the wings of the cherubim – the glory of God dwells.

No one can enter there and fellowship intimately with God. No one speaks face to face with Him.

But God does speak through His word and through Prophets and the people worship by keeping His Law.

And this is a tangible expression of the hope that God will finally fully restore the relationship that is broken.

Whenever things were tough – any Jew could look toward Jerusalem and the Temple – and they would know that **God was with them.**

BUT – incredibly, they responded by throwing it all away. They **wasted** this blessing.

They worshipped other gods.

They broke the covenant and every law.

They indulged in every sin.

They worshipped animals, insects, the rising sun.

When prophets warned them, they killed them.

And Jeremiah says the reason they could be so arrogant and blatant in their sin – was the Temple.

They looked and said – **God is With Us** – He is in our Temple. How bad can we be – because God is with us?

When God reaches down – don't slap His hand away.

Unfortunately, this is something we can all be prone to do.

God offers grace. We can take that grace for granted.

Are there ways you are taking His grace for granted?

Areas you fail to deal with hoping grace will cover those sins?

In Ezekiel 8 and 9 – the Lord shows Ezekiel the sin of the people and the priests – right in the Temple itself.

Prostitution, idolatry – you name it.

They had rejected His grace.

So, in chapter 10 – the glory of the Lord rises from the Holy of Holies – moves to edge of the Temple – then to the edge of the city and finally in chapter 11 the glory leaves the people of Israel.

They wasted the glory of Immanuel.

Justice has to be crying – wipe the entire rebellious lot from the earth.

But, God is not done yet.

They are carted off into captivity but in His love – a rump – a few dregs finally return to the land.

This pitifully weak nation is oppressed by a succession of powerful forces – Babylon, Persia, Greece and finally Rome.

The people may have abandoned God – but God had not abandoned them.

We come now to our **third** *movement* – the best-known image of Immanuel.



Flesh – Immanuel Gifted and Left

God will come to walk among us – as one of us.

John 1:14:

The Word – God – became flesh and dwelt among us.

Christmas has become one of the key dates on the Christian calendar because of the significance of this.

God comes – in flesh – not to an Eden – but to a sinful Israel.

Once again – the glory of God is among men.

And once again God walks and fellowships with men.

Not all men and women – just the Jews and just for a few years.

But the glory is not in a stone Temple.

In John 2 as Jesus began His ministry, He said that His body was the Temple.

And Jesus moved throughout Judea and Samaria.

In other words – once again the glory of God was among men – but now it was in Jesus.

He was flesh and blood but also true God of true God.

So, John can say this in John 1:14:

We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In Matthew 17:2 we read:

He was transfigured in front of them, and his face shone like the sun; his clothes became as white as the light.

It is almost as if Jesus peeled back the corner of His humanity to give them a glimpse of the glory within.

God Himself came among us. Not as the angel of the Lord. Not in the ark of the covenant. The glory of God was within the flesh and blood of Jesus.

Because His glory was veiled in flesh – most who met Him had no idea who He was. Even the disciples struggled to realise the gift that walked among them.

It is hard to overstate how incredible this gift was.

If the President of the United States wishes to show solidarity with the Federated States of Micronesia – he sends a very low-level envoy. No way he goes himself.

But God Himself came – He Was With Us. His glory walked among us.

So this famous passage – Matthew 1:20–23:

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph ... Mary will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: **See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel**, which is translated “God is with us.”

The Prophet Isaiah’s wife had given birth to a child and they named that baby – Immanuel – a prophetic name – that one day God would come and walk among us.

Now, in Jesus that prophecy was fulfilled. He came to save His people from their sins and restore the relationship of God and man.

He was the greatest gift ever given.

He walked among us – talked, taught, laughed, ate, loved – **but** then – **He left**.

Why?

Because dying and atoning for sin is only part of what He needs to do in order to save His people. He must *also* leave, reign and come again.

So, on the night before His death Jesus began to say – guys – I am going away.

The disciples struggled to comprehend.

Why? We don’t want You to go.

But Jesus had to die, rise and ascend to the Father.

Jesus had to come again to finally eradicate sin, Satan and death.

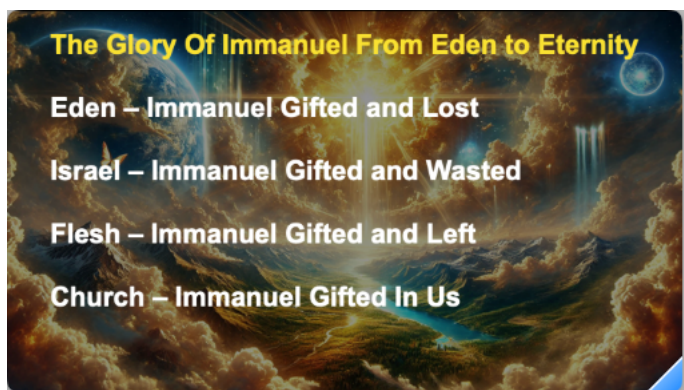
He had to come again to judge the world.

He has to come again to fully fulfill the promise of Immanuel.

Jesus knew that would upset the disciples, so He said things like John 14:27:

Peace I leave with you. ... Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful.

And then Jesus explained the **fourth movement** of Immanuel:



Church – Immanuel Gifted In Us

Jesus had to go – but that did not mean Immanuel would end.

John 14:16–17:

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. ... he **remains with you** and **will be in you**.

Jesus promised to send His Spirit to be **in** us and **remain** with us.

And this is a good thing. John 16:7:

Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is **for your benefit** that I go away, because if I don't go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you.

Why is it for our benefit?

Because at His return Jesus will finish what He began – He will bring us into a relationship with the Father.

And until His return – we are not alone – He will be with us – by placing His Spirit in us.

In Galatians 2:20 Paul can say:

Christ lives in me.

The glory of God was in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Then it dwelt in the Temple of Jesus' fleshly body.

Now – 2 Corinthians 6:16 says:

We – you and I – the church – we are the temple of the living God.

Or Ephesians 2:21–22:

[We are] a holy temple in the Lord. In him you are also being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit.

Now, His Spirit dwells within us as it dwelt in Him and as it dwelt in the Temple.

Do you see the progression of Immanuel?

From one place – in one city.

To Jesus – who travelled around Judea and Samaria.

Now it will be in His church – who will spread to the outermost parts of the world.

But why is the coming of the Spirit good news for you and me?

The Spirit of Jesus within us will empower us to take the gospel to the world.

It will empower us to fight sin and resist the devil.

And on our days of struggle, in the darkest valleys of this life – we will know Jesus is with us. Jesus will return. Jesus will make all things right.

The last words Jesus said are these – Matthew 28:20:

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

I will never leave you or forsake you.

He will finish the work begun in us.

Brothers and sisters – we are not in the new and better Eden – yet.

We do not walk with Jesus and talk face to face – yet.

But, we are getting closer.

He talks to us through His word and His people.

We talk to Him in prayer.

We are surrounded by Spirit filled believers to help us through this life.

He encourages us with the hope of glory.

He is in us.

He is there with us through life and eventually through the final journey we must all face.

Immanuel – God Is With Us.

This is no second experience.

In 2 Peter 1 – Peter says – yeah I was fortunate to walk with Jesus. I saw His majesty. I was there on the holy mountain when the heavens opened and God said – this is My beloved Son.

Peter says – but don't think your experience is second rate because you didn't have that. Never forget – you hear His voice in the Word of God.

In 1 John 1 – John says – yes we were privileged to see Jesus and touch Him and hear Him. But by faith you can have fellowship – an intimate relationship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And this completes your joy.

Our experience of Jesus is not second rate.

In fact, it is beyond the experience of the Disciples when they were with Jesus – because we have what they did not at that time – the gift of the Spirit – Christ **in Us**.

When Jesus died – the curtain in the Temple was torn in two.

Once the only access to God was through priests and ceremonies. Now we can go direct to the throne of God – we have access through the Son.

We are adopted as children.

We don't talk face to face yet – but we can talk directly to Him and hear from Him in His word.

And He is not done yet.

The great Christmas hymn – **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – Veni, Veni Emmanuel** – which I note is on Keith Getty's short list of greatest Christmas songs.

It was originally written in Latin some 1200 or 1300 years ago.

It covers the movements of Immanuel.

It begins with Israel longing for Emmanuel the One who will free them from sin, Satan and hell.

Then it moves to the church – longing for the return of Emmanuel. The One who will open wide our heavenly home and close the path to misery. The One who will bind all people's in one heart and mind and fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Finally – it moves to the new heavens.

This is the **final** *movement* of Immanuel.



Eternity – Immanuel Gifted Forever

Jesus will return.

Deal with sin, Satan, death.

He will restore the creation.

And then the new heavens and new earth will be ready.

And the gift of Immanuel will be complete.

Revelation 21:3:

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: **Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God.**

God will dwell with us – God Himself will be with us – **forever**.

Revelation 21:22–23:

I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb **are** its temple.

All of the promises of a day when the glory of God will fill the earth are fulfilled.

There is no need of a Temple to house the glory of God – because the glory of God will fill the entire new heavens and earth.

The whole of the new heavens is a Temple.

Revelation 22:3–5:

There will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. **They will see his face ... and they will reign forever and ever.**

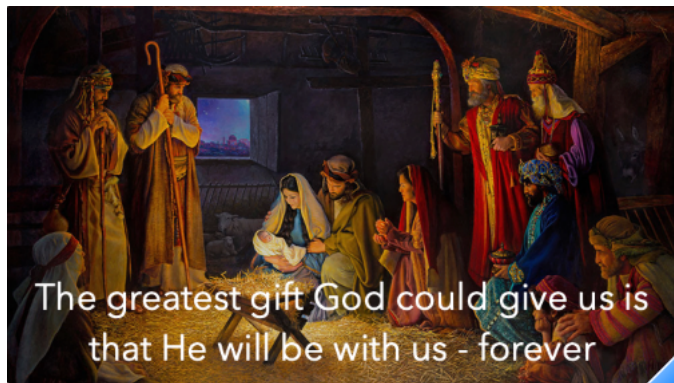
Better than Eden.

Not just Adam and Eve – but all the redeemed are with Him.

No Satan so no possibility of sin.

And we see His face, face to face we will worship Him and enjoy Him – not for a time – but forever.

Immanuel.



Now I know some of you don't like nativities.

You don't like a depiction of Jesus. And you are right that it is more likely He was born in a cave than a stable. And yes, the wise men were not kings and came well after the shepherds.

Look I know all of that – but I do like nativities.

Why?

Because when I look at a nativity I see this.

A poor outcast couple.

Poor smelly Jewish shepherds.

Rich Gentile wise men.

And there in the centre their one hope – God With Us.

The whole spectrum of humanity united by one thing – a common need for the child who came to reconcile God and man.

I look at a nativity and I see hope.

Whatever your gender – male or female.

Whatever your ethnicity – Jew or Gentile.

Whatever your social status – rich or poor.

Whatever your pain – outcast or in group.

Whoever you are – divorced, single, same sex attracted, a bit odd or miss popular, brilliant or intellectually challenged, happy or sad, in crowd or out – the gift we **all** need is Immanuel.

And this gift is offered to us all.

God offers us a relationship with Him – fellowship – fulfilment – joy.

The gift comes in His Son.

But a gift has to be received. We have to trust that Jesus' life and death pays for our sins – that at His return He will finish the work and wash us clean and place us in the new heavens.

If you are here and you know you were made for something more than this world – if there is an ache that stuff and relationships and money doesn't fix. It is because only God can fill that hole.

And if you have accepted that gift. If you have Immanuel in you. Then hear the words of Paul in Ephesians 1:13–14:

In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

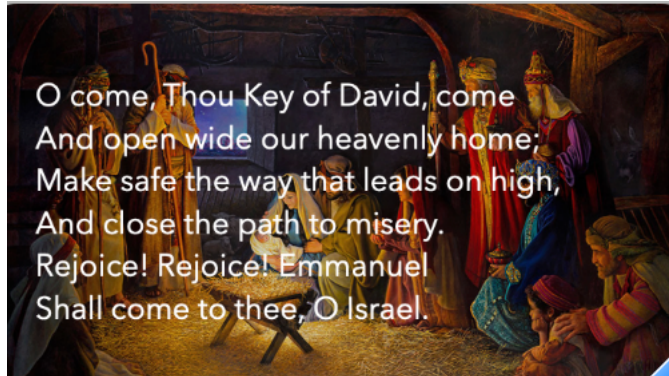
What we have here – The Spirit of Christ in us – the Church – the Word – is but a down payment.

The best is yet to come – the full inheritance.

We **will** see His face. We **will** walk with Him. There will be **no** sin to hinder our relationship. We **will** know Him and enjoy Him forever.

Most of the older hymns have a lot of verses – many verses we don't often sing.

My favourite verse of **O Come, O Come Emmanuel** is one few sing.



**O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

He has come.

He will come.

Rejoice – the promise of Immanuel will be fulfilled.

The time when we enter into the full blessing of God With Us is coming.

10 Looks: Look 10 – Immanuel (15 Dec 2024)

Main Point: The greatest gift God could give us is that He will be with us – forever.

General Questions:

1. Why is God's presence the greatest gift possible?
2. Why did God create us and choose to have a relationship with us?
3. What was Adam's relationship with God like before the fall?
4. In What was it like after the fall?
5. What is the goal of salvation?
6. What was Israel's relationship with God like?
7. What led to them wasting this relationship?
8. Why did God have to come in the flesh?
9. In what way is Immanuel with us today in the church?
10. Why is this a blessing for us?
11. What is the final Immanuel like? What will our relationship with God be like in the new heavens?

Application Questions:

1. When you think of your salvation do you think more of what you are saved from or what you are saved to?
2. Are there areas of your life in which you can take the grace of God for granted?
3. In what ways is Immanuel a gift for all kinds of people?
4. How can you use the idea of Immanuel evangelistically – especially the idea of looking for something more?

What convicted me in the message?

What moved me in the message?

What will I do in light of the message?