

Immanuel, God with us

By Barry Minsky

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 8:8

Preached on: Sunday, July 23, 2006

Quacco Baptist Church

215 Quacco Road
Savannah, GA 31419

Website: <http://www.quaccobaptist.org/>

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/minsky

As I said this morning, we are going to have a brief series on the names of God in the New Testament. We looked at the names of God in the Old Testament. And there are several names. All of them are actually names that are used for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the first one we want to look at is the name Immanuel. And it is found in Mathew chapter one and verse 23. You will remember that the...you remember the context in which it was given. Let me just turn to that and it says, going back to verse 18:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."¹

The word "Immanuel" is a Hebrew word. You remember when we were studying the names of God and the first name we looked at was the name אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem'). And we noted that the word אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem') came from the root word אֵל (ale) which means God. And you will find that there are many, many names in the Bible that end or begin with אֵל (ale). And the emphasis is something about God.

For instance, Israel means a prince with God. אֵל (ale) is at the end, God, you know, Isra-, prince, a prince with God. And so here we have the name Immanuel. Immanu- means with us. It is just a Hebrew word that means with us and אֵל (ale) means God.

The idea is: God with us or God is with us. And that is the meaning of the word.

¹ Matthew 1:18-23

Well, when we look at this we need to understand that there are two emphases here concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. One of them is that he is with us. And the second is that he is God. And those are the two things that we have to look at and consider when we think of this name, Immanuel.

There is an interesting hymn. Now, have we ever sung the hymn "Immanuel's Land"? Do we...does anybody know it? Does anybody know the hymn, "Immanuel's Land"?

Ok, well, I'd like to...it's actually a very beautiful hymn and I printed out a copy of it. I would like to read a few verses of it because I think it is a very beautiful hymn and it is one that gives us a picture of who Immanuel is. And if you ever want to see it, by the way, it is a long hymn. I mean, you know, each one of these is a stanza and it takes two pages to print it out. A very, very long hymn, so if we ever want to sing a hymn that will take, you know, like a half hour or something, it is a very beautiful hymn. But I am going to read a few of the stanzas.

The king there in His beauty, without a veil is seen:
It were a well-spent journey, though seven deaths lay between:
The Lamb with His fair army, doth on Mount Zion stand,
And glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land

But that He built a heaven of His surpassing love,
A little New Jerusalem, like to the one above,—
"Lord, take me o'er the water," hath been my loud demand,
"Take me to my love's own country, into Immanuel's land."

I have wrestled on towards Heaven, against storm, and wind, and tide.
Now, like a weary traveler, that leaneth on his guide,
Amid the shades of evening, while sinks life's ling'ring sand,
I hail the glory dawning from Immanuel's land.

Deep waters crossed life's pathway, the hedge of thorns was sharp
Now these lie all behind me— Oh! for a well-tuned harp!
Oh! to join Halleluiah with yon triumphant band,
Who sing, where glory dwelleth, in Immanuel's land.

With mercy and with judgment my web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow were lusted with His love.
I'll bless the hand that guided, I'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land.

Oh! I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine!
He brings a poor vile sinner into His "House of wine."
I stand upon His merit, I know no other stand,
Not even where glory dwelleth In Immanuel's land.

I shall sleep sound in Jesus, filled with His likeness rise,
To love and to adore Him, To see Him with those eyes.
'Tween me and resurrection but Paradise doth stand;
Then—then for glory dwelling In Immanuel's land!

The Bride eyes not her garment, but her dear Bridegroom's face
I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of Grace.
Not at the crown He giveth, But on His pierced hand.
The Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's land.

They've summoned me before them, but there I may not come,—
My Lord says, "Come up hither," the Lord says, "Welcome Home!"
My king, at His white throne, my presence doth command,
Where glory, glory dwelleth In Immanuel's land.

Immanuel is our God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the one who dwells in the glory of heaven. And the wonderful phrase in that, that catches me is, “The Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel’s land.” For he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.² He is God with us.

Now where do we read about Immanuel in the Old Testament? Well, the passage from Isaiah chapter seven to chapter 12 has often been called the book of Immanuel. There are two verses that impress us immediately in Isaiah chapter seven and verse 14. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."³

And then in Isaiah eight and verse eight we read this. “And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.”⁴ That’s Immanuel’s land.

Well, God says that he will be with us. And that is one of the most exciting concepts in the entire Word of God.

Do you know there is no other religion that has a concept like that? If you think about it for a moment, if you think of Old Testament Judaism, the idea is that we could only approach God by going through a priest. God was not there, in essence, present with the worshipper. The worshipper went to the priest to offer a sacrifice.

If you look at the various religions of the world you will find out that there is no sense in which God is with them. God is not with them. But for us who are believers we can constantly think of God as being with us.

² See John 1:29

³ Isaiah 7:14

⁴ Isaiah 8:8

I would like to point out a few of the beautiful passages in the Word of God that emphasize this. You remember that the Lord Jesus said in Matthew chapter 28 and verse 20, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”⁵ What does that mean? It means that if we are believers, we constantly have the Lord present with us. The Holy Spirit has come. He dwells within us. And dwelling within us we have that greatness and that wonder of the relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ every moment. We have access to him. He is with us. I can, at any moment I want, turn to the Lord and I can know that he will hear me. Isn’t that a wonderful concept? Isn’t that magnificent?

I mean, I don’t have to wait to come to church to pray to God. I don’t have to go to a priest to pray to God. I don’t have to do anything other than simply say, “Lord,” and he is listening because he is with you always even to the end of the age.⁶

Now, let me read some of the Old Testament verses that basically teach us the same concept. Psalm chapter 46 and verse seven and then verse 11 say basically the same thing. “The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.”⁷

Then in Isaiah chapter nine and verse six, a very familiar passage.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.”⁸

He is the one for us the Wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. He is the one who is ready to counsel us. That is what the Wonderful Counsellor is. That means that when I have a problem, I have somebody that I can go to. And he is going to direct me to passages in the Word of God where I can learn to deal with the issues and concerns of my life and he will do the same for you if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John chapter one and verse 14, going to the New Testament we read, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”⁹ It says the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. He came here to live among his people. The interesting...there is an interesting word here that is used here in this passage where it says he “dwelt among us.” It is a word for a tent or a tabernacle. And the idea is that he tented or tabernacled among us.

⁵ Matthew 28:20

⁶ See Matthew 28:20

⁷ Psalm 46:7

⁸ Isaiah 9:6-7

⁹ John 1:14

Some of you have been in the army. You have had that wonderful experience of sleeping out in tents. You know, I mean it is great experience. I remember, you know, setting up the tent and, I don't know. I guess I never really had to. Because of my rank they said I could just wait and watch other people do it. But I really felt that, you know, as a chaplain I always got out there and worked with the...the folks who were doing it. So if you can picture me climbing up on the top of a GP medium, you know, to do all the things that you have to do. I actually did those things. I don't think I would do it again in...you know, today, but we lived in tents. And sometimes it was convenient and sometimes it wasn't. But one of the neat things was there was this scent of very close fellowship and we—I mean that literally. I mean, we were close. Any of you in the military you know exactly what I am...what I am talking about.

I can remember one time and I don't know whether this story is so incredibly relevant, but it is an interesting one anyway. I can remember one time where we had a...one tent for the male soldiers and one tent for the female soldiers which is appropriate. And all of a sudden the...this was in bitter cold in Germany in the middle of the winter. And it was night time and all of a sudden the heater went out in the ladies' tent.

Now, these are very resourceful female soldiers so they decided that they were going to share a tent with us that night, did not ask us. You know, they just decided that, you know, warmth is better than cold. And I can understand their motivation. So all of a sudden we had a tent that was just filled with people, all over the place. It was the only place to get some warmth there. And you talk about close fellowship. I mean, I have...I don't think I have ever been in such a crowded situation.

Finally in the morning all the ladies, you know, left and allowed us to have privacy to get ready and every thing. But we were all together close as close can be.

Well, this is what the concept that the Lord has for us here. It says that he dwelt among us. He lived in tabernacles or tents among us.

Now when it talks about a tent or a tabernacle, the Word of God views our body as the tent in which we live. I am not going to take the time to turn to the passage in the book of Hebrews, but it speaks of the tent in which we are living. The body that we live in is one that—as we all know, as we get older—it gets older and eventually we leave the body and we go off to be with the Lord. And it is only a tent in which we are living temporarily while we are here on earth.

Well Jesus also lived in a tent in the body and he tented or tabernacled among us. So he is the one who was and is with us.

But we see this and we understand that he was that. But now what about the concept of his being God? Immanuel means God who is with us. We see the concept of his being with us.

The Word of God over and over and over again emphasizes the fact that Jesus is God. One of the difficulties that we have sometimes in witnessing is that that is one of the things that non believers love to deny. Have you ever encountered that? I mean, I have.

I mean, you know, that they will believe that Jesus Christ lived. I mean, he is a historical figure. They will believe that he did many of the things that we read of in Scripture. Sometimes they won't believe that he did all of them, but they will believe that he did many of things that we read of in Scripture. But the one thing that they often will not believe is the idea of his being God.

Well, one of the problems with that is that they will usually say he was a good man. He was a prophet. And many will say to me, "But I don't believe that he was really God."

Well, there is a real problem with that. There is a real dilemma. If he was a good man he wouldn't lie, right? Good people don't lie. Well, he said he was God. So either he was God or he wasn't a good man. He either was God or he was a liar. I mean, there aren't...there are no other options. And I present it that way to people. I say, "You know, if you want to believe he was a good man, then you have to believe he was God because he said it over and over and over again."

We are going to look now at some of the passages. And this may seem as if I am belaboring it a little bit. And maybe I am. But I think it is so important for us to focus on the fact that the one who is with us is, in fact, a divine individual. He is God.

So we are going to look at several passages to teach us this.

In Luke chapter 22, you want to take the time if you want to mark these down. These may be useful to look at when you have an opportunity. Luke chapter 22 and verse 69 and 70 the Lord Jesus said:

Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.
Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them,
Ye say that I am.¹⁰

Now, that "ye say that I am," is a statement that speaks in the affirmative. He is basically saying, "I am agreeing with you. I am, in fact, the Son of God."

In John chapter 10 and verse 30 we read, "I and my Father are one."¹¹ There is no clearer statement than that. He is not saying that they just have a relationship with one another. But what he is saying is that what he Father is, that is what he is. If the Father is God, then Jesus Christ is God. That is what he is saying in this passage.

In the same chapter he says in John 10 and verse...beginning with verse 37.

¹⁰ Luke 22:69-70

¹¹ John 10:30

If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.¹²

They are united. In John chapter 12 we read this in verse 45. “And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.”¹³ That’s an odd statement, really. I could never say that in any sense at all. If you would send me somewhere I would go. But I could not say, “If you have seen me, you saw the person who sent me.” What he is saying here is that we are one. We are united. And therefore if one is God, the other is God.”

Now in John chapter 14 we read beginning with verse seven. “If you had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth you know him, and have seen him.”¹⁴

Now listen to the question.

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."
9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; and how can you say, then, 'Show us the Father'? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father who dwells in me, he does the works."¹⁵

Do you see how they are united together, that Jesus and the Father are both God.

Going down now to John chapter 16 we read, “All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”¹⁶ One more indication of their unity.

You will remember that in Matthew chapter 16 where Jesus is being questioned as to who he is, his person, we read in the 16th verse that Simon Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” He brings him together as the one who is intricately related to the Father.

Going back to the book of John...and here is some of the clearest passages that we can find. In John it says, “In the beginning was the Word.”¹⁷ We know this word “Word” is talking about the Lord Jesus. “And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”¹⁸ Jesus is God.

¹² John 10:37-38

¹³ John 12:45

¹⁴ John 14:7

¹⁵ John 14:8-9

¹⁶ John 16:15

¹⁷ John 1:1

¹⁸ Ibid.

Now if you question whether this is referring to the Lord Jesus—and we know it is but some people will question it—just go down to verse 14 and in verse 14 it says very clearly that “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.”¹⁹ It is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans, in chapter one and verse four. And it says, “And he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”²⁰ He was declared to be the Son of God. His deity was declared by the resurrection.

In Romans chapter nine and verse five: “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”²¹ That does not mean that he is blessed by God forever, it means that he is God who is blessed forever. What a wonderful picture, very, very clear.

In the book of Colossians there are two passages. In chapter one and verse 15 it speaks of Christ and it says, “Who is the image of the invisible God.”²² Well, that’s clear, isn’t it?

And then in chapter two and verse nine, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”²³ He has all the fulness of the godhead, all the fulness of what God is in his very person.

And then in 1 Timothy chapter three and verse 16 it says, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh.”²⁴ Ok? That is the Lord Jesus Christ, God manifested in the flesh.

Hebrews chapter one. “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”²⁵ He was the brightness of God’s glory. In other words, he was the clear, visible representation of who God is.

One other set of passages makes it clear for us that the Lord Jesus Christ is God. And it is a set of passages that we find in John chapter eight. If there is any passage that we need to know if someone is going to question the deity of Jesus Christ, it is John chapter eight.

In this passage we read many statements in which the Lord Jesus said, “I am.” And we are going to look at these. I think they are extremely important passages. We read, for instance, and I am going to go down to verse 24, verse 24 of this passage it says, “I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you

¹⁹ John 1:14

²⁰ Romans 1:4

²¹ Romans 9:5

²² Colossians 1:15

²³ Colossians 2:9

²⁴ 1 Timothy 3:16

²⁵ Hebrews 1:3

shall die in your sins.”²⁶ Now I hope this works. The word “he” should be in italics. Is it in italics in your Bible? Ok. Any time you find a word in italics it means it is not there. It was added because the translator thought it would help for clarification. Well, it doesn’t. It would be a lot better if it didn’t have the word “he” there. And there is a reason for that.

You will remember that back in the Old Testament when Moses was encountered by the Lord at the burning bush he asked the question, “When I go to the children of Israel, who shall I say sent me? What is your name?”²⁷

And you will remember that God answered him and said, “I am that I am. Tell them that I am hath sent you.”²⁸

The word “I am” is a name of God, a very important name of God. It indicates self existence, the one who is in himself. Jesus, in saying this in verse 24, “Unless you believe that I am, you shall die in your sins,”²⁹ is referring to the fact that he is God.

In verse 28 we find basically the same thing. It says, “Jesus therefore said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am.”³⁰ The “he” doesn’t belong there.

In other words he is saying, “I want you to understand that I am God. I am the Jehovah of the Old Testament. I am the one who was encountered by Moses there in Exodus chapter three.”

And then, probably the clearest and most important is in John chapter eight and verse 58 where we read this, “Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.””³¹ We looked at this way back when, when we were studying the names of God. But for any of you who—and all of us, too, I’m sure—speak very good grammatically correct English, you notice that is pretty bad grammar, isn’t it? I mean, that is not what we would say, is it? I would not say to you, “Well, before you were here I am.”

I would instead say, “Before Abraham was, I was.” Wouldn’t that be better English? Yeah, it would also be better Greek. But the reason that the Lord chose to use what looks like bad grammar is because he is not trying to emphasize the fact that his existence...he is clearly saying here, “I am” referring back to the Old Testament where that name of God is given to Moses, “I am that I am. Tell them that I am hath sent you.”³²

So over and over again we see two things that are so clear for us. First of all we see that God is with us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God has been sent

²⁶ John 8:24

²⁷ See Exodus 3:13

²⁸ See Exodus 3:14

²⁹ See John 8:24

³⁰ John 8:28

³¹ John 8:58

³² See Exodus 3:14

to indwell us throughout our lives and to be with us until the end of the age. And then we find that this person who is with us is, in fact, God himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So when we read in Matthew chapter one that his name will be Immanuel, which being translated is God with us,³³ we recognize, first of all, his deity. But, secondly, we recognize the fact that every moment of every day the Savior is with us, that we have access to his throne. At any moment I can turn to him and I can ask of him whatever I need. I can approach him and glorify his name any time I want. He is, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"³⁴ And he is with me. Someday I am going to be with him in that land which is referred to as Immanuel's land.

And it says in that one stanza that is my favorite in "Immanuel's Land:"

The Bride eyes not her garment, but her dear Bridegroom's face
I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of Grace.
Not at the crown He giveth, but on His pierced hand:
For the Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's land.

Let's pray together.

Father, we thank you for who you are. You are the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. You are Immanuel, God with us. And we thank you, our Father, that you are always with us. We pray, Father, that we, too, might have a desire in what we do to draw close to you, that our lives might glorify the name of the Savior. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

³³ See Matthew 1:23

³⁴ John 1:29