

“God With Us”

December 24, 2023

INTRODUCTION

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Immanuel means “God with us

“God”

As Christians, we believe that Jesus is God as a man. That He is in fact the only God-Man. That He is fully God, yet fully man. Fully possessing two natures. He’s not God in the appearance of man. Just looks like a man. Neither is He a man but filled or controlled by the Spirit of God. He is God made flesh.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1, 14)

Why is this so important?

Lots of reasons, but the one I want to highlight this morning is this: *there was no other way for our sins to be paid for.*

- The book of Hebrews in particular does such a great job explaining this concept. It’s based on a knowledge of the sacrificial system seen in the Old Testament where it was made very clear: *Without the shedding of blood there is no remission (or forgiveness) of sins.* (Hebrews 9:22)
- The Bible makes it very, very clear that there is only one appropriate penalty or punishment for sin against a holy God: death. (Romans 6:23)
- Something or someone will need to pay for your sin. Either you’re going to pay the penalty for your sin with your own life. Or God, because He is merciful, is willing to accept a substitute on your behalf. He is willing to forgive your sins, to cover, or atone for your sins, if something or someone else dies for your sins.
- We see in the Old Testament, that God was willing to accept the blood of bulls and goats and lambs to cover or to atone the guilt of the one bringing that sacrifice.
- But, the writer of Hebrews would go on to say, but the blood of bulls, and lambs, and goats can’t really pay for the sins of a man. He said the Law was simply a foreshadowing of what was to come. And that this is why people still felt guilty over their sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Hebrews 10:4).
- Only a man can pay for another man’s sins. The problem is, as Paul points out, *but all have sinned and fallen short of the glory (or standard) of God* (Romans 3:23). Thus, there IS no man that can pay for another man’s sins, because he or she are also condemned before an infinitely holy God.

So what can be done? Is all hope lost? Enter Jesus.

¹² [Jesus] did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!
Hebrews 9:12-14

“With”

In a phrase, Jesus *gets* me. Why? Because He was WITH us.

Once again, the writer of Hebrews says:

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16

“Us”

Me. You. Unbelievable, right?? But as the apostle Paul makes clear. His love for us NEVER had to do with our good works.

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5:6-11

God says to His children, “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5b)

Related passage: Romans 8:31-39

Questions for Personal Reflection/Group Discussion

1. How does it impact you to know that God was willing to take on flesh in order to be with us, in order to save us, in order that we might be with Him?