

Emmanuel God with Us

*Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "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." (Matthew 1:23, NASB95) (Gk. Meta = "in common with us")*

Let's trace the development of this Idea of "With Us". This cannot be exhaustive but only representative.

God was with Adam and Eve in the Garden. Gen. 1-3. Because they heard the footsteps of God coming to them in the cool of the day I assume that the Lord had taken a human form as He did with Abraham and others of the in between time before the Law. At this time there was no Mosaic Law. There was God's Presence. God covered them and shed blood so He could continue to walk with them.

Enoch was a special man. He pleased God by doing everything God desired of people in those days. Gen. 5:22 says "Enoch walked with God..." How he knew what pleased God and how God spoke to him is not described

Joshua was encouraged to be strong and of good courage because the Lord said, "I will be with you wherever you go..." Josh. 1:9 There was no cloud and no fire but there was glory in the tabernacle. Guidance was given by the prophets and priests speaking for God. In v. 17 the leaders blessed Joshua and said, "may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses...only be strong and courageous." The presence of God was evident by wisdom and strength and success.

Isaiah was given words of comfort as Israel was going into captivity. Yahweh said, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." V2. And in v4 He says of the future, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you and will gather you". But God's presence was not seen and apostate priests and prophets and leaders had no Word from God. Into this darkness Isaiah spoke. He said, "The virgin (betrothed woman) will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel." (i.e. God with us) Whether this was a child to be born at that time or a prophecy for the future or both is not clear. But the Prophecy was that the invisible Yahweh would take human form and dwell with Israel. When this verse is quoted in Matt. 1:23 the word "with" is translated into Greek as "meta" meaning "in common with". Other N.T. references use the idea "sharing our humanity".

When we transition to the N.T. the Greek words "**para**" (alongside, with, among. John 14:17) and "**pros**" (near Mk 9:19) are frequently used. Jesus says to the disciples about the coming of the Spirit, "you know him, for he lives with you (para) and will be in (en) you." John 14:17 This change in prepositions marks the great transition from the old dispensation to the new. Jesus said v20 "on that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you."

It is important to remember that the Old Covenant is in force throughout the Gospels up until Pentecost. God was "with" them but not yet "in" them. There are two reasons.

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One, the sacrifice of the Lamb had not been made and the blood had not been applied to the heavenly altar. Heb.9:23-25,

“Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own.” (Hebrews 9:23–25, NASB95)

). **Two**, In the OT the priests were anointed with blood and then oil. Believers are first cleansed by faith in Jesus. The death of Jesus was purposed by God to satisfy His own justice. God justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

“But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.” (Isaiah 53:10–11, NASB95)

Pentecost was the celebration of the giving of the Law in the OT. In the NT the Law was to be written in human hearts (Jer 31:33-34) by the Holy Spirit. When atonement was made for sin and activated by faith in Jesus the Father was able to pour out the Holy Spirit and humble believers became the dwelling place of God. This is the significance of the little word “in”.

It is for this reason that the least in the K of G is greater than John Baptist. They are indwelt by the very person of Yahweh. He is not just “with” but “in” them. For this reason Jesus said, *“that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”* (John 14:17, NASB95)

Not that he is not “with” anymore but by the Spirit he is also “in”. In the Old Covenant people could walk with God. Many would like to walk with Jesus not realizing that they desire to remain in the Old Covenant. In the New they have MORE than Emmanuel. We have God “in us”. It is important to realize that this is because the Word has really become flesh. He cannot dwell in us because He really has a body, although as Paul says, “a spiritual body”. This does not mean that Jesus Christ is a spirit devoid of a body. Rather his spiritual body has new dimensions, a new composition but it is nonetheless a body that cannot live inside a human body. This is why Jesus said it was necessary for him to go away.

To look at this from a different direction. When Jesus sent out the 12 he gave them authority. When he sent out the 70 he gave them authority. He could not go with them all as they went in different directions because he lived in a physical body so he delegated authority to them. But after His resurrection and just before Pentecost in Matt 28:18 he said this; *“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of*

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the age.” (Matthew 28:18–20, NASB95) We do not have delegated authority we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who conveys to us the very presence and will of the Father. We must not go back to the Old Covenant. We have something far better.

Here is an aside. If a boat is floating on the water is it “near” the water? But what does it have “in common with” the water? But if the boat is submerged in the water and it is “in” the water but the water is “in” it what has happened to the boat? Hence the term, “baptized, dunked, immersed to fulness” in the Spirit. But fulness of the Spirit is not about speaking in tongues or doing “the greater works” of John 14:12. It is about being Indwelt by God the Holy Spirit to overflowing.

In John 14:15-23 there is an interesting literary structure. Here are the keywords:

V15 If you **love** me you will **obey**. I.e. the disciples in the flesh

V16 I will **ASK** the Father and He will give you another Counsellor - the Spirit of Truth

V17 you **know** him for he is with you and will be in you

V18 **No orphans**. I will come to you

V19 world will not see me but you will see me i.e. death, resurrection, appearances

V20 **on that day** - when you see me again and the Spirit comes you will **realize** “I am in my Father, and you are in me and I am in you”.

V21 **obey** me = **love** me

V 21b **loved by** my Father and **I will love him** and **show** myself to him. I.e. ongoing revelation of Jesus the Messiah. Obedience and love are the path to revelation.

V23 love, obey and we will make our **home** with him.

All of our life springs from our indwelling Lord. The key word is abide, remain, dwell.

15:4,6,7,9, remain

“*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it **abides** in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.*” (John 15:4, NASB95)

“*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*” (John 15:7, NASB95)

“*Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.*” (John 15:9, NASB95)

Two more principles before application.

The Son Jn 8:28-29; 12:49 The Son does not initiate for God.

“*So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.”* (John 8:28, NASB95)

“*For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.*” (John 12:49, NASB95)

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I am deeply concerned that the present emphases have turned our attention outward to religious actions that are more metaphysics suitable to New Age thinking than abiding in Jesus. God will continue to embarrass those who speak false things in his name and have passed the humility of humble requests. Don't let that be you. Don't initiate for God.

The Holy Spirit ch 16:13 does not initiate for God.

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.” (John 16:13, NASB95)

The best gift for us from the Father and from the Lord Jesus is the Gift of the Spirit. I am deeply concerned that turning outward and going back to the Old Covenant is forfeiting the presence of Jesus and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Look around you. People are declaring this and declaring that, even things that prove evidently false. It is a technique instead of a word from God that is a fire and a hammer.

Jesus' instruction is in Jn 15:7. *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”* (John 15:7, NASB95) Throughout Jn 14,15,16 the simple instruction is abide and ask.

Here is the take away.

1. The qualities of character that God requires of His children are fruit of the Spirit.

Faith is a fruit of the Spirit not of mind and will. It is imparted by the immediate work of the Holy Spirit in us.

2. The gifts He wants us to give are the Gifts of the Spirit. The gift of faith comes from the Spirit. It is activated by the joining together of the word and the Spirit. It cannot be manufactured . It springs out of the work of the Spirit in you.

3. The faith we require comes by grace from the Son and the Spirit. Faith cannot be exercised according to our mind and will; it is either fruit or gift. Stop busting your guts to do what only the Spirit in you can do.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8–9, NASB95)

“fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2, NASB95)

4. The Son has taught us how to live in dependence upon the Father and the Spirit. He did nothing of himself. He only did what he heard and spoke what he saw. Make your highest goal to abide in him more and more completely.

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