



One of the carols often sung at Christmas is *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. The name *Emmanuel*, the Greek translation, or *Immanuel*, the Hebrew translation, both mean the same thing - God with us. Even though we're familiar with the name Immanuel, what does it mean and what difference does it make for how we live today? That's what we're going to discover in this new Advent series "God with us".

1. One of the most familiar Bible prophecies about Christmas is Isaiah 7:14. Yet in order to grasp what this really means for us today, we need to understand the context. Read Isaiah 7 – 8.
2. What problem did King Ahaz face (7:1-2a)? What did his enemies plan (5-6)? How did Ahaz respond, and what effect did he have on his people (2b)? What did God tell Ahaz through Isaiah and his son (3-4)? What did God promise and warn (7-9)? As a leader in your family, at work, in the church, why is it important to stand firm in our faith?<sup>1</sup>
3. How did God offer to help Ahaz (7:10-11)? Why did he refuse God's help and justify himself (7:12)? How did Isaiah rebuke him (7:13)? Why was God patient with the house of David and why is God patient with us (Romans 2:4)?
4. Despite Ahaz's stubbornness, what sign did God give him (7:14)? What does "Immanuel" mean? Nevertheless, how would God use Assyria as his instrument of judgment on the land and people of Judah (7:17-25)?
5. What is the meaning of the name God asked Isaiah to write on a large scroll and name his son (8:1-3)? How was the birth of Isaiah's second son an initial fulfillment of 7:14? What would happen while this new son was still young (7:15-16; 8:4)? Note in 8:5-10 where the word "Immanuel" is repeated. How did this word plant hope in his people?
6. What warning did God give Isaiah (8:11-15)? Who is the one we should fear, and why? According to Isaiah 8:17, what should we do when we are in dark valleys?
7. Read Matthew 1:23. When was this promise fulfilled, and how does this reveal God's grace to sinners? How does God with us give us hope for today? How does God with us give us hope for the future?

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<sup>1</sup> University Bible Fellowship, New Jersey. Isaiah 7:1-8:22, God's Sign, December 5, 2010. Abraham Lee.