



## Behind Enemy Lines Training Saints

Written by an Inmate

### God With Us [Immanuel]

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Next week we'll be celebrating the birth of our Savior. That blessed time over 2,000 years ago when God put His plan into motion to seek and save the lost; to bring us forgiveness rather than condemnation; to shine light amidst the darkness of this broken world; to offer us peace beyond all comprehension; and to give us the hope of life everlasting. It's that time when God Himself came down from heaven in the form of a human child, a baby born to a poor, young, betrothed couple from the Podunk town of Nazareth.

God Himself came to earth not just to die for our sins but also to live; to live a pure, righteous life. But it was a full, human life. He came to experience what we experience, so He can relate and know what we go through; so He could live His human life as an example for us; and so He could teach us directly through His words. While He was here, He knew pain and suffering, joy and happiness, temptation and anger. The only thing He did not experience was sin. And it was through His righteous life that we may be saved through our faith in Him. As Paul puts it in **Philippians 3:9**, "not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."

The Jewish people during the time of Jesus were anxiously awaiting their prophesied messiah to come and save them from the oppression of the Roman Empire. The people expected a king to rise up and defeat their enemies. God's plan was bigger though. He would defeat the great enemy, satan, and give all who believe victory over sin and death. Though, He will come again as a King to rule for all eternity.

In **Isaiah chapter 9**, he prophesied the following over 700 years before the birth of Christ: <sup>2</sup>"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." <sup>3</sup>"You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil" ... <sup>6</sup>"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." <sup>7</sup>"Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore."

The light has shown on us beginning that glorious night when a host of angels brought the good news of great joy to the shepherds outside Bethlehem. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (**2 Corinthians 4:6b**) was given to them, some of the lowest of society at the time. God doesn't care about wealth or status; God looks at the heart. He brought both kings (or "magi") and shepherds – those from all walks of life– to come and worship Him.

Since the creation of the church at Pentecost, His "holy nation" as Peter calls it has multiplied greatly. It has spread throughout the whole earth and numbers in the billions. And here we are today, a small part of His global church worshipping Him and rejoicing in all He has done for us.

Hebrew names always convey deeper meaning beyond just identity. They describe attributes about the person and often personality. When we look at the names Isaiah lists, we see a picture of Jesus, the child born, the son given, as none other than God Himself. The word translated as “Wonderful” is only ever used to describe God. “Counselor” shows His wisdom and teaching and makes me think of the Advocate we have in the Holy Spirit. “Mighty God” and “Everlasting Father” – this child will be called Mighty God and Everlasting Father! It doesn’t get much more direct than that. There are many in this world who would deny who Jesus really was and prefer to see Him as just a good man or a prophet. But we know the truth of who He was (and is) by what He said, did, by the testimony of those who knew Him, and by the prophecies like this one that clearly show us that He is the Son of God, God incarnate who was and is and is to come.

He is the Prince of Peace who brings us to peace with God and brings us the peace of God. “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (**Romans 5:1**). “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (**Philippeans 4:7**). No matter what the world throws at us, we rejoice in God since we put our hope, our trust in Him who has adopted us as sons and heirs of all creation. During this Christmas season, let us reflect on the immense love of God and all He has done for us and all He has planned for us in the future. Let us rejoice with the angels singing “Gloria in excelsis deo.” Glory to God in the highest!



### **Let us pray ...**

Mighty God our Savior, help us to focus on You this Christmas rather than on ourselves and our own wants and needs. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness as we celebrate the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns for ever and ever. You are Immanuel, God with us. Give us peace and guard our hearts and minds until You come again. In Jesus’ name we pray.

Amen.