

Isaiah 7:14 New International Version - UK

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.

A sign for all people, that God is with us as we wait, watch and prepare for the second coming of Jesus, we do not do so alone, for the Immanuel, God with us, is here, giving us faith and strength to live in the Advent time. Give thanks for Immanuel, Jesus is here, He is with us, always.

Matthew 1:22-24 New International Version - UK

22 All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’[a] (which means ‘God with us’).

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Matthew’s Gospel retells how Joseph saw a vision of the angel Gabriel in a dream, pointing him to Isaiah 7:14, telling him that Mary’s pregnancy was the fulfilment of this prophecy and explains, for his readers, that Immanuel means ‘God with us’ – both Joseph and Mary demonstrated courageous faith in accepting God’s will for their lives. When God calls us to do difficult things for Him, are we ready to respond with courageous faith? Give thanks that God has a plan for you and ask that we will be prepared to respond with courageous faith when required.

Micah 5:2 New International Version - UK

**2 ‘But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.’**

Bethlehem, the hometown of King David, would come a ruler – a new king. This is one of the many Old Testament prophecies that point to the promised Messiah and is clearly one that is taken seriously by scholars at the time of Jesus, who point the Wisemen seeking a new King to Bethlehem. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, give thanks that God keeps His promises. Pray for those who do not know Jesus and the promises He gives to all who follow Him.

Psalms 132: 11-12 & 17 New International Version – UK

**11 The Lord swore an oath to David,
a sure oath he will not revoke:
‘One of your own descendants
I will place on your throne.**

**12 If your sons keep my covenant
and the statutes I teach them,
then their sons shall sit
on your throne for ever and ever.’**

**17 ‘Here I will make a horn grow for David
and set up a lamp for my anointed one.**

A promise to David that one of his descendants would reign on his throne eternally. The horn (V17) refers to a strong king, anointed by God to rule. Another Messianic promise that points to the Messiah being a descendent of King David. Titles given to the Messiah, include ‘Son of David’ and so those that studied the scriptures closely would have expected any claimant to the title Messiah to have been in the line of David and born in Bethlehem. Give thanks for our families, those we descend from and those who belong to our church family.

Luke 2:4-5 New International Version – UK

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Joseph and Mary went through considerable hardship in order to be where God needed them to be at the time of Jesus birth. The scriptures promised a Messiah in the line of David and born in the town of Bethlehem. What hardships have you suffered in order to be where God needs you? Pray for those who struggle, suffer hardships, leave home and family, in order to answer God's call on their lives.

Isaiah 40:9 New International Version – UK

**⁹ You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
'Here is your God!'**

Isaiah announces Good News, encourages his listeners do not be afraid, and declares "Here is your God" – Immanuel, God with us. This is Good News, because whatever we face, God is stronger, whatever we suffer, God is able to overcome, whatever we struggle with, God's love can heal, restore and forgive. Here is your God, with us. Pray for those who are searching for God, ask that God will help us point to Him and declare – "Here is your God".

Isaiah 40:11 New International Version – UK

**¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd:
he gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.**

We have so many illustrations in the New Testament of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, protecting, guarding, feeding, gathering and leading his flock – the Good Shepherd who lays down his life to save his sheep. Does Jesus carry you close to His heart? Pray for those who need Jesus gentle touch, those who need His protection, those who need to be fed, those who need to know the loving, gentle touch of a Shepherd and His leading.