



Good day Worthy Knights

In this part 19,

In the North: Companion, Whom seekest thou? Immanuel. (Anthony Wilson / Wikipedia)

Immanuel, Hebrew form *עִמָּנוּאֵל* "El is with us" and Emmanuel, Latin form, (Septuagint *Emmanouel*), signifies "God with us" (Matthew 1:23), and is the name of the child predicted in Isaiah 7:14:

"Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel".

The child is not a merely an ideal or metaphorical person, he cannot be identified with the regenerate people of Israel, nor with religious faith, for "he shall eat butter and honey."

The Prophet does not refer to a child in general, but points to an individual; both text and context require this.

The child is not a son of the Prophet Isaiah; Isaiah 8:1-4 shows that the Prophet's son has a name different from that of Emmanuel.

The child is not a son of Achaz; for Ezechiah did not possess the most essential characteristics of Emmanuel as described by Isaiah.

The Emmanuel is the Messiah foretold in the other prophecies of Isaiah. In Isaiah 8:8, Palestine is called the land of Emmanuel, though in other passages it is termed the land or the inheritance of Yahweh (Isaiah 14:2, 25; 47:6; Hosea 9:3; Jeremiah 2:7; 12:14), so that Emmanuel and Yahweh are identified.

Again, in the Hebrew text of Isaiah 8:9-10, the Prophet predicts the futility of all the enemies' schemes against Palestine, because of Emmanuel.

In 9:6-7, the characteristics of the child Emmanuel are so clearly described that one can doubt no longer of his Messianic mission. The eleventh chapter pictures the Messianic blessings which the child Emmanuel will bring upon the earth. Moreover, St. Matthew (1:23) expressly identifies the Emmanuel with Jesus the Messiah, and Christian tradition has constantly taught the same doctrine.

The question why was the Messiah called Emmanuel, or "God with us", admits of a double answer: the name is a pledge of Divine help and also a description of the nature of the Messiah.

King Achaz (Ahaz) had not believed the Prophet's first promise of deliverance from his enemies, Rasin, King of Syria, and Phacee, King of Israel (Isaiah 7:1-9). And when the Prophet tried a second time to restore his confidence, Achaz refused to ask for the sign which God was ready to grant in confirmation of the prophetic promise (7:10-12).

The Prophet, therefore, forces, in a way, King Achaz to confide in God, showing that the Messiah, the hope of Israel and the glory of the house of David, implies by his very name "Emmanuel", or "God with us", the Divine presence among his people.

The Gospel of Matthew quotes the Immanuel prophecy from Isaiah, although it uses a Greek translation rather than the original Hebrew. It begins with a genealogy from Abraham through David to Joseph, establishing Joseph as the "son of David", the rightful heir to Judah. But verse 1:16 makes clear that Jesus is not Joseph's son, and Matthew is careful never to refer to Joseph as Jesus' father. Verses 1:18-25 turn to Mary, the future mother of Jesus, betrothed (engaged) to Joseph, but "found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit" before she and Joseph have "come together".

Joseph is about to break the engagement, but an angel appears to him in a dream and tells him of the child's divine origins, and Matthew 1:22-23 explains how this is the fulfilment of Scripture:

"All this happened to fulfil what had been declared by the Lord through the prophet, who said, 'Look, the virgin will become pregnant and will give birth to a son, and they will give him the name Immanuel' - which is translated, 'God with us'".

It was common in Jewish writing of the time to reinterpret the scriptures in order to signify a new meaning. This is what Matthew has done with Isaiah 7:14: the Hebrew has the child being given the name Immanuel by "she" (presumably its mother), while the commonly-used Greek translation of the time (the Septuagint) has "you" (presumably King Ahaz, to whom the prophecy was addressed).

The change from "she" or "you" to "they" allows Matthew to have Joseph give the name "Jesus" to the child, thus signalling the God-born Messiah's formal adoption into the House of David, while at the same time he is "Immanuel", God with us, the Son of God.

The gospel of Matthew was probably written in the last two decades of the 1st century, by a highly educated Jew who believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah, "God with us".

At first, titles such as "Messiah" and "son of God" had described Jesus' future nature at the "deutera parousia", the Second Coming; but very soon he came to be recognised as having become the Son of God at the resurrection; then, in Mark, he becomes Son of God at his baptism; and finally Matthew and Luke add infancy narratives in which Jesus is the Son of God from the very beginning, conceived of a virgin mother without a human father.

Sources:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05404a.htm>;

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel>

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