

God With Us: Incarnation Before the Incarnation

Covenant Church
Pastor Zack Phillips
Sunday, December 2, 2018

1. Scripture for today: Matt 1:18-23 (NRSV)

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”
which means, “*God is with us.*”

2. “God with us” in Matthew

Matt 18:19-20 Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, *I am there among them.*”

Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, *I am with you always*, to the end of the age.”

3. God with Us in the Old Testament

a. God physically (?) with Israel, e.g., Exod 33:11 (Moses in the tent of meeting); Exod 33:18-23 (Moses in the cleft of the rock); Exod 24:9-11 (Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel); Exod 13:21-22 (Pillars of cloud and fire); Exod 25:8, 28:35, etc. (Tabernacle); 1 Kgs 19:11-13 (Elijah and the still, small voice).

b. God in/as an angel, e.g., Gen 16; Gen 18-19; Exod 3; Exod 14:19

c. God in immediate action, e.g., Exod 14:25; Josh 10:10-11; Josh 24:12

d. God working through human beings, e.g., Exod 4:15; Judg 6:15-16

e. “God with ____” generally, e.g., Gen 21:20; Exod 3:11-12; Exod 33:14; Josh 1:9; Judg 6:12