

Week 4.

- What do you think about Jesus' return? Are you looking forward to it?
- Read Isaiah 7:10-16

The reference to Immanuel in v14 is quite obscure but has been taken to ultimately refer to the birth of Jesus.

- How might the prophecy of Isaiah give hope to King Ahaz? (See opposite)
- How might these words give us hope today?
- Do you experience a sense of God being with you everyday?
- The hope of Advent is ultimately realised in the birth of Jesus - as 'Immanuel' and as his return. How does this encourage you?

'I taste my future and celebrate it, but return to my present.'

[Jeremy Driscoll O.S.B. in 'A Monk's Alphabet : DLT : 2006 p.30]

- Share any incidences you may have had of experiencing 'God with you'.
- Praise God for his presence with us as we look forward to Christmas Day and beyond into next year.



Advent Expectations : Jesus is Coming!

The context for these verses is an encounter between Isaiah the prophet and King Ahaz when Jerusalem is surrounded by hostile enemies and it's water source is at risk.

The sign of 'Immanuel' had an immediate significance to Ahaz and the people of Judah. A woman who was then a virgin would get married, conceive, and bear a son whose name would be "Immanuel." This son would be a reminder that God was with His people and would care for them. It is likely that this virgin was Isaiah's second wife, his second son was named both "Immanuel" and "Maher-shalal-hash-baz".

'As the prophet affirmed God was present with & for Jerusalem, Christians affirm Jesus Christ is Immanuel, 'God With us.'

Jesus had to be born of a virgin, apart from human generation, because He existed before His mother. He was not just born in this world; He came down from heaven into the world. He was sent by the Father and therefore came into the world having a human mother but not a human father.

[My paraphrase from The Spiritual Formation NRSV Bible : Harper Collins: 2005 & Warren Wiersbe : Be Comforted : Victor Books : via Logos]