

Christmas at the Movies: Never Forgotten, Never Alone

Dr. John Carmichael

[Mat 1:23 NASB95] 23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

[Isa 7:14 NASB95] 14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

- The virgin birth of Jesus and the truth that God became human are among the most controversial beliefs of the Christian faith. For believers, they are the very hope of the gospel. God did not remain distant from our pain. In Jesus, He came near, took on flesh, and entered our broken world to save us.
- Why does it matter? These truths are structural to Christian salvation theology. Without the Incarnation, there is no atoning mediator. Without the virgin birth, the uniqueness and divine initiative of Christ's mission is removed.
- Textual Hermeneutic:
 - Original Isaiah Context (Isa. 7:14): The prophecy was given during King Ahaz's crisis (c. 740 BC) as Judah faced invasion from Syria and Israel. Ahaz trusted Assyria instead of Yahweh, so God gave a sign assuring imminent deliverance: the hostile kings would soon be removed.
 - Immediate/Literal Fulfillment: The promised child functioned as a time-marker: before the child reached moral discretion, Judah's enemies would be defeated. In Isaiah's setting, the sign meant God was with Judah to rescue them from political danger.
 - Multiple Meanings of "Fulfilled" in Scripture: Biblical fulfillment can mean many things including that it is language reused because it aptly fits a later event; without being its original intent.
 - Fulfillment in Christ: Matthew applies Isaiah 7:14 to Jesus in the fullest sense. His virgin conception was literal and miraculous, indicating divine initiative in creating the Messiah's body (cf. Luke 1:34; Heb. 10:5).
 - Meaning of "Immanuel - God With Us": While originally signifying God's nearness to deliver Judah, Matthew understands the name in its ultimate sense: Jesus is truly divine and human. This union grounds the glory, security, and wonder of redemption, revealing God's condescension and love (Phil. 2:6-8).
- The Home Alone clip: Kevin waking up, calling out for his family, and realizing he's been left behind. Forgotten even by his mother, who loved him. He blamed (or credited) himself.
- That moment captures a feeling many people carry: especially during the holidays: forgotten, overlooked, alone, and left behind.
- Some are surrounded by people yet feel isolated. Others are literally alone this season. But Christmas declares a powerful truth: God came to be with us.
- The name given to Jesus at His birth was not accidental. Immanuel - God with us.

What does the fact that God is with us mean for us today?

Here are four truths about what it means that God is with us.

I. IMMANUEL MEANS GOD IS PRESENT, NOT DISTANT

- a. Matthew 1:23 / Isaiah 7:14
- b. God didn't shout salvation from Heaven. He stepped into our world.

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- c. Immanuel means: God entered our pain. God stepped into our loneliness. God chose proximity over distance. Jesus is not watching from afar; He is walking with you.
- d. [Psa 46:1 NASB95] 1 For the choir director. [A Psalm] of the sons of Korah, set to Alamoth. A Song. God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.
- e. Saved but still walking through pain. I would hold on to my cross. For me, it brought the Holy Spirit into the moment.
- f. Application: Speak this truth aloud: "God is with me right now." When loneliness whispers lies, answer with Scripture. Practice awareness of God's presence. Invite Him into ordinary moments.

II. JESUS PROMISED HE WOULD NEVER LEAVE YOU AS AN ORPHAN

- a. [Jhn 14:18 NASB95] 18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.
- b. Jesus understood abandonment. He addressed it directly.
- c. An orphan spirit says: "I'm on my own." "No one's coming for me." "I have to survive alone."
- d. But Jesus promises presence, relationship, and belonging.
- e. [Rom 8:15 NASB95] 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
- f. Application: Reject the orphan mindset; receive your identity as God's child. Invite the Holy Spirit to heal wounds of rejection or neglect. Declare daily: "I belong to God, and I am not alone."

III. GOD'S PRESENCE IS YOUR SECURITY WHEN OTHERS FAIL YOU

- a. [Heb 13:5 NASB95] 5 [Make sure that] your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"
- b. People may forget. Schedules fail. Plans fall apart. But God's promise is unwavering: Never = not once; Forsake = not ever
- c. His faithfulness is not seasonal. It is forever.
- d. [Isa 49:15-16 NASB95] 15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. 16 "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms [of My hands;] Your walls are continually before Me.
- e. Application: Anchor your security in God's promises, not people's behavior. When disappointment hits, run toward God's presence, not away from it. Trust that even delays and detours are covered by His faithfulness.

IV. WHEN YOU REALIZE GOD IS WITH YOU, FEAR LOSES ITS POWER

- a. [Mat 1:23 NASB95] 23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."
- b. Spiritually, when believers grasp Immanuel: Fear gives way to faith, anxiety loosens its grip, and courage rises to the top.
- c. You are never truly alone when God is with you.
- d. [Psa 23:4 NASB95] 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
- e. Application: Replace fear-filled thoughts with faith-filled declarations. Pray boldly knowing God stands with you. Step forward in confidence. God is not sending you alone.

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- Even when people forget you, overlook you, or leave you behind, God never abandons His children. Immanuel means God is with you.
- Kevin was left behind. Forgotten by even his mother (who loved him.) God never, ever, not once, has forgotten you.
- Someone needs to hear this truth:
 - Even if others forgot you...
 - Even if life overlooked you...
 - Even if this season feels quiet and empty...
- God has not forgotten you.
- Immanuel is not an idea. It's a promise.
- God is with you. God is for you. God is staying with you.
- You are not alone. You are not abandoned. You are not forgotten.