

EMMANUEL BAND

ABOUT EMMANUEL

Emmanuel means **With us is God** - a symbolic name from the prophecy of Isaiah which applied in later years to Jesus, the Messiah. In the time of the Prophet Isaiah, Syria and Israel were attacking Judah in an attempt to force King Ahaz of Judah to join a coalition against Assyria. Isaiah called on Ahaz to put his trust in the Word of the Lord so that the threat of Syria and Israel would lose their capacity to be a threat to Judah. But before this peace and prosperity becomes a reality, Isaiah announced there would be a drastic purging judgement at the hands of the King of Assyria. Only a remnant would experience the good future that God had intended for his people (Isa. 7:10-25).

The sign that God promised to provide to Ahaz was the birth of a child within, whose childhood years these events of promise and judgement would take place. The child would be given the name Emmanuel, meaning "God with us", as a symbol of Judah's hope in the midst of adversity (Isa. 8:8-10). God would be with His people, in spite of the devastation wrought by the forces of the Assyrians (Isa. 8:7-8). Immanuel offered a future and a hope for those who would place their trust in God.

The identity of this child and the circumstances of birth are much disputed. This remarkable prophecy achieved its full meaning with the coming of Jesus Christ. But there may have been an initial fulfilment in the eighth century B. C. When Hezekiah took over the throne, he carried out many moral reforms that brought the people of Judah closer to mind when he announced this prophecy. Others think the child may have been a son born to Isaiah and "the prophetess" (Isa. 8:3). In that case, "Immanuel" would have been another name for Maher-Shalal-Haz-Baz.

Regardless of Isaiah's understanding, Matthew rightly recognized that hope for restoration through the house of David reached its ultimate fulfilment only with Jesus. (Matt. 1:23). With the coming of Jesus, God is with us in the most profound sense. With the virgin birth, God's pattern of working out His purposes through special births (Gen. 3:15; I Sam. 2:1-10; 2 Sam. 7:12-16) reaches its climax. And in Jesus, God is with us always, even to the end of the age (Matt. 28:20).