

# Orlando Bible Students Newsletter

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## They Shall Call His Name Emmanuel

When Mary was found with child by the power of the Holy Spirit, the words of the Prophet Isaiah were being fulfilled. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). When this prophecy is repeated in Matthew 1:23 concerning the birth of Jesus, the explanation of what "Emmanuel" means is added as part of the scripture. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Following his miraculous birth, Jesus lived in Israel for 33 years and then was crucified as a blasphemer of God. According to the Jews, his blasphemy was his claim to be the Son of God (John 10:36). Did Jesus' death mean that God was no longer with Israel or the rest of the human family?

Just last month, mankind once again celebrated the birth of Jesus. How was the birth and the short earthly life of Jesus a sign indicating that God is with us? Do all of the troubles, conflicts, and problems of today indicate that God is no longer with us?

The Scriptures clearly indicate that Jesus was the Son of God (Matt. 16:16-17). Jesus taught that he came from God and, after his death, he would return to God (John 16:28). Jesus came to earth not to establish his kingdom but to give his life as a ransom for Adam (I Cor. 15:22). "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, . . . that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). While Jesus was the Messiah, he told Pilate his kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). His kingdom was to be future—based in heaven and not on earth (Acts 1:6-7).

Jesus, through his earthly ministry, announced the opportunity for his followers to be part of this kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21; 19:27-29). He opened the door to a spiritual salvation, first to his Jewish followers and then to the Gentiles (Matt. 6:33).

As the Son of God, Jesus reflected the Father's righteous, godly character and the Father's teaching (Heb. 1:1-4). In this sense, God was with the nation of Israel through the ministry of his only begotten Son (John 14:10). However, the brief time Jesus was alive on earth was not the complete fulfillment of this prophecy.

The Scriptures promise that Jesus will return a second time, not as a man but as a spiritual king, to extend his kingdom to the earth, to bring salvation and restore to mankind all that was lost through Adam's disobedience (Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:21). As a king, he returns to take control of man's affairs, to bring the chaos, violence, and unrighteousness we see all around us to an end, and to teach the human family righteousness (Psa. 2:6-8; Zech. 9:10; Isa. 26:9). The goal of his kingdom on earth will be to heal the entire human family from the effects of sin (Rev. 21:1-4). In his kingdom, all of the dead will be raised to life, all will be healed from their illnesses and given an opportunity, if obedient to the laws of the kingdom, to gain everlasting life upon a restored earth (Acts 24:15; Isa. 35:5-10). In this way, Jesus will completely fulfill the promise of God being with us.

As a result of his kingdom work, the human family will regain the perfection lost through Adam's disobedience, and once again become sons of God (Ezek. 36:24-28). ■

*For more information, see our offer for the free booklet "God's Plan."*

# Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a choice we make, motivated by obedience to God and his command to forgive. We are to forgive as the Lord forgave us. “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:13 *NIV*). We forgive by faith, out of obedience. Since forgiveness goes against our nature, we must forgive by faith, whether we feel like it or not. We must continue to forgive (our job), by faith, until the work of forgiveness (the Lord’s job), is done in our hearts.

Corrie Ten Boom, a Nazi concentration camp survivor, said, “Forgiveness is to set a prisoner free, and to realize the prisoner was you.” We know the work of forgiveness is complete when we experience the freedom that comes as a result. We are the ones who suffer most when we choose not to forgive. When we do forgive, the Lord sets our hearts free from the anger, bitterness, and hurt that previously imprisoned us.

Forgiveness can be a slow process. Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother. Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times” (Matt. 18:22 *NIV*). Jesus makes it clear that forgiveness is not easy for us. Forgiveness may require a lifetime of forgiving, but we must continue forgiving until the matter is settled in our heart.

Prayer is one of the best ways to break down the wall of unforgiveness in our heart. When we pray for someone who has wronged us, God gives us new eyes to see and a new heart to care for that person. We begin to see that person as God sees them, and realize that they are precious to the Lord. We also see ourselves in a new light, just as guilty of sin and failure as the other person. We, too, are in need of forgiveness. If God did not withhold his forgiveness from us, why should we withhold our forgiveness from another?

“If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-16 *NIV*). We also forgive so our prayers will not be hindered (Mark 11:25 *NIV*). In summary, we forgive out of obedience to the Lord. It is a choice, a decision we make. As we do this “forgiving,” we discover the command is for our own good, and we receive the reward of our forgiveness—freedom. ■

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## “In the Last Days”—Isaiah 2:1-4

In Matthew 6:10, Jesus taught his disciples, and us, to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” This is the kingdom of God’s dear Son—the promised Messiah—that will bring peace, health, and joy to all mankind. In Isaiah 2:1-4, we have this Messianic Kingdom identified with the people represented by Judah, Israel, and the Holy Land, Jerusalem. Mountains represent kingdoms, and the “mountain of the LORD’S house” signifies the kingdom of God’s house—Christ and his glorified Church. It will be established in the “top of,” or above, the kingdoms of this world. It will be exalted amongst the nations, and all mankind will flow to it.

In this kingdom, there will be an attraction for all to climb upward. The attraction will be blessings of peace, health, and happiness—restitution blessing—that the kingdom will give to all mankind, as they shall come into harmony with its requirements.

The Apostle John speaks of Christ’s Messianic Kingdom in Revelation 21:2-4. “I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride [The Church] adorned for her husband [Christ]. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall (Continued on next page)

# The Resurrection and the Life

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?” (John 11:25-26) What did this mean? Jesus was telling us that the key to everlasting life was belief in him as the Son of God.

What is the ‘resurrection’ of which he spoke? To understand the resurrection, we must first look at the Greek word translated resurrection—*anastasis*—a verb which means raising up, or to cause to stand up. It has the connotation of being raised to perfect manhood. The Apostle Paul writes, “Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:21-22). Christ’s sacrifice was necessary before the promise of a resurrection could be fulfilled.

We have miracles in the Bible which demonstrate a temporary re-standing of the dead—Elijah raising the widow’s son and Jesus raising Lazarus. However, the most compelling evidence of the resurrection was Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

How important is a belief in the resurrection of the dead? The Apostle Paul writes, “Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” (1 Cor. 15:12-14). Paul was saying that belief in the resurrection is key to our faith.

The Apostle Paul promised, “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15). Jesus also promised a resurrection, saying, “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth” (John 5:28-29 *NASB*). Here we have an assurance that all in the grave will have a resurrection—a new standing to life. The resurrection of the dead will fulfill God’s promise that “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces: . . . for the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 25:8). We look forward to that day. ■

## Gospel of the Kingdom

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### **In the Last Days** *(continued from previous page)*

be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” This is a heavenly, spiritual kingdom which will be invisible to mankind, but whose earthly agents will be visible. Jesus said in Matthew 8:11, “I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” Under Messiah’s reign, wars will cease forever (Isa. 2:4). ■

ORLANDO BIBLE STUDENTS CHURCH  
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## Calendar of Events

### **Florida Bible Students Convention**

**March 5-7, 2011**

Magnuson Grand Hotel  
230 West State Road 436  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714  
[Free admission, no collection]

For further information contact:

**Orlando Bible Students**  
**PO Box 180216, Casselberry, FL 32718-0216**

Or contact us at our website:  
**[www.orlandobible.org](http://www.orlandobible.org)**

The Orlando Bible Students is a nondenominational group that meets for Bible studies and devotions on Sunday mornings at the Eastbrook branch YMCA, Winter Park, FL and in area homes during the week.  
For further information call: (407) 831-2098

## Special Offer

We would like to send you a complimentary copy of the booklet,

### **“God’s Plan”**

This booklet describes how God brings blessings to all mankind through Christ’s 1000-year kingdom.

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