

I have been packing and preparing all week because tomorrow morning I am leaving on a trip. This isn't just any trip either. In this cold of winter, tomorrow my husband and I are going to St. Kitts, an island down in the Caribbean. I have never been anywhere like this in the dead of winter before. Warm sun and a beach sound wonderful to me. As you can guess, I am super excited. All this is taking place because my husband has been working very hard for an entire year. All this is taking place because God has had favor on his efforts. All this is taking place because my husband earned this trip through work as he labored diligently and God blessed him. I hope you get the idea. A lot has gone into this trip and we are hoping to enjoy it immensely. Our verses for this week also indicate some serious effort. This effort was from God Himself and the outcome for us is incredible. Let's take a look.

Matthew 1:22-23

Verse 22 begins with, "*All this took place...*" All what took place? Pretty much everything you have been memorizing and a whole bunch more! I believe verse 22 is specifically referring to all of the preparation with Mary and Joseph but we need to be aware of the fact that Jesus coming to be our Savior involved a tremendous amount of effort on God's part. The Bible tells us before the creation of the world God was putting His plan in motion (Ephesians 1:4) to bring us together with Him. In fact, He had been announcing it through the prophets for centuries. That is why verse 22 continues on as it does. The prophets had announced things and now they were coming to be just as they were foretold.

Specifically here in verse 23 it is noted that Mary, a virgin, would be with child and give birth to a son and they would call Him Immanuel, which means God with us. This is very interesting. We know that God called Him Immanuel in the book of Isaiah but Matthew 1:23 says "they" will call him Immanuel.

So here is the question for today. "Are you a part of the "they". Do you call Jesus Immanuel in your life? Is He with you? Do you know that every minute of the day? How does that impact your life? Try to make a list of all the ways His presence affects you.

You see, even though we know that He is Immanuel - God with us, we also know that there are many who do not call Him that? All this work on God's part took place so that you would know Jesus as Immanuel - God with you. My prayer is that you know that in a deep way. My prayer is also that as He is with you, He will be evident to those around you so that the effects of God's work can continue to change the world.

Thank you God for Jesus – I call Him Immanuel!

Blessings,
Sharon