

God with us

‘Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.’ Isaiah 7:14

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: John 20:24–31

As fallen creatures, God is against us and we are against him. But in the Messiah he is reconciled—*God with us*. He is God in our nature still. He suffered as a man, and as a man he now reigns on the throne of glory, exercises all power and receives all spiritual worship both in heaven and upon earth. He is the head of principalities and powers, thrones and dominions, and has *a name above every name* [Philippians 2:9]. Thus man is not only saved but enabled, brought into the nearest relation to him that sitteth upon the throne, and can say, He is our Lord, our Shepherd, our Saviour, our Friend, *Emmanuel, God with us*.

What a cold assent is paid to this doctrine by many who profess to receive it as a truth! What a strong foundation for the faith and hope of those who have put their trust in him. How awful the state of those who reject him and say in their hearts, *We will not have this man to reign over us* [Luke 19:14]. He is now manifested as a Saviour—hereafter he will appear as a Judge. Embrace his golden sceptre, lest you are broken by his rod of iron!

FOR MEDITATION:

Sweeter sounds than music knows
Charm me, in Emmanuel’s name;
All her hopes my spirit owes
To his birth, and cross, and shame.

Did the Lord a man become
That he might the law fulfil,
Bleed and suffer in my room,
And canst thou, my tongue, be still?

When he came the angels sung
‘Glory be to God on high’,
Lord, unloose my stammering tongue,
Who should louder sing than I?

No, I must my praises bring,
Though they worthless are, and weak;
For should I refuse to sing
Sure the very stones would speak.

O my Saviour, Shield, and Sun,
Shepherd, Brother, Husband, Friend,
Every precious name in one;
I will love thee without end.³⁵²

Born King

‘Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.’ Matthew 2:2

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: 2 Peter 1:16–21

The Lord knows his people and will find means that they, however circumstanced, shall come to know him. Jesus is a King, King of all, and especially *King of the Jews*—the true Israel (Romans 2:29)—*born* a King by an original right, their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, before his birth—and came to his own (John 1:11).

The enquirers: *wise men of the East*—at a great distance, probably like those called Chaldeans in Daniel—we might say, philosophers. A principal study in the East was astronomy, but without this one star, the knowledge of all the rest would have left them miserable.

Their guidance: no common star, neither fixed star or planet—a light, in appearance *a star*, which they saw in their own country, and again at Bethlehem leading them to the very house. But there was more than this: certainly a divine revelation to their mind. How else should the sight of a new star lead their thoughts to Jesus? Here is an emblem of the work of grace: a light is seen, the heart drawn. This light is the gospel, written or preached—the Word is a light in a dark place—and the Holy Spirit.

Note their declaration, *we have seen*, expressing their own certainty to excite the attention of others, expecting information from a people who had the Scriptures—might they not wonder they went forward by themselves?

Their design: *to worship*. Jesus the proper object of worship, of admiration, praise, profession, love, trust and service. Are these your views of worship (Psalm 45:11)?

They are *come*. They who are apprised of his glory will come, will use diligence, wait, read, pray, hear. These came a long journey. Enquiring souls are busy in earnest.

FOR MEDITATION: Shall these wise men condemn us in judgement? You have seen the star, heard the message. Do you yet sit still? You that are indeed come to worship, admire his love, approach his table. He who once lay in the manger will be there.