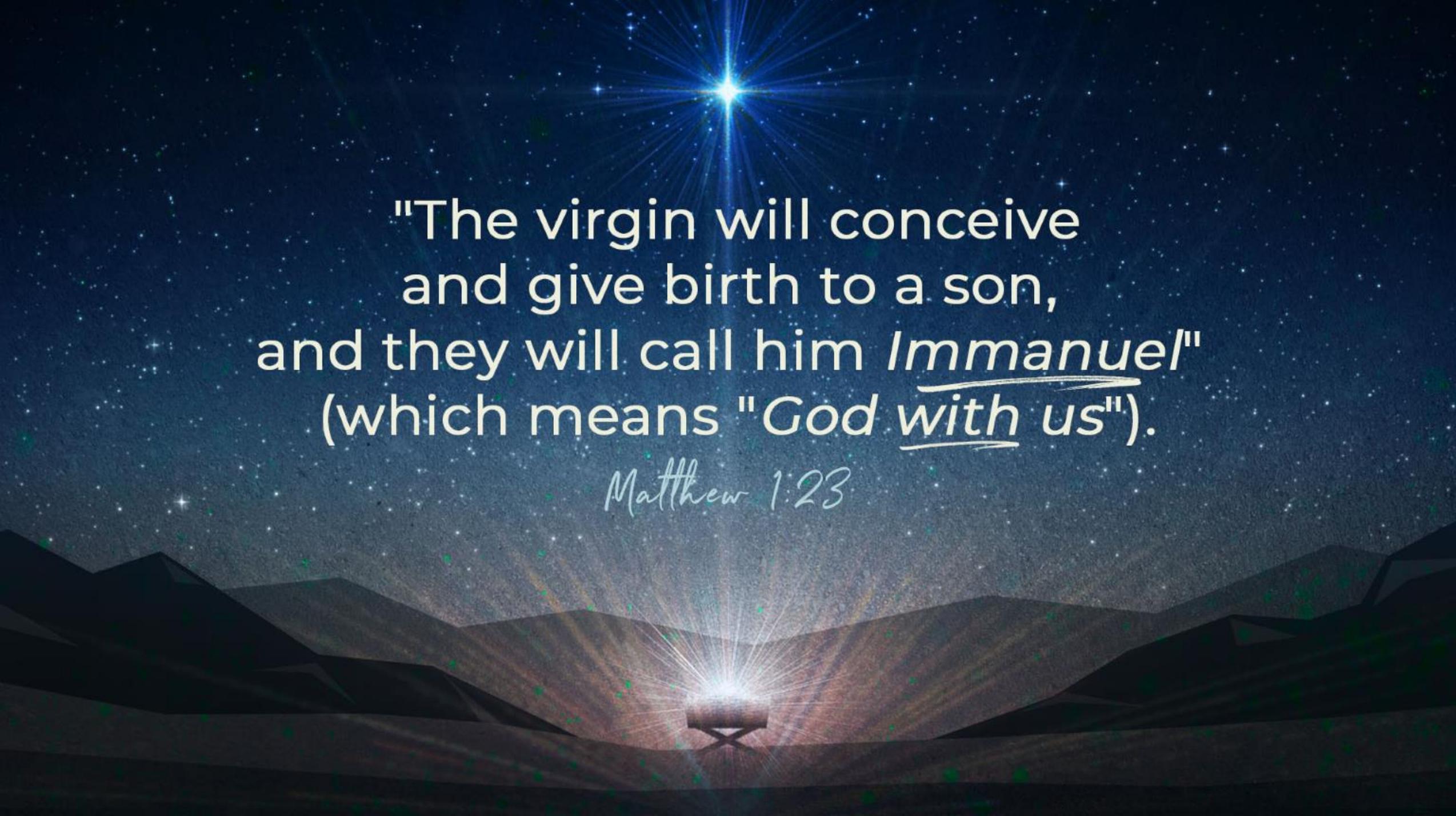
A night sky filled with stars, featuring a prominent bright star with a blue and white starburst effect at the top center. Below the text, a silhouette of a desert landscape with rolling hills is shown. In the center of the foreground, a campfire is burning brightly, casting a warm glow and illuminating the surrounding terrain.

God Is with Us

SO, HOW HAVE WE LIVED?

# **Why the Birth of Jesus matters:**

- Through the Valley
- When Facing a Mountain
- In the Valley
- When Battered by a Storm

The background features a dark, starry night sky. At the top center, a bright, multi-pointed star shines. Below the text, a dark, silhouetted landscape of rolling hills is shown. In the center of the foreground, a glowing manger sits on the ground, emitting a bright light that illuminates the surrounding area and casts a glow on the hills above it.

"The virgin will conceive  
and give birth to a son,  
and they will call him *Immanuel*"  
(which means "*God with us*").

*Matthew 1:23*

# ONE MORE THING:

*That God is with us in every moment not only reassures us but also raises a question for us.*



After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

*6 "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of  
Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel."*

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

<sup>9</sup> After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

**<sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup> On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.**

**Matthew 2:1-12**







***Our response to God is with us  
determines how we choose to  
live and our focus.***

***We have a choice in this  
life: how we respond to  
God with us.***

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God with us.***

Tozer describes it as the tension between  
holiness or happiness (comfort).

# THE QUESTION:

***How have you chosen to live  
because *God is with us?****





# ***Being & Doing, Enjoying & Tending:***

***<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. (2 Corinthians 7:1)***



A dark, arrow-shaped wooden sign is positioned diagonally against a background of vertical wooden planks. The sign has a smooth, dark finish and contains two lines of white, hand-painted text. The text is written in a clean, sans-serif font. The sign's tail is on the left, and its arrowhead points towards the right. The background consists of weathered, light-colored wooden planks with visible grain and knots. The sign is resting on a dark, textured wooden surface.

DON'T LOOK BACK  
YOU'RE NOT GOING THAT WAY



Look back to learn  
how to look forward.

Joe Girard

quote fancy

***The promise that *God is with us* gives context to past, present, and what is to come.***

- If we believe the Christmas story (and all that it means), how has it impacted how we live?
- If we believe God is with us, are we living in alignment with God?

***The answer to the question  
requires spiritual  
evaluation.***





***15** Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, **16**making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

***17**Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the LORD's will is. (Eph. 5:15-17)*

***23**LORD, I know that people's lives are not their own; it is not for them to direct their steps. (Jer. 10:23)*

## **Are we living according to God's way?**

***Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matt. 4:4)***

***How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand- when I awake, I am still with you. (Psalm 139:17-18)***

## ***Are we holding on to the deep truths?***

***Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.***

***(1 Tim. 3:16)***

## ***Are we being intentional?***

***<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. (1 Cor. 9:24-27)***

## ***Are we being intentional?***

***<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose .(Phil. 2:12-13)***

***How to do spiritual  
evaluation:***

# **How to do *Spiritual Evaluation*:**

- ***Prepare***



**EVANGELISM**



**COMPLETING THE GREAT COMMISSION**



**PRAYER**



**DEPENDENCE ON THE HOLY SPIRIT**



**STEWARDSHIP**



**FAITH-FILLED OBEDIENCE**



**KNOWING & OBEYING GOD'S WORD**

# ***How to do Spiritual Evaluation:***

- ***Prepare***
- ***Pray*** (Psalm 90:12, James 1:5, Psalm 139:23-24)

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- ***Pursue Obedience*** (Heb. 2:11)

# **End Goal of Spiritual Evaluation:**

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- ***More than just “resolutions.”***
- ***It is about Christ-likeness.***
- ***God wants us to be everything He’s called us to be (like Jesus).***
- ***Lean into Jesus and all He has for us.***

***18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever!***

***Amen.***  
2 Peter 3:18