



## Was Jesus Emmanuel?

It's hard to imagine that one phrase in the Bible could have caused so much confusion, but it has. Is Emmanuel another name for Jesus? This is the unanswered question among both Jewish and Christian scholars. Now, don't get me wrong. I am not trying to elevate myself above noted scholars, but I do want to discuss this topic with a slightly different view than those.

Regarding the birth of Jesus, the angel visiting Joseph shortly after God created seed within Mary told Joseph:

(Mat 1:22-23) Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord



by the prophet, saying, {23} 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.

And it is here we find the phrase "they shall call his name Emmanuel." Emmanuel means, "God with us." This is the verse that has caused many to think the Jesus was also named Emmanuel.

This quote originates in Isaiah

7:14.

(Isa 7:14) Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The context of this original usage takes us back to 735BC, right before Syria and Israel attacked Judah, specifically Jerusalem. Israel and those ten tribes had long since departed from Judah and those two tribes. After they separated, they never really got along together again. Sad but true. Now, Israel teamed up with Syria to battle against Jerusalem and to install a king of their own choosing. *It was a very tense and frightening*

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*time.* This battle cost the warriors of Judah 120,000 men, no small matter.

The king of Judah was Ahaz. Isaiah was the prophet, called into action because of Ahaz and this pending battle. God wanted Ahaz to trust in Him so that He could deliver Jerusalem, but Ahaz would not hear of it.

*(Isa 7:10-12) Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, {11} Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. {12} But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.*

Ahaz could have listened to God, but he said, “I will not.” After all, it was probably too late since he had already sent his messengers to a neighbor to ask for help. But, God was determined to show His love and care anyway. That’s

where the prophecy we already read in verse 14 comes in. God gave Judah and Jerusalem a sign that He would and could help.

*(Isa 7:14-16) Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. {15} Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. {16} For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.*

It is precisely this section of scripture that has caused so much confusion between equally, well-meaning scholars. Let’s see what this verse 14 really says.

Isaiah said, “He shall give you a sign,” which was prophecy to Isaiah, Ahaz, and possibly even

this “virgin” woman. We know from this, that regarding the parts of this prophecy “local” to Ahaz and company, what ever was going to happen, had to happen then, not later, with one exception. There was yet another aspect of this prophecy that applied to Jesus’ birth because it is quoted in Matthew chapter one.

The next, most controversial word is “virgin.” *The Jewish scholars say that this does not mean “virgin,” but rather “young woman.”* An entirely

different Hebrew word, not used in the verse, means, “virgin.” Many Christian scholars claim that this must mean “virgin,” not “young woman.” They base their reasoning on how they think Matthew wrote the Book of Matthew – from the Greek Septuagint (the Greek-based Old Testament). There is yet another

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group of folks, among whom I fall, who are Christians and who believe what the Jewish scholars proclaim, that this word in the Hebrew should be translated “young woman.” By the way, all virgins are young women, but not all young women are virgins. Age *used* to help one decide if a girl was still a virgin. Yes, I know. This no longer applies, but when considering Biblical meanings and Biblical usages, you have to consider the way they thought back then, not the way you think now.

This young woman, a woman these folks knew quite well even though we are not told who she actually was, was pregnant with a boy-child and was soon to deliver. When she delivered this son, she was going to call him Immanuel. The Hebrew actually renders the phrase “and shall call his name” “and she shall call his name” Immanuel!

How cool! This new mother was going to have a boy, and she was going to name him Immanuel, which means “God with us.”

*How comforting for these people who were about to war with two formidable armies AND lose 120,000 of their best men.*

God was still going to be with them and do what He could given the circumstances. So far, we can realize that this prophecy applies to this time of 735BC, a sign given to them to comfort and encourage them even though Ahaz refused to listen.

According to verse 15, the boy was to eat butter and honey (curds and honey) because there was no other food available for one thing, but also to help him understand between good and evil. And before this understanding was to fully root itself within him, two kings were

going to be destroyed. As you read this, it becomes clearer how it applies to then and, seemingly, not now. But, don't be so quick. There's more to consider.

Let's jump forward to Matthew 1:

(Mat 1:18-23) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. {19} Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. {20} But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

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{21} And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. {22} Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, {23} 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.

What a great time to consider this record in the Bible, *After all, the birth of Jesus took place on September 11, 3BC and I'm writing this in August, just in time to celebrate!* God had just finished creating seed within Mary, but Joseph and Mary were already married. Joseph was deeply concerned because Mary was *already* pregnant, and he was considering leaving her. He did have this right. But

that's when the angel of the Lord stepped in and told him what had happened and that it was okay to have sexual relations with his new wife. He told him that the child in Mary was conceived in her by God and that he was going to be called Jesus. Then follows the prophecy from Isaiah 7:14.

Matthew 1: 23 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.

Now, can you see where all the trouble comes in? We just learned that Mary's son was going to be named "Jesus." But, then it says that he shall be called "Emmanuel." Confusing, right? Yes, it is until you realize that Jesus is never called Emmanuel. Why not? Because that was not his name. His name was Jesus. But why do the objectionable

Christians want to believe that his name is Emmanuel? Because many of them believe in the trinity and the initial promoters of this "Emmanuel" doctrine also believed in the trinity and wanted to force it upon the followers of Christ. The trinity is a non-biblical doctrine stating, in part, that Jesus is God.

*My friends, the Bible states that Jesus is the son of God, and never the opposite.* And they

think they can because of their lack of understanding of the Isaiah 7:14 word "virgin." You and I know that "virgin" means, "young woman." So, the "young woman" with Ahaz and Isaiah in Judah is not the same woman as Mary in Judah nearly 730 years later.

The young woman in 735BC did have a son and did call his name Emmanuel, and this boy did give the people hope because God did

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complete his promise when He removed those two evil kings who hurt Judah so badly. God was with them of a certainty.

The young woman in 3BC, Mary, was a virgin, but not when Joseph consummated their marriage, because God had already created seed within her and Jesus was already forming in her womb. Yes, God was also with them, but there was one big difference. Jesus was not named Emmanuel. He didn't go about eating curds and honey either. Two kings weren't destroyed either, and quite a few other things as well.

*(Mat 1:24-25) Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: {25} And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.*

Could Joseph have called this child Emmanuel? Certainly, he could have. But did he? No, a thousand times no. Why?

*Because the angel told him to call him Jesus.*

The prophecy out of Isaiah 7:14 was “filled full” when Mary, a virgin, gave birth to Jesus, but that was the only part of this prophecy that applied to them some 735 years later. All the rest of that prophecy applied to the folks in Judah, including the disobedient King Ahaz, during 735BC.

As workmen of the God's Word, we must follow Biblical keys to the Word's understanding. One of them is to NOT come to God's Word with preconceived ideas, but rather allow the Word to speak for Itself. Another wonderful key to the Word's interpretation is to go back to earlier usages of a word or phrase or quote and learn what it meant then and

there. Doing so will keep you out of the “spiritual” soup and in God's wonderful grace.

We learned that this prophecy was definitely fulfilled (in the messianic sense) in Mary. This prophecy was given “as a sign” to Ahaz, and the woman in the sign was a “young woman.” This prophecy was also given “as a sign” to all of God's people, and when it was “filled full,” in the messianic sense, the woman was Mary! How wonderful! The Old Testament young woman named her new born Emmanuel, meaning, God with us. 735 years later, at the very end of the Old Testament era, a young woman named Mary, truly a virgin, gave birth to a new born conceived by God, and named this child, not Emmanuel. but rather, Jesus!

Much love in Christ!

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