



Question: "Why wasn't Jesus named Immanuel?"

Answer: In the prophecy of the virgin birth, Isaiah 7:14, the prophet Isaiah declared, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel." This prophecy refers to the birth of Jesus in Matthew 1:22-23, "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' which means, 'God with us.'" This does not mean, however, that the Messiah's name would actually be Immanuel.

There are many names given to Jesus using the phrase "He shall be called," both in the Old and New Testaments. This was a common way of saying that people would refer to Him in these various ways. Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). None of these titles was Jesus' actual name, but these were descriptions people would use to refer to Him forever. Luke tells us Jesus "shall be called the Son of the Highest" (Luke 1:32) and "son of God" (1:35), but neither of these was His name.

In two different places, the prophet Jeremiah says in referring to the coming Messiah, "And this is His name by which He shall be called, YHWH, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:15-16). Now we know that God, the Father, is named Yahweh. Jesus was never actually called Yahweh as though it was His name, but His role was that of bringing the righteousness of Yahweh to those who would believe in Him, exchanging that righteousness for our sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, this is one of the many titles or "names" which belong to Him.

In the same way, to say that Jesus would be called "Immanuel" means Jesus is God and that He dwelt among us in His incarnation and that He is always with us. Jesus was God in the flesh. Jesus was God making His dwelling among us (John 1:1,14). No, Jesus' name was not Immanuel, but Jesus was the meaning of Immanuel, "God with us." Immanuel is one of the many titles for Jesus, a description of who He is.

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