

THE IMMANUEL EFFECT

I. [Matthew 1:20-21](#) [Colossians 3:12-17](#) [Philippians 2:1-11](#)

A. We live between the Advents. As surely as Jesus came once, He'll come again. In the meantime we have the privilege of celebrating His birth, His life, His sacrifice, His victory over the grave, and His reign. But regarding His birth, [Matthew 1:20-23](#) (ESV) says: **20** "But as he (**Joseph**) considered these things (**divorcing Mary quietly**), behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.'" **22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ([Isaiah 7:14](#)) **23** "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

B. "His name will be called Jesus for He will save His people from their sins." His people! Last Sunday we read the verses that assured us we were His adopted children. And if we're His children, what's that make us to one another?

C. Some come to Christ with both feet dragging. Conversion is joyous for most but for some whom God is drawing to Himself, there's a fierce internal struggle. Deep down they know He's calling. But not everyone called to follow Jesus has a horrible life-situation in the present tense. They may have security, good friends, and an enviable life. But then they hear the Gospel. God's Word cuts them to the quick. They realize Christ's sacrifice was for them, to make them His own, but they're genuinely torn. Once they surrender and the joy floods in, they're better than good, but the lead-up can be a wrestling match. Some of you can relate...

D. But here's the real kicker: When we become His children it makes us brothers & sisters in Christ. For some that can be joy piled on top of joy! But for others, not so much. 'You mean God considers what's-his-name my brother in Christ?!' 'You mean the gal with the strange hair-doo & bonnet is my new sis?' (You're kidding?!)

E. Some merely choose to segregate. But to justify separation from God's Family, you need a spiritual smoke machine or a celestial blindfold so as to avoid seeing what the Scriptures teach, especially what Jesus taught and demonstrated in His relationship with His disciples. (Plus-the One who clothes the lilies of the field doesn't issue blindfolds!) Avoidance of God's instructions is better known as disobedience. "But hey you don't know my particular church family or the faith circles I have to operate in!" I might say, "I feel your pain!" Or I might better say, "God's grace will enable you to grow, love, and serve where He plants you!"

F. About our first text: *Immanuel* (with an *I* or with an *E*) means: "God with us." It does not mean: "God with just me." Our next text will help us discover or rediscover the intended *Immanuel effect* or *God-with-US effect*. Let's closely examine how Jesus' journey from throne to manger to cross to temporary tomb and back to throne should have an internal transformative result in the-here-and-now as it relates to one another. And just *who all* is included in the *US* part?

G. Colossians 3:12-17 (NIV) states the expectation, the intended outcome of the incarnation. The God-with-US effect of Jesus' first Advent: **12** *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, (Remember all those Scriptures from last Sunday. We're God's adopted sons & daughters! That's makes us brothers & sisters, i.e. Family!) 12-again: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (This attire never goes out of fashion! Better than all your ugly Christmas sweaters!) 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (If Christ came to establish peace between God and man vertically, doesn't it make sense He wants to accomplish the same horizontally? **Romans 12:18** (NIV) echoes: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."*

H. Did you know hatchet-throwing has become a thing? Bars and clubs have installed areas where you can heave hatchets at a target. There's competitions even. You can become a hatchet-heaving star! Chucking hatchets is hip right now like throwing darts or riding electric bulls used to be! Here's a novel idea, how about a new Christmas tradition: Hatchet burying! That means reconciling with someone you're at odds with. Something like this: "Today I need to bake cookies, decorate our tree, pick up some eggnog, and bury some hatchets." "As far as it depends on you..."

J. What do I wish for you this Christmas? Here it comes: 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15a Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. ("Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.") 15b: And be thankful. (And yes 15b is a sermon all of its own...)

K. All summer and early fall we read about our Israelite ancestors. They mastered the dark art of murmuring and complaining. Ingratitude was their predominant attitude. They acted entitled. They were proud and selfish. For chronic complainers nothing's ever good enough; they always think they deserve better; *me-me-me!* (So was ingratitude and complaining just an OT problem? Sadly, no!)

L. Anything else? 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you (The Word of God is our food, our nourishment, our spiritual sustenance!) teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, (And Christmas carols too!) with gratitude in your hearts to God. (V15b yet again: "And be thankful.") 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

M. Jesus came and died to save us--from sin, death & hell. He also came to adopt us into His Family. As Family, He means to transform our hearts in such a way that we genuinely love one another. Like the old song lifted from Jesus' words in John 15: "This is My commandment, that you love one another that your joy may be full." So what is the *Immanuel effect*? Love that leads to joy! Vertically, for sure. But horizontally as well.

*** Philippians 2:1-11 (NIV) gives us the ultimate picture of Immanuel and the intended *Immanuel effect*. I send you into Christmas with these words: **1** *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being***

like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. **3** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, **4** not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. **5** In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: **6** Who, being in very nature **(form)** God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; **7** rather, He made Himself nothing **(emptied Himself)** by taking the very nature **(form)** of a servant, being made in human likeness. **8** And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death--even death on a cross! **(Dying for our sins!)** **9** Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue acknowledge **(confess)** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

* Close with Prayer...

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[Matthew 1:20-23 \(ESV\)](#)

20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." **22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: **23** "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

[Colossians 3:12-17 \(NIV\)](#)

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13** Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14** And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. **15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

[John 15:9-12 \(NKJV\)](#)

9 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. **10** If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. **12** This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

[Philippians 2:1-11 \(NIV\)](#)

1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,

2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in Spirit and of one mind. **3** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, **4** not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. **5** In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: **6** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; **7** rather, He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. **8** And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death--even death on a cross! **9** Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

"The First Noel" - Shane & Shane with Phil Wickham
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxHG1YhfLVk>

"Go Tell It On The Mountain" - Home Free & Texas Hill
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7xRruwTY2k>

"Sounding Joy" - Ellie Holcomb (Live Acoustic Performance)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzwSww9UtoQ>

Christmas Worship Medley - Gateway Worship
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjAycyj8aMg>

Luke 2:8-14 (ESV)

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. **10** And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** And this will be a sign for you: you will find a Baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, **14** *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"*

John 1:1-14 (ESV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. **6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him. **8** He was not the Light,

but came to bear witness about the Light. **9** The true Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. **11** He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. **12** But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. **14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hebrews 1:1-4 (ESV)

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **4** having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV)

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Quote by St. Augustine

"He was created of a mother whom He created. He was carried by hands that He formed. He cried in the manger in wordless infancy, He the Word, without whom all human eloquence is mute."

Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon

"Infinite, and an infant. Eternal, and yet born of a woman. Almighty, and yet hanging on a woman's breast. Supporting a universe, and yet needing to be carried in a mother's arms. King of angels, and yet the reputed son of Joseph. Heir of all things, and yet the carpenter's despised son."

Quote by John MacArthur

"If we could condense all the truths of Christmas into only three words, these would be the words: "God with us." We tend to focus our attention at Christmas on the infancy of Christ. The greater truth of the holiday is His deity. More astonishing than a baby in the manger is the truth that this promised baby is the omnipotent Creator of the heavens and the earth!"

Quote by J.I. Packer

"The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation."

Quote by Corrie Ten Boom

"Who can add to Christmas? The perfect motive is that God so loved the world. The perfect gift is that He gave His only Son. The only requirement is to believe in Him. The reward of faith is that you shall have everlasting life."

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God."

Lyrics by Charles Wesley

"Hark the herald angels sing, Glory to the new-born King. Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"

Praise For The Incarnation

By John Newton

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

When He came, the angels sung,
"Glory be to God on high;"
Lord, unloose my stamm'ring tongue,
Who should louder sing than I?

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

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,
Ev'ry precious name in One,
I will love Thee without end.

Immanuel or Emmanuel

by Derek Griz - Immanuel Church - July 19, 2016

<https://immanuelknox.org/2016/07/19/immanuel-or-emmanuel/>

The King James Version of the Bible uses the spelling Emmanuel. The English Standard Version and others (e.g., NASB, NLT, NKJV, HCSB, NIV) use the spelling Immanuel. The New English Translation employs both spellings, Immanuel ([Isaiah 7:14](#)) and Emmanuel ([Matthew 1:23](#)).

So, which spelling is correct?

Well, to be fair, there really is no “right” way to transliterate words from one alphabet to another. The process of transliteration is all about getting the sounds into the other language, and both spellings, Immanuel and Emmanuel, allow us to pronounce the original word correctly.

But still, why the difference in spelling? And why would the NET Bible use both spellings?

The answer lies in the languages behind the English translations. The Old Testament is written in Hebrew (and some Aramaic), and the New Testament is written in Greek. The Hebrew for Immanuel looks like this: אֱלֹהֵינוּ אִמָּנוּאֵל. Reading right-to-left, the first letter “א” (Ayin) is silent (with a vowel point beneath it) and typically gets transliterated as an “I.” So, the English transliteration of the Hebrew word usually looks like Immanuel.

The Greek transliteration of אֱלֹהֵינוּ אִמָּנוּאֵל looks like this: Ἐμμανουήλ. Do you see the “E” (Epsilon) in there? The Gospel of Matthew has Ἐμμανουήλ present in [Matthew 1:23](#). Epsilons often come over to English as “E’s.”

Now, knowing the Greek and Hebrew background, we have our answer.

The translations that use “Immanuel” favor the Hebrew, which was the original language for the name and predates the Greek versions. The translations that use “Emmanuel” favor the Greek. And of course, now we can see why the NET Bible uses both spellings. But the most important thing about Immanuel is not the spelling. What is most important is the meaning behind the name. What does “Immanuel” mean? It means “God with us,” and this is the name that was applied to Jesus ([Matthew 1:23](#)). The Gospel of John describes the arrival of Jesus as the arrival of God-with-us: “[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...[14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...[18] No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known” ([John 1:1, 14, 18](#)).

So, the name “Immanuel” reminds us that one of the amazing facts of the Gospel is that in Jesus God drew near. He is not a god who is far off; He is the God who is near, near to the brokenhearted, near to His people.