

The Gift of “God With Us”

Scripture

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A wailing scream pierces the air. The new mother cries tears of sheer exhaustion and joy. The father stands speechless, astounded, holding a wriggly bundle in his arms. Mom and dad lock eyes and they silently ask each other, “*What should we name him?*”

A name means something. Depending on the culture, a name implies family respect, honor, and tradition. In the Latino culture, for



example, parents typically name their firstborn child after the father or mother. If the father is Luis, the baby boy is Luis. If the mother is Elizabeth, the baby girl is Elizabeth. In doing so, the parents preserve their family legacy. If the baby girl is not named after her mother, she might receive the name Maria or Mary.

More than 2,000 years ago a young Jewish girl named Mary gave birth to a baby boy and Mary and Joseph named him Jesus. In fact, we know Jesus by many names: Lamb of God, Savior, Messiah, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Word, Alpha and Omega, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. But did you know that Jesus has over 200 names and titles?

Have you considered the weight and meaning of some of Jesus’s names? This week I pondered Jesus’s name of Emmanuel. Emmanuel literally means “*God with us*” (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23).

Jesus was Emmanuel, God in the flesh. Not just God for us, God overseeing us, God looking out for us, but God with us. Jesus was not a stone statue in a temple, cold and immovable. He was not an abstract thought or mystical being. He was not an unreachable and busy God. Do you get what I’m saying?

- Jesus walked like us.
- He spoke like us.
- He felt sorrow like us.
- He wept like us.
- He got frustrated like us.
- He got tired and hungry like us.
- He grieved like us.
- He got angry (righteously) like us.
- He felt pain like us.
- He got tempted like us. (But he did not sin like us.)
- He suffered like us and ultimately, for us

The Scripture shows us that He was “*God with us*” for:

- ✓ The little children (Matt. 19:13–14; Luke 18:15–16).
- ✓ The sick and dying (Matt. 4:23; 8:3; 8:13; 9:18; 9:27; 17:18).
- ✓ The widow (Luke 7:11–15).
- ✓ The busy woman (Luke 10:38–42).
- ✓ The reflective woman (Luke 10:38–42).
- ✓ The prostitute woman (Matt. 21:31–32).
- ✓ The many times-divorced woman (John 4:4–29).
- ✓ The criminal (Luke 23:40–43).
- ✓ The religious (John 3:1–21).
- ✓ The Jew and the non-Jew (Rom. 3:20–29).
- ✓ The foreigners (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

He was and is “*God with us*” for the sinner (Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32). He is Emmanuel, “*God with us*” for all of us (John 3:16–17). He knows us because he was one of us.

Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was God Himself, in the flesh of a man, so that he could live among us and be with us. Out of love for us he made himself accessible. Out of love for us he sacrificed himself for us. Out of love for us he made us whole, so that we could be forever with him.

This Christmas may we meditate on the miracle of the birth of Jesus, the Lamb, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, Emmanuel—our God with us.

Merry Christmas! Emmanuel is born!