"EMMANUEL"
("God with us")
Matthew 1:23

Introduction:

More miraculous than the creation of the universe (the earth, sun, stars) . . . More miraculous than any miracle (the birth of Isaac, parting of the Red Sea, the manna falling from Heaven, the cleansing of Naaman, the protection of Daniel in the lion's den) . . . Is the incarnation of the Son of God.

For God to become a man, born of a virgin, to take upon Himself flesh, is the miracle of miracles!

In Bible days, a name had meaning. It described one's character or nature. It revealed attributes.

So it is with every name applied to Jesus Christ.

He is called Jesus (Mt. 1:21), Christ (Jn. 1:41), Messiah (Jn. 4:25), Lord (Lk. 23:42), the "I AM" (Jn. 8:58, 18:6), the Son of God (Lk. 1:32), the Son of man (Mt. 8:20), the Son of Abraham (Mt. 1:1), Son of David (Mk. 10:47), the Son of the Highest (Lk. 1:32), the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45), the Word (Jn. 1:1, 14), Savior (Lk. 2:11), Rabbi (Jn. 1:38), Master (Mt. 9:11), Alpha & Omega (Rev. 1:17), King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16), Faithful and True (Rev. 19:11), the Way, truth, life (Jn. 14:6), Bread of life (Jn. 6), the living water (jn. 4), the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10), the Light of the World (Jn. 8), the Door (Jn. 10:9), the Branch and the Vine (Jn. 15), the Cornerstone (mt. 21:42), the Messenger (Mt. 21:37), the Morning Star (II Pet. 1:19), the Prophet (Jn. 4:19), the Rock of Offense (I Cor. 1:23), the only begotten Son (Jn. 3:16), the Lord of Glory (Ja. 2:1), the Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14), the Redeemer (Eph. 1:7), Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6).

There are over 200 names and titles applied to Christ in the bible, but no name is as miraculous, no man is as awe-inspiring as the name "Immanuel." For this name means "God with us" and points to the miracle of miracles - the virgin birth - the incarnation of deity!

Immanuel" - from the Hebrew (Is. 7:14)
"Im" = with (together with)
"(Ma)nu = us
"El" = God
Hence, "With us (is) God"!

The incarnation of Christ is the greatest miracle of all time. For on the first Christmas day, God came to be with us!

I. The name "Emmanuel" shows: CHRIST'S DEITY
("God with us")

The Bible teaches that Christ is divine, equal with the Father, God very God, and Lord of Lords!

A. Jesus is Directly Called "God."

"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" (Mt. 1:23).

1. He is called God by John.

John 1:1 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (the "Word" refers to Jesus - v. 14).

I Jn. 5:20 - "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

Rev. 21:7 - "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

2. He is called God by Thomas.

Jn. 20:27-29 - "...and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said, Because ye have seen me, thou hast believed..."

If Thomas erred so seriously in addressing Jesus as God, why was there no correction by Jesus? And why did Jesus commend his faith?

3. Jesus refers to Himself as God.

John 5:17-18 - "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

John 10:30 - "I and my Father are one." [Note the reaction of the Jews (v. 33) - "...Thou, being a man, makest thyself God." jesus shortly after this said, "...that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me,a nd I in him. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand" (v. 38, 39).
John 14:9 - "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father..."

4. He is called God by the writer of Hebrews.

Heb. 1:3 - "His Son...who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person..."

5. He is called God by God the Father.

Heb. 1:8 - "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." (quoting Ps. 45:6, 7)

6. He is called God by the Apostle Paul.

"Israelites...whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen."

Acts 20:28 (Luke quoting Paul) - "...Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

Phil. 2:6 - "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

Col. 1:15 - "Who is the image of the invisible God."

Col. 2:9 - "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." ("fullness" = completeness or perfection; "Godhead" = to have the same essence as God)

I Tim. 3:16 - "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Titus 2:13 - "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (cp. I Jn. 5:20; Rev. 21:7; Is. 9:6)

B. Jesus has the Divine Titles of God.

1. "Son of God" -

   The word "Son" refers to identity (See pages 30-31 in the notes).

   Christ is identified with God because He has the same nature.

   To be the "only begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16) means to have a unique relationship to the Father that no one else has or ever will have.

2. "God"

   Jn. 1:1, 20:27-29; Rom. 9:5; I Tim. 3:16; Titus 2:13, Heb. 1:8; I Jn. 5:20; etc.

3. "Lord"

   Such a title identifies Christ with Adonai and Yahweh of the Old Testament (Jn. 13:13, 20:28; Acts 4:33; Rom. 10:9; Rev. 17:14; cp. Jn. 12:41 with Is. 6:5).

4. "God with us"

   Mt. 1:23; Is. 7:14.

5. "The Holy One"

   Acts 3:14; Is. 6:1-3, 10:20.

6. "First and Last"

   Is. 44:6; Rev. 22:13.

7. "Savior"
   Is. 43:11; Titus 2:13.

C. Jesus Claimed and Exercised the Prerogatives of God.
(Christ had the rights of God, and did the works of God.)

1. Forgives sins (Mk. 2:10; Lk. 7:48)

2. Raises the dead (Lk. 7:12-15; Jn. 5:25, 29; 6:39-44; 11:24, 25).

3. Controls nature (Mt. 8:26).

4. Judges motives (Mt. 7:22-27).

5. Receives worship (Ps. 2:8, 12; Mt. 8:2, 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Jn. 9:35, 38; 20:28, 29; Lk. 24:51, 52; by angels - Heb. 1:6; by all men - Phil. 2:10.

[Note: Peter (Acts 10:25, 26), Paul (Acts 14:11-18) and angels (Rev. 19:10 refused to be worshipped.]

6. Taught with independent authority (Mt. 7:29).

Jesus did not say, "Thus saith the Lord" as the prophets did, but boldly states, "I say unto you" (cp. Mt. 5).

7. Sends the Holy Spirit (Jn. 15:26).

8. Creates (Gen. 1:26; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15, 16).

Note: "Firstborn" (Col. 1:15) is a Jewish concept which refers to <u>preeminence</u> or <u>authority</u>, not origin (cp. Col. 1:18 - EX: Jacob & Esau). Jesus had the rights of the firstborn. Cp. Jn. 3:16 - "only begotten" - lit. "one of a kind"; "unique"; not referring to origin. Cp. Heb. 11:17 - Isaac was not Abraham's only son. Cp. Acts 13:33 - reference to the resurrection.

9. Sustains (He preserves creation) (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3).

10. He is the only Judge (cp. Jn. 5:22 with Rev. 20:11).

11. He is to receive equal honor with the Father (Jn. 5:23).

12. The only Savior (cp. Is. 43:11 with Jude 25; I Pet. 3:18).

13. He grants eternal life (Jn. 10:28).

14. He answers prayer (Jn. 14:14).

D. Jesus Christ has the Same <u>Attributes</u> as God.

1. Self-existence (Jn. 8:58 - "I am"; Jn. 1:14, 14:6).

2. Immutability (Heb. 13:8 - "The same...for ever")

3. Eternal (Rev. 22:13 - "Alpha & Omega"; cp. Is. 44:6; Jn. 8:35).

4. Omnipresent (Mt. 28:20 - "I am with you always"; cp. 18:20).

5. Omniscient (Jn. 21:17 - "Lord, thou knowest all things"; cp. Jn. 1:48, 2:24, 4:18, 29).

6. Omnipotent (Rev. 1:8 - "Almighty"; cp. Jn. 1:12, 4:19-21; Phil. 3:21, 21).

7. Life (Jn. 1:4 - "In Him was life").

8. Truth (Jn. 14:6 - "I am the truth").

9. Infinity (meaning no limits or boundaries except those that are self-imposed) (Eph. 3:8 - "unsearchable"; cp. Col. 2:3).

10. Perfection (Col. 2:9 - "<u>fullness</u> of the Godhead"; Eph. 4:13).

11. Omnisapience (I Cor. 1:24 - "the wisdom of God").

[NOTE: References to Trinity in Scripture: I Cor. 6:11, 12:4-6; II Cor. 1:21, 22; 13:14; Gal. 3:11-14; I Th. 5:18-19; I Pet. 1:2.]

It was <u>God</u> who entered the womb of Mary! (Note: mary was merely the <u>vehicle</u> through which Christ would acquire a physical body to be born - she is in no way deified, nor did Christ come into existence via Mary. Rather, He took on flesh via Mary.

Mary gave birth to her Creator, to her Master, to her Lord, to her Savior.

It was God who was wrapped in swaddling clothes!

It was God who was laid in a manger!

It was God whom Mary fed and cared for!

It was God who brought joy to the home of Mary and Joseph!

It was God who walked the streets of Jerusalem!

It was God who stunned the scribes and doctors of the law with His intense knowledge of the Scriptures!

It was God who worked as a carpenter with His father!

II. The name "Emmanuel" shows: CHRIST'S HUMILITY
("God with us")

Jesus humbled Himself so much as seen by:

1) His coming to earth

2) Taking on a physical body with all of its limitations

Christ had:

1) Humble ancestors (lineage)
--Tamar (incest with Judah)
--Rahab (a prostitute)
--Ruth (a Moabite)
Mt. 1:3, 5

2) Humble birth
--swaddling clothes (Lk. 2:7, 12)
Cp. how we are so interested in how we wrap gifts to beautify what is inside, with how God wrapped His gift to us!
"Swaddling clothes" = lit. strips of cloth - Christ was wrapped up like a mummy.
NOTE: This wrapping was part of a sign (v. 12) (a sign is something out of the ordinary).

God's gift was the best gift ever imaginable and yet it wasn't wrapped in special paper! In God`s infinite wisdom He planned that His Son would not be recognized man's way. (by a royal, wealthy family with imperial power and prestige) but that He would be revealed solely by the Holy Spirit (as the Child was to Simeon).

--Manger - a feeding trough for animals in a stall or stable (possibly a cave or an underground barn).

--Bethlehem (Micah 5:2 - "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.")

3) a humble family (Lk. 2:24)
Mary and Joseph could only afford to give two turtledoves or two young pigeons, rather than a lamb (READ Lev. 12:6 - cp. with 5:7).

4) a humble trade (Mk. 6:3 - "Carpenter . . . they were offended at Him" (Mt. 11:6 - "And blessed is He, whosoever shall not be offended in me.")

5) a humble upbringing - "Nazareth in Galilee" Nathaniel said: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46) (Town was very small and had a negative reputation) Jn. 7:52 - "They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

6) a humble ministry
--He had no pillow to lay His head (Mt. 8:20)
--He had no money to pay His taxes (Mt. 17:24-27)

Christ's life shows that He plunged into the depths of poverty. At birth, he slept in another's manger; in ministry, He cruised in another's boat; in ministry, He ate in another's house; at triumphal entry, He rode on another's donkey; at death, he was buried in another's tomb (Mt. 27:57-60).

7) a humble death (Phil. 2:8)
crucified = a curse (Gal. 3:13)
Stripped of clothes, thorns, etc.

The hymnwriter wrote:

"There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus--
No, not one! No, not one!
None would could heal all our soul's diseases--
No, not one! No, not one!

No friend like Him is so high and holy--
No, not one! No, not one!
And yet no friend is so meek and lowly--
No, not one! No, not one!

Jesus knows all about our struggles,
He will guide till the day is done"
(Hymn # 208)

Humility of Christ - Isaiah 53:2-3 - "For He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall se him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

As a lowly servant, Christ washed the disciples feet (Jn. 13:13ff). He preached salvation to the lowest of the low. He traveled with common fishermen and a tax collector.

Jesus "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister . . ." (Mt. 20:28)

The Lord of the universe put up with poverty, persecution, scorn, abandonment, and the cruelties of the cross.

Jesus said that He "came down from Heaven" (Jn. 6:51).

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15).

He is called "the Lord from Heaven" (I Cor. 15:47).

--The Creator (Jn. 1:3, Col. 1:16) left His "drafting board" to enter the human race, and become part of creation by taking upon Himself a physical body.

--The Judge (Jn. 5) of Heaven and earth left His throne in the righteousness of Heaven, to

come to a sin-cursed, unrighteous planet inhabited by wicked men and fallen angels.

--The King of kings (Rev. 19:16) left his realm in glory, where angels submitted to Him and obeyed His every word, to come to earth, where men spit on Him and opposed His words.

The humility of Christ is evidenced by the following changes He underwent in becoming man:

a. A change in His dwelling-place
(from the presence of the Father to the presence of men - Jn. 6:51)

b. A change in His possessions
(from riches to poverty - Luke 8:59; II Cor. 8:9)

c. A change in His reputation among men
(from glory to obscurity - Jn. 17:5; Phil. 2:6, 7)

d. A change in His position
(from equality with God [in authority] to servanthood - Mt. 20:26-28; Phil. 2:6, 7)

e. A change in His form (bodily appearance)
(from the form of God to the likeness of men - Phil. 2:6-8)

Note concerning these changes:
All the changes were temporary
(Christ now has his former Glory back - John 17:5)

Humility - Christ took upon Himself physical needs

1) Hunger - Mt. 4:2
2) Thirst - Jn. 19:28
3) Sleep - Mt. 8:24

II Cor. 8:9 - "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

CONCLUSION:

What does "Christmas" mean to me?

One word - "Humility"

That God would come to earth, take upon Himself human limitations, and die a shameful death.

If Christ so humbled Himself for you, is it too great a matter for you to humble yourself before Him and others?

The message of the incarnation (the Baby in a manger) is a message that should strip away all pride, all desires for self-exaltation.

SEE: Phil. 2:1-10

As a Christian:

*We should humble ourselves:

1) to regard the importance of others

2) to admit when we are wrong; ask forgiveness

3) to sacrifice more for God's work

As a non-Christian:

*You should humble yourself:

1) to acknowledge what Christ did to save your soul

2) to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior

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("God with us")
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The incarnation of Christ is the greatest miracle of all time. For on the first Christmas day, God came to be with us!

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