

HE SHALL BE CALLED

Pastor Steve 12/3/17

Naming a baby can be a big deal. Ask almost any parent. Oh, not every parent has had the same degree of interest or influence in the process, but most can attest to how much thought and deliberation goes into choosing what their child will be called.

Some have a name picked out long before a child is even conceived. Perhaps they determined that their child will be named after a relative, like their father or grandmother. Or maybe a favorite celebrity's name is chosen just because it sounds cool.

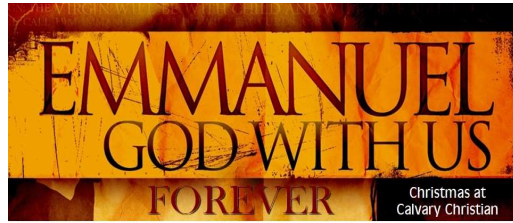
Parents in the 70's might christen their little girl after a season, some fauna, or a name in a song. And a boy's namesake might be a planet, constellation, or astrological sign.

Believers have often chosen names from the Scriptures. Of course, they usually select names of Bible heroes and champions of faith rather than those of less seemly character. I've yet to meet a "Jezebel," a "Goliath," or a "Judas Iscariot."

When all else fails, some refer to a book or a website containing names along with their origin and meanings. Not a bad thing to do, especially if the sound of the name is much more pleasant than what it may refer to.¹

And of course, no matter what name we choose, our child's peers will likely tag them with a nickname of some sort. It might just be an abbreviation, but it could be an aberration. We may not be able to prevent this, but we needn't give them unnecessary ammunition either.²

Mary and Joseph didn't have to concern themselves with all this. They may have had other ideas, but God the Father chose the name for His son. Look at **Matthew 1:21-23**.



Speaking of Mary, it says,

²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name JESUS, because He will save His people from their sins. **²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet (Isaiah): ²³ "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and they shall call Him EMMANUEL" - which means, "God with us."**

So, "the name" for this child was already picked out. Actually, there was more than one "name" he was to be given. Neither was assigned because of how they sounded, even though the syllables might roll easily off the tongue. The meaning behind the names was the deciding factor.

The "Jesus" in our English translations of the New Testament comes from the Hebrew "Yeshua." A synonym might be "rescuer" or "deliverer," but the most commonly accepted translation is "God (Yahweh) saves." And "Emmanuel," or the Hebrew "Immanuel," is literally translated as "God with us."

Yet, I believe any translation would be incomplete if we only think in terms of word meanings. The Holy Spirit intends for us to comprehend more than a concept. He wants us to experience truth. So, I feel compelled to ask a couple questions...

God loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son so that though faith in Him we need not perish, but could have everlasting life (**John 3:16**). So, if "Jesus" means "God saves," have you accepted Him as your personal Savior?

Jesus didn't come to earth for a vacation, but on a mission trip. He came to make a way for us to be forever with Him (**John 14:6**). So, if "Emmanuel" means, "God with us," have you opened your heart to welcome Him?

If our answer is "yes" to both, we need never be alone. Let us praise "Emmanuel!"

¹ "Penelope" may have its origin in the idea of someone or something being "an odd duck." ² I had classmates named "Shea K, Spear" and "Holly Wood."