

His Name Had Been Immanuel: A Name Not to be Uttered

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Abstract

That Jesus' name had actually been 'Immanuel' at birth, until altered in the last half of the 1st century through Paul's influence, solves many problems heretofore ignored. It explains why John the Baptist, Paul, Matthew's writer, Justin and Irenaeus all believed that 'Jesus' fulfilled Isaiah's messianic prophecy although 'Immanuel' needed to be his *name* at birth, not just a characterization. It explains the dearth of writings about Jesus during 35-95 CE, the great scarcity of mention of 'Immanuel' up through the 2nd century and even beyond, and why his original name was not to be uttered according to several Gnostic writings and the *Testament of Solomon*. A scenario is presented on why and how it transpired.

Keywords

Isaiah 7.14, Immanuel, Jesus' name, Paul, Gnostic writings, *Testament of Solomon*, name conspiracy

Introduction

There are a surprising number of reasons for making the claim in the title of this paper, involving puzzles that are solved if the man's name had originally been Immanuel. After these are spelled out, it becomes clear that theological commitment of the 1st and 2nd centuries, especially acceptance of Paul's gospel, led to a great conspiracy that has long been forgotten. Such commitment discouraged critical and enlightened scholarly thinking on the subject over the centuries, and this, combined with a professional commitment towards building upon certain incorrect assumptions of the past, has caused modern scholars to unknowingly maintain the cover-up. A contributing factor to this maintenance is that the question of 'Jesus' versus 'Immanuel' is sufficiently important that its resolution would be considered sensational; serious scholars do not wish to be labeled as sensation seekers.

A dozen strong clues indicate that the original name of the man, whom I shall at times refer to as 'J' to avoid confusion, had been 'Immanuel' and/or had not originally been 'Jesus'. To piece them together into a coherent whole, we start with Isaiah's 'Immanuel' prophecy of the 8th century BCE and follow through until the time of Irenaeus near the end of the 2nd century CE and even beyond. Much literature exists on each topic by itself within this chain of events, so in linking them together I cannot avoid being eclectic in presenting the most basic, relevant references.

The Prophecy: Was It Fulfilled?

Isaiah's Messianic Prophecy

His well known prophecy for a Messiah, from Isa 7.14, is unusually specific:

Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. [RSV Bible]

Here we need not concern ourselves with the ‘young woman’ versus ‘virgin’ controversy. Instead I emphasize the evidence that ‘Immanuel’ was to be his name according to the text. However as the pre-Christian centuries passed, we find no record that anyone named Immanuel came along, until we read in Matthew that Jesus could be thought of as being Immanuel although he is said to have been given the name Jesus at birth (Mt. 1.21-25). Plainly, the writer of Matthew thought of Jesus as being the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, even though it was actually a failed prophecy if the child had not been named Immanuel at birth. Nevertheless, he made it abundantly clear to the reader that J had been named Jesus (not Immanuel). We shall keep this strange contradiction in mind.

Was ‘Immanuel’ a Name or a Characterization?

To replace the paucity of scholarly questioning of this contradiction, there exists the inference that within the prophecy ‘Immanuel’ was symbolic—a title or characterization, not an original name.¹ However, it had been prophesied by Isaiah that *upon birth* the special child would be given the *name* Immanuel; that, then, indicates it was intended to be an actual name, not a sign-name or characterization supplied only later.

Additional support for the *name* interpretation comes from the Qumran Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^{a6}), dated to around 125 BCE—the oldest, most complete known copy of Isaiah. In it, ‘Immanuel’ is written as a single separate Hebrew word, עִמָּנוּאֵל, which indicates it was intended as a name, and *not* written as two words as if to express it by the title ‘with-us God,’ or ‘Immanu El,’ i.e., אֱלֹהֵינוּ.² The Septuagint (LXX), which dates to the 2nd and 3rd centuries BCE, also expresses Immanuel as a one-word name,³ and this Greek source is evidently what was used in canonical Matthew at v. 1.23.

In the Hebrew Masoretic text, or received text, which dates much later, to 9th century CE, ‘Immanuel’ at Isa. 7.14 *is* written as the two words ‘Immanu El’. Later I offer an explanation for the change. Here we may accept that the much older readings of the Great Isaiah Scroll and the LXX are to be preferred. In the Great Isaiah Scroll, each of its three mentions of ‘Immanuel’ (Isa. 7.14; 8.8,10) occurs as a single word,⁴ unlike in the Masoretic text where all three are as the two words, ‘Immanu El’. Thus, Isaiah’s apparent intent that Immanuel would be the *name* of the prophesied child was maintained in writing down through the centuries to at least 125 BCE.

¹ E.g., see David D. Kupp, *Matthew’s Emmanuel: Divine Presence and God’s People in the First Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 166; or Alfred Eldersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1953), p. 587.

² The Hebrew writing system of separating words by spaces (or by dots or vertical lines) dates back to before Isaiah’s era, at least to the 840 BCE time of the Mesha Stele or ‘Moabite Stone’. A single name was written as one word, while a title or characterization contained two or more separate words. The Great Isaiah Scroll contains many other instances of one-word names that have multiple-word meanings, as well as containing multiple-word names intended as characterizations.

³ John H. Raven, ‘The Sign Immanuel,’ *The Biblical Review*, vol. 2, (April 1917), p. 213.

⁴ For photographic evidence of this point, see Fred P. Miller, ‘Column VI: The Great Isaiah Scroll, 6.7-7.15’. Online: <http://www.ao.net/~fmoeller/qum-6.htm> [accessed 27 October, 2012].

Early Believers in J Being Isaiah's Immanuel

Besides the writer of Matthew having been one who so believed, there is a definite probability that before him Paul had believed likewise. Within Paul's frequent references to OT passages, we find that in Rom. 15.12 he quotes Isa. 11.10:

and further Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse shall come, he who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles hope.'

Here the 'root of Jesse' is accepted by most Christians as the same person prophesied within the preceding four chapters of Isaiah, namely Immanuel. There has long been definite scholarly support for this position, which is well explained by Edward Hindson:⁵

It is also important to notice that the sign is directed to 'you' (plural) and is not evidently directed to Ahaz who rejected the first offer. In v. 13, Isaiah had said: 'Hear ye now, O house of David' and it is apparent that the plural 'you' in v. 14, is to be connected to its antecedent 'ye' in v. 13. Since the context tells us that the dynasty of David is what is at stake in the impending invasion, it would seem proper to interpret the plural 'you' as the 'house of David' which is the recipient of the sign. This being true, then, all objections to the relevancy of a messianic prediction to Ahaz's contemporary situation are nullified. The prophet did not direct the sign merely to Ahaz and therefore, a strictly messianic interpretation of the sign is not out of the question.

However, most scholars believe the prophecy was just a short-term one to be fulfilled in Isaiah's own time, because succeeding passages, in particular Isa. 7.16-17 and 8.3-4, refer to prophecies fulfilled in the time of King Ahaz or Hezekiah, and thus ostensibly in the time of the prophesied messianic child.⁶

Yet, the absence of anyone of importance named Immanuel in that time frame or in the succeeding seven centuries leaves the hypothesis unconvincing that the prophecy was a short-term one.⁷

Now the fact that Paul knew of Isaiah's messianic prophecies, but neither quoted from Isa. 7.14 nor mentioned Immanuel in any epistle, may seem very curious. It might cause one to assume he thought as do many modern scholars, that the Immanuel prophecy applied only to his distant past, the 8th century BCE. Paul's exultation over the root-of-Jesse Messiah (Isa. 11.1) might then be thought of as applying to Jesus but not to Immanuel. If so, however, how does one account for later

⁵ Edward E. Hindson, 'Isaiah's Immanuel', *Grace Journal* 10.3 (Fall, 1969), p. 6.

⁶ E.g., see Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), pp. 760-61; or Herbert M. Wolf, 'A Solution to the Immanuel Prophecy in Isaiah 7:14-8:20,' *JBL* 91 (1972), pp. 449-56. According to Isa. 7.16-17, before the Immanuel child had reached an age where he could choose good from evil, the two kings of Ephraim and Syria, which were enemies of Judah under King Ahaz, would be destroyed and/or their lands devastated. The two kings were slain, circa 733 BCE, so the prophecy has been considered fulfilled. From this context, the child might have been Isaiah's own.

⁷ Some apologists resolve the problem by assuming that the Immanuel prophecy had a double fulfillment—first in Isaiah's own time and second some seven centuries later (Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia*, p. 761). However, the prophecy involved the birth of one child, not two.

followers of early Christianity, who were fully knowledgeable of Isaiah, believing that Immanuel was both the Messiah *and* the root of Jesse? Not only the writer of Matthew, but Justin Martyr and Irenaeus believed that Christ was the fulfillment of the Immanuel prophecy and was the same person as the root of Jesse in Isa. 11.1,10.⁸ So can we nevertheless assume that Paul did not believe likewise? This question will be answered later, along with a satisfying explanation why the name Immanuel was used so sparingly before 200 CE.

John the Baptist must also be included as one who, from oral tradition, accepted that J was the fulfillment of Isaiah's long-range messianic prophecy. He was evidently rather certain of it even at the beginning of the Baptism (Mt. 3.13-14), which is unlikely to have been the case if J's name had not then been Immanuel. And later, after J had performed many mighty works, the question from John's disciples: 'Are you he who is to come?' (Mt. 11.3), suggests that John must have been totally convinced after hearing back from his disciples. J's reply about his healings of the blind, the deaf, and the lame, evidently in fulfillment of Isa. 35.5-6, indicates that Isaiah was the prophetic source both had in mind.⁹

So I am suggesting that Paul, the writer of Matthew, Justin and Irenaeus all accepted the faulty logic that 'Jesus' was Isaiah's Immanuel because they knew his original name indeed *was* Immanuel. Before them, John the Baptist accepted him as Immanuel as a matter of course, that being the only name he was known by then.

Resolution of the Short-term versus Long-term Problem

The present solution starts with Isaiah's prophecies about Immanuel and how he would be glorified by Gentiles (Galilee of the nations—Isa. 9.1) and even regarded as Mighty God (Isa. 9.6). That the Messiah of vv. 9.5-6 was Immanuel of v. 7.14 has been well argued.¹⁰ And if Immanuel were also thought to be the 'shoot from the stump of Jesse', it would be the Gentiles who would be seeking after him according to Isa. 11.1, 10. We may assume that Isaiah made these prophecies known to the people of his time, and thereafter they were passed on as oral tradition.

On the negative side, certain priests and custodians of the sacred literature are assumed here to have made alterations in Isaiah's writings that would discredit any long-range Immanuel prophecies. The purpose: so that Gentiles would not be seen as receiving so much favor,¹¹ and Jews need not fear that the God of Israel would be eclipsed by a new Mighty God. The alterations accomplished this by insertions indicating that prophecies fulfilled in the 8th century BCE signified that: (a) Immanuel had already come and gone (Isa. 7.15-16), apparently unnoticed, and (b) another child, supposedly Isaiah's own, was given a name that was obviously a characterization: 'Swift-is-the-booty, speedy-is-the-prey' (Isa. 8.1-4). The inference, then, is that the Immanuel prophecy should be ignored because it had been short-range, and because 'Immanuel' must also have been just a characterization or sign-name.

⁸ For Justin on the 'root of Jesse', see *Dialogue with Trypho*, chs. 86-87, and on Immanuel, see chs. 43, 66. For Irenaeus on the 'root of Jesse', see *Adv. Haer.* III.9.3, and on Immanuel, see III 9.2; 19.1; 20.3; 21.4.

⁹ There is much agreement here with Michael F. Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come? The Historical Jesus and the Messianic Question* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

¹⁰ E.g., Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Westminster, 2nd edn, 1983), p. 116.

¹¹ Existence of ancient anti-Gentilism is attested in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (under 'Gentile'); see also Deut. 7.1-6.

At the same time, however, the custodians of the Scriptures did not wipe out the essence of Isaiah's oral tradition. The priests had little or no control over the oral tradition itself, and dared not simply eradicate its essence from Isaiah's writings. These particular redactions were probably made in the late 7th century BCE, or soon after Isaiah's death.¹² This is not to imply that other redactions were not also made to Proto-Isaiah at this time and subsequently.¹³ Thus the undesired prophecies associated with Immanuel, in Isaiah chs. 7-11, would be of little concern to those who interpreted the Scriptures literally and selectively.

It is understandable if most biblical scholars prefer to think that the Immanuel prophecy was just a short-term prediction, and ignore the above facts and arguments to the contrary: no mechanism to explain a successful, explicit prophecy centuries into the future is known to science.

Clues from New Testament Evidence

Let us briefly return to the Gospel of Matthew and restate the primary clue coming from it. It is totally implausible that at birth J would have been given two names at once: Jesus and Immanuel. We may then ask why the writer of Matthew would have inserted a verse instructing Joseph to name his stepson Jesus if, two verses later, he included an original passage (quoting Isaiah) saying that his name was to be Immanuel. A straightforward explanation is that Matthew's writer was aware that J's name had actually been Immanuel, as already suggested, but that name was no longer in use, and was not to be uttered. As we shall see, he would have known this from suppressed memories and traditions. Chronologically, if J's name had become known as 'Jesus' for several decades before Matthew was written, as deduced here,¹⁴ its writer, being under the influence of an evolving christological orthodoxy, would feel obliged to utilize the name 'Jesus' in his gospel, not 'Immanuel'.

Quite possibly, Heb. 1.3-4 indicates that J's name had been changed:

When he [God's Son] had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs.

So at some stage J is said to have *obtained* a really *excellent* name. That name must be the orthodox one 'Jesus Christ', whereas before the crucifixion it is indicated to have been something different—could it have been 'Immanuel'? Although it might be argued that going from 'Jesus' to 'Jesus Christ' was the intended name change, that is unlikely, as 'Christ' is just a title added to the same name. Moreover, in the Gospel of Matthew 'Christ' is referred to some 14 times before the crucifixion, in a contemporary sense indicating that the qualifier 'Christ' was to be considered part of his title at all stages of his life, not just after the crucifixion.

Name-Change Clues from External Evidence and Gnostic Writings

¹² They may be classed under the redaction criterion of 'contrary tendency': the contrary oral tradition had come first.

¹³ John Goldingay, *Isaiah* (New International Biblical Commentary; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001); Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture, Isaiah 1-39* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2007).

¹⁴ I place the Gospel of Matthew quite late, circa 120 CE, due to the importance of the *Apology of Aristides* circa 125, which first clearly refers to a Gospel by content (Matthew) and calls it 'the gospel', and due to Arthur J. Bellinzoni's 'The Gospel of Matthew in the Second Century', *The Second Century* 9 (Winter, 1992), pp. 197-258 (201-220).

Consider this from Justin Martyr:¹⁵

So also in Zechariah, Christ Jesus, the true High Priest of the Father, in the person of Joshua, nay, in the very *mystery* of His name, is portrayed in a twofold dress with reference to both His advents. At first He is clad in sordid garments, that is to say, in the lowliness of suffering and mortal flesh: then the devil resisted Him, as the instigator of the traitor Judas, not to mention his tempting Him after His baptism: afterwards He was stripped of His first filthy raiment, and adorned with the priestly robe and mitre, and a pure diadem [emphasis mine].

Why was there a mystery in his name? Did some tradition persist to at least mid-2nd century that at some point his name became something different? Was J stripped of his earlier not-to-be-spoken name, which was to be shunned like a filthy, sordid garment, and then adorned with the post-crucifixion name 'Jesus Christ'?

There are several Gnostic writings that strongly support the name-change hypothesis. One relevant verse, 9.5 from the *Ascension of Isaiah* (dated around 150-200 CE), is:

and he who gave permission [for Isaiah to ascend to the seventh heaven] is thy Lord, God, the Lord Christ, who will be called Jesus on earth, but his name thou canst not hear till thou hast ascended out of thy body.

Similarly, from Act 13.163 of the *Acts of Thomas* (200-225 CE) we read:

And Misdaus said [to Judas-Thomas]: 'What is his [your master's] name?' Judas said: 'Thou canst not hear his true name at this time... but the name which was bestowed upon him for a season is Jesus, the Christ.'

Another is found in the *Gospel of Philip*, (150-300 CE):¹⁶

Names given to the worldly are very deceptive, for they divert our thoughts from what is correct to what is incorrect... One single name is not uttered in the world, the name which the father gave to the son; it is the name above all things: the name of the father. For the son would not become father unless he wore the name of the father. Those who have this name know it, but they do not speak it. But those who do not have it do not know it.

Here the most enigmatic portion has an easy interpretation. The father is 'God', while 'Immanuel', being 'God with us', is effectually the same, namely 'God'.¹⁷ Hence the father had given the son his own name in essence: Immanuel, which no one utters. The penultimate sentence above makes sense if 'Those who have this name' is interpreted as 'Those who are aware of this name'. The last sentence makes sense if it has an extended meaning of, 'those who are not aware of this name are unaware because it has not been uttered for such a long time'.

¹⁵ Justin Martyr, 'Treatise against Marcion', in Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, bk 3, ch. 7.

¹⁶ The *Gospel of Philip*, The Gnostic Society Library (The Nag Hammadi Library), trans. Wesley W. Isenberg, paras. 7-8. Online: <http://gnosis.org/naghamm/gop.html> [accessed 27 October 2012].

¹⁷ Although there are many Hebrew names ending in 'el', 'Immanuel' is the only one known that is usually taken to imply the name bearer *is* God. Most are of the nature of a noun combined with 'God', as in 'Ariel', which means 'Lion of God'.

Hence there is external evidence, previously unexplained, of ‘Jesus Christ’ having held a different name that was not supposed to be uttered, that this suppression may have extended even into the 3rd century, and that this name may have been Immanuel.

This Mysterious Name--A Smoking Gun

Let us now look into the *Testament of Solomon*. As noted in association with an online version, ‘[Its text] is an Old Testament Pseudepigraphic catalog of demons summoned by King Solomon, and how they can be countered by invoking angels and other magical techniques. It is one of the oldest magical texts attributed to King Solomon, dating First to Third Century A.D.’¹⁸ Here, the story seems written by a Gnostic knowledgeable in demonology.

The first of three revealing passages is:

29. I [Solomon] said to him [a demon called Ephippas]: ‘Tell me by what angel thou art frustrated’. And he answered: ‘By the holy and precious name of the Almighty God, called by the Hebrews by a row of numbers, of which the sum is 644, and among the Greeks it is Emmanuel’.

I shall soon discuss this disclosure of ‘Emmanuel’.¹⁹ For now we just notice that only in Greek do the number designations of the letters in Emmanuel sum to 644,²⁰ as was noted by the translator.

The next relevant passage is:

52. So I [Solomon] said to him [another demon]: ‘I adjure thee in the name of the God Sabaoth, to tell me by what name thou art frustrated along with thy host’. And the spirit answered me: ‘The “great among men”, who is to suffer many things at the hands of men, whose name is the figure 644, which is Emmanuel; he it is who has bound us, and who will then come and plunge us from the steep under water. He is noised abroad in the three letters which bring him down.’

Even if the name weren’t spelled out, it is evident that the ‘great among men’ is J, who was to suffer from scourging and crucifixion, and who at Gadara had sent the demons into the swine, which then plunged down the steep and drowned in the sea (Mt. 8.32). The name-number designation in this case can be expressed also by chi+mu+delta (600 + 40 + 4) or $\chi\mu\delta$, the three letters to be called upon to bring Emmanuel down from heaven.

A little further into the story, we find this:

65. ‘And then we [demons] shall go forth in great power hither and thither, and be disseminated all over the world. And we shall lead astray the inhabited world for a long season, until the Son of God is stretched upon the cross. For never before doth arise a king like unto him, one frustrating us all, whose mother shall not have contact with man. Who else can receive such authority over spirits,

¹⁸ The *Testament of Solomon*, trans. F.C. Conybeare’. Online: <http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/testamen.htm> [accessed 4 November 2012]. For its provenance and historical background, see Sarah Iles Johnston, ‘The Testament of Solomon from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance’, in J.N. Bremmer and J.R. Veenstra (eds.), *The Metamorphosis of Magic* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven, 2002), pp. 35-49. Online: <http://theol.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/2002/595/c3.pdf> [accessed 27 October 2012].

¹⁹ From a Greek source of the name we use the English spelling ‘Emmanuel’, and from a Hebrew source, ‘Immanuel’.

²⁰ Emmanuel = $\epsilon\mu\mu\alpha\nu\omicron\upsilon\eta\lambda = 5+40+40+1+50+70+400+8+30 = 644$.

except he, whom the first devil will seek to tempt, but will not prevail over? The number of his name is 644, which is Emmanuel. Wherefore, O King Solomon, thy time is evil, and thy years short and evil, and to thy servant shall thy kingdom be given.’

66. And I Solomon, having heard this, glorified God.

Again it is apparent who it is that frustrates the demons. But except for his name having been immediately expressed, his true name of Emmanuel would remain a mystery unless one could figure out what name would contain the proper choices and number of Greek letters whose numeric values sum exactly to 644.

After some thought, it should become evident that a primary intention of the author of this story was to extol J while keeping his actual, mysterious name a secret to be deduced only by those most knowledgeable and who could accept the fact. To achieve this goal, he needed to avoid direct mention of the name, so that his story could survive purging by the custodians of the literature, while at the same time convey the name in some secret form, which a demon might be thought to employ. This means that the clauses of the type ‘which is Emmanuel’ were inserted by some later redactor who wished to eliminate the secret. Otherwise, if it had been the author himself who had supplied the Emmanuel identifications, there would be no reason for his having first expressed the name enigmatically as 644--no reason at all. It was probably at some much later date, after the tradition of ‘Emmanuel’ being taboo was practically forgotten, that this redactor defused the mystery in the name by exposing it directly in no uncertain terms.²¹ In his first addition into Sec.29 above, however, this redactor seems to have awkwardly added the ‘it is Emmanuel’ clause, causing the numeric value of the precious name to read 644 ‘among the Hebrews’ rather than 644 ‘by the Greeks’.²²

I would date the story to some time between about 125 and 250 CE,²³ while the particular redactor involved may not have made his brief additions until decades or even centuries later.

In summary, the redactor’s method of rendering harmless the old taboo against the name Emmanuel came at a price: illogic crept in, which all but confirms that a long-lasting taboo against use of the name ‘Emmanuel’ had once existed.

Who Changed his Name, and Why?

It should be evident that there is no candidate other than Paul to have supplied the new name for Immanuel. Paul’s primary role in shaping or forming Christianity is well known.²⁴ That Paul was the first to expound early Christian theology on ‘being saved’ through the sacrifice of God’s Son is

²¹ Otherwise, if the ‘Immanuel’ identity had been exposed at a significantly earlier date, the revealing document would not likely have survived.

²² The Hebrew alphabet has its own letter-number designations, in which the numeric total for ‘Immanuel’, i.e. לֵאמָנוּעַ, is quite different.

²³ It must have appeared after the Gospel of Matthew if the temptation story (Mt. 4.1-11) is a redaction, as assumed here; else the other descriptive summaries on J could have derived earlier from oral tradition.

²⁴ See Joseph Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1943), pp. 440-42, 513-24, 581-82; and H. Conzelmann, ‘Current Problems in Pauline Research’, *Interpretation* 22 (1968), p. 172. Herein we find considerable credence to views about Paul by Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Antichrist* (trans. H. Mencken; New York: A.A. Knopf, 1923), pp. 41-42, 47, 58.

also evident.²⁵ His background as a Pharisee (Phil. 3.4-5, Acts 23.6; 26.5) and as an assiduous student of Judaism (Gal. 1.13-14) indicates he would have been acquainted with the concept of offering human sacrifice in hopes of deliverance (2 Kgs 3.27). Thus he would have had the motivation to change Immanuel's name to 'Jesus' (i.e. Joshua or Yeshua/Yahoshua with meaning 'Yahweh saves') in support of his theology. Since Paul changed his own name from Saul, we know he was not averse to altering a name. The name Joshua or its Greek equivalent of Jesus was of course already well known to Paul, and though it was a fairly common name, through frequent attachment of the suffix 'Christ' or prefix 'Lord', Paul could ensure that the intended man was understood.

Also, renaming him from Immanuel to Jesus would link his name to the more contemporary expression for the Divine Name: Yahweh (LORD), which name came to predominate over El or Elohim (God) in the biblical tradition.²⁶ From Exod. 6.2-3 we see an example of the name Yahweh taking over from El, and similarly in Jer. 32.38. Hence this consideration may have contributed to Paul's renaming of Immanuel to 'Yeshua the Messiah' or 'Jesus the Christ'.

However, a prime motivation quickly comes to mind. After Saul's conversion, there should be no doubt that he would have wished to minimize in his thoughts the name of the man he must have hated with a passion, being the arch persecutor of Immanuel and his disciples.²⁷ Thus in speaking or writing of 'Jesus', or 'Jesus Christ', Paul would have a new, favorable name to dwell upon, not the name he detested: Immanuel. In propagating his message of forgiveness of sins through faith in a resurrected Jesus Christ, Paul would then speak only of Jesus, and avoid mention of Immanuel whenever possible.

Consistent with this is Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Cor. 12.7), which detailed study has suggested may refer to an 'opponent' or 'opponents' rather than to any physical ailment.²⁸ The chief opponent would then have been Immanuel himself. By altering Immanuel's name to 'Jesus the Christ', the post-conversion Paul could more readily keep this thorn from piercing into his memory every time he prayed to his Savior. Thus the salvation aspect of the name Jesus would well suit Paul's need to pray for forgiveness for his terrible past sins of persecution.

This, then, can go a long way toward explaining why Paul, in referring to Isaiah in his epistles, never mentioned Immanuel or Isaiah's prophecy of Immanuel, though in mentioning the root of Jesse as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, he came close. However, still another reason exists to help explain not only this, but why, for nearly a century after Paul's evangelizing, the name

²⁵ See Rom. 5.6-10, 15; 14.15; 1 Cor. 8.11; 15.3; 2 Cor. 5.14; Gal. 1.4; Col. 1.14.

²⁶ David Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 118.

²⁷ From 1 Cor. 9.1 it seems that Saul had met J: 'Have I not seen Jesus our lord?' This must have occurred before his conversion experience in which he was blinded. Hence if he had seen J it was before or during the crucifixion, which is supported also by 1 Tim 1.12: 'I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him'. This can explain why Saul quickly recognized and accepted that it was Immanuel's voice accosting him on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9.3-9). It allows us to understand that he must have disagreed with most of Immanuel's teachings, thereby further explaining why Peter and James, among others, would in turn be opponents to Paul's gospel. The fact that Paul's Epistles refer relatively little to J's teachings is also consistent with this reconstruction. Also consistent is Paul's failure to have more clearly admitted his contact(s) with J prior to the crucifixion—this most shameful persecution mode of Paul's life was just too disgraceful to describe. His failure to have depicted his Road-to-Damascus conversion in his epistles can be explained by his not desiring to raise the unthinkable possibility that it had been a covert confrontation at night by his enemy who had survived the crucifixion. Contrary to John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), pp. 167-69, Saul was in no trance during this experience, because the men with him also heard the voiced exchange.

²⁸ See Terrence Y. Mullins, 'Paul's 'Thorn in the Flesh'', *JBL* 56 (1957), pp. 299-303; and Jerry W. McCant, 'Paul's Thorn of Rejected Apostleship', *NTS* 34 (1988), pp. 550-72.

Immanuel and Isaiah's prophecy of him were taboo topics. The supporters of Immanuel had to be silenced, which meant silencing the name they venerated.

Could It Really Have Happened?

Opponents to the Change of Name and Message

Surely strong opposition to the name change must have been encountered from most of those who had known Immanuel, including from some of the disciples, especially Peter.²⁹ By what argumentation could Paul have convinced others to listen to him and not to his opponents such as Peter? We must look into this question in some detail, and from a realistic viewpoint.

After the crucifixion, Immanuel had most certainly revealed himself to his brother James (Paul acknowledges this in 1 Cor. 15.7) and other family members, as well as to his disciples. They must have been quite convinced that he was alive as before and not in a strange resurrected state as Paul and certain Gospel writers would later imply.³⁰ They can only have accepted, at least tentatively, what they had seen with their own eyes: Immanuel had miraculously survived the crucifixion. Hence, for persons closest to him, the post-crucifixion Immanuel was still the same prophet, healer, wisdom teacher and ascetic they had known the previous year or more,³¹ who had somehow survived.³² They were the Immanuel believers, or Immanuelites as I shall call them.³³

²⁹ From Gal. 2.9-14 we know that there was dissension between Paul and Peter, and likewise from 1 Cor. 1.11-13, where some were saying they belong to Cephas. Hence Peter was one of those who was preaching 'a different gospel' (Gal. 1.6-9). In saying that another man was building upon Paul's foundation, 1 Cor. 3.10 probably refers to Peter. Also, we notice from Acts 12.12 that Peter was a close friend of John Mark, who had a falling out with Paul (Acts 13.13; 15.37-39). From Clement of Alexandria we know that at some stage Peter went to Rome, along with (John) Mark who served as his interpreter (see Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* 2.15.1-2); Rom. 15.18-24 is consistent, in that Paul avoided Rome while Peter and Mark were most active there. Peter's later activities were apparently not approved by the writer of Luke/Acts, who did not mention Peter after Acts 15.

³⁰ In his epistles Paul scarcely gave any description of what a resurrected being should be or look like: either spiritual (1 Cor. 15.:2-46), or physical (1 Cor. 15.5-7). The writer of Matthew depicted the resurrected J as being physically recognizable, as did the writers of Luke and John, except the latter two allowed that he could abruptly appear and disappear, or pass through a closed door.

³¹ On his asceticism, see Simon J. Joseph, 'The Ascetic Jesus', *JSHJ* 8 (2010), pp. 146-81 (160-69). Evidence suggests this included teachings of spiritual evolution, traces of which remain in Matthew at vv. 7.2; 11.14; 16.13-15; 21.43-44 (a karmic burden); 26.52; see James W. Deardorff, *Jesus in India: A Reexamination of Jesus' Asian Traditions in the Light of Evidence Supporting Reincarnation* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1994), pp. 22-35. If Immanuel and some of the great prophets, including Isaiah, were very highly evolved spiritually, this might explain an ability to prophesy far into the future on certain matters with accuracy, but by means unknown to science because of our present incomprehension of human consciousness. See also Geddes MacGregor, *Reincarnation in Christianity* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978), p. 173.

³² Present-era supporters of the Immanuelites can point to a wide variety of evidence, much of it stemming from oral tradition, of J having traveled extensively in years following the crucifixion, going as far east as northern India, where he lived a long life. Among the sources are: Francis Edward Younghusband, *Kashmir* (London: A. & C. Black, 1909), p. 112; Pandit Sutta, *Bhavishya Maha Puranan*, 3.3.17-31 (Bombay: Venkateshvaria Press, 1917), p. 282; Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* (Woking, England: Woking Muslim Mission & Literary Trust, 1952); Vincent A. Smith, *Akbar, the Great Mogul, 1542-1605* (Delhi, India: S. Chand, 1966), p. 207; Omar Michael Burke, *Among the Dervishes* (London: Octagon Press, 1976), p. 107; Peter James, 'Did Christ Die in Kashmir?' *Islamic Rev.* 3 (Oct./Nov., 1983), p. 17; Holger Kersten, *Jesus Lived in India* (trans. T. Woods-Czisch; Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset, England: Element Book, 1986); Swami Abhedananda, *Abhedananda's Journey into Kashmir and Tibet* (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 1987), p. 121; Deardorff, *Jesus in India*, pp. 241-55.

We must look at the situation now from their viewpoint. Plausibly they would have been warned by Immanuel, during his appearances, to keep his survival a secret, which they probably did to varying degrees for only a few years at most. Obviously, as a survivor he would not have wanted news of his recovery to leak too soon to the Jewish clergy or Roman authorities, lest they believe it, and then have him be sought out and brought back to Jerusalem to undergo a second crucifixion, which would be fatal.³⁴

At first when some of the disciples and James did eventually speak out, I suspect that few would believe them. Others who had heard of Immanuel ‘knew’ he had died, except for a growing minority of doubters who became aware of the spreading rumor of his appearances or survival. These open-minded ones began to meet together in small groups, initiating the earliest churches. By the time Paul appeared on the scene in the late 40s, and for years afterwards, these people had to choose between the Immanuelites’ views and Paul’s gospel of a resurrected Jesus Christ. Paul’s powers of persuasion evidently enabled him to lay the groundwork for his oral gospel eventually to win out, but one must speculate on just what oral argumentation he used in promoting his gospel.

This much is certain: in the course of his travels Paul needed to marginalize the Immanuelites—they were among those who were preaching ‘a different gospel’ (Gal. 1.6-9), which must have emphasized their belief that Immanuel had survived the crucifixion, and had never wanted to be worshipped or treated as divine. If accepted, their views would destroy Paul’s own gospel, which demanded that J had died on the cross (1 Cor. 15.3-4), and subsequently been raised in a resurrected state (1 Cor. 15.4-19) as the Son of God. So it was imperative to Paul that he work on the goal of suppressing the Immanuelites as well as the goal of proselytizing the Gentiles.

As already implied, Immanuel’s brother James of Jerusalem must have been one of the Immanuelites.³⁵ When Paul was in Antioch he (Paul) accused Peter along with other Jews of acting insincerely and being ‘not straightforward about the truth of the gospel’ (Gal. 2.11-14). This occurred when certain men from James—from his church in Jerusalem—arrived in Antioch, whereupon Peter withdrew from the presence of Paul and apparently joined the men from James as well as joining with other Jews present there in Antioch. So Paul accused the latter and Peter of insincerity and of not following his own gospel. This present assessment is consistent with Peter having shared his Immanuelite views with the other Jews present, though this interpretation may be clouded by the issue of circumcision, which intervenes in an ambiguous manner.³⁶

³³ The Immanuelites can be considered a particular type of Gnostic, having been exposed to Immanuel’s teachings, which, as noted, appear to have included evolution of the human spirit. This group should not be confused with the somewhat later Jewish-Christians who became followers of Paul except for continuing to uphold the Mosaic laws.

³⁴ Immanuel must have remained incognito, hidden or veiled following the crucifixion until eventually traveling outside of the Mideast.

³⁵ In Gal. 2.9 Paul spoke demeaningly of James as a ‘reputed pillar’ of the church (along with Peter and John), and had little to say about him although he had visited with him (Gal. 1.19). James was a close friend of Peter (Acts 12.16-17, and since Paul regarded both as reputed pillars, James and Peter may both be regarded as being Immanuelites. On Paul’s second visit to Jerusalem it was agreed that he and Barnabus would proselytize the Gentiles while Peter, James and John would do so with the Jews (Gal. 2.9), thus tending to keep the Immanuelites’ ‘different gospel’ or ‘wrong gospel’ away from the Gentiles.

³⁶ According to Gal. 2.11-14, when Peter withdrew from Paul and his Gentile converts, it was because of ‘fearing the circumcision party’. But Peter, born a Jew, had almost certainly been circumcised from an early age, and had no reason to fear a circumcision party, if that had been involved. Hence I presume that an early transcriber of Paul’s letter to the

The realization that both Peter and James, the (half-) brother of Immanuel, were Immanuelites allows us to make better sense of another ambiguous passage in Galatians (1.18-20; 2.1):

Then after three years [after traveling to Arabia] I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)... Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas.

During Paul's 14 years of preliminary evangelization, some of the Galatians would have heard of Immanuel's survival from James or others, as well as hearing of Paul and his gospel message. They would know that besides Peter, James especially was an opponent of Paul.³⁷ Hence they would be surprised to learn that Paul had extensively visited James and Peter, who had become his principal opponents; and he really had! This can explain his parenthetical sentence. However, the most prevalent explanation for it is that he wanted it known that his gospel of Jesus Christ came straight from God, not from 'flesh and blood' (Gal 1:16b); therefore he did not confer with the other apostles. But it makes little sense to reason that Paul's 'I do not lie!' remark was meant to emphasize that he did *not* confer with the apostles when he stated he *did* confer with the two pillars of the church.

Without necessarily pointing out James and other Immanuelites by name, in his proselytizing Paul could nevertheless denounce them or their viewpoint as mistaken, silly or confused, and even accursed (Gal 1:6-9). If Immanuel had survived, where was he? Why couldn't they meet with him? And a resurrected person should be spending most of his time with God the Father, he might have argued, and only occasionally make an appearance of his own choosing in the physical world, like what had seemed to happen.³⁸ Also, the popular belief that Immanuel had indeed died must have been strong.³⁹ In addition, around 62 CE James was executed by stoning according to Josephus,⁴⁰

Galatians altered his text (in early 2nd century) by inserting the circumcision issue at this point, in order to divert attention away from any thought that James and those in his church were also opponents of Paul's gospel. In so doing, the transcriber/redactor introduced the ambiguous illogic noted here.

³⁷ I suspect that James was the most influential of the Immanuelites, with Immanuel having spent considerable time with him during that appearance.

³⁸ This argument is more easily turned around. If 'Jesus' had died and been resurrected, he would no longer have to fear persecution or death, but could openly proclaim himself to all of Jerusalem and Israel.

³⁹ It would be several decades before the observation of Josephus would become at all known, that on one occasion during the war of 66-70 'I saw many captives crucified, and remembered three of them as my former acquaintance. I was very sorry at this in my mind, and went with tears in my eyes to Titus, and told him of them; so he immediately commanded them to be taken down, and to have the greatest care taken of them, in order to [gain] their recovery; yet two of them died under the physician's hands, while the third recovered' (*The Life Of Flavius Josephus*, 75). Immanuel must also have had medical assistance, within the tomb, to have survived—see Deardorff, *Jesus in India*, pp. 153-67.

⁴⁰ See *Antiquities* XX.9.1. The charge mentioned against James and companions was not specified, other than as 'breaking of the law'. This account of James's fate is preferred here over the differing account from Hegesippus (*Hypomnemata* Bk V) in Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* 22.23.4-18. It seems evident that the characteristics of James deduced here are quite unlike the pious picture stemming from the 4th century (e.g., Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, ch. 2)—that James had 'camel knees' from having spent so much time in the Temple on his knees, praying. However his later nickname of 'James the Righteous' or 'James the Just' (Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* 2.23) might be the result of his having insisted on speaking the truth about his brother Immanuel despite Paul's gospel to the contrary, with early church fathers then giving him a label that put the best face forward to the controversy. The present view differs also from that

quite likely because the brash new chief priest, Ananus the Younger, as a Sadducee along with his father, could not have tolerated promulgation by James that Immanuel had survived his crucifixion and foiled the desires of the Sanhedrin 30 years previously when Caiphas was high priest.⁴¹ James's execution must then have had a chilling effect upon the Immanuelites. So as the number of Pauline converts grew, the Immanuelites became a smaller and smaller minority within the churches. They gradually dared less and less often to speak out their 'silly' views on Immanuel's survival—it just generated unnecessary dissension within the churches as well as being personally dangerous. Paul's tireless evangelizing and persuasive letter writing had laid too strong a groundwork for the Immanuelites to overcome.

It is realized that much has previously been postulated about Paul's opponents.⁴² Although such studies have been helpful in many respects, they are basically flawed in two ways: (a) none consider the possibility that a certain sect believed J had survived the crucifixion, which sheds a whole new light on the situation,⁴³ and (b) none are aware that his name had been Immanuel, which name, as we shall see, had to be avoided or silenced for a long time after Paul's views prevailed. Because of (a) it was not realized that James and Peter themselves, and the disciple John at least, were Gnostics of a kind, and not Jewish Christians.⁴⁴ Because of (b) it was not realized why there has been no surviving written response by some early Gnostic opposing Paul.

The present solution allows that Paul had opponents primarily on two fronts: the Immanuelites, and the Jewish Christians whose most radical element were Judaizers. Of these two, the Immanuelites must have been the more serious threat, as their gospel could destroy Paul's. He could easily discuss problems involved with circumcision and the Law (Gal 6:15), but could not easily discuss the views of the Gnostic Immanuelites lest he draw attention to their belief that Immanuel had survived the crucifixion.

'Jesus' Displaces 'Immanuel' in Earliest Christianity

Occasional writings that debated whether or not Immanuel had died, and which either supported the Immanuelites or supported Paul and his gospel, must have cropped up from the 40s on (or even as early as 35 CE) for several decades. It took a half century before Paul's views fully won out over the Immanuelites, as gauged by the first appearance around 95 CE (*1 Clement*) of a christological writing that (repeatedly) mentioned Jesus, while of course not mentioning Immanuel. This presumes

of Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, pp. 134-35, who wondered if James might not have been an influential Pharisee.

⁴¹ Caiphas was the son-in-law of Ananus the Elder.

⁴² E.g., Walter Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics* (trans. J. E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972). Schmithals informs us of the many conflicting views on who Paul's opponents were.

⁴³ This possibility, which explains J's appearances afterwards, has not been treated seriously by more than a handful of NT scholars since the debunking work of David Friedrich Strauss, *A New Life of Jesus*, vol. 1 (London: Williams and Norgate, 2nd edn, 1879), p. 412. Omitted was the thought that J could have been in a state of clinical death (unknown then) or have received medical attention inside the tomb.

⁴⁴ We cannot be certain that some of the disciples may not later have changed their minds and sided with the Pauline Christians. The two groups did share the belief that J was a Messiah of sorts, as prophesied. The investigator who has perhaps come closest to the present solution, as to who Paul's opponents were, was H. Schlier in 1949 (see Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, p. 16). Schlier referred to Paul's opponents as 'so-called Judaizers' who were not of Pharisaic background but rather were Jewish Gnostics.

that the first Gospel did not appear until still later, about 120 CE (see Note No. 14), after which time various verses from Matthew were frequently alluded to, or quoted, by later Christians. During all this time and even later, the voices of the Immanuelites had to be silenced, along with the name of the man they venerated. Otherwise Pauline Christianity itself could not have survived.

Hence, sufficient time had elapsed, between about 95 and 120 CE, for the name Jesus to become well established for use within early Christianity and the Gospels. Well before this time, however, and long afterwards, the tradition would have spread within the churches (and independently within the synagogues—see next section) that the name Immanuel was to be avoided, and any former or contemporary literature containing it was to be properly edited during transcription or else destroyed.⁴⁵ Acceptance of Paul's gospel and the emerging Christianity, while rejecting the Immanuelites, required nothing less. The four lost epistles of Paul may have been victims of this purging,⁴⁶ had they contained too many mentions of Immanuel or his followers to edit out. As noted by Bart Ehrman, 'One of our greatest losses is a written response from one of them [Paul's opponents]. But if any such reply was made, it has disappeared forever'.⁴⁷ The Immanuelites had never been sufficiently strong or cohesive to form an organization that could preserve any writings originating from among their ranks.

I know no other scenario that can explain the dearth of 1st-century writings about Jesus (or Immanuel), outside of Paul's epistles, which became known later. The 'criterion of embarrassment' as a general explanation is certainly germane here. The consequent scarcity of such writings eventually led to the spawning of the hypothesis that Jesus Christ had not existed, which presently is almost a respectable scholastic subject.⁴⁸

The suppression of any mention of 'Immanuel' was briefly lifted by Justin Martyr around 145 CE,⁴⁹ but only in the same manner as in the Gospel of Matthew. Had there been no such taboo, we certainly would expect that early Christian writings would have proliferated in the latter half of the 1st century and throughout the second, celebrating the fact that Isaiah's Immanuel prophecy had been fulfilled. Although Justin twice quoted from Isa. 7.14 and thereby mentioned 'Immanuel', he said nothing about why the 'Immanuel' part of the quotation should be considered to have been fulfilled in the figure of Jesus. Instead, he apparently felt safe arguing why the 'born of a virgin' (not 'young woman') phrase was fulfilled in Jesus. We can now understand why he did not address the Matthean contradiction regarding the Messiah's name: he also knew it had been 'Immanuel', but

⁴⁵ This includes the writings of Josephus.

⁴⁶ The four are inferred from 1 Cor. 5.9; 2 Cor. 2.4; 7.8; Eph. 3.3-4; and Col. 4.16.

⁴⁷ Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 98.

⁴⁸ See G.A. Wells, *Did Jesus Exist?* (London: Pemberton, 1986). Then also, there were miraculous stories within mythologies that preceded Christianity of which it could be claimed that Christian versions were just copies, such as virgin births. See Acharya S, *The Christ Conspiracy* (Kempton, IL: Adventures Unlimited Press, 1999). The traditional scholastic view has recently been upheld by Bart D. Ehrman, *Did Jesus Exist? The Historical Argument for Jesus of Nazareth* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2012). However, Ehrman gives no adequate explanation, as presented here, for the great scarcity of surviving contemporary written or archaeological evidence for Jesus' existence. He could only offer that the traditions about Jesus' marvelous deeds were simply not relevant to others aside from the Gospel authors (pp. 137-39).

⁴⁹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chs. 43, 66.

agreed with the emerging orthodoxy in accepting it as 'Jesus'. The mention of 'Immanuel' through reference to Isaiah's prophecy had become the one rare exception to the taboo against its mention, within early Christianity. If necessary, with the meaning of Immanuel being 'with-us God', it could be argued illogically that Isaiah's messianic prophecy had been fulfilled upon regarding Jesus as God.

Another forty years passed before 'Immanuel' again appeared in the literature, this time through Irenaeus.⁵⁰ In his section III.21.4 he spent more space on vindicating the belief that Christ was the fulfillment of Isa. 7.14 than did Justin, but appears to have followed Justin's lead in dwelling almost entirely upon its 'virgin' aspect and not the 'Emmanuel' versus 'Jesus' contradiction. The closest Irenaeus comes to connecting the Emmanuel prophecy with the name Jesus appears to be in inferring from the name Emmanuel that J was God, from there inferring that J could save men from their sins, and then leaving it to the reader to further infer that his name could thus be 'Yeshua' or 'Jesus' as well as Emmanuel. Hence Irenaeus did not resolve the Matthean contradiction either. Instead he may have strengthened it by speaking of 'Emmanuel born of the virgin', and by three times speaking of Emmanuel as a name (in III.21.4), not a characterization or title.

It would appear, however, that by about mid-3rd century virtually all traces and memories of Jesus having originally been Emmanuel by name had been lost or wiped out within early Christianity. Around 230-250 Origen wrote his homilies, some of which were about Isaiah with one being on Isa. 7.14. From what we know of this homily, as stemming from Eusebius over a half century later, different interpretations of the meaning of the prophecy were set forth and debated just as done today,⁵¹ with no suggestion that J's name might have been Emmanuel from the start. However, we cannot be certain that in his extensive library Eusebius didn't possess writings still extant that addressed some aspect of the conspiracy, which he would not have chosen to reveal.

The Jewish Taboo against 'Immanuel'

The Jewish clergy independently aided early Christianity in this endeavor to alter history. Common sense indicates that from the crucifixion on, they would not have wished the blasphemous teachings of Immanuel to be remembered or spread,⁵² and would detest that name at least as much as Paul had. So they would not want to accept Immanuel as the Mashiach, especially since he had 'died on a tree' and did not fulfill their expectations of restoring the kingdom of David and being King Messiah. Hence they could go along with Paul's desire of not mentioning 'Immanuel', and even carry it to a greater extreme than did early Christianity by not mentioning Isa. 7.14 at all.

From the Talmudic Tractate *Pesachim* 54a, which probably dates to the Mishnah, there is mention of the Messiah, but not of his name:

Seven things were created before the world was created, and these are they: The Torah, repentance, the Garden of Eden, Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, and the name of the messiah...The

⁵⁰ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III.9.2, 19.1, 20.3 and 21.4.

⁵¹ Michael J. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 52-53.

⁵² Following Francis Beare, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), p. 522, I believe J's blasphemy to have been more offensive than what is presented in Mt. 27.59-66.

name of the messiah, as it is written, his name shall endure forever, and has existed before the sun!⁵³

Again one may ask, why isn't the name of the Messiah expressed? In later writings he is sometimes called 'Shiloh',⁵⁴ among other possible names, but never identified as Immanuel.

The situation has been summarized by William Most:⁵⁵

In speaking of the Mishnah... dating from around 200 A.D., [Jacob] Neusner says that it hardly mentioned a messianic figure of any kind [see Neusner, p. 74]...Similarly, the Tosefta is not much concerned with the Messiah [p. 77]...The Talmud of Jerusalem shows no tendency, he says, to bring up questions of messianic importance [p. 86]...But when we finally come to the much later Talmud of Babylonia (reached closure 500-600 A.D.) a fair bit of interest develops in the Messiah. However, the items that are discussed are remarkable for what they omit: they do not take up the great classic prophecies of the Messiah, such as Isaiah 7:14 and 9:5-6 or 53 [p. 175].

Indeed, these items, though dealing with the coming of the Messiah, never deal with his identity, and make no mention whatever of Isaiah's Immanuel. For such reasons Neusner frequently spoke of the idea of *the* Messiah as 'the Messiah myth'.⁵⁶

With the later appearance of the Masoretic text of Isaiah, we noted that it presents Isaiah's Messiah as 'Immanu El' each of the three times rather than as the one-word name 'Immanuel' as written in the Great Isaiah Scroll. This can now be explained by the intensification of the priesthood's objections against Isaiah's Immanuel prophecy following Immanuel's existence and ministry, which had seemed to indicate fulfillment of Isa.7.14.

Precedents

There is an OT precedent for a name change almost as unknown—one for which the changed name is mentioned 220 times: Joshua, who had originally been named 'Hoshea' until renamed 'Joshua' by Moses (Num. 13.16). Except for this verse, we would not know that the name change had been effected.

The best known precedent for purposeful Christian concealment of undesired information and literature is probably represented by the Gnostic Gospels.⁵⁷ As the present study suggests, during

⁵³ Some translations read 'exited' rather than 'existed'; the latter is preferred here, being somewhat closer to Ps. 72.17.

⁵⁴ 'Shiloh' is commonly believed to derive from a transliteration of the Hebrew for 'he comes whose right it is' in Ezek. 21.27 and 'he comes to whom it belongs' of Gen. 49.10.

⁵⁵ William G. Most, 'The Problem of Isaiah 7.14', *Faith & Reason* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, Summer issue, 1992). Online: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/scriptur/fr92203.txt>, paras. 5-6 [accessed 3 November 2012]. In this extract he refers, as indicated, to Jacob Neusner, *Messiah in Context: Israel's History and Destiny in Formative Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

⁵⁶ Jacob Neusner, *Major Trends in Formative Judaism, Second Series: Texts, Contents and Contexts* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), pp. 93-94; Neusner, *Messiah in Context*, pp. 84-86, 89.

⁵⁷ Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. xxiv.

the second century some of the Gnostic writers evidently learned that if their writings were to stand a chance of surviving, they needed to avoid mention of the name Immanuel.

Early mention of the Jewish tendency to wipe out undesired names from their holy writings occurs in *1 Enoch*, ch. 105 (trans. Richard Laurence):

²¹Another book, which Enoch wrote for his son Mathusala, and for those who should come after him, and preserve their purity of conduct in the latter days. You, who have laboured, shall wait in those days, until the evil doers be consumed, and the power of the guilty be annihilated. Wait, until sin pass away; for their names shall be blotted out of the holy books; their seed shall be destroyed, and their spirits slain. They shall cry out and lament in the invisible waste, and in the bottomless fire shall they burn.

Conclusion

The centuries-old cover-up of ‘Immanuel’ having been Jesus’ original name has been sufficiently successful that few scholars even have any intimation of it. However, the foregoing evidence, both of commission and omission, altogether well fits the ‘criterion of coherence’ in support of the reality of this forgotten conspiracy. Fortunately, ample clues have been left behind to allow the truth to emerge if past and present theological commitments are fully set aside.
