

WAS HIS NAME ORIGINALLY JESUS, OR IMMANUEL?

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ABSTRACT

The idea 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 the dearth of writings about Jesus during this time and the great scarcity of mention of "Immanuel" then and in the 2nd century and beyond, and why Isaiah's Immanuel prophecy was considered literally fulfilled by John the Baptist, Paul, the writer of Matthew, Justin and Irenaeus. It explains why Jesus previously held a different, not-to-be-uttered name according to several Gnostic writings, the *Testament of Solomon*, and the *Pesachim*. A scenario is included on why and how it transpired.

INTRODUCTION

There are a surprising number of reasons for asking the question in the title of this paper. After these are spelled out, one may wonder why biblical scholars did not long ago notice the problems, both major and minor, which are solved if the man's name had originally been Immanuel. It will be seen that theological commitment of the 1st and 2nd centuries, especially belief in resurrection, led to a great cover-up that has since been forgotten. Such commitment discouraged any critical thinking on the subject over the centuries, and this, combined with a professional commitment towards building upon certain incorrect but approved assumptions of previous scholars, 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.

It is known of course that certain theological questions which demand careful attention from a logical viewpoint may not yet have received this consideration because an unexpected answer would be theologically upsetting. As noted by E. P. Sanders, an essential task for biblical scholars to become engaged in is "the effort to free history and exegesis from the control of theology; that is, from being obligated to certain conclusions which are pre-determined by theological considerations."¹ The question posed here is one such issue, which, however, branches into others that cannot be delved into too deeply here.

There are several indications and clues that J's name had been changed to "Jesus" from an original name of "Immanuel." To piece them together into a coherent whole we start with Isaiah's "Immanuel" prophecy of the 8th century BCE and follow through until at least the time of Irenaeus near the end of the 2nd century CE.

THE PROPHECY — WAS IT FULFILLED?

Isaiah's messianic prophecy. His well known prophecy for a Messiah, from Isa 7:14, is unusually specific (RSV Bible):

Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Here we need not concern ourselves with the “young woman” versus “virgin” controversy. Instead we emphasize that “Immanuel” was to be his name, according to the text, not just a characterization he would later receive. However as the pre-Christian centuries passed, we find no record that anyone named Immanuel came along, until we read in the Gospel of 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. However, he made it clear that the reader should believe J had been named Jesus at birth, not Immanuel.² 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.³ This inference could carry some weight if the name or title “Immanuel” had been first bestowed upon J during or after his ministry. Then “Immanuel” could be called a characterization based upon J’s actions and teachings. However, if it had indeed been prophesied (as by Isaiah) that upon birth the special child, J, would be given the *name* Immanuel, then that would confirm it was intended to be a name, not a characterization supplied only later.

The primary 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, **למנוע**, 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., **למנוע**.⁴ The Septuagint (LXX), which dates to the 2nd and 3rd centuries BCE, also expresses Immanuel as a one-word name,⁵ and this Greek source is evidently what was used in canonical Matthew.

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 we offer an explanation for the difference; here we accept that the much older reading of the Great Isaiah Scroll and the LXX is to be preferred. In the Great Isaiah Scroll, each of its three mentions of “Immanuel” (Isa 7:14, 8:8, 8:10) occurs as a single word, 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 down through the centuries to at least 125 BCE.

Early believers in J being Isaiah’s Immanuel. Besides the writer of Matthew having been one who believed J was the fulfillment of the Immanuel prophecy, there is a definite probability that before him Paul had believed likewise. Within Paul’s frequent references to Old Testament passages, we find that in Rom 15:12 he quotes Isa 11:10, saying,

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 prophecy about the root of Jesse is accepted by most Christians as the same person prophesied within the preceding four chapters of Isaiah, starting with Isa 7:14, namely Immanuel. There has long been definite scholarly support for the prophecy having been a long-term one, which is well explained by Edward Hindson.⁶

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, especially in Isa 7:16-8:4, refer to prophecies thought to have been fulfilled in the time of King Ahaz or Hezekiah, and thus supposedly in the time of the prophesied messianic child.⁷

Yet, the absence of anyone of importance named Immanuel in that time or in the succeeding six centuries leaves the short-term-prophecy hypothesis unconvincing.⁸

Now the fact that Paul knew of Isaiah’s messianic prophecies, but neither quoted from Isa 7:14 about Immanuel nor mentioned Immanuel in any epistle, is very curious. It might cause one to assume he thought as do many modern scholars, that the Immanuel prophecy applied only to the distant past, the 8th century BCE. The root-of-Jesse Messiah (Isa 11:1) might then be thought of as applying to someone other than Immanuel in the indefinite future, as there is no mention of Immanuel in the rest of Isaiah. If so, however, how does one then account for later 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 11:1,10.⁹ So can we nevertheless assume that Paul didn’t believe likewise? This question will be answered later, along with a compatible reason 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 pretty well certain of it at the beginning of the Baptism (Mt 3:14), which is unlikely to have been the case if J’s name had not been Immanuel. And later, after Immanuel 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.

Our resolution of the short-term versus long-term problem. The present solution to this problem takes account of human nature as well as the above facts. It 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). And if Immanuel were also thought to be the “shoot from the stump of Jesse,” the gentiles would be seeking after him (Isa 11:1,10). We assume that Isaiah made these prophecies, and more, 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 must be assumed then to have made alterations in Isaiah’s writings that would discredit any long-range Immanuel prophecies, so that the gentiles would not be seen as receiving so much favor, and the God of Israel would not be eclipsed by a new Mighty God. The alterations accomplished this by insertions indicating that Immanuel had already come and gone, apparently unnoticed, in the 8th century BCE (in particular, Isa

7:15-16). At the same time, however, they upheld the essence of the oral tradition. The priests had little or no control over the oral tradition itself, and dared not simply wipe out its essence from Isaiah's writings. These particular redactions were probably made in the late 7th century BCE, or soon after Isaiah's death. This is not to imply that other redactions were not also made to Proto-Isaiah at this time and later.¹⁰ Thus the undesired prophecies associated with Immanuel, in Isa 7-11, would be of no 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 that would explain a successful, explicit prophecy centuries into the future is known to science.

CLUES FROM NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

We briefly return to the Gospel of Matthew and restate the primary clue coming therefrom. 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 compiler 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 would be Immanuel. The most straightforward explanation is that this compiler was aware that J's name had actually been Immanuel, but that name was no longer in use, for reasons yet to be set forth. As we shall see, he would have known this from suppressed traditions, i.e., an early pre-Christian cover-up. However, we shall keep in mind the paradox that he at the same time insisted upon calling him "Jesus."

This conclusion can be restated as follows. If the writer of Matthew had not known that J's name had once been Immanuel, there would have been no point in his claiming that J was the messiah prophesied by Isaiah. That is, anyone could claim that some person had been born of a maiden or virgin — that in itself would carry no evidential weight. Only if the person had also been correctly named Immanuel at birth, as foretold, could the child so named have gained attention. Yet, if J's name had become known as "Jesus" for several decades before Matthew was written, as deduced here,¹¹ its writer, being under the influence of an evolving orthodoxy, would have felt obliged to utilize the name Jesus in his gospel, not Immanuel.

Quite possibly, Hebrews 1:3-4 also 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 of course 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 seems 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 he emerged from the tomb.

CLUES FROM EXTERNAL EVIDENCE AND THE Gnostic GOSPELS

In a writing of Justin Martyr,¹² he says this:

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.

So why was there a mystery in his name? Was it a mystery that he was supplied with the same name as Joshua of the Old Testament? Hardly. Or did some tradition persist to at least mid-2nd century that his name had originally been something different, which name for some “mysterious” reason was not supposed to be uttered? Was he stripped of his earlier not-to-be-spoken name (Immanuel), 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 also support the name-change hypothesis. One relevant verse, 9.5 from the *Ascension of Isaiah* (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*, 10-11 (150-300 CE), Wesley Isenberg’s translation:¹³

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 enigmatic portion, “the name which the father gave to the son, it is... the name of the father,” has an easy interpretation. The father is “God,” and “Immanuel” being “God with us” is basically the same, namely “God.”¹⁴ Hence the father gave the son his own name in essence: “Immanuel,” which was at some stage not to be uttered. 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 never heard of it because it has not been uttered for such a long time.”

Hence there is external evidence, previously unexplained, of “Jesus Christ” having had 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. Translation is by F. C. Conybeare.”¹⁵ The story or novella contains no christology.

The first of three revealing passages is:

29. I [Solomon] said to him [a demon called Ehippas]: “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.”

We shall soon discuss this disclosure of “Emmanuel.”¹⁶ For now we just notice that only in Greek do the number designations of the letters in “Emmanuel” sum to 644,¹⁷ 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 Emmanuel alias Jesus, 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, 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. And though I marvelled at the apology of the demons, I did not credit it until it came true. And I did not believe their words; but when they were realized, then I understood, and at my death I wrote this Testament to the children of Israel, and gave it to them, so that they might know the powers of the demons and their shapes, and the names of their angels, by which these angels are frustrated. And I glorified the Lord God of Israel, and commanded the spirits to be bound with bonds indissoluble.

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 whose 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 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 “which is Emmanuel” type clauses 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 have been no reason at all for his having first expressed the name enigmatically as 644. No reason at all. It was probably at some much later time, 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.¹⁸ In his first addition into Sec.29 above, however, this redactor seems to have erred

a bit, when altering a sentence whose sense had been, "...called by the Hebrews by a row of numbers, of which the sum is 644 among the Greeks," into the one translated as, "...called by the Hebrews by a row of numbers, of which the sum is 644, and among the Greeks it is Emmanuel." The Hebrew alphabet has its own letter-number designations, in which the numeric total for "Immanuel," i.e. לְאֵן־נִמֵּעַ, is quite different.

We date the story to some time between about 125 and 250 CE,¹⁹ 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 Immanuel came at a price: Illogic crept in, which all but confirms that a long-lasting taboo against the name 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.²⁰ That Paul was the first to expound early Christian theology on "being saved" through the sacrifice of God's Son is also evident.²¹ 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" (or Joshua or Yeshua/Yahushua with meaning "Yahweh/God saves") in support of his theology. Since Paul changed his own name from Saul to Paul, we know that 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 not a rare name, through frequent attachment of the suffix "Christ" or prefix "Lord," Paul could ensure that the intended man was understood.

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.²² From Exodus 6:2-3 one sees 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.²³ Thus in speaking or writing of "Jesus," or "Jesus Christ," Paul would have a new, favorable name to dwell upon, not his previous name of the 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.²⁴ 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 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.²⁵ 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: 1 Cor 15:7) and other family members, as well as to his disciples. They must have been pretty well convinced that he was alive as before and not in a strange resurrected state as Paul and certain Gospel writers would later depict.²⁶ 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 and wisdom teacher they had known the previous year or more, who had somehow survived.²⁷ They were the Immanuel believers, or Immanuelites as we shall call them.²⁸ Plausibly they would have been warned by Immanuel to keep his survival a secret, which they probably did to varying degrees for only a few years at most. Obviously Immanuel would not have wanted news of his survival 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.

At first when some of the disciples and James did eventually speak out, we suspect that few would believe them. Others who had heard of Immanuel “knew” that 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 a bit on just what 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 awareness 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 had 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 this 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.²⁹ When Paul was in Antioch he 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 interpretation 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.³⁰

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 the crucifixion] 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...

The most prevalent explanation for Paul's parenthetical sentence 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. Here, however, we suspect that James was the most outspoken of the Immanuelites, having probably spent the most time with Immanuel (who must have remained incognito, hidden or veiled following the crucifixion until eventually traveling east). During the preceding fourteen years 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. Hence they would be surprised to learn that Paul had visited his principal opponents-to-be extensively; and he really had! He was not just making it up, but had actually challenged them. It makes no sense to reason that Paul's "I do not lie!" remark was meant to emphasize he did *not* confer with the apostles when he admitted he *did* confer with the primary two apostles who were pillars of the church. And it would make little sense to suppose that Paul was concerned that his having conferred with them might be regarded as a contradiction to his earlier remark of *not* having conferred with flesh and blood (Gal 1:16b-17), since that remark applied only to the relatively short period of time after his conversion when he went to Arabia then Damascus before going to Jerusalem.

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 can't we meet with him? And a resurrected person should be spending most of his time with God the Father, it could be argued, and only occasionally make an appearance of his own choosing in the physical world, like what had seemed to happen.³¹ Also, the popular belief that Immanuel had indeed died must have been strong.³² Moreover, around 62 CE James was executed by stoning according to Josephus,³³ quite likely because the brash new chief priest, Ananus the Younger, was a Sadducee who, along with his father, could not have tolerated promulgation of the claim that Immanuel had survived the crucifixion and foiled the desires of the Sanhedrin 30 years previously. 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.

We realize that much has previously been postulated about Paul's opponents.³⁴ Although such studies have been helpful in many respects, they are basically flawed in two ways: (a) none consider the

possibility that J survived the crucifixion, which sheds a whole new light on the situation,³⁵ 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.³⁶ 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 on two fronts: the Immanuelites, and the Jewish Christians whose most radical element were Judaizers. Of these two, the Immanuelites must have been the most serious threat, as their gospel could destroy Paul's gospel, while Paul neither advocated circumcision nor uncircumcision (Gal 6:15). Paul could easily discuss problems involved with circumcision and the Law, but could not specifically discuss the gnostic Immanuelites lest he draw attention to their cause.

“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 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 that the first Gospel did not appear until still later, about 120 CE (see Note #10), 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 elapsed, between about 95 and 120 CE, for the name “Jesus” to become well established for use within early Christianity and the Gospels. However, well before this time the tradition would have spread within the churches that the name “Immanuel” was to be avoided, and any former or contemporary literature containing it was to be totally destroyed. 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,³⁷ had they contained too many mentions of Immanuel or his followers to edit out. As noted by 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.”³⁸ The Immanuelites had never been strong enough or cohesive enough to form an organization that could preserve any writings originating from among their supporters.

We 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. This consequent scarcity of such writings eventually led to the spawning of the hypothesis that Jesus did not exist, which presently is almost a respectable scholastic subject.³⁹

The taboo against mention of “Immanuel” was briefly lifted by Justin Martyr around 145 CE,⁴⁰ in the same manner as it had been in the Gospel of Matthew. Had there been no such taboo, we 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. He did not address the Matthean contradiction regarding the Messiah's name. The

mention of "Immanuel" through reference to Isaiah's prophecy became the one rare exception to the taboo against its mention — if necessary, with its meaning of “with-us God,” it could be illogically argued 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.⁴¹ 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 “Immanuel” 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, and 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 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. Sometime 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,⁴² 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 cover-up, which he would not have chosen to reveal or perpetuate.

The Jewish taboo against “Immanuel.” The Jewish clergy independently aided early Christianity in this endeavor to alter history. From the crucifixion on, they would not have wished the blasphemous teachings of Immanuel to be remembered or spread,⁴³ and would detest that name at least as much as Paul had. They would also have been reluctant toward writing down anything about “Jesus” for many decades following the crucifixion, knowing that “Jesus” had not been his name and did not represent any savior figure that they would ever worship. As a result, along with the lack of acceptance of Immanuel as the fulfillment of Isaiah’s messianic prophecy by Pharisees, Sadducees, and Jewish clergy, the latter would have still less to say about Immanuel than about Jesus. They did not even leave writings behind that would indicate they had pondered or debated the possibility of fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.

From the Talmudic Tractate *Pesachim 54a*, which probably dates to the Mishnah and its early 3rd-century oral tradition, the Messiah’s name is mentioned, but not stated:

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

Even as late as the 4th century CE there is no known Jewish mention of Isaiah’s Immanuel prophecy. Later, in the Jerusalem or Babylonian Talmud (4th century and later), there is much discussion of over a dozen names of various messiahs, none of them being Immanuel. Thus any mention of “Immanuel” was avoided, and within Judaism the name has been lost in the crowd. Still later with the appearance of the Masoretic text of Isaiah, we see that it presents Isaiah’s Messiah as “Immanu El” or “with-us God” each of the three times rather than as the one-word name “Immanuel” each time (as in the Great Isaiah Scroll). This is consistent with the Immanuel taboo having been initiated in mid-1st century and persisting for centuries within Judaism.

Precedents. There is an Old Testament precedent for a name change of this nature — one for which the changed name is mentioned 220 times. The reference is to Joshua, who had originally been given the name “Hoshea” until renamed “Joshua” by Moses or by the writer of this portion of the Old Testament: see Num 13:16. Except for this verse, we would not know that the name change had been effected. The new name was apparently bestowed upon Hoshea, son of Nun, to honor him for his role in the decisive victory over Amalek’s people (Ex 17:8-15). It signified that Joshua’s leadership had saved the Jews through the help provided by Yahweh’s magic rod.

The best known precedent for purposeful Christian concealment of undesired information and literature is probably represented by the Gnostic Gospels.⁴⁴ During 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.

A precedent for a Jewish tendency to wipe out undesired names from their holy writings occurs in *I Enoch*, Chap. 105:

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.

In conclusion, the centuries-old cover-up of “Immanuel” as having been J’s original name was sufficiently successful that few scholars even have any intimation of it. Fortunately, however, ample clues have been left behind to allow the truth to emerge if theological commitment and uncritical professional commitment are set aside.

ENDNOTES

¹ E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 333-34. This also means one should not allow fear of offending theologically committed colleagues, editors or book publishers deter one from exposing apparent truths.

² To avoid any confusion, we shall at times use “J” here to refer to the person who became known as “Jesus.”

³ E.g., see John Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 88; or Alfred Eldersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1953), 587.

⁴ The Hebrew writing system of separating words by spaces (or by dots or vertical lines) dates back to Isaiah’s time. 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 Hebrew meanings, as well as containing several-word names intended as characterizations.

⁵ John H. Raven, “The sign Immanuel,” *The Biblical Review*, vol. 2, April 1917, 213.

⁶ Edward E. Hindson, “Isaiah’s Immanuel,” *Grace Journal* 10.3 (Fall, 1969), 6.

⁷ E.g., see Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 760-61. Or see John Witmer, *Immanuel: Jesus Christ, Cornerstone of Our Faith* (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1998), 33; or Herbert M. Wolf, “A solution to the Immanuel prophecy in Isaiah 7:14-8:20,” *J. Bibl. Lit.* 91 (1972), 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 (there are several different interpretations). The two kings were slain, circa 733 BCE, so the prophecy has been considered fulfilled. From the context, this child might be Isaiah's own.

⁸ 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*, 761). However, the prophecy involved the birth of one child, not two.

⁹ For Justin on the "root of Jesse," see *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chaps. 86-87, and on Immanuel, see Chaps. 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, and 21.4.

¹⁰ John Goldingay, *Isaiah*, New International Biblical Commentary, Old Testament (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 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).

¹¹ We 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 the Gospel of Matthew by content and calls it "the gospel," and due to the work of Arthur J. Bellinzoni, "The Gospel of Matthew in the Second Century," *The Second Century (Journal)*, Winter, 1992, Vol. 9, No. 4, 197-258.

¹² Justin, "Treatise against Marcion" in Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, Bk 3, Chap. 7.

¹³ I thank RJ of the University of California for bringing this and the document in the next section to my attention.

¹⁴ 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."

¹⁵ See <http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/testamen.htm> for the full text. What is known about its provenance and historical background may be found at <http://theol.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/2002/595/c3.pdf>. See also Sarah Iles Johnston, "The Testament of Solomon from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance," in J. Bremmer and J. Veenstra (eds.), *The Metamorphosis of Magic* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven, 2003), 35-50.

¹⁶ From the Greek spelling of the name we use "Emmanuel," and from the Hebrew, "Immanuel."

¹⁷ Emmanuel = Εμμανουηλ = 5+40+40+1+50+70+400+8+30 = 644.

¹⁸ Otherwise, if the "Immanuel" identity had been exposed at a significantly earlier date, the revealing document would not likely have survived.

¹⁹ It must have appeared later than did the Gospel of Matthew because we regard the temptation story (Mt 4:1-11) as a redaction; otherwise the other descriptive summaries could have derived earlier from oral tradition. We infer the writer was a gentile Christian knowledgeable of pagan magic.

²⁰ See Joseph Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1943), 440-42, 513-24, 581-82; and H. Conzelmann, "Current problems in Pauline research," *Interpretation* 22 (1968), 172.

²¹ See Rom 5:6-10, 15 and 14:15; 1 Cor 8:11 and 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14; Gal 1:4; and Col 1:14.

²² David Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 118.

²³ From 1 Cor 9:1 it seems that Saul had met J: "Have I not seen Jesus our lord?" Although in 1 Cor 15:8 Paul wrote: "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me," it is clear he was speaking there of J's appearances after the crucifixion; during his Road-to-Damascus confrontation he had not *seen* J, having been blinded by the light. Hence if he

had seen J it was before or during the crucifixion. And if 1 Tim 1:12 can be trusted: “I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him,” Saul had indeed confronted Immanuel before the crucifixion. This would well explain how 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 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 event in his epistles could be due to not desiring to raise the unthinkable possibility in people’s minds that it had been a covert confrontation, probably at night, by his enemy who had survived the crucifixion.

²⁴ See Terrence Y. Mullins, “Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh,’” *JBL* 56 (1957), 299-303; and Jerry W. McCant, “Paul’s thorn of rejected apostleship,” *NTS* 34 (1988), 550-72.

²⁵ 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 ”or to some other leader. Hence Peter seems to have been 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, and that John Mark 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; we know this also from Papias via Eusebius). Rom 15:18-24 is consistent with Paul having avoided Rome while Peter and (John) Mark were most active there. It appears that the writer of Luke-Acts reveals his preference for Paul over Peter at this point, as he loses track of Peter in Acts 15 before Peter went to Rome, and never mentions him thereafter though continuing on about Paul for another 13 chapters, including Paul’s eventual trip to Rome.

²⁶ In his epistles Paul scarcely gave any description of what a resurrected being should be or look like: either spiritual (1 Cor 15:42-46), 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 allowed that he could abruptly appear and disappear or pass through a closed door.

²⁷ There is an astonishing amount of evidence, much but not all of it from oral tradition, of J having traveled around after 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 Ltd, 1909), 112; Pandit Sutta, *Bhavishya Maha Puranan*, 3.3.17-31 (Bombay: Venkateshvaria Press, 1917) 282; Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* (Woking, England: Woking Muslim Mission & Literary Trust, 1952); Vincent A. Smith, *Abkar, the Great Mogul, 1542-1605* (Delhi, India: S. Chand, 1966), 207; Omar Michael Burke, *Among the Dervishes* (London: Octagon Press, 1976), 107; Peter James, “Did Christ die in Kashmir?” *Islamic Rev.* 3 (Oct./Nov., 1983) 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; also available from Vedanta Press, Hollywood, CA.), 121; 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). This literature is essentially ignored within NT scholarship.

²⁸ The Immanuelites can be considered a particular type of Gnostic, having been exposed to Immanuel’s teachings, which we believe included the evolution of the human spirit. This group should not be confused with the somewhat later Jewish-Christians of Jewish background, who became followers of Paul’s christology except that they continued to uphold the validity of the Mosaic laws.

Regarding spiritual evolution as taught by J, traces remain in Matthew at: 7:2, 11:14, 16:13-15, 21:43-44 (a karmic burden), 23:29-36, and 26:52. See also Geddes MacGregor, *Reincarnation in Christianity* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978), 173; Deardorff, *Jesus in India*, 22-35. If Immanuel and some of the great prophets, including Isaiah, were very highly evolved spiritually, this could explain an ability to prophesy far into the future on certain matters by means unknown to science because of present incomprehension of human consciousness.

²⁹ Paul spoke demeaningly of James as a “reputed pillar” of the church (along with Peter and John, Gal 2:9), and had little to say about him although he had visited him (Gal 1:19). From Acts 12:16-17 we learn that Peter was a close friend of

James, and since both were looked upon by Paul as reputed pillars, James and Peter both must be regarded as being Immanuelites. It was probably on his first visit to Jerusalem that Paul learned from James that he had seen or met with Immanuel after the crucifixion (1 Cor 15:7). On Paul's second visit to Jerusalem it was agreed that he and Barnabas 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.

³⁰ 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 it is presumed here that an early transcriber of Paul's letter to the Galatians (in early 2nd century) altered his text by inserting the circumcision issue at this point, in order to divert attention away from any thought that those in James's church, and James himself, were also opponents of Paul's gospel. In so doing, the transcriber/redactor introduced some ambiguous illogic.

³¹ 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.

³² 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 — see J. W. Deardorff, *Jesus in India*, 153-67.

³³ See *Antiquities* XX.9.1. The charge mentioned against James and companions was not specified, other than as "breaking of the law." A differing account comes from Hegesippus (*Hypomnemata* Book V) in Eusebius *Eccles. Hist.* 22.23.4-18,, in which James is persuaded to ascend to the top of the Temple and preach to a crowd of disbelievers in Christ, but he instead extols Christ and is then thrown down from the Temple and beaten to death by a fuller's club. Here Josephus's 1st-century account is preferred over Hegesippus's 2nd-century account as relayed by Eusebius.

It seems evident that the characteristics of James we deduce here are quite unlike the pious picture stemming from the 4th century (e.g., Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, Chap. 2) — that James had "camel knees" or calloused 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, *Eccl. 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.

³⁴ An especially thorough study is that of Walter Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, J. E. Steely, Trans. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972). Schmithals lets us know of the many conflicting views on who Paul's opponents were. He rejects the idea that Paul had to battle both a Jewish Christian group or Judaizing group and a gnostic or pneumatic group, and pretty much rejected a gnostic group as being among Paul's opponents on the grounds that no known sources tell of it (p. 16).

³⁵ 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, 2nd ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1879), 412. Omitted was the thought that J could have been in a state of clinical death or have received medical attention inside the tomb.

³⁶ 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*, 16). Schlier referred to Paul's opponents as "so-called Judaizers" who were not of Pharisaic background but rather were Jewish Gnostics.

³⁷ The four are inferred from 1 Cor 5:9; 2 Cor 2:4, 7:8; Eph 3:3-4; and Col 4:16.

³⁸ Bart Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 98.

³⁹ With so much “smoke,” it seemed like more “fire” should have been visible. 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 scarcity of surviving contemporary written or archaeological evidence for Jesus’ existence. He advances the argument that one should not even expect Jesus to have been mentioned in pagan sources despite his “many miracles and fantastic deeds” without one having first established that he existed; “only then can we revisit the question of why no one, in that case, mentions him” (pp. 43-4). Upon revisiting the question, 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), which is no explanation. And must one really have positive evidence on hand before explaining the lack of same?

⁴⁰ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chaps. 43, 66. Even then, “Immanuel” was only mentioned within the one approved context of quoting from Isaiah 7:14.

⁴¹ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III.9.2, 19.1, 20.3 and 21.4.

⁴² Michael J. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea’s Commentary on Isaiah* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1999), 52-3.

⁴³ Following Francis Beare, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 522, we believe his blasphemy to have been more offensive than what is presented in Mt 27:59-66.

⁴⁴ Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (NY: Random House, 1979), xxiv.