

Matthew 1:23

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” (KJV)

1. The name can be translated as, “God with us” or “God is with us.” We know that God was with the people in Jesus Christ, and Jesus himself said that if one had seen him, he had seen the Father.
2. The significance of the name is symbolic. God was with us, not literally, but in His Son, as 2 Cor. 5:19 (NASB) indicates: “That God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.” It is important to read exactly what was written: God was *in* Christ, not God *was* Christ. Symbolism in names can be seen throughout the Bible. It is not unique to Jesus Christ. Many people were given names that would cause great problems if believed literally. Are we to believe that Elijah was “God Jehovah,” or that Bithiah, a daughter of Pharaoh, was the sister of Jesus because her name is “daughter of Jehovah?” Are we to believe that Dibri, not Jesus, was the “Promise of Jehovah,” or that Eliab was the real Messiah since his name means “My God [is my] father?” Of course not. It would be a great mistake to claim that the meaning of a name proves a literal truth. We know that Jesus’ name is very significant—it communicates the truth that, as the Son of God and as the image of God, God is with us in Jesus, but the name does not make Jesus God. For more on the fact that calling something does not make it that thing, see the notes on Jeremiah 23:6.

Buzzard, p. 135;
Farley, pp. 46 and 47;
Morgridge, p. 119;
Snedeker, pp. 355-359

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