

Matthew 1:18-25

“The Birth of Jesus”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 18-19 Earthly Situation

III.) Vs. 20-23 Heavenly Pronouncement

IV.) Vs. 24-25 Loving Obedience

I.) Intro.

The birth of Christ is a story that most are quite familiar. Matthew who wrote this version was a converted tax collector and uses his pen to give us a history lesson as to Jesus entrance into humanity. There are over 108 specific prophecies fulfilled by Jesus of those 39 of them appear in the book of Matthew, more than any other book. But out of all of these prophecies the most important of all is the virgin birth, as only one person in all of history can say this of themselves, Jesus.

II.) Vs. 18-19 Earthly Situation

Vs.18 Luke's gospel gives us information not recorded in Matthew, of how the angel Gabriel came to inform Mary of what was about to take place in her life. Matthew tells us.

1.) ***The time of Mary's pregnancy:*** “..after His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together.” The Jewish marriage had **three stages** to it:

A.) **Engagement period.** Jewish marriages were by arranged of the parents at a young age. These parents knew each other and decided that their two children should one day be married one day, so an agreement was made with each other. They may only be 2 or 3 years old but as soon as they could talk they could tell you who they were going to marry.

- B.) **Espousal or betrothal time which lasted a year.** The couple was considered legally married during this time, although the relationship would not be consummated until a year later at the marriage festival. The couple was dedicated to each other during this time yet they were not living together, in either a practical sense or a physical sense. They were both readying themselves for marriage, he would be building the place in which they would live, she would be learning how to take care of the home. Most were around 15 -16 years of age by this time. During this time if the couple decided they could not be with each other they would have to obtain a divorce, and the betrothal could not be broken except by a divorce.
- C.) **Marriage.** On the wedding night the father of the bride would take signs of his daughter's virginity and keep them in case there was ever a question as to her being a virgin. Under Jewish law, if there was infidelity during the second stage it was thought of as adultery, and was punished by taking the perpetrator to the center of town placing them in a box of manure until they were up to their knees, and the people of the city would throw rocks at the person until they fell face down into the manure dead.

It was at the second stage that we are told that "..before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit." Before the consummation, suddenly Mary finds herself pregnant and we know through Luke (1:31-35) that she was told that it was by way of the Holy Spirit.

- 2.) **Mary's pregnancy was super-natural.** There are those who wish to take away the virgin birth of Jesus, saying that it is not that important to the rest of the gospel. But if you take away the virgin birth, Jesus is not who He claimed to be. And if He is not who He claimed to be then we all are still in our sins! You can have a great teacher in Jesus if he was a liar. Jesus said of

His own birth in John 8:23-24 "*You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore, I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*" Look carefully at Matthew 1 verse 25, who's first born son was Jesus? It does not say **theirs** but **hers**.

Vs.19 Not much is known of Joseph except what we have here, but think of this a moment the turmoil he must of went through? He loved Mary and she comes to him and tells him she is pregnant. Picture the two of them at 15 or 16 having this conversation. It does not appear that Joseph believed it, yet with that said, I am totally amazed at how he handles it.

- **He was a just man**: Joseph was not cold, or hard, he did not react out of anger toward her. No, he just wanted to see how he could let her go with out ruing her emotionally, and physically. **Joseph was concerned with truth, but not at the expense of mercy!** Most of us are either moral or merciful, but Joseph was both. He was seeking a solution that would allow the moral character to live with the merciful character.

It appears that Joseph died early in Jesus life some time after their return from Egypt and the trip Jesus took with His parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover when He was 12, for we are told in Luke 2:41 that He went with "His parents". We also know that they had other children, after the birth of Jesus. The words of verse 25 that Joseph "..did not know her **till** she had brought forth her firstborn Son.", certainly does not mean that he **never** knew her. So Joseph lived long enough to have four sons and some daughters with Mary.

III.) Vs. 20-23 Heavenly Pronouncement

Vs.20 The angel, prevents Joseph from making a tragic mistake as Joseph was in a dream. The angel addresses Joseph from the stand point of his legal lineage, (*son of David*). Thus this was assurance against fear, as well as announcement of the miraculous birth by way of explanation. All of which was accepted, with out questioning, which speaks to Joseph's character.

Vs. 21 Joseph was told three things:

- 1.) First, he is told that Mary is going to have a Son.
- 2.) They are told that they are to call Him, Jesus: This was a common name for boys in that day, it is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, which means "**God is salvation**." Many people think that His name is *Mr. Jesus Christ*, but Jesus is His full name, Christ is official title, as it means "**Anointed One**". There were three groups of people in the O.T. that were anointed with oil, **prophets, priests, and Kings**. Jesus was the only person who was all three, this He is the only "**Anointed One**."
- 3.) They were told why He was to have this name: "for He will save His people from their sins." He is given a common name as he is identifying with them. Born in time when they were under the yoke of Rome. Jesus would reach down to the human condition and calls us His people. People may not want to be identified with Him, but He was identified with all people! He is coming to suffer, but because of His suffering He is going to be able to SAVE, His people.

Vs. 22 Matthew gives his readers his comments and tells them that all this was being done in fulfillment of the Lord as He spoke through the prophet. 2 Tim 3:16 tells us the same thing where we read that, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." From the beginning the plan has been laid out that man needed a savior and that savior had to be Immanuel, "*God with us.*"

Vs.23 The quote Matthew give us is out of Isa. 7:14. In some of the versions the word here for “*virgin*” in Isaiah is rendered “*young maiden*”, but if you go back to this passage you will find the context which is “*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign...*” The question in the context is, “**What kind of sign is it if a “young maiden” shall be with child, this happens all the time.**” The guy that translated “*virgin*” into the words “*young maiden*” did so because he had a presupposition with regards to miracles. So even though every where else the word was translated “*virgin*” he deliberately translated it “*young maiden*”. “Emanuel” is the descriptive title of Jesus, of His earthly ministry, “God with us”. The apostle John would say as much in John 1:1; “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**”

IV.) Vs. 24-25 Loving Obedience

Vs.24-25 I can't help but notice the prompt obedience as Joseph at once married her, not only in obedience, but in tender love. And still he did not have sexual relations with her until after Jesus' birth. Lastly they call the child as they were told. There are two verses that she light on this birth:

- 1.) Phil. 2: 5-11 “*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*”
- 2.) Acts 2:12 “*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*”