

## Matt. 1:18-25 - The Birth of the King

Written by Tim Black

Sunday, 14 December 2008 16:19 -

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### Body

1.

### Conceived by the Holy Ghost v. 18

1.

Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, as v. 18 reveals.

1.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

2.

**Betrothed.** The background to Christ's conception was that "Mary had been betrothed to Joseph."

1.

**Betrothal.** Like modern engagements, betrothal was a binding promise to marry, but unlike an engagement, one who was betrothed could be charged with adultery . (Deut. 22:23-24)

2.

**Virginity is not more holy than marriage.** Those who claim Mary's virginity means monks and nuns who never marry are more holy than those Christians who do have not reckoned with Mary's betrothal as they ought. It was through Mary's betrothal that God makes plain the true holiness of both Mary and our Lord Jesus Christ. She was betrothed—having already begun the transition from singleness to marriage—and in that holy condition, "

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she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit approves of the holy preparation for a holy marriage. And Mary's preparation was holy, for she had testified to the angel, "

I do not know a man,

" and she and Joseph had not come together before the appointed time.

Virginity is not more holy than marriage

.

3.

**Christ's holiness.** This betrothal preserves not only Mary's holiness but even more so the holiness of Jesus Christ. It served as a veil to protect Him from accusation later in life; it was better it would be asked, "Is this not the son of a carpenter?" (Mark 6:3)

than "Is this not the son of a

harlot

?"

4.

### Found to be with child from the Holy Spirit

1.

We can find no fault in Mary during the time of her virginity. But the true source of Christ's holiness is that He was in fact conceived by the Holy Spirit, as v. 18 says, she was found to be with child "from the Holy Spirit." Christ's conception is from a holy origin, by a holy means. And more than that, it was a miracle!

2.

The miracle on the face of the text is that in His conception Christ had no human father, but was given human life by the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. From Mary He received a complete fallen human nature, for he came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (**Rom. 8:3**) and so was "tempted as we are, yet without sin"

" (

Heb. 4:15

), because He was not only fully man, but was also fully God. If Jesus had a human father, you would find it harder to believe He was fully God. Though He was the Son of God from all eternity, His conception by the Holy Spirit reveals and thereby guarantees for our faith that He is

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holy

, and is the

Son of God

. This is what the angel had told Mary, "

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called

holy

—the

Son of God

.

" (

**Luke 1:35**

)

3.

Mary's response to the angel was full of faith and godly trust: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.

" Take care to keep a good conscience, and when God calls you to a holy path the world maligns, "

Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the dawn, and your justice as the noonday sun.

" (

**Ps. 37:5-6**

)

4.

### The Scandal: "Divorce Her Quietly" v. 19

1.

Mary was

1.

found to be with child....19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her

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to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

2.

In this we find the great scandal, a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" (**Is. 8:14**) even at His birth! Joseph was an upright man, but now to all outward appearances his betrothed had committed adultery! For reason of adultery Joseph would have the right to divorce Mary, and to preserve his good name he chose not to forgive and thereby appear to approve of her sin. He "resolved to divorce her quietly."

3.

Without a miracle, Mary was helpless to defend herself. She was innocent of wrongdoing, but how could she prove it? Had she revealed her miraculous news to a skeptical world, who would have believed her? She would have become a laughingstock. Had she spoken without Joseph's protection, she could have been tried for and convicted of adultery, punishable by death under the Mosaic Law. (Deut. 22:23-24)

4.

In God's wise providence He did not give Mary the role of revealing Christ's miraculous conception to Joseph. Had she spoken and all these potential evils become a reality, the divine announcement to follow would have been of less value. Further, because Mary remained silent, unbelievers cannot claim Joseph was misled by Mary to speak highly of Mary's pregnancy and of the child she carried in her womb. Rather, by God's design, in her gentle and quiet spirit "Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart."

" (  
**Luke 2:19**  
)

5.

Similarly, through God's sovereign restraint and Joseph's human carefulness, Joseph "was unwilling to put Mary to " an open " shame, " and so " resolved to divorce her quietly.

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" Even before this, he "  
considered these things

" for a time and did not act rashly on his first impulse to divorce. Do you not wish that each of us were as godly as were Jesus' parents?!

6.

**The Solution: You Shall Call His Name Jesus, for He Will Save His People from Their Sins vv. 20-21**

1.

Yet Joseph had made up his mind. This scandal must end in divorce.

1.

20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

2.

God's ordinary providence led Joseph to the brink of divorce. It took the miracle of supernatural revelation, the miracle of Christ's conception, and the miracle of Christ's salvation to change the course of Joseph's life.

3.

**Fear not**

1.

The angel tells Joseph "do not fear to take Mary as your wife." Joseph was afraid he would be charged with aiding in Mary's crime. Mary could fear the world would call her a harlot, and you could fear that he who is in the world is greater than he who is within you. But through

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God's making Mary the mother of our Savior, we rejoice with her when she says, "  
My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the  
humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed, for  
he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

" (

**Luke 1:46-49**

)

2.

Through the angel's announcement to Joseph, he and Mary were saved from shame and  
divorce, and you and I are saved from our sins.

3.

### **Jesus**

1.

This name "Jesus" means means "Savior." It is the same word as "Joshua" in Hebrew, which  
means "Yahweh saves." God rescues us from our sins through Jesus Christ. For this reason,  
with Joseph, you should "fear not." Fear not how the world may malign your obedience to the  
true and living God. Fear not when they say there is a greater savior, and that Jesus is of no  
account; that there is a greater worship than the worship of Jesus Christ on the Lord's day. Fear  
not when they say His body was stolen by His disciples and He did not rise from the dead. Fear  
not when they say there is no hope for a marriage between irreconcilable sinners. For "

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,

" and with Paul you should freely say, "

of whom I am chief.

" (

**1 Tim. 1:15**

) And if Jesus Christ has saved you from your sin, you have nothing to fear. "

In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world.

" (

**John 16:33**

)

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2.

### Born of the Virgin Mary vv. 22-25

1.

By God's eternal plan, sovereign providence, and saving grace, Christ was not only conceived by the Holy Ghost, but protected from all scandal was also born of the virgin Mary.

"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; and it is marvelous in our eyes.

" (**Psalm 118:23; Matt. 21:42**

) Matthew explains,

1.

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

2.

### Fulfillment of God's promise

1.

**The Threat.** God's promise through Isaiah has a context both old and new. In the Old Testament, in Isaiah's time, God brought an end to the northern kingdom of Israel in judgment on their sins, and the southern kingdom of Judah only barely escaped the same fate. Syria and Israel attacked Judah, and God sent Isaiah to Judah's king Ahaz to encourage him that God would preserve Judah and Jerusalem from destruction. That's the good news. But the bad news is God would only preserve Judah from this present attack, and would do so by quickly bringing a greater and more ominous world power, the Assyrians, to destroy those currently attacking Judah.

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2.

**The Message: "Do not fear."** God's message to Ahaz through Isaiah was "Do not fear" (**Is. 7:4**

), the present attack " shall not stand

" (

**Is. 7:7**

), but also "

If you will not stand by faith, you will not stand at all.

" (

**Is. 7:9**

)

3.

**The Sign.** To confirm His message, God commanded Ahaz to ask for a sign. But Ahaz had no faith in God, so in rebellious unbelief and humanistic self-sufficiency Ahaz refused to receive and believe any sign from God. God rebuked Ahaz and gave him a sign that would prove Ahaz wrong—" Hear then, O house of David!....Therefore the Lord himself will give you a

sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall call his name

Immanuel....Before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. The Lord will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.

" (**Is. 7:14-17**) And that is what God did. Before many years passed, God brought the king of Assyria to destroy the nation of Israel.

4.

**Partial Fulfillment.** The sign of a woman conceiving and bearing a son was partially fulfilled through Isaiah's own son in Isaiah's own day. In **Is. 8:3**, Isaiah says of his own wife, "

went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son.

" God commanded Isaiah to give his sons meaningful names which served as " signs and portents

"

**(Is. 8:18**

)

in Isaiah's day of God's judgment on His people. However, none of Isaiah's sons were named "Immanuel," nor were any of them truly "God with us." And none of Isaiah's sons were born of a virgin. The signs given in Isaiah's day were not as great as the sign God had promised. Isaiah's sons were a God-given picture of His promise of a Child who would be born in



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### Isaiah 9:1

's "

latter time

" of the New Covenant and according to

### Isaiah 9:6

would be called "

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

" Isaiah's children were types and shadows of this final child, who is Jesus Christ.

5.

### Final Fulfillment.

-

Unlike the ominous portent of judgment for which Isaiah's children served, God had promised that through this final Child Immanuel His people would not be destroyed, but would be saved. Isaiah's children may have preserved the earthly Jerusalem for a time, but Immanuel will preserve the heavenly Jerusalem for eternity. He will overcome the Davidic kings' refusal to listen to God's signs and God's word, and will be "obedient unto death, even death on a cross, " bearing the name, "The King of the Jews. " As God

promised through Isaiah, so He will bring to pass, "

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

" (

**Is. 9:7**

)

-

### Immanuel

1.

Isaiah longed to see this final fulfillment of God's promises, but he would not see them until Christ was born of Mary in Bethlehem that day. This Jesus Christ, born of a virgin, is truly God

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with us, Immanuel. "In Him the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily" (**Col. 2:9**), for Jesus Christ is " God manifested in the flesh.

" (

### 1 Tim. 3:16

) Through Him who is David's son, yet David's Lord, one day a loud voice from the throne will say, "

Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

" (

### Rev. 21:3

)

2.

## Joseph's obedience

1.

Consider lastly Joseph's obedience. The angel had called Joseph "Son of David." Knowing now that Mary's pregnancy was no shame but bore in it the glories of salvation for all who will believe in Christ, Joseph changed course immediately. It was imperative that this baby be born, that Joseph adopt and raise Him as his own, that none could dispute Jesus was the promised Son of David. Like David, Joseph is now a man of action, and a man after God's own heart. He responds in faith and obedience as King Ahaz should have.

2.

Through faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior and His King, Joseph obeyed God's commands. What will you do, now that you have seen Jesus Christ, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary?

-

Commit yourself to obedience to Christ as your King. **1 Pet. 1:10-16** says,

-

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them

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was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. 12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. 13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

-

Stand up for righteousness and the gospel when the world reviles you for doing it. **1 Pet. 3**

applies to us today God's encouragement to Isaiah as he faced unbelieving Ahaz. Like humble Mary and obedient Joseph, ask yourself,

-

13 Who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

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## Conclusion

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1.

"The path of the righteous is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. " (**Prov. 4:18**) But without a miracle, you will not follow the path of the righteous. Without a miracle, your betrothal, your marriage, your life, your city, and your nation will be a shambles, a scandal, worthy of all the ridicule the world can heap. You can only find the righteousness and holiness you need in Jesus Christ, " whom God made our wisdom righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

" (

**1 Cor. 1:30**

) He was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary." In this way He is God with us, Immanuel, come to save His people from their sins. Give thanks to God for providing your Savior through the birth of Jesus Christ.