

Matthew 1:18-25

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 4/26/2009

God with us!

Prayer

Would you bow together with me? Father, just what a wonderful, wonderful privilege it is to come and worship before You, in spirit and in truth. Father, we praise You for who You are, and what You have done. We praise You for loving us, and sending Your Son Jesus to die for our sins, we praise You that He willingly came and did Your will perfectly, that He lived the perfect life, that He bore our sins in His body on the cross, that He died for our sins according to the Scriptures. That He was buried and rose again according to Your word. That He appeared and He ascended and now is at Your right hand above all. We praise You for Your Son. Father thank You for Your word which You have given us, Your Word, Your truth which You sanctify us with. You set us apart from sin unto Yourself, and I pray today as we look into Your Word You would do that. That we would first of all not come before You with sin in our lives, that we would just confess it so that we would not be forgetful hearers, that we would set aside all malice and wickedness, all that remains of wickedness and receive implanted the Word, Your Word. So Lord, we commit this time to You, we pray that You would bless it richly, and we pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

Sermon

Well I am sure, no, I am not sure, but I think that probably every one of you has hoped in something or hoped for something. And apart from what we see in Scripture when you hope for something, I am certain that when it does not happen we get discouraged; but when things do come to pass that we hope in, we find that apart from a relationship with the living God, those things are empty. Those things do not satisfy, and we know from Scripture that the world is without God, and without hope. We know that the world, every single one of us before Christ was without hope and without God in the world. The apostle Paul tells the Ephesians that they were separated from Christ, they were without hope and without God in the world.

Now inevitably, hopelessness leads to despair, and loneliness, all these different things come together, and no matter what we try to do, and when I was young my parents would share that it was the "frantic search for happiness" - where you try to fill this void with whatever you can do, whether it is projects, hobbies, sports, whatever it could be, it was the frantic search for happiness, which never satisfied. And never will satisfy, because as we will see, what we all need is God with us. We need to have a relationship with the living God, and today we are going to see just that in the book of Matthew. God with us as we look at the account inspired by the Holy Spirit by Matthew of the birth of Jesus Christ.

So would you turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 1, and we are going to be starting in verse 18. Now I am going to give you a little background again. We started last week in the book of Matthew,

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and it has been a blessing for me to study, and I greatly appreciate your encouragement that I have received from you concerning the book of Matthew. And I am greatly encouraged as I begin this book.

Now specifically Matthew is not named as the author specifically, but it has been accepted universally without contention, especially in the early church, that the book, the first Gospel we have in the New Testament is written and was written by Matthew. We have the account as we saw last week of Matthew, or Levi, which is his formal name, who is a tax collector; he was a sinner called to repentance by the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew 9 and Luke 5.

And now, as I shared last week, the gospel of Matthew is very Jewish. It contains a myriad of Old Testament quotes, and I believe it serves as a bridge from the Old Testament to the New Testament. It is certainly as we saw, and as you will see, if you read through it this week (I hope you did), it is one of the most Jewish of the gospels. And as we start our study in the book of Matthew, and as we looked last week, we saw that this book is about Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews who brings salvation to the whole world. And as we go through this book, we will see Matthew presenting Jesus Christ as the King of the Jews. And certainly with this presentation of the King, there is teaching concerning the Kingdom, which we see throughout the book of Matthew.

We also see in context the opposition to the King, and the Kingdom. The rejection of the King by His own people which brings about that very salvation which would go to all the nations. Now last week we saw a genealogy, Matthew chapter 1:1, ***1The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham. [Matthew 1:1]*** We saw the genealogy that proves that Jesus Christ, the Lord is salvation, the King, the Messiah, He is the rightful King. And in that first verse we see some wonderful truths as we looked at last week, that He is the Son of David, that He fulfills the Davidic covenant, that there would be a King in his line forever. He also fulfills the covenant that was made with Abraham, that in his seed (singular) all the nations would be blessed. (Galatians)

It is through Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews, that salvation is offered to the whole world. And we saw specifically in the genealogy in verses 1-16, we saw specifically that this was Joseph's genealogy, it was Joseph's side, it was the legal side for Jesus. We will see today, and we will reaffirm that Joseph was not Jesus' physical father. Mary was His physical mother. In Luke chapter 3 we see the genealogy of, I believe, Mary. We see that Jesus was completely human but we also see in Matthew, as we will see today, that He is fully God. And He has the right to the throne, as the King of the Jews. "The Lord who saves."

So with that in mind, again turn with me to Matthew chapter 1. We will start with verse 18 where we are going to see today, Lord willing, God with us, as we look at the birth of Jesus. And I appreciate what Robert said, we should have been singing Christmas carols today, because this is the typically a Christmas message, but typically we need to understand that these truths should permeate us every day of the year, they are the wonderful truths concerning Jesus Christ. Verse 18, and I think first of all, we are going to see in this passage that Joseph's got a dilemma, and that dilemma is that "It is not my baby." And we are going to see that.

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Verse 18, ***18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. [Matthew 1:18-19]***

Now first of all we need to notice this passage is about the birth of Jesus Christ. That is what it is about. Matthew inspired by the Holy Spirit tells us what this is about. Verse 18 “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows...” That is what this passage is about, we need to keep that in mind as we look at this passage today. Now remember we just finished last week, we looked at the genealogy, with which we saw that Jesus was Mary’s physical offspring in Luke, not Joseph’s. But legally He was Joseph’s offspring. Matthew 1:16, let’s read that again, “And to Jacob was born Joseph, the husband of Mary by whom was born Jesus , who is called the Christ.” [Matthew 1:16]

And now springing from this genealogy, we have the very important account of His birth. Notice first of all Mary is found to be with child, unknown to Joseph, by the Holy Spirit. Again verse 18 “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows, when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.” [Matthew 1:18]

First of all we see here in our passage that she had been betrothed to Joseph. Now some of you may understand what that means, but in our culture, we do not really understand this betrothal period. It is somewhat like our idea of engagement, but actually it is quite different than engagement as we would see it in our culture today. In the Old Testament time and in Jesus’ time, marriage had two stages. There was the betrothal period, and there was the wedding itself; and obviously there was the marriage after that. The betrothal was instigated by two families, or two individuals and it was considered a binding marriage contract for proposed marriage. It was a binding contract, it was a promise. And this promise was so binding that during the betrothal period, they would even be called husband and wife, as we will see Joseph was called her husband; and if there was a situation that arose during that time which would cause the two parties not to be married, they would have to be divorced during this time. It was so binding that if they had made this agreement to have it separated would be the same as if they were married.

Now this process was usually about twelve months, but it could be shorter. And it is important to note that one element of this process was a period of protection for both the husband and the wife in which the fidelity of the wife would be proven during this time. Obviously if she became pregnant during that 12 months, they were not faithful, from our point of view, not from what we see with Mary. They were not faithful, and then there would need to be the provision of the law instituted in the situation there.

Now we see this same idea when the apostle Paul uses this term betrothal as a metaphor to speak of his interactions with the Corinthian church. Keep your fingers in Matthew and turn with me in 2 Corinthians, chapter 11. And the apostle Paul is trying to woo this Corinthian church back to him, and ultimately to Christ, because they have been pulled away by their own affections, ultimately drawing them to false apostles. Second Corinthians chapter 11:1, now they were in essence, and we will see this

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in 2 Corinthians that he is responding to things that we do not see in our text, evidently they were saying "Paul is foolish." And so he is going to come back and share this

¹ I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. ² For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I (And here is our word) betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. ³ But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. [2 Corinthians 11:1-3]

Paul is saying "I arranged your marriage with Christ, I brought you the truth that brought about your supposed salvation. But I am concerned that you are not a pure virgin, that I might be able to present you this way." This was a protection period; he is using it as an illustration.

You see we have this idea of protection, a period of time when one is observed to see if they are truly going to be faithful. That is one element of the betrothal period. And at the wedding, the betrothal period ends gloriously as the woman is presented as a beautiful virgin bride to her husband. And they are married, and they consummate the marriage physically at that time.

So then Mary and Joseph had entered into this binding contract, they were as the Scripture says, betrothed. Now this betrothal usually took place in the latter teen years, so most likely Mary was a young woman. But what we know from Scripture is that Mary was a godly woman. Mary was a godly woman. Do you remember her response to the angel Gabriel's declaration that she would become pregnant from the Holy Spirit, bringing the Savior? Do you remember what she shared with her cousin Elizabeth? Luke 1:46, you can hop over there if you would like, Luke 1:46, this is Mary's response,

⁴⁶ And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. (Mary needed a Savior too, she was not sinless, by the way) ⁴⁸ For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. ⁴⁹ For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. ⁵⁰ And His mercy is upon generation after generation Toward those who fear Him. ⁵¹ He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things; And sent away the rich empty-handed. ⁵⁴ He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his offspring forever." [Luke 1:46-55]

Just a glimpse into the response of Mary. And we see that Mary was a godly young woman. And we see also in Scripture that she was godly, she kept herself a virgin until marriage, the marriage was consummated after the wedding.

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Well what about Joseph? What do we know about Joseph? First of all we saw last week that he was from the line of David; Scripture reveals that he was a carpenter; we know that Mary and Joseph were probably not that wealthy. They came from Nazareth, which was not a wealthy area of Israel. Also on the eighth day, when they brought their offering they offered a pair of turtle doves, which implies that they were not very wealthy. And we know from this passage today that “Joseph being righteous,” he was a righteous man. So let’s continue on our passage, back to Matthew 1:18, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows.” And I shared last week the significance of Jesus Christ, and we will see it more in depth later, but Jesus as we will see the name means “The LORD is salvation,” Christ speaks of the anointed One, the Messiah, the Redeemer King. “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary (and it is always His mother, not father) had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together...” [Matthew 1:18a]

Very important, “before they came together.” Joseph and Mary had not come together. She was kept a virgin until after Jesus was born. Luke makes it quite clear also that Joseph was engaged to a virgin. Now in Greek that word “virgin” means just that, it means “virgin.” Luke 1, Mary herself declares the fact that she is so. Again, Luke 1:26,²⁶ ***Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth,*** ²⁷ ***to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. [Luke 1:26-27]*** And then when the angel Gabriel shared that she would bear a son, she says later on, verse 34 ***“And Mary said to the angel, “How can this be since I am a virgin?” [Luke 1:34]***

We need to recognize in this passage it is crucial to see that Mary and Joseph had not come together. But here is the point of the verse, here is the main sentence here, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child.” [Matthew 1:18] Now we know from the Gospel of Luke that before the child was conceived, Mary was given this information by the angel Gabriel. Before the child was conceived, Mary was told that this would happen before, that He would be conceived by the Holy Spirit, in her womb by the Holy Spirit, that she would bear a son.

But what about Joseph? Now historically speaking, those who were betrothed together did not always spend a lot of time together, it is not like engaged couples in our society where they are joined to the hip. We see here in this situation, that even when Mary visited Elizabeth, when she was in this betrothal period, there was no sign of Joseph anywhere. And Mary was informed before the conception by the angel Gabriel, but Joseph apparently had no knowledge of this.

And here we go, “She was found to be with child.” “Mary, what’s going on here?” This must have been very troubling for Joseph, being a righteous man. Mary may have told him what the angel said, but that certainly would have been hard for him to believe. Bottom line for Joseph, she was found to be with child, and it was not his baby. Now before we are tempted to jump to conclusions, Matthew inspired by the Holy Spirit makes sure we do not jump to any conclusions. It says she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. It was not Joseph, it was not by any man, it was by the Holy Spirit. And this is something that is extremely difficult to wrap our heads around. And we need take it by faith and believe what God

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has shared “she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.” This is speaking of the conception of Jesus in the womb of the virgin by means of the Holy Spirit.

From man’s point of view this is totally impossible. So do not try to figure it out. God just says here are the facts. He does not explain how it works. We do not know that, all we do know is what God has revealed. And folks we need to make this clear that the virgin birth is a non-negotiable element of Christian doctrine. It is mandatory that we believe it as we will see today. It is mandatory that we believe it because it reveals the means in which God became flesh, to save us from our sins. And if we do not believe in the virgin conception and birth, it is to erroneously and satanically remove the deity of Jesus Christ from the birth.

And there are many liberal unbelieving theologians who slanderously say in this sense, “I believe in the virgin birth in a devotional sense.” But when you talk to them, and you read their writings, they do not believe that it actually happened. One pastor writes, “Any rejection of Christ’s supernatural origin leaves His supernatural life, His supernatural death, His supernatural resurrection inexplicable. You have got to have it all for any of it to make sense. And if Jesus wasn’t virgin born then the claim that He can save is highly questionable.” And I would add and would say impossible. So Matthew begins this point and affirms the virgin birth. We do not need to be Greek scholars, we do not need to debate the issue, we just need to read the text, and here it is, “she was found to be with child (and literally by or from, out of) by the Holy Spirit.”

So back to our passage, Joseph is hit with a whopper. Mary is pregnant. And if you think about that, he is not the father, he is engaged to this woman, think about in a realistic point of view. All of a sudden he finds out that his wife is pregnant. And he did not have any revelation from God, like we do, and Mary did. So it is fully understandable that he would desire to do the right thing in God’s sight being a righteous man. And let’s take a look here as we see Joseph’s difficult but righteous response. He desired not to shame her, but to divorce her secretly. Verse 19, “And Joseph her husband being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly.”

Joseph has got an agonizing dilemma here. “It is not my baby, my wife is pregnant.” And betrothed to Mary, she is pregnant. Now our verse does not say that he was afraid, but if you look down later on when the angel talks to him and says “Joseph, son of David, (verse 20) do not be afraid to take Mary...” [Matthew 1:20b] I think it is safe to say that Joseph was probably running the gamut of emotions that any person would have after discovering that the person they are betrothed to is pregnant. He was probably absolutely shocked. This was totally out of character for Mary. Yet from Joseph’s point of view, she was found to be with child.

Did Mary tell Joseph what the angel had told her? Scripture does not say. But it does say, verse 19 “and Joseph her husband (notice he is considered her husband in the betrothal period) being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly.” [Matthew 1:19] Two participles, “Joseph being righteous,” “Joseph not wanting to disgrace her.” Joseph was a Godly man, “being righteous,” present tense. He evidently obeyed the Lord. He was an Old Testament saint, and he was probably saying to himself, “How can I marry her, she has violated the law? I do not get it, I do not

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understand it, but I must do what God says." "...being a righteous man..." but notice Joseph was also a merciful man, "and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly."

Well what does he mean by this, "desiring to put her away"? There were two avenues for Joseph to take legally in a theocracy concerning the situation. He could put Mary and charge her in public, he could bring her before trial, she could be convicted and shamed, that is one possibility. And the other possibility would be to send her away. The term is even the same word used for divorce, to send her away, to loose her in secret. In Deuteronomy 24 we see the provision for sending away someone privately and giving them a certificate of divorce. That provision that God allowed because as Jesus would say because of the hardness of their hearts, Matthew 19. What is the righteous response on Joseph's part? Our text says to put her away, "being righteous." But along with that response Joseph was compassionate and merciful, "not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly."

Joseph had a tremendous dilemma, he was a righteous man, he did not want to disgrace her. So what happens as Joseph is agonizing over this? We see God's faithful intervention, as an angel comes to him and tells him to take Mary as his wife and then explains why. Verse 20 (What's this? What we just talked about, putting her away secretly)

²⁰But when he had considered this (What's this? What we just talked about, putting her away secretly), behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of 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." [Matthew 1:20-21]

So Joseph is considering and pondering what he must do righteously, and he falls asleep. And evidently in this, based on the limited information, Joseph desired to do the righteous thing; but God was going to, through this angel, give him more information that he might do exactly what God wanted him to do. "But when he considered this, behold (take a look) an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream..." [Matthew 1:20]

Now before we get into what this angel said, we need to recognize the angel appears in the context of a dream. Joseph is not imagining things, it is not something that is not really happening, it is actually happening. An angel does appear to him, but it is in the context of a dream. And we see here it is "an angel of the Lord." The term "angel" means "messenger." It is not THE angel of the LORD, which we see in the Old Testament, referring to Christ, pre-incarnate appearances of Him; it is an angel of the Lord, and the angel is not named here. Simply a messenger for the Lord. And what he says here ultimately, first of all is "Do not fear to marry Mary," right? Verse 20 "but when he had considered this, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife.'" [Matthew 1:20] "Joseph, son of David, you are in the line David."

Here we see God's perspective of Joseph. He is in the line of David. Joseph being Jesus' legal father entitled Jesus Christ to be the King of the Jews. "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife." Right in the nick-of-time as Joseph is going to make this decision to do what is righteous, God intervenes, and gives

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him more revelation and tells him what to do. And as I paraphrased before, "Do not be afraid, marry Mary."

And I praise the Lord that He does not leave us at this point, but He declares through the angel why Joseph is to marry Mary. Middle of verse 20 "for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, and she will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He will save His people from their sins." [Matthew 1:20b-21] "Do not be afraid, Joseph, to take Mary, do not be afraid to marry Mary." Why? "For that which has been conceived, (already conceived, she is already showing), in her is of the Holy Spirit." It is not the child of Joseph or any man, but of God. And again there is no explanation to how this works. This is a God thing. And all God wants us to know is, "for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

This is the means in which God took on human flesh, a physical mother Mary, and conceived of the Holy Spirit this wonderful, wonderful Child. There is no male human father. Back to Luke 1, turn there for a second, and I want to read what the angel Gabriel says to Mary. I see the same explanation, but maybe a little more expanded for her. Luke 1:31, and notice she has not conceived yet, the angel came to Mary before the conception, before the Spirit came upon her.

³¹ **"And behold, you will conceive in your womb,** ("You will conceive," this is not some baby implanted from somewhere else, it is Mary's child, of the Holy Spirit, fully man and fully God) **and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.** ³² **"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;** ³³ **and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."** (He is the King of Kings). ³⁴ **And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"** ³⁵ **And the angel answered and said to her,** (and here we go) **"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;** (Of the Holy Spirit, conceived of the Holy Spirit and Mary) **and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. [Luke 1:31-35]**

"Because it is the Spirit of God that is bringing about this birth in you Mary, the Holy Offspring, Holy, separate from sin, shall be called the Son of God."

The "Son of God" was a term the Jews understood for deity. They wanted to stone Jesus because He made Himself out to be God. Mary is going to conceive a son without a father, how can this be? "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." [Luke 1:35] Here we have again the all-important truth of the virgin birth, Jesus is fully human. "Mary you will conceive and bear a son. But He is also fully God, the Holy Offspring shall be called the Son of God. Because of this Mary, your son will be God." Is that not what Scriptures affirm? John 1:1 ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*** ² ***He was in the beginning with God.*** ³ ***All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. [John 1:1-3]*** Then down, John 1:14 ¹⁴ ***And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. [John 1:14]***

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Colossians 1:19, ¹⁹ **For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him. [Colossians 1:19]** Colossians 2:9, ⁹ **For in Him** (speaking of Christ) **all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form. [Colossians 2:9]** And how did that happen? Human mother, the Spirit of God brought about the incarnation of the person of Jesus Christ. Fully God, and fully man. This is how, in the means which we do not understand, God took on human flesh. I need to make it clear, the child conceived is of the Holy Spirit, not of Joseph or any man. "For this reason, He shall be called the Son of God."

And now folks, it is not man who saves, it is God who saves. It is Jesus Christ the God man, the Savior of the world. And we need to understand this one fact, no matter what anyone says, that the denial of the virgin birth completely undermines the fact that Jesus is God. And folks, as I shared, there are a lot of so-called theologians who deny the virgin birth, lots of main line denominations if you sit in a room with their pastor and you ask them about this, and you tear off all the bologna, and get to the core, they do not believe in it. Not all, but lots. And if you deny the truth of the virgin birth, I do not believe you are saved, because Jesus Christ said "My sheep hear My voice."

In 1 John, the apostle John says that "if they do not listen to us (speaking of the apostles, the ones who brought the Word of God) they are not of God." This is how you can know. Do we understand it? No. Do we believe it? I believe it. Do you believe it? Yes?

Now notice at this point, we see also that He is fully human. Back to Matthew 1:20. "But when he had considered this, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit (and here's the human part) and she shall bear a son.'" [Matthew 1:21-22a]

Jesus was literally born of a woman. Galatians 4:4, ⁴ **But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman. [Galatians 4:4]** The eternal Son of God took on human flesh. And what else does the angel tell Joseph? "And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus." [Matthew 1:22] "Joseph it is not your physical son, He is of the Holy Spirit and His mother Mary, and she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus." Joseph is commanded to call this son in Mary's womb Jesus.

And what is the significance of the name Jesus? We looked at it last week, it is the Lord's human name, it was given to Him eight days after He was born, we will see, by Joseph. And Jesus is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "Joshua" or "Yeshua," which means literally "Yahweh is salvation," or "Jehovah is salvation."

And what does "Yahweh" mean? Yahweh is the first person, in perfect tense of the verb "to be" in Hebrew, I AM. As I shared last week, remember in Exodus 3 as Moses is speaking to the Lord, and he is talking, "When I go to the Egyptians what should I say Your name is?" The Lord answers literally in Hebrew "Yahweh asher Yahweh." "I AM who I AM." Self-existence, it points to deity it is speaking of God. None of us are self-existent, there is nothing self-existent apart from God. He is, He is.

Now the name "Jesus" means "Yahweh, the I AM is salvation." The self-existent one, the Lord is salvation. "You shall name His name because He is God, you shall name His name 'the Lord is salvation.'"

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And we are going to see why, do not miss this, “for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”
“Joseph you’re going to call your son the Lord is salvation, for it is He who is the one that will save His people from their sins.”

God is so gracious, not to leave mankind in his sinful state. We have all sinned, the Scripture is clear. **For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. [Romans 3:23]** We have all sinned by doing wrong, we have all sinned by not doing right. We have all sinned against the Lord God. All of our sin is against Him. When we do our own will apart from His will, we are sinning. Scripture says in Romans 3, “There are none righteous, not even one,” [Romans 3:10]

“But he is a good person.” No, without God he is not good, she is not good. Because inside that person residing is sin which has not been dealt with. “All have fallen short of the glory of God,” Romans 3:23. Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death.” The Lord makes it clear in the book of Ezekiel 18, **Behold all souls are Mine, (You’re all His) and the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine. The soul that sins will die. [Ezekiel 18:4]** The wages of sin is death.

Well what is death? Physical death, we understand that very well, physical death is the absence of life. It is the separation of the body from the spirit. When someone is dead, there is nothing there, right? When someone gets hit in a car accident, and they look for things, they do not look for signs of death, they look for signs of life. And if they find no signs of life, then he is, or she is dead. It is the separation. Spiritual death is the separation of us from God because of our sin. An eternal death, the second death is a separation of us, if you are in your sins, forever from God in punishment. The wages of sin is death.

We have all sinned. There is a lot of sin out there. We can point at it pretty well, right? But we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We have all done wrong things, and we have all not done the right things. That is called sin, and God is a righteous God, and He will punish sin. There will be a day when there will be only righteousness dwelling in the presence of God, and sin will have been taken care of by eternal death. But God is gracious, not willing that any should perish. God is gracious that He would not leave us in our state, and He sent His son, to become like us, “for it is He who will save His people from their sins.” You need to be saved from your sins, I need to be saved from my sins, and the only Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is He who will save.

God is not only a gracious, merciful God; He is a righteous God and He will judge you for your sins. And He will separate you eternally in punishment if your sins are not taken care of. The Lord is salvation, the Lord coming in human flesh, dying for our sins on the cross, this is the means in which we are saved. You see Jesus Christ bore our sins in His body on the cross that we might live to God and die to sin. And God is satisfied with His sacrifice. 1 John 2:2, **And He Himself** (speaking of Christ) **is the propitiation** (what is propitiation mean? Satisfaction) **for our sins** (Christ satisfies God’s judgment and wrath. Christ does. He is the satisfaction) **not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world. [1 John 2:2]**

Scripture is clear there is salvation in no one else, no one else, Acts 4:10, as Peter and John have healed the lame man and the Pharisees are addressing the surface issues to try and catch them on things, and he says in Acts 4:10,¹⁰ **let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of**

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Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health. ¹¹ **"He is the stone (speaking of Christ) which was rejected by you (the Jews), the builders, but which became the very corner stone.** ¹² **"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:10-12] Must be saved.**

The Lord is salvation. Baptism does not save you, communion does not impart saving grace, your works do not save you, your church does not save you, your family does not save you. The Jesus of the Mormons does not save you, the Jesus of the Jehovah's Witnesses does not save you, a Jesus that is still on the Cross, who is still trying to take care of your sins does not save you. The Lord is salvation. There is no other name in which we must be saved.

Now folks we need to recognize there are other Jesus's out there. There are Jesus's that do not line up with what God says about His Son in Scripture. Other Jesus's. That same passage in 2 Corinthians 11, after he shares that he is afraid that they will be led astray by the serpent, that they would be led away from a simplicity and devotion to Christ, "For if one comes and preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached..." the Jesus of the Mormons is not the Jesus of Scripture, He is another Jesus. The Jesus may be of your mind, may not be the Jesus of Scripture. It is only the Jesus of Scripture that brings salvation, the Lord is salvation. "For it is He who will save His people from their sins." [Matthew 1:21]

Have you believed in the Jesus of Scripture, is He your Savior? God the Son who took on human flesh, lived the perfect life. "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." [John 1:29] Is it the Son of God who came in human flesh who you cried out to for salvation? Or was it a simple hand-raising because God will fix you up? Have you cried out to the Savior Jesus Christ, as revealed in Scripture?

So we have seen Joseph's dilemma, he is betrothed to Mary, she is pregnant, Joseph being a righteous man desires to put her away secretly. But God through an angel intervenes and commands him to take Mary as his wife because the child is of the Holy Spirit. He is God, and the child will become flesh, she will bear a child and you shall name Him Jesus. "You shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." [Matthew 1:21] And at this point in our text we have an explanation for us, for the reader. Verse 22 ²²**Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:** ²³**"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." [Mathew 1:22-23]** Notice Matthew makes it clear that all this took place to fulfill Scripture.

Now let's make some quick observations here, notice who is doing the speaking through the prophet in verse 22, "Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." God speaks through men that He calls to share His word. And when the prophets did not do it of their own will, 2 Peter 1:20, ²⁰ **But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,** ²¹ **for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. [Matthew 1:20-21]** The Lord spoke through the prophet, it is God's Word. And

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what is the prophecy he is speaking of? Verse 23, "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." [Matthew 1:23]

Isaiah 7:14, Bob read the passage for us. I am not going to go into the context but you can read it again for yourself. Ahaz is not trusting in the Lord, he is wanting to team up with the Assyrians to take care of his enemies who are coming. He is told by God to ask for a sign, "Trust me, ask for a sign," and he rebelliously says, "No." But God says He is going to give him a sign. The sign¹⁴ **"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."** [Isaiah 7:4] And we have a near fulfillment of that in Isaiah, but we have a far fulfillment in Christ in Matthew. Matthew inspired by the Holy Spirit takes this prophecy and applies it to Christ.

Now there is all sorts of talk between so called scholars, I would say unbelieving scholars, concerning the Isaiah passage. Which word is used, does it mean virgin, young woman, what does it mean? We do not need to argue over, and ramble, and argue about words. Because when you go to Matthew the word that is used means virgin. "Behold the virgin will be with child." What is important is what Matthew is saying is that God's Word was fulfilled. "Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord by the prophet might be fulfilled, 'Behold a virgin shall be with child, and she shall bear a son.'" [Matthew 1:23]

Prophecy was fulfilled over and over again in Christ. In the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ, and resurrection for our sins. Death and resurrection. God laid forth His plan in the Old Testament, and it is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus shares with those on the road to Emmaus, they are walking away, it is the third day, they do not believe what God says, Luke 24:25²⁵ **And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!** (Well it was the Lord that spoke through the prophets)²⁶ **Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"**²⁷ **And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. [Luke 24:25-27]**

"Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel." [Matthew 1:23] It is interesting, a couple weeks ago someone came to me before I even decided to preach in Matthew, and they asked me a question here, "How was this prophecy fulfilled in what Matthew said, this latter part?" We certainly understand the virgin with child bearing a son, totally fulfilled in what he just said. What about the second part? "...and they shall call His name Immanuel." How was that fulfilled in what he just said? I do not remember my answer, I do not know if it was the right answer but I am going to give you an answer right now which I think is what is being said here.

First of all, we do not ever see anyone in Scripture actually calling Jesus Immanuel, right? There is no passage that we have a reference. It says "they shall call His name Immanuel" right? But we do not have any record of anyone saying "Immanuel, come here." We do not have that.

And secondly the Holy Spirit took the liberty to change the quote from Isaiah from "she shall call," I believe pointing to the near fulfillment in Isaiah's time, to "they shall call His name Immanuel." It is

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God's Word, God can do as He pleases, as He expands on the truth and gives us more revelation. But who is the "they" here? "'Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means 'God with us.'" Who's the they? Is it Mary and Joseph? Is it those who have been saved from their sins? Who is it?

I cannot be exactly sure here but I do know who it is not. It is certainly not unbelievers, for God is not with them. They are separate from God. Without hope in the world. It is not unbelievers, God is not with them, no matter how much they say He is. Paul would say to the Ephesians as I have shared in Ephesians 2:12, that this group of believers at one time were separate from Christ, having no hope without God in the world. No matter what you think, no matter what you do, if you are still in your sins, you are separated from God. The Lord through Isaiah said that "sin has caused a separation between you and I," Isaiah 59:2. The wages of sin is death. It completely blocks a relationship with a Holy God, and if you die in your sin you will be eternally separated, as God takes the redeemed in righteousness and dwells with them forever, there is a place for those who reject Christ, and they will be separated in their sin forever, this is the second death. Revelation 20:11,

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, (This is future, this is what's going to happen, it is going to happen), **and no place was found for them** (you cannot run away from this judgment). **¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.** (Notice they are called the dead) **And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades** (You see the bodies and the souls being brought together for this judgment) **gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.** **¹⁴ And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.** **¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. [Revelation 20:11-15]**

We know he who overcomes is not taken out of the book of life. If they (we) overcome in Christ you are in the book of life. We know the overcomer in 1 John is the one who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If your sins have not been covered, God is not with you, and God will not be with you. You'll be eternally separated, forever.

So what does it mean here, "'And they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated 'God with us'"? [Matthew 1:23] How was this fulfilled in the birth of Christ? It is my view, it is not simply speaking of the incarnation, where God dwelt among mankind for 33 years. I do not believe that is simply what it is saying. Certainly God was with us, or with them in that context, but I do not think that is what it is saying. It is my view, ultimately, it is speaking of the result of the incarnation, which is that Jesus will save His people from their sins, and they will call His name Immanuel, which means God with us. Saved people call Him, will say "God with us," right? He is with us, if you are saved.

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The very end of Matthew, we see the promise, Matthew 28:18

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority (He has been risen from the dead) has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; (and here we go, the end of Matthew) and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
[Matthew 28:18-20]

God with us. We see it throughout Scripture, we see it in the book of Hebrews, Hebrews 13 as the writer is exhorting them to keep the right focus. ⁵ **Let your character be free from the love of money; (Be content with what you have, why? Who do you have?) for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you. [Hebrews 13:5]** Be content with what you have, for you have God. You have the Lord God. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

Separation between God and man was because of sin. Because Christ came and took on human flesh and died for our sins, they shall call His name "Immanuel" which translated means "God with us." Is God with you? On what basis do you say so? Is it because Jesus Christ has saved you from your sins? Then I say, "Yes." Is it because you feel He is with you? The only way God is with you is because of Christ delivering us from our sins. He is with us, and we will be with Him forever, forever.

Are you separate from Him having no hope without God in the world? That is God's declaration, not your view. Are you in your sins? Then you are separate from Christ, and the good news is God took on human flesh, and His name is Jesus, the Lord is salvation. For it is He who will save His people from their sins. God with us.

So then this was written to fulfill prophecy, and now Matthew points out in the end of this portion that Joseph obeys. Back in Matthew 1:24, ²⁴ **And Joseph arose from his sleep. [Matthew 1:24]** Sweet dreams right? The angel has given him the truth concerning Mary, he went to bed troubled, and he woke up understanding the truth of God, understanding it was God that had brought about this conception in Mary. And he is to take her as his wife, and he is to call her child "Jesus." Verse 24 ²⁴ **And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, (He obeyed. He did not take it as a suggestion. Do not fear Joseph, suggestion, no, command. Name him Jesus Joseph, suggestion, no, command.) and took her as his wife, ²⁵ but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. [Matthew 1:24-25]**

Joseph is in the midst of the greatest trial probably in his life, his betrothed wife Mary is pregnant. He is a righteous and merciful man, desiring to do the right thing. So he considers to divorce her quietly, and he dozes off and the Lord sends an angel to tell him what to do and why. And Joseph wakes up and what does he do? Does he say "I need to talk to a Rabbi, or pastor to help me with this situation. I am not sure. Do I need to get some counseling to figure out what I should do in this circumstance"? No. Joseph is given clear instructions in the Word of God and he obeys. Joseph arose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He keeps Mary as his wife, takes her as his wife, he keeps her

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as a virgin, she gives birth to a son, and in obedience in Luke 2:21, on the eighth day, Joseph names Him Jesus. He obeyed.

Folks I am so amazed when I see the obedience of God's people in Scripture, with how little truth they had. We have so much truth, and we are so disobedient. And I am greatly grieved when people come to me for advice concerning a whole bunch of issues in their lives, and they are unwilling to obey the clear commands of Scripture. They are focused on the fuzzies in lieu of what God has clearly said they are to do. Joseph was not like this. He could have sat there and said, "How does this work God? I really need to know how this works before I follow through with this." He did not do it. He just did what God said. We could learn from the humility of Joseph. He was righteous in a trial, and when he received more revelation from God, he obeyed it.

And I think for us I think that is what James is talking about.

² Count it joy when you encounter various trials ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance it is perfect result, that you may be complete and lacking in nothing. ⁵ But if anyone lacks wisdom, God's wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives freely without reproach. [James 1:2-5]

God gave Joseph the wisdom he needed to obey Him. How about you, do you just obey what He says? Joseph is a wonderful example.

Ok so we have seen Joseph's dilemma – "It is not my baby." Mary found with child by the Holy Spirit. Joseph desiring to righteously put her away, God intervenes in a dream through an angel pointing him to the great truth that God was taking on human flesh in Mary's womb. "And do not fear, marry Mary." Why? Because Jesus is going to save His people from their sins. And all this points to the prophecy which is fulfilled "'Behold the virgin shall be with child, and she shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means 'God with us.'" [Matthew 1:23]

Can you say based on Scripture that God is with you? That the great gulf between you and God because of your sin has been taken care of? On what basis do you say God is with you? We have seen today the only way God can be with us is through the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. God the Son who took on human flesh. Some of you are without God, and without hope. Today is the day of salvation. God took on human flesh to pay the penalty for your sins. Cry out to the Lord Jesus Christ to save you from your sins. "Oh Lord Jesus save me from my sins, I believe You died on the cross for my sins, I believe You rose from the dead, that the penalty is paid, I can do nothing, I am sinful and I need You to save me." Humble yourself before Him.

And some of us have been saved. But maybe we have forgotten that God is with us. We have forgotten throughout the day that the living God who gave Himself for us is with us. That because our sins have been forgiven we can boldly come before His throne and receive grace in time of need. This should change the way we live every day. It should cause us to thank Him, and praise Him, and trust Him, and obey Him. For He gave Himself for you and me. Is God with you?

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Prayer

Dear Lord, I praise You and thank You for Your Son Jesus. I thank You for this wonderful plan, in the fullness of time You sent forth Your Son born of a woman, thank You. Thank You that although we were without God and without hope, without God and without hope in the world, thank You Lord God, that You sent Your Son, and that our sins are forgiven. Lord God I just pray right now, if there is anyone here who knows in their heart of hearts that things are empty, knows that they have no hope, and are without God, that they would recognize it is their, sin Lord God, it is their sin that is between You and them. That they would confess their sin and trust in Christ. Thank You for Your Word. And for those of us who know You, we realize and recognize and praise You that You are with us, in Christ. We thank You in Jesus name. Amen.

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