

**“Jesus is the Christ: The Submission of the Son” Matthew 1:18-25, Sermon Notes**  
**Pastor Marc Wragg**  
**Saving Grace Bible Church**  
**December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017**  
**Morning Worship Service**

“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.<sup>19</sup> And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.<sup>20</sup> 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 the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup> “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”<sup>22</sup> Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:<sup>23</sup> “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.”<sup>24</sup> And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife,<sup>25</sup> but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.” (Matthew 1:18-25)

**Introduction**

We have taken the last three weeks and looked at the Lord Jesus Christ. We come now to see Christ in His submission

Christmas is a time when we come together and reflect upon the great gift God has given us in Christ

- But it should also be a time where we step back and are amazed by God
- Amazed that the God of this universe took on human flesh
- Amazed that the God of glory humbled Himself to take on the frailty of humanity
- Amazed that the one who is before all things, in all things, and through whom all things find their being, subjected Himself to this creation
- Subjected Himself to the laws and order of the very universe and world He created

Looking in the manger we see, captured in the frailty of an infant, the fullness of God dwelling in bodily form

- The power and the wisdom of God is on display in the person of Jesus Christ

Before we look at how Jesus entered into this world and what it means for us, let us ponder for a moment why He came

- Jesus came in submission
- Submission is treated like a dirty word – We value our independence and freedom

"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.'" (John 4:34 NAS)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." (John 5:24 NAS)

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." (John 5:30 NAS)

"But the witness which I have is greater than *that of* John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me." (John 5:36 NAS)

"And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form." (John 5:37 NAS)

Matt. 10:40; Mk. 9:37; Lk. 9:48; Lk. 10:16; Jn. 1:33; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 5:24, 30, 36-37; Jn. 6:38-39, 44, 57; Jn. 7:16, 28-29, 33; Jn. 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; Jn. 9:4; Jn. 12:44-45, 49; Jn. 13:20; Jn. 14:24; Jn. 15:21; Jn. 16:5; Jn. 20:21; Acts 9:17

What cannot be missed is that Christ comes in obedience to the Father

- He submits to the Father's will
- The Father sends and the Son responds
- The virgin birth is first an act of submission by the Son to the Father

This is accommodation language for us. This is incarnational language. Christ, the eternal unchanging God, takes on the limitations of humanity in an act of submission to the Father

- At the birth of Christ, we see the greatest act of humility and submission which will ultimately result in the highest exultation for Christ. But not before He goes through the greatest suffering He or anyone has ever faced
- The price to honor the Father and accomplish the eternal plan of God did not come cheaply. The loneliness, sacrifice, suffering, and blood shed was real

The Glory of God is revealed to mankind on the day of the birth of Christ. To recount this, let us look at Matthew's gospel

- *Christmas, the birth of Christ, does not happen unless the Father plans and orchestrates it, and the Son submits to the Father's will*

## Textual Introduction

Matthew gives us no room to believe anything other than Jesus was born through the Virgin Mary as the result of God's work

- At the core of this teaching is the belief that Jesus Christ is like no other man, He, and He alone is the Messiah
- Matthew presents his message directly
- In His brevity of words, 8 verses total, he covers from conception to the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Baby Jesus' life when He was circumcised and named
- 9 months of time are covered in 8 verses
- The account lacks embellishment
- It lacks detail that would draw our attention away from the main point

Whole chapters of the Bible could be written just on this experience alone, and yet Matthew simply and directly recounts the events. What did the angel look like? How long did the conversation last? Did Mary have to touch the angel to verify he was real?

Matthew is direct with his account because:

*The brevity of the account in light of the impossibility of the event is what is stark here*

- We are amazed by the event
- Matthew is amazed at He who enters this world
- Look, if I am going to believe a lie, let's dress the story up a little and give it a little more flesh
- Tell me how the angel had handsome blue eyes and gold hair and carried a golden harp and when he winked sparkles flew out the side of his face
- If this is a lie you know the writer is going to get more elaborate! Because that is what we do when we tell a lie, we seek to dress the story up to make it believable

BTW friends this is exactly how Origen defended the Virgin birth against Celsus. He simply state this is God in flesh. Are we to believe that God almighty who performed so many miracles entered this world through sin?

- NO this is God
- And we need no more elaborate story than this, He is conceived of the Holy Spirit

Here Matthew is seeking to prove Jesus is the long-awaited Christ. He is the One Israel has been waiting for. Here finally in Jesus Christ, we find all the requirements for the Messiah are fulfilled

Argument # 1 - Jesus is the Messiah because He comes from the line of David and Abraham. Matt 1:1-17

Now here is Matthew's Second Argument

Jesus is the Messiah because he was conceived by God. (Matt 1:18-25)

This whole section demonstrates God's interaction with human history

This account is remarkable because it records for us how God began His earthly work

- We come to the focal point of God's Redemptive Plan
- Now everything God has been doing since the Fall of Adam, through the birth and growth of the Nation of Israel, through the rise and fall of the Kingdom now comes into perfect focus
- The High point; the crowning Jewel of His redemptive work is the Person and work of Jesus Christ
- All the years of sacrifices
- All the years of suffering with ungodly kings
- All the years of punishment and deportation
- All the years of silence

All these years now find wonderful fulfillment in Jesus Christ as God now enters the stage

From this text we learn of three divine works which strengthen Jesus' right to be called Messiah:

1. The Divine Origin of Jesus Christ
2. The Divine Protection of Jesus' Kingship
3. The Divine Proclamation of God's Redemption

Three works of God which brought Jesus Christ into this World and proved Him to be the Messiah

## **Body**

### **1. The Divine Origin of Jesus Christ**

"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 NAU)

Two out of the four gospels record the details of the virgin birth: Matthew and Luke

Matthew records the events from Joseph's perspective while Luke records the events from Mary's perspective

The story can basically be recounted like this:

"when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph" vs 18

They are betrothed. They are married but not like we understand marriage in our culture

- They are more than engaged but less than married as we understand marriage

During the time of Christ, marriage was a three-step process

1. There was an arrangement. – This was normally done by the parents, but could also be arranged through a professional wedding planner

- a. This could occur when the children were quite young or when they are of marriageable age: Girl 13 Boy 18
2. They were betrothed – this is a legal binding arrangement signed between two or more witnesses uniting the two parties together. They are legally married though they have not yet consummated their marriage. This period of time would last no longer than 1 year to give the groom an opportunity to prepare to receive his new bride
  - a. They are legally married at this point
  - b. IF there was something improper in the wife, the husband could divorce his wife with a writ of divorce and with two or more witnesses
  - c. Two witnesses were enough but one could shame the other person by having many more witnesses
3. Marriage – they would have a ceremony and consummate their marriage
  - At this point in their relationship Joseph and Mary are still not allowed to be together and alone on the same side of a locked door

Joseph and Mary were in this second stage of Marriage. They are officially married

They had been betrothed and “before they came together” vs 18

- It’s during this time an Angel comes to Mary and announces to her that the Holy Spirit has come upon her and that she is with Child

Now what I want you to see here is that Matthew makes it clear that Jesus’ birth is the result of the Holy Spirit’s work

“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 NAU)

“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 the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 1:20 NAU)

How? The Holy Spirit, God, created life in conception

Literally the text reads “for the one having been begotten in her is from the Holy Spirit.” Vs 20

- That which has been born
- That which has been conceived is from God
- This is God’s announcement and Matthew states this fact as directly as the Angel stated the matter to Joseph

BTW a side note here, life starts at conception. At conception Jesus was considered a child. Keep that in mind when people want to discard unwanted children and keep their conscience from accusing them

No questions asked by Joseph:

- How is this possible? \* When did this occur?
- How can the immaterial make the material?
- Are there going to be any lasting health consequences?

In this text we see a work of God the Holy Spirit who supernaturally conceives Christ in the womb of Mary

- Jesus came into this world by the work of God

One more observation:

Understand this, without the uniquely Jewish tradition of the betrothal period Jesus' conception would have been called into question. Or Jesus would not have had the right of his earthly father Joseph to sit upon the throne of David. Joseph had to be both legally bound to Mary and at the same time kept away from Mary for purity's sake in order for the virgin conception of Christ to take place

- If this happened today we could say no this is a honeymoon baby
- If this happened today and she was found with child before the wedding the child would need to be adopted and would not be considered a direct descendent

God's sovereignty over human tradition paved the way for the coming of Jesus. But because Joseph and Mary were actually married, this son was their son even though Jesus was not of Joseph's blood

*This Child, Jesus, is of Divine Origin and is the legal heir to the throne of David, and His rights were divinely preserved by God's sovereignty over human tradition to bring the Christ into this world at the perfect time*

Notice how God protected the rights of Jesus Christ:

## **2. The Divine Protection of Jesus' Kingship**

Please bear with me and follow with me on this.

Some have asked, is it really necessary to believe in the virgin birth? Can we not just treat the birth of Christ like a hallmark card? Nice story with a nice message, but not really true?

No, we cannot treat the account of Jesus birth like a fairytale. Yes, it was necessary. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is necessary because

1. He was born of God. We have to acknowledge that Jesus is from God. He is the Son of God conceived by the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. It was necessary to protect Jesus' right to the throne of David

You see there is a problem vs 11 & 12

- Joseph's line is cursed and Joseph's lineage gives Jesus legal right to the throne
- There is one itsy bitsy problem with the Joseph's lineage to the Davidic throne
- The problem is that there is a Prophetic curse against it given by the Prophet Jeremiah
  - The prophet Jeremiah prophesied against Jeconiah and God was rebuking the evil kings of Judah

"Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar? Or is he an undesirable vessel? Why have he and his descendants been hurled out And cast into a land that they had not known?<sup>29</sup> "O land, land, land, Hear the word of the LORD!<sup>30</sup> "Thus says the LORD, 'Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.'" (Jeremiah 22:28-30 NAU)

- None of Jeconiah's descendants will prosper by sitting on the throne of David
- Now we are in a pickle here. How can Jesus come from Joseph and still be an heir through Jeconiah's cursed line?
- In comes the necessity of the Virgin Birth!
  - Jesus receives the legal status of His father Joseph but not the hereditary status otherwise he would be cursed and God's Word made void
- Since the legal right to the throne was passed through the father, Jesus had to be Virgin born to be able to satisfy God's demands and fulfill all of God's pronouncements against the wicked kings of Israel
- No man can accomplish this work God had to do it
- This is another demonstration of God's work to bring the Messiah into this World! What is impossible for man is not impossible for God
- God was preserving Jesus Right to the throne of David by making him the legal son of Joseph, who was a legal descendant of David, and at the same time not the physical son of Joseph so that he was not a part of the curse upon Jeconiah

Isn't that amazing!

This shows God's sovereignty over man to bring about His desired end. God was able to curse Jeconiah for His open rebellion and evil 3-month rule after his father Jehoiakim died, and to make Jesus the rightful heir to the throne of David

1. Not only did God protect Jesus from a curse in the messianic line in order to preserve his right to be King over Israel
2. BUT God also preserved the marriage of Joseph and Mary in order to preserve Jesus' legal status

This is important to recognize because Joseph was on the verge of divorcing his wife over these events

Now Notice vs 19 again

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly

- How did Joseph find out? Am I the only one who wondered this?
  - We know Mary did not change her Facebook timeline to expecting Baby
  - So either Mary told Joseph the great news or he found out by observation. You can only keep those things hidden for so long
- When Joseph found out, I like to imagine that he said something stupid as all men do when they stunned by their wives
- We do not know
- What we do know is that they had some kind of discussion OR
- Joseph took the news and walked out silently
- I believe the former happened and now as vs 19 records Joseph is in internal turmoil and he cannot imagine Mary's tale is true

Joseph was experiencing honest, pure, real, doubt here

- As vs 19 says Joseph planned to send her away
- He was sympathetic to her and her story so he sought to do this in a righteous way but he had made up his mind

### **But Notice again vs 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 the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

- The Angel's message is quick and to the point
  - 1- Do not be afraid to make Mary your wife – IE drop the plans for divorce
  - 2- This child is of the Holy Spirit – He is from God

*The most important aspect I want you to see here is that God intercedes between Mary and Joseph to preserve their marriage and to protect Jesus' legal right to the David throne*

If Jesus was not from God . . . then Joseph was going to drop Mary faster than a crispy crème from a THM menu

- God brought Jesus into this world through the Holy Spirit
- God preserved the legal rights of Jesus to become the King of Israel by protecting Him from a cursed genealogy through the virgin birth and by preserving the marriage union between Joseph and Mary

Lastly, we see that God proclaims His plan of salvation through the Child

### **3. The Divine Proclamation of Redemption**

"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "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." <sup>24</sup> And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, <sup>25</sup> but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus." (Matthew 1:21-25 NAU)

That is the glorious message here pronounced by the Angel. Jesus has come to save His people from their sin. Joseph and Mary have been allowed by God to be an inseparable part of redemptive history. The Angel proclaims that the Child's name is to be Jesus. The name Jesus is a form of the Hebrew Joshua, Jeshua which means "Jehova will save." The supernatural work and the redemptive plan was enough to defend the validity of the Virgin Birth to Joseph

This is important to understand, the Angel's pronouncement was more about the redemptive work than the physical manifestation

- The angel does not explain how
- He explains why
- His name is Jesus and He will save His people from their sins

1<sup>st</sup> The Angel Announces who this Baby is, this is Jesus who will take away the sins of His people

2<sup>nd</sup> Matthew adds the OT Prophet Isaiah in the mix so that we the readers understand this is the Messiah in verse 23

*Is 7:14 "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."*

#### 1) The Context Proves the VB

- a. In this context God is speaking to Ahaz and commanding him to ask for a sign – the idea of sign here is something miraculous – so that God can demonstrate that His message is true
- b. Ahaz is unwilling to ask, so God gives the sign in vs 14
- c. Some have concluded that in Isaiah 8:1-4 this prophecy was fulfilled when Isaiah's wife conceived and bore a child
- d. 7:11-14 – it would not be a sign for a woman of marriageable age to give birth

But this conclusion never sat well with Jewish scholars. You need to catch this. When people today argue against the virgin birth they say it is we Christians who are twisting the OT prophets to make them fit

#### 2) The Septuagint Translation Evidences the VB

Please understand this, OT was originally written in Hebrew, primarily. There are some sections written in Aramaic after the Jewish deportation. But the primary language of the OT is Hebrew.

The Jews were then deported from Jerusalem and whole generations were lost and the people forgot their native language. For this reason, Ezra the scribe had to translate the word of God and communicate its meaning to the people after Israel was allowed to return. Eventually the Greek language started to become the dominate language of trade, because of Alexander the Great, and consequently the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek. Note this in particular, this translation work was not done by Christians. This work was done by Jewish scholars. These men had no ax to grind. They had no inward desire to present a Christian interpretation of Isa 7:14. They desired to remain faithful to the meaning of these words. Therefore, they were unbiased neutral translators trying to remain faithful to the original text and its intention

- How did they translate Isa 7:14? As Virgin

Secondly, these men lived in a context and time where they could master the ancient biblical Hebrew. Are we to assume today that our schooling is so far superior to these men that we know how to handle the Biblical Hebrew better than they do? It is arrogance to believe that 21<sup>st</sup> century scholar understands Hebrew etymology and translation better than a pre-Christ, pre-Christian translator

Not only did the early secular Hebrew translators view this passage as referring to a Virgin, but also early Jewish commentators did as well

### 3) Jewish Commentators Believe this was a Virgin

MacArthur Notes:

“The most famous medieval Jewish interpreter, Rashi (1040-1105 ad), who was an opponent of Christianity, made the following comment: “Behold the ‘alma shall conceive and have a son and shall call his name Immanuel’ means that our Creator shall be with us. And this is the sign: the one who will conceive is a girl who never in her life has had intercourse with any man. Upon this one shall the Holy Spirit have power.” These are the exact words of a hostile Jewish scholar who seeks to remain faithful to the Hebrew text. “

### 4) The Hebrew word “Alma” means Virgin

It should be noted that in Modern Hebrew the word Virgin is alma (Gen. 24:43- Rebeka; Exod. 2:8- Moses’ Sister; Psa. 68:26-maidens ; Prov. 30:19 - courting; Song 1:3-maidens; 6:8-Solomons court; Isa. 7:14)

John continues: “Matthew does not give the term alma a Christian “twist,” but used it with the same meaning with which all Jews of that time used it. In any case, his teaching of the virgin birth does not hinge on that word. It is made incontestably clear by the preceding statements that Jesus’ conception was ‘by the Holy Spirit.’”

So let me sum up the argument really quick, the Virgin conception and birth are directly taught because:

### 1) The Context of IS 7:14 Demands a Miracle

- 2) Neutral translators translate Is 7:14 as virgin
- 3) Hostile, or unfavorable, commentators agree that Is 7:14 refers to a virgin
- 4) The Hebrew Word Alma refers to a Virgin

Through the angel, then it is made clear that this child should be called Jesus – for He will save His people from their sins

And by Matthew’s connection to the OT we see that He should also be called Immanuel – which means God with us

In Jesus Christ we have God with us saving us from our sins

In the testimony of the angel of God and the Prophet of God, we have Divine proclamation that in Jesus we have the Messiah who is God with us

## **Conclusion**

What cannot be missed in this account from Matthew is God’s involvement from the beginning to the end. We should not be surprised of a supernatural account of Jesus’ birth because God was at work through His Spirit to bring Jesus in the world

- When Joseph doubted and struggled with Mary’s account of what was happening, God sent a messenger to comfort him
- When Jesus came into the World, God named him to reflect the work he was to perform. Jesus came to save His people from THEIR sin
  - He came to be a savior of the World
  - He came to satisfy the wrath of God
  - He came to provide a righteousness which satisfies the law
- And when none of it made sense God confirmed through the testimony of the prophet Isaiah that indeed in Jesus Christ we have Immanuel, “God with us.”

Do you believe in the message of the Word of God? Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God born from the Virgin Mary? Are you willing to proclaim this belief as truth?

- As we have looked at Matthew’s teaching here, I am convinced there is no other way we can look at this teaching
- Jesus Christ is the Son of God
  - God in His providence brought His Son into our world
  - God supernaturally worked in Mary through the Holy Spirit to conceive the child
  - God protected Jesus from being disqualified as Messiah by informing Joseph of His work and directing Joseph to remain with Mary

- God Announced His work by proclaiming that this Child will be called “Immanuel” which means “God with us.”

At the virgin Birth the submission of Christ was richly on display AND in the midst of that submission God was wonderfully protecting.

- This is what we need to learn. God calls us to great acts of humble submission. We need to by faith believe He will protect us and care for us through any difficulty. Just as Christ did
- If Christ does not humbly submit and trust the Father we are not saved

Often times when we are called to submit to God we ask who is going to protect me? Who is going to care for me while I am submitting to God?

- That is not the right question
- The obvious answer is God cares for us
- God will supply our every need
- There is not one ounce of suffering that we face in our humble submission to God that will not go honored in this life or the next from God
- Not one act of faith will be a waste of your time
- Not one moment of humble submission will go unnoticed from God

The question is not: Who will care for us when we are acting in humble submission?

- The question is: What is God going to accomplish through you when you yield in faith to His will?

When Christ humbled Himself and submitted, God delivered Him and His people

- Who knows how God is going to use our faith to accomplish great things
- When we come to this time of year and look upon Christ, we should see His humble submission and God’s faithful protection without which we are not redeemed today

You, too, today, can see the same glory of God manifest through your life: Humbly submit to His Word and watch as He protects and leads you for His glory

**Saving Grace Bible Church © 2017.**  
**All rights reserved. [www.SavingGraceBibleChurch.org](http://www.SavingGraceBibleChurch.org)**