

God Miraculously Steps into our Mess (Matthew 1:18-25)

Last week we learned through the genealogy about Jesus being a descendent of Abraham and David

- And that the messiah had to be (covenants that had to do with lineage) (bless/rule)
- But, Abraham and David had many descendants
 - What made Jesus *THE* descendant who would **ble**ss and **rule** the nations forever? (not an other)
 - There are many ways we can answer that question:
 - Miracles/healing ministry—witness of John the Baptist—Resurrection from the dead

But the first line of evidence presented here by Matthew is **Jesus' Virgin Birth** (The Incarnation)

- Jesus was not just **A** son of Abraham and David—Jesus is **THE** son of Abraham and David—who will extend God's **gracious blessing** and **righteous rule** into the world | (Savior and **Immanuel**)
- Matthew is demonstrating this to be the case through reporting **divine intervention**

Now the birth of Jesus **Christ** was as follows... (v. 18a)

- **Christ** = **Messiah** | **Jesus** = name; **Christ** = title (Matthew employs this title in vv. 1, 17, 18)
- Not only is Jesus' ancestry proof of Him being the **messiah**—but also the circumstances surrounding his birth

... when His mother Mary had been **betrothed** to Joseph, before they came together she was **found** to be with child by the Holy Spirit. (v. 18b)

- **Betrothal** = legally binding (like marriage); no sex (**before they came together**); lasted about a year
- Suddenly, Mary is showing... (she is **found to be with child**) (**Scandal!**)
 - Matthew immediately tells us: **by the Holy Spirit** (RETURN TO THIS IN A MOMENT)

What about this scandal?

- A very big deal in that culture
- A very big deal in God's law (**Deuteronomy 22:20-22**, NIV)
 - If Joseph were obeying the Mosaic Law, this is what He would have done (**but, verse 19**)
 - **We see a different dynamic at work here**
 - Remember Jesus and the woman caught in adultery (**John 8:3-5**, NASB)
 - Jesus did not condemn her, because He would be condemned **for** her
 - It is not that the Law changed, it is that the One had come who would pay our debt to the law and free us from its consequences (sexual codes have not changed)
 - **What we see happening with Joseph is that the mercy of the Messiah was already breaking in to the world (at conception)**
 - (Now of course, Mary was not guilty, but Joseph didn't know that—he was truly extending mercy; cf **John 8**)

That this is exactly what God would have Joseph do (extend mercy) is evidence by what happens next

- **Verses 20 and 24-25**
 - Something different was happening here (a picture of the Messiah's mercy breaking in)
 - Joseph would take her (publicly perceived) **shame** on himself
 - Joseph would **identify** with her and **share** in **humiliation** (though innocent)
 - A picture/hint/foreshadow/illustration in the story
 - The way Israel functioned under God's rule was being transformed as the fulfillment of their story (Jesus the Messiah) was coming on the scene
 - **Isaiah 53:5-6**, NIV
 - **Isaiah 54:4**, NASB

Fear not, for you will not be put to **shame**; and do not feel **humiliated**, for you will not be disgraced; but you will **forget** the **shame** of your youth...

Notice what is happening there:

- The **punishment/shame/humiliation** that was due to us, **would be taken by** the promised one of God
- The **moral code/penalty for violation** was the same—but there was coming a **Substitute** for us
 - **My Servant** will justify the many, as He will bear **their iniquities**. –Isaiah 53:11d-e, NASB

Now we see an added dimension to Jesus the Messiah:

- He is not only the promised seed of Abraham (extending God's blessing)
- And the promised son of David (extending God's rule)
- But, the promised Servant of Yahweh (bringing God's mercy)

See **Matthew 1:21**

- **Saving people from their sins** = how God's **blessing** and **rule** are brought to the world

This is accomplished by God's miracle (**see Matthew 1:22-23**)

- Notice that again, Matthew is telling us that Jesus is the fulfillment of **ancient promises and prophecies**
 - **Isaiah 7:14**, NASB

The Virgin Birth

- **... she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.** (v. 18b)
- **... that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.** (v. 20b)
 - Not a parallel to some ancient mythologies where gods have sex with women
 - A unique work of the one true God (no intercourse; no man involved)
 - A miracle of the highest order (greatest?)

Some Christians are tempted to doubt the Virgin Birth of Jesus (for a few reasons)

- **1. The Miraculous Nature**
 - If you cannot accept miracles you cannot accept God (creation), or Christianity (Resurrection)
- **2. The Bible's Claims**
 - If you cannot believe Matthew and Luke on this, what do you believe? (The Cross?)
- **3. The Old Testament Passage**
 - **עַלְמָה** (virgin; young woman of marriageable age)
 - Matthew tells us how to translate it as it pertains to Jesus (and that it does pertain to Jesus)
 - Double fulfillment

Here is why this matters (doctrinally and practically)

- Christian Doctrine (Scripture) teaches that:
 - **Jesus had a dual nature (fully God and fully human) (i.e. The Incarnation) (Cf. John 1)**
 - Why did Jesus have to be fully human?
 - To be a substitute sacrifice (**Hebrews 2:14-17**, NIV)
 - To be the one mediator (**1 Timothy 2:5**, NIV)
 - For representative obedience (**Romans 5:18-19**, NIV)
 - To be our example (**1 John 2:6**, NIV)
 - To be our empathetic high priest (**Hebrew 2:18** and **4:15-16**, NIV)
 - Why did Jesus have to be fully divine?
 - Only God can save (**Isaiah 43:11** and **Titus 2:11-13**, NASB)
 - Only God is without sin (**Hebrews 7:26-27** and **2 Corinthians 5:21**, NASB)
 - Therefore, only Jesus (as God in the flesh) could bear the penalty for our sins
 - Only by being **fully God and fully human** can Jesus save us
 - Only the **conditions of the virgin birth** can bring about the **dual nature** of Jesus
- Why the Virgin Birth is good news that teaches us to be glad and rejoice:
 - God **Himself** came to save us (love)
 - God has intervened in our messes with a great **miracle** of mercy (incarnation)
 - God has brought us deliverance from the **penalty and guilt** of the law (Joseph)
 - God has **accomplished** what humanity never could (salvation)
 - God intends to bring His blessing and rule **through** His people (Mary)
 - God is present **with us** (Immanuel)