

7. The Birth of Christ

Matthew 1:18-25

To understand who Jesus Christ really was, we can start by looking at a very unique birth. We have two records of it, one in Luke mainly from His mother Mary's view, and this one in Matthew, mainly from her husband-to-be Joseph's.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

[18] 耶稣基督降生的事记在下面：他母亲马利亚已经许配了约瑟，还没有迎娶，马利亚就从圣灵怀了孕。

“*Before they came together, she was found with child.*” Anyone in this situation would think straight away she's been messing around. And that's exactly what Joseph thought:

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

[19] 他丈夫约瑟是个义人，不愿意明明的羞辱他，想要暗暗的把他休了。

Joseph was a just man, so he wanted to deal with this situation properly. Under the law of Moses, there were two ways of dealing with this. He could either make her a public example and get her stoned to death, which was the punishment for adultery, or he could just quietly divorce her. He chose the latter.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

[20] 正思念这事的时候，有主的使者向他梦中显现，说：大卫的子孙约瑟，不要怕！只管娶过你的妻子马利亚来，因他所怀的孕是从圣灵来的。

But before he could do anything, an angel of the Lord spoke to Him and told him to go ahead and take Mary as his wife, because “*that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*” In other words, there was no father, no third party. Mary had already been told:

Luke 1:35

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

[35] 天使回答说：圣灵要临到你身上，至高者的能力要荫庇你，因此所要生的圣者必称为神的儿子。

The father was the Holy Spirit. Muslims think this terrible. They say, “God forbid that He should have carnal relations with a woman.” But it doesn’t say that. It says the Holy Spirit “overshadowed” her. They also say, “God forbid that He should have a Son.” But we’re told here that her son was specifically to be called “*the Son of God.*”

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

[21] 他将要生一个儿子，你要给他起名叫耶稣，因他要将自己的百姓从罪恶里救出来。

The name “*Jesus*” means “He saves.” And that’s exactly what He came into the world to do, to save all those who come to Him in faith from the punishment of their sins, by dying in their place.

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

[18] 因基督也曾一次为罪受苦，就是义的代替不义的，为要引我们到神面前。

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

[22] 这一切的事成就是要应验主藉先知所说的话，

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

[23] 说：必有童女怀孕生子；人要称他的名为以马内利。

We’re told in Scripture:

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[1] 太初有道，道与神同在，道就是神。

Jesus Christ was from eternity, the beginning. The book of Proverbs says something similar as it personifies Wisdom:

Proverbs 8:22-23

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

[22] 在耶和华造化的起头，在太初创造万物之先，就有了我。 [23] 从亘古，从太初，未有世界以前，我已被立。

This is Jesus Christ. He is the Word. He is Wisdom. And we're told He "*was with God*" and at the same time "*was God.*" So how can Jesus Christ be a man on this earth, and a God at the same time?

We could go into a discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity here. This says that God is one being, but exists in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each person has separate work to do, but each is worshipped as God. But there's only one God. You try to understand that. We can't understand it at all really. The doctrine of the Trinity is man's best feeble attempt to explain this. We're specifically told God became man:

John 1:14

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

[14] 道成了肉身，住在我们中间，充充满满的有恩典有真理。我们也见过他的荣光，正是父独生子的荣光。

1 Timothy 3:16

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

[16] 大哉，敬虔的奥秘！无人不以为然：就是神在肉身显现，被圣灵称义，被天使看见，被传於外邦，被世人信服，被接在荣耀里。

In order to save a people for Himself, what does God have to do? Just send messages telling us how to behave? No. Whatever He asks us to do, we just can't do it. He had to come personally into the world as a man. Not only to be an example to us of how we should live, but to pay the price of sin for all those who come to Him. There could be no other way. Somebody has to pay the price for our sins, we can't do it ourselves. But:

1 John 4:9-10

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

[9] 神差他独生子到世间来，使我们藉着他得生，神爱我们的心在此就显明了。[10] 不是我们爱神，乃是神爱我们，差他的儿子为我们的罪作了挽回祭，这就是爱了。

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

[24] 约瑟醒了，起来，就遵着主使者的吩咐把妻子娶过来；

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

[25] 只是没有和他同房，等他生了儿子（有古卷：等他生了头胎的儿子），就给他起名叫耶稣。

Both Joseph and Mary did exactly what the Lord told them. He took her for his wife, but had no sexual relations with her until after the birth. They had at least six children in the normal way after that. And they called His name Jesus, just as the angel had told them.