

A UNIQUE BIRTH Sunday School- December 20, 2009

Unifying Topic: **IMMANUEL IS BORN**

Lesson Text

I. Joseph's Decision (Matthew 1:18-21)

II. A Prophecy Fulfilled (Matthew 1:22-23)

III. A savior is Born (Matthew 1:24-25)

The Main Thought: And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for she shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People can feel alone in their lives. Who can break down the walls that isolate us? Scripture proclaims that Jesus came to be God with us.

Lesson Aim: To help students appreciate how Mary's future husband Joseph patiently trusted God with Jesus' birth.

Life aim: To teach how God's wise, loving guidance of Joseph in handling the discovery of Mary's pregnancy and the birth of Jesus can inspire us in dealing with our own difficult and challenging decisions in life.

1:18 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.

1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

1:20 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.

1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

1:23 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.

1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

HISTORY:

Chapter 1:1-17

1:1 The Genealogy Of Jesus

Matthew was writing to the Jews, zeroing in on Jesus the Messiah, the King of the Jews. Now, because no Jew would accept a Messiah who did not meet the requirements of biology and birthplace, Matthew is addressing that first. The genealogy of Jesus Christ shows that Jesus is the legal heir to the throne of David. Matthew traces the roots of Jesus Christ in order to prove that He is the promised Messiah.

1:2 Son Of Abraham

Matthew starts with Abraham. God promised that Abraham was going to be the patriarch of a great nation. And in Abraham, all the families of the earth would be blessed. The Messiah would be the One to bless the nations of the earth.

Son Of Isaac

Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac.

Son Of Jacob

Isaac then had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Would God continue to narrow down the Messiah's lineage? Indeed! Balaam prophesied, *Num. 24:17 "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel..."* From ancient times, the Jews knew that this passage foretold of their coming Messiah, and that He would come through the line from Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob.

1:3 Son Of Judah

Jacob, being called Israel, had many sons, whose descendants became the twelve tribes of Israel. On his deathbed, Jacob continued to narrow down the Messianic line when he prophesied that the star to

¹ <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/40-Matthew/Matthew0101.html>

come forth from him, that same prophetic scepter, would come from one of his sons. Gen. 49:10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples." The nations would obey this ruler called "Shiloh," which means "peace." This prince of peace would come from the tribe of Judah.

1:4-5 Son Of Ruth And Boaz

Down through the tribe of Judah we go, until we arrive at a man named Boaz, who we know is the hero of the Old Testament book of Ruth. You see, Ruth was a Moabite woman. When her husband died, she followed her mother-in-law Naomi from Moab back to Naomi's hometown: Bethlehem in Judah. Once in Israel, Naomi discovered that because her late husband had sold the family land when they left Bethlehem, it couldn't be redeemed back without a relative marrying her daughter-in-law Ruth. Boaz becomes the knight in shining armor, the kinsman redeemer, by marrying Ruth and restoring the family land in Bethlehem. This becomes vitally important, since the prophet Micah would later prophesy, Mic. 5:2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me, to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." Messiah the king, though existent from eternity past, would somehow come from Bethlehem.

Son Of Jesse

Ruth and Boaz were the grandparents of a man named Jesse. Once again, the lineage follows precisely. You see, Isaiah prophesied, Is.11:1-2 "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him..." This descendant of Jesse, the Bethlehemite would be the Messiah, the king, not only of Israel, but of all the nations. Is.11:10 "Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples..."

1:6a Son Of David

Jesse had eight sons, the youngest of whom was David. David grew up to be the King of Israel, and the prophecies continued to pour forth about the Messiah. The Word of the Lord to David was... 2Sam.7:16 "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." Psa.132:11 "The Lord has sworn to David a truth from which He will not turn back: Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne." The Messiah would be eternal, would rule on the throne of David, and would be a descendant of David. In Revelation, Jesus says, Rev. 22:16 "...I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

1:6b-11 From Solomon To Jeconiah

David had several sons. Solomon was the one who became king, and Matthew traces the genealogy through Solomon. However, there is a major problem here. You see, as the kingly line continued, ungodliness was rampant among most of Judah's kings, which reached a horribly low point when Jeconiah became king in 2Kings 24. 2Kings 24:9 He did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done." Enough was enough, and God cursed the king's blood line. Jer. 22:30 "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." Think about it: This curse should mean the end of all the promises. Now how can Messiah become king?

1:12-17 Joseph

The kingly line of David descended to Joseph. Joseph's firstborn son would have the right to sit on David's throne, but God had cursed everyone with that bloodline. But wait: While Jesus had all legal rights to Joseph's lineage, He did not have the blood of that line, for He was born of a virgin, conceived in her womb by the Holy Spirit! Does this mean that Jesus is not truly the branch of Jesse, and the root of David? No! You see, the gospel of Luke also gives us Jesus' genealogy, but not through His legal line. Luke tells us His biological bloodline, which He had through His mother Mary.

And Mary's line also descends through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, through Jesse to David. But from David, Mary's heritage did not extend through the kingly line of Solomon. Instead, she was a descendant of David's son Nathan. Thus, according to Jewish Law, Jesus could legally inherit the throne, <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

while completely avoiding the blood curse on Jeconiah's line! It is apparent that from eternity past, God had the whole thing worked out. He foretold of a specific Messiah, who could only be One: Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ accepted the title of messiah on three different occasions (Matt.16:17; Mk.14:61; Jh.4:26). The name Jesus shows him to be man. The name Christ shows him to be God's anointed, God's very own Son. Christ is Jesus' official title. It identifies him officially as:

- Prophet (Deut.18:15-19)
- Priest (Ps.110:4)
- King (2Sam.7:12-13)

These officials were always anointed with oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit who was to perfectly anoint the Christ, the Messiah (Matt.3:16; Mk.1:10-11; Lk.3:21-22; Jh.1:32-33).

LESSON:

Matthew 1:18-21: Joseph's Decision

1:18 Betrothed

Mary and Joseph were betrothed. The betrothal is a promise of marriage, sort of like being engaged in modern society. However, the bond of the promise made was much stronger than a simple engagement. During the time of betrothal, although the couple is not joined physically, they are bound by a marriage covenant. To break of the engagement would require a decree of divorce.

There are three steps involved in a Jewish marriage:

1. The engagement: the parents usually determined who a child was to marry—often at a very early age.
2. The betrothal: at a determined time the couple agreed with the engagement. If they followed through, the betrothal was immediately binding. A legal divorce was thereafter required. The betrothal lasted one year. When Joseph discovered Mary's pregnancy, they were already betrothed to one another.
3. The marriage: the consummation of the couple took place. It should be noted that in Joseph's case consummation did not occur until after Jesus' birth.

Before They Came Together

And so Mary and Joseph are betrothed, but not united in physical contact. At this point in their relationship, she was found to be with child –pregnant. But she had not committed the sin of adultery or had relations with any man. The adultery law said that a betrothed virgin who committed adultery was to be stoned to death (Deut.22:21-24). She was with child by the Holy Spirit.

With Child By The Holy Spirit

What does it mean "*to be with child by the Holy Spirit?*" The gospel of Luke explains that the angel Gabriel told Mary: *Luke 1:31 "...you will conceive in your womb and bear a son..."* When Mary inquired as to how this would happen, since she was a virgin, *Luke 1:35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."* Mary, a virgin who had not been with any man, became pregnant. This pregnancy was a supernatural act by the power of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Found To Be With Child

Mary's pregnancy might have begun supernaturally, but it progressed as all others do biologically. It was not too many weeks after this that her pregnancy became known - she was found to be with child. You can only imagine Joseph's reaction to this. He knew she was pregnant, and he knew the baby wasn't his. The two of them might have had a conversation about it, with Mary insisting that the baby was the Son of God. If they did, Joseph didn't believe her.

1:19 Joseph A Righteous Man

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Joseph was a righteous man. And righteousness is God's perfect balance of justice and mercy. Justice said that divorce was the thing to do - break the vow of betrothal. But justice also said that if a man find that the woman he is to marry is found not to be a virgin, *Deut. 22:21* "Then they shall bring out the girl to the doorway of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death..." That is justice. But being a righteous man meant Joseph was also merciful. He knew he couldn't marry her, but also wanted to show mercy. And so, rather than a public stoning, Joseph would quietly divorce her and send her away somewhere.

1:20 An Angel In A Dream

Without supernatural intervention, Joseph would not have wed Mary. But an angel appeared to him in a dream and reassured him that Mary was still a virgin, and that the wedding should still take place. He told Joseph that the child was God's and shall call His name JESUS!

Matthew 1:22-23: A Prophecy Fulfilled

1:21-23 Call His Name Jesus

Joseph was not excluded from the parenting of God's Son. He was to give the child a certain name. (Jewish boys would get their names when they were eight days old, on the day of their circumcision (See *Luke 2:21*). *Matt. 1:21* "...call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Call His name "YAH-weh is salvation" because it is HE who will save HIS people from their sins." In other words, it is YAH-weh - God Himself - who is in Mary's womb, Who would save His people from their sins. The Bible says, *1Tim. 1:15* ...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Call His Name Immanuel

Jesus Christ is shown to be God. And Matthew reminds his readers that this was prophesied long ago in the book of Isaiah, when the Lord told King Ahaz, *Is. 7:14* "...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 This miracle child's name would be called Immanuel, meaning, "God with us." This child born of a virgin is God with us.

To Fulfill

In keeping with Matthew's mission, he will continually point out in his gospel how Jesus was fulfilling Old Testament prophecy.

Matthew 1:24-25: A Savior is Born

1:24-25 Kept Her A Virgin Until

Mary and Joseph did get married, and after Jesus was born, they had normal marital relations and built their family. Some claim that Mary was a perpetual virgin, but these verses clearly tell us otherwise. In addition, we will discover in chapter thirteen that Mary and Joseph later had other children, who would be Jesus' half brothers and sisters.

He Called His Name Jesus

When the baby was eight days old, He was taken to the temple, circumcised, and given the name Jesus. This name would one day be the focus of the world. The Bible tells us that:

- we call on the name of Jesus (*1Cor. 1:2*),
- we assemble in the name of Jesus (*1Cor. 5:4*),
- we were justified in the name of Jesus (*1Cor. 6:11*), and...
- *Phil. 2:10* ...at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW...

1John 3:23, This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY:

²In the **Old Testament**, there was Abraham and there Sarah: Abraham was 100 years of age, and Sarah not far behind at 90 years of age, yet of course the plan of God and the story of God's word is that it was that barren womb of Sarah's that brought forth a deliverer in Isaac (*Gen.30:11*). We find Isaac,

² <http://www.preachtheword.com/sermon/christmas1-barrenwombvirginbirth.shtml>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Abraham's son, married Rebekah, also her womb was barren, and yet, we find another miracle taking place, Jacob - who later became Israel, the father of the nation - he was born to Rebekah's barren womb (*Gen. 25:21*). Then Jacob married Rachel, and her womb also was barren, yet it was from her womb that Joseph was born - another deliverer to the people of Israel (*Gen. 29:31*). In *Judges 13: 2*, we read of a man called Manoah, his wife is unnamed, and Samson was born from Manoah's wife's barren womb. In *1 Samuel chapter 1* we read of a man called Elkanah, a woman by the name of Hannah - she too possessed a barren womb. And we find that from that barren womb of Hannah, Samuel was born. Ruth found mercy in the eyes of the Lord, and we read also that she bore Obed, who begat Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David.

Scripture says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel". Whether it's the barren womb, or whether it's the virgin womb, there is one thing in common right throughout the whole scripture and it's this: God would have His way, and God would bring that Man forth, God would do it in His own time and in His own mechanism - and, praise God, "*When the fullness of time was come, God brought forth His Son made of a woman.*" Hallelujah! Made of a woman!

Now we go to the **New Testament**, and we find exactly the same thing - not to the same extent, but we find in the beginning chapters of the Gospels a man by the name of Zacharias and a woman by the name of Elisabeth, also past the age of childbearing with a barren womb. We find that the greatest prophet ever born of woman, John the Baptist, was born of her womb.

Luke Chapter 1 verse 28, the angel came unto Mary and said: "*Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*" She was a virgin: "*I know not a man, how can this be?*" The obstacle in Mary was not a barren womb, but was a virgin womb - but it wasn't an obstacle, it wasn't a barrier, the Word of God would teach us that it was an absolute necessity that she was a virgin!

Grace stepped in anew. Mary was already bound or betrothed to Joseph. Mary pregnant and Joseph was not the father! Matthew records an angel appearing to Joseph, encouraging him to go ahead with the marriage and accept God's blessing on their union, in spite of impending social disgrace. He had trusted Mary! Somehow, God had blessed the child in Mary's womb, and this child would be the Savior of the people.

Matt.1:20b, "...*Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*" *Matt.1:23*, "*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.*"

Even the virgin womb was no obstacle in presenting us today with a Saviour. The Lord Jesus Christ would not be born of a barren womb, but rather He would be born of a fruitful womb! That womb would be fertilized not by man, but by the Holy Spirit of the Living God! What a difference! In fact, this was beyond the natural. This was the **UNIQUENESS** of God Almighty! There was no natural process at all within the conception of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, His birth was normal, but His conception was of the Holy Ghost. Yes, He would be a Deliverer; Yes, He would come to a barren nation; Yes, there would be no insurmountable objects that would prevent God bringing Him to the people. But, His Father was God Almighty! That took a virgin birth!

The womb of Mary's was only used as a medium and a mechanism to bring the Eternal One into time. These other births were miraculous, but this is something else.

APPLICATION:

Both Joseph and Mary had to deal with decisions! How they handled them, took faith! Joseph chose to show MERCY. Mary chose TRUST! At this time, will you choose Christ?