

Matthew 1:18-21
“The Birth of Jesus”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 18-19 Earthly Situation

III.) Vs. 20-21 Heavenly Pronouncement

I.) Intro.

The birth of Christ is a story most are quite familiar. Matthew, a converted tax collector was used to give us a history lesson as to Jesus' entrance into humanity. There are over 300 prophecies in the O.T. about the First Coming of Jesus, many of these are repetitious of each other. So, when you what you are left with is 108 specific prophecies all fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth. Of those 108 fulfilled prophecies 39 of them appear in the book of Matthew, more than any other book. The story of the birth of Christ is one in which we see Gods words being transmitted through the body of a man, Jesus is that bridge and His birth is the story of that bridge!

II.) Vs. 18-19 Earthly Situation

Vs.18 Matthew, let's his readers know specific things about the timing of Jesus' birth:

1. **First, we are told the time of Mary's pregnancy:** “*..After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together,*” There were three stages to a Jewish marriage:

A. **The engagement period.** Not like our engagement as marriages were arranged by the parents at a young age. They may have only been 2 or 3 years old but as soon as they could talk they could tell you who they were going to marry.

B. **The espousal or betrothal time which lasted a year.** They were considered during this time legally married, although the relationship would not be consummated until about a year later at the marriage festival. During this time, they were both readying themselves for marriage, the groom would be building the place in which they would live, the bride would be learning how to take care of the home and making her wedding dress. If the couple decided they could not be with each other they would have to obtain a divorce, and the betrothal could not be broken except by a divorce.

C. **The marriage itself.** On the wedding night the father of the bride would take signs of his daughter's virginity and keep them in case there was ever a question as to her being a virgin. Under Jewish law, if there was infidelity during the second stage it was thought of as adultery and was punished by taking the perpetrator to the center of town placing them in a box of manure until they were up to their knees, and the people of the city would throw rocks at the person until

they fell face down into the manure dead.
According to Matthew it was at the second stage that we are told that “..before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.” **That is before sexual intercourse, suddenly Mary finds herself pregnant.** We know through Luke (1:31-35) that she was told that it was by way of the Holy Spirit.

2. **Here is the second thing we notice about her pregnancy:** Mary’s pregnancy was super-natural. **There are some who wish to take away the virgin birth of Jesus, saying that it is not all that important as to the rest of the gospel.** I could not disagree more, take away the virgin birth and Jesus plainly is not who He claimed to be, and if He is not who He claimed to be then we all are still in our sins! The virgin birth points out the deity of Jesus.

Vs.19 Often lost in this story is Joseph but when I consider this godly man except I realize what he must have gone through at this a moment, the turmoil he went through. He loved Mary and came to him and tells him she is pregnant. Joseph is a far better man than I am, for as soon as she would have told me I would have been questioning what I just heard. But when she would have said its, “It’s OK it’s not another man’s child, it’s Gods!” Joseph was a just man a straight or true man. He was not cold, or hard, he did not react out of anger toward her as he could of. No, he just wanted to see how he could let her go without ruing her emotionally and physically.

It appears that Joseph died early in Jesus’ life sometime after their return from Egypt and the 12-year-old Jesus’ trip with His parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, for we are told in Luke 2:41 that He went with “His parents”. We also know that they had other children, after the birth of Jesus. The words of verse 25 that Joseph “..did not know her *till* she had brought forth her firstborn Son.”, certainly does not mean that he *never* knew her. The obvious fact is that he did not have sexual intercourse with Mary until after Jesus was born. The dogma of the Catholic church of the perpetual virginity of Mary is clearly false. We are told in Mark 6: 3 “Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” Joseph lived long enough to have four sons and some

daughters. The false teaching of the perpetual virginity of Mary was developed to elevate her to the status of deity and was not introduced into Catholic teaching until 500 years after Jesus' death along with, Mary's being virgin born a well and rising from the dead as Jesus did, the mediator of all believers. There seems to be two mistakes made when people deal with Mary:

1. *They exalt her too greatly beyond being blessed to the place of worship.*
2. *They do not honor her as they ought as being the most blessed and honored woman that has ever been.*

III.) Vs. 20-23 Heavenly Pronouncement

Vs.20 The angel, perhaps Gabriel, prevents Joseph from making a tragic mistake. The angel addresses Joseph from the standpoint of his legal lineage, (son of David). This was assurance against fear, as well as announcement of the miraculous birth by way of explanation. All of which was accepted, without questioning by Joseph.

Vs. 21 They are told things about this child:

1. First, he is told that Mary is going to have a Son.
2. Second, they are told that they are to call Him, Jesus. This was a common name for boys in that day. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, which means "God is salvation." Jesus is His full name, Christ is official title, and it means "Anointed One".
3. Finally, we are told why he is to have this name, "for He will save His people from their sins."

Jesus is given a common name of the people, he is identifying with them, born in time when they

were under the yoke of Rome. A people devastated because of sin, that is where you find Him,

they are His people. He reached down to the human condition and calls us His people. We may

not be identified with Him, but He was identified with us. He is our friend, though we may not

be His, but He is yours!