

# Birth of Jesus

Matthew 1:18, 21

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**FOCAL Read Responsively** Matthew 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.

**Matthew 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.

As I was leaving the store the other day I noticed that makers of a certain cola have begun to *repackage* their product for the holidays. Instead of the soft drink being in a standard plastic bottle or can, they made the container look like a round Christmas tree ornament. On closer inspection I saw that there were actually three different labels on these ornamental bottles, with "collect all three" boldly written on the label. It seems to me that a round cola bottle is about as useless as set of oars are to a fish. When you opened the bottle you wouldn't be able to sit it down, lest it roll over and pour out all your drink. The only reason the average person "collects" cola is to drink it. Nevertheless there will be a few who will buy these unwieldy "collectors editions" because of their uniqueness.

Manufacturers are good at repackaging their product to get you to buy it. Several companies are now putting their cookies in "easy open resealable" bags. That's a wonderful idea, because I'm tired of fighting my way into a bag of Oreos<sup>®</sup>. One "Totally Healthy" cereal company became famous by putting pictures of athletes on the front of its boxes smiling over a heaping spoonful of cereal. One of the most successful industries is the one that makes ice cream. Though prices have increased in

on most products the price on ice cream remains relatively unchanged. They did this by repackaging. As prices went up, the size of the ice cream container went down. To hide the fact that you were no longer getting a full half gallon of product the ice cream manufacturers began using the metric system. Most people what a “half gallon” is, but “1.5 liters” is a mystery only a European can understand.

Manufacturers aren't the only repackagers. The fallen angel we call Satan repackaged himself first as a comical red devil (in red tights and a cute little pitchfork). Once people began laughing at him, Satan repackaged himself – along with the concept of “sin” as a *figment of our imagination*. There was a time when people who left their families in order to “be” with someone else was guilty of the sin of *adultery*. Now we label such behavior “a mid life crisis”: it sounds better that way. We no longer abort babies, but we “practice birth control”. Sexual activity outside of God's concept of marriage (one man and one woman) has been repackaged as “true love with a significant other”. Dear friend, you can repaint a rattlesnake, but it's still a snake! Satan knew this when he repackaged himself as a serpent so he could tempt us in Eden. **“Disobeying God isn't wrong! He knows you won't die if you eat the forbidden. God is just trying to keep you from godhood ” (Genesis 3:1-5).** Satan repackaged sin, and Adam foolishly bought what he was selling. Humanity has been suffering – and stumbling – ever since.

Now think for a moment on the birth of Jesus Christ. God repackaged *Himself* in order to be a blessing to us all. That Baby in the manger is called JESUS. He is God

with us, God come from Heaven to earth, from majesty to mediocrity, from immortality to mortality. **God was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).** God had no ulterior motive for coming to us through a virgin birth. He did not come to sell us anything, but to give. He came to give us life. **I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).** Jesus came to give us peace. **Let the peace of God rule in your hearts (Colossians 3:15).** He came to defeat sin and death, and to give whosoever believes in Him eternal life. **Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:15).**

May this Christmas lead you to the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **1. Christmas Is All About Family**

Before we read about the birth of Jesus, we have the first *seventeen verses* of Matthew dealing with “**the begats**”. Most people read over this section without the slightest bit of thought. Read just a little with me:

**CONTEXT Matthew 1:1-3** **The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. {2} Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; {3} And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Tamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;**

We didn't get too far before you felt your eyes rolling back in your heads. I one person ask me, “**why all these BEGATS? What does that mean?**” The word “**begat**”

is an old English word that means “to give birth to”. As it says in verse 2, “**Abraham gave birth to Isaac, and Isaac gave birth to Jacob**”, and so on and so on. This is a *genealogy*, a record of families from the time of Abraham all the way to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's all about the family!

When the Devil came to earth he repackaged himself as **a serpent**, which was at that time a very beautiful creature. His entire purpose for coming to creation was to destroy the family. The Devil – Satan – Old Slewfoot – Beelzebub – he goes by a hundred different names. When he slithered into the Garden of Eden he targeted Adam by tempting Eve – and Adam took the bait!

**NO PERSON IS AN ISLAND WHERE SIN IS CONCERNED !** Dear friends, sin never just effects the participant. The woman with child who is addicted to crack cocaine will give birth to an addicted baby. The man who is promiscuous shares himself with an HIV infected partner, bringing death on himself and on others. The parent who abuses his or her child will find that, many years later, this child will grow up and in turn abuse their family. Do drugs around your children and you not only destroy your life, you destroy their lives. Drug abusing parents created drug abusing children. The mother who aborts her baby not only kills her child, but destroys every grandchild and great grandchild that should have come from this precious branch. The doctor or scientist who could have cured cancer or AIDS or Alzheimer's might have come from that aborted life. It is

not just one life that is affected by sin. Many suffer, many die.

Adam, Oh Adam – think beyond yourself! Think before you unwrap Satan's glittering package!

When Adam sinned he not only broke trust with God, but he broke the family itself away from God. Every child born as a result of Adam and Eve is inherently sinful. The Bible tells us that

**Romans 5:12 ... by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ...**

**One man** - Adam - by his action of disobedience brought **spiritual and physical death upon all people**. The Scripture says of all that ...

**Psalms 51:5 ... I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

Sin is in the child while it is yet in its mother. Sin is on the mother, the father, and the children. Look at sin killing the family. See **Cain murdering his brother Abel** in a jealous rage. Didn't God warn him that “**sin lieth at the door**” (**Genesis 4:7**)? He didn't listen, and killed his brother while ruining his own life. It was sin that led the **sons of God to marry the daughters of men** (**Genesis 6:2**), the righteous to yoke itself with the unrighteous. Not too many years after that God destroyed all but eight souls in a worldwide flood. **The**

wickedness of man grows great, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

A little sin is like a little poison. It will confuse you, sicken you, and ultimately destroy you. Sin will destroy your family. This is why God was made flesh through a virgin *who was part of a family*. God came to humanity through the family to save the family.

We read:

**FOCAL** Matthew 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.

God brought His Only Begotten Son into this world through *a traditional family*. There was **one woman named Mary** and **one man named Joseph**. Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus (**she was found with child of the Holy Ghost**), but he would be the godly parent that would raise up the humanity of Christ.

**ILLUSTRATE RADICAL FEMINISM** This says a lot about family. A few years ago radical feminists began attacking the father figure in marriage. They began to teach that "**a woman alone can raise a child just as well - even better - than a woman and a man**".

Commercials started popping up on television mocking men – a terrible travesty. Dear friends, I'm not saying that a woman alone cannot be a good parent. Some of

you may have been forced by circumstances beyond your control to raise your children alone. But let me put it this way: **Jesus Christ is perfect, eternal God Who came to live among us.**

**CONTEXT** Matthew 1:23 ... **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.**

**God the Father saw the need to have the humanity of Jesus to grow into manhood in a traditional family.** If God manifest in the flesh needed a family – don't you think *every child* needs a family?

The family is important. **The father in the family is important. The father's faith is important!** God the Father chose Joseph to be the stepfather of Christ because - not because he was rich or famous - but because he was a good and godly man.

When I'm standing in the supermarket I can't help but read the cover on some of these magazines. Usually it has a smiling celebrity with a child in his or her arms. Many times the caption will be "**Miss I'm So Special adopts another child**" or "**a look at Mr Snooty's family**". Looking at the celebrity lifestyle many of these people shouldn't be raising turtles, much less children.

Look at God's ideal for a family.

**Joseph was justified by faith** We read in our text:

**FOCAL Matthew 1:18-19** ... before {Mary and Joseph} came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. {19} Then Joseph her husband, being a just man ...

Joseph was a **just man**. He was "**justified**", that is, he believed in God and trusted in God. He was, as the Prophet said:

**Habakkuk 2:4** ... **not upright in him{self}; but the just shall live by his faith.**

When Joseph discovered Mary was pregnant he had a choice to make. Just as all believers live by faith Joseph chose to *live by faith*, and not by Law.

When Joseph discovered that Mary was with Child - and he knew that he hadn't *been* with Mary - he had a choice to make. You see, according to the Law of Moses anyone guilty of adultery was to be taken outside of the camp. The Law said:

**Leviticus 20:10** .. **he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death...**

Joseph had every civil right to report Mary to the elders of Israel. If he had, then Mary would have been stoned to death. Yet ..

**FOCAL Matthew 1:19** ..... **Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public**

**example, was minded to put her away privily.**

Joseph proved his salvation by his works. Those who have received Grace from God are - in turn - gracious. The Law of God was *never given* to those who are saved by faith in God. The Scripture says:

**1 Timothy 1:9** **Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient...**

Joseph as a receiver of God's Grace was - in turn - **gracious**. He refused to make a public spectacle of His wife,

deciding instead to divorce (**put her away**) her privately (**privily**). He never got an opportunity to do this, because we are told that the Angel of God appeared to Joseph and said:

**CONTEXT Matthew 1:20** ... **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.**

**Mary was justified by faith** She was a believer in God. When God came to her and told her she would be with Child of the Holy Ghost she told the Lord:

**Luke 1:38** .... **Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. ...**

You can always tell a believer from an unbeliever, a

sheep from a goat. God has said that:

**John 10:27** **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:**

When God called, Mary replied. When God called, Joseph replied. God would be made flesh through a *believing family* so that He can save your family!

## **2. God Came To Save Our Families**

**FOCAL Matthew 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.**

In ancient times it was the male parent who named the child. Even today mother and father will tell the doctor what name to put on the birth certificate. Yet neither Mary nor Joseph were given the choice of naming this Child.

**God – not Joseph - was the Father of God. God decreed "thou shalt call His Name Jesus".**

The name **Jesus** literally means "**God our Savior**". What a beautiful name this is! He is called "**Jesus**" because "**He shall save His people from their sins**".

I have often wondered at the message the Angel of God gave to the Shepherds on the night that Christ was born. He told them:

**Luke 2:11 ... unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.**

**ILLUSTRATE** If I were panning for gold I would not consider one flake of gold to be unimportant and unworthy of attention. If I were mining for diamonds even the smallest stone would be carefully lifted out of the dirt. Many read the Scripture without watching the small things, but God has taught me that "**every word of God is pure**" (**Proverbs 30:5**). Read the above text again with me. "**Unto you is born this day in the city of David A Savior, which is Christ the Lord**".

I would have expected the angel to tell the shepherd, "Unto you is born the One and Only Savior", not "A" Savior. The angel meant that Jesus was "A Specific" Savior.

Jesus did not come to be a Savior like Moses, Joshua, Gideon, or David. These were all saviors of a specific people, the Jews. Jesus did not come to save Israel from a Roman yoke. He did not come to save the environment, nor did He come to eradicate poverty and want in the world. Jesus came to earth to "**save His people from their sins**".

**FOCAL Matthew 1:21 ... He shall save his people from their sins.**

Notice that the text states "**He SHALL save**". Jesus Christ has the power to save from sin. He draws us from

the dark well of enslaving Satanic bondage and into the glorious light of God. **He SHALL save.** He shall save every child who believes on Him, He shall save every momma and daddy and grandma and grandpa. **There is nothing impossible with God (Luke 1:37).**

God Who can put Himself in a virgin can surely put Himself in the hearts of His people. **He shall save His people.**

**FOCAL Matthew 1:21 ... He shall save his people from their sins.**

If you have believed on Jesus, then you are part of a great family of God. Every Christian is **of one Blood and of one family.**

**Ephesians 3:14-15 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, {15} Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,**

What a great gift the believer has received. Not only are you **saved from your sins**, but you are **saved to enter the Family of God.** You are saved from your sins, saved from death, and saved to be with the Family of God forever! As **C.H. Spurgeon** said:

**"The first link between my soul and Christ is not my goodness, but my badness; not my merit, but my misery; not my standing, but my falling; not my riches, but my need. He comes to visit His people, yet not to admire their beauties, but to remove their**

**deformities; not to reward their virtues, but to forgive their sins."**

What a blessed assurance we have in Jesus!

**FOCAL Matthew 1:21 ... He shall save his people from their sins.**

Christ does not save us to sin, but saves us **FROM OUR SINS.**

Those saved by faith in Christ experience New Birth. They undergo change. The Scripture says emphatically:

**Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.**

**ILLUSTRATE** Just as the Angel of God entered the prison and loosed Peter from his captors, just as God Almighty knocked down the door of the jail at Phillipi, God tears the bonds of sin from those who call upon Jesus Christ to be saved. **He shall save His people from their sins.** The Law cannot condemn the Christian, for we are *no longer under the Law*. Jesus Christ saved us from sin, and saved us from the Law!

The Scripture says:

**Galatians 3:22-26 But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. {23} But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto**

**the faith which should afterwards be revealed. {24} Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. {25} But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. {26} For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**

If you have believed in Jesus - that Precious Savior - then **He shall save you from your sins, and save you from the Law.** He is the Sweet Lamb of God Who bled and died for you. Will you not come to Him and be saved?

**1 Timothy 3:16 .. 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.**

God was manifest in the flesh through Mary. The Holy Spirit of God was the Agent that moved on Mary. Dear friends, the day that you realize you need Jesus Christ to be *your* Savior, the day that you call upon Him for salvation, the day that you say - as Mary said -

**Luke 1:38 ... be it unto me according to thy word. ...**

is the day that you will be saved from your sins. The day that you make a habit of daily surrendering your lives to Him is the day that you will begin to understand our faith.

As Jesus filled Mary's life, so will He fill ours - if we will but trust in Him. May God touch your hearts with

His Word!

Will you come? Will you give your lives to Him?

As I said at the beginning, the life you live effects others around you. If you continue to follow Satan and Sin you not only bring yourselves to a state of death – but you lead your families in the same path. **What a terrible waste!** Jesus Christ came to save His people from their sins. Give yourselves unto Him, trust in Him, and He will give you power to rise above sin and to walk in His Light!

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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