

Matthew 1:18-25 Conception and Birth of Jesus

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. **19** And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. **20** But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." **22** Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: **23** "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." **24** And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, **25** but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

- Jewish betrothal was a legal marriage contract which required a divorce to break it (v. 19 Joseph wanted to put her away secretly). Betrothal is much more than our engagement. Engagements are social, betrothals are legal. The betrothed couple were considered to be husband and wife (Deuteronomy 22:23-24, the betrothed girl is called "a wife"). In v. 19, Joseph is called "a husband." In v. 24, he took "his wife." During the betrothal period, the couple did not live together nor have sexual relationships. The proof of this had to be given to the parents at the wedding (Deuteronomy 22:13f).
- Joseph finds out Mary is pregnant, wants to divorce her, but the angel appears to him in a dream telling him to take Mary as a wife because the child is conceived of the Holy Spirit.
- Matthew omits Mary's perspective. (Tradition says Luke got much information from interviewing Mary.) The whole focus is on Joseph (more evidence it is a Joseph genealogy).
- God seems more interested in the process, and we are more interested in the product.
- The angel says His name will be "Jesus" that is "Yahweh saves." "For it is He who will save His people from their sins."
- Except for what is written in Scriptures, we cannot know what God is doing. We'd not predict that God would develop the line of the Messiah through the fornication of Judah with Tamar, or Rahab the harlot's lies to protect Joshua's spies, or Ruth, who was a Moabitess, or David's adultery with Bathsheba. If it's not written in Scripture, don't try to predict what God will do.
- Doing the righteous thing is not the same as doing the right thing. Righteousness goes beyond rightness. Rightness reflects the law of God. Righteousness reflects the love of God. Joseph did the righteous thing according to compassion rather than the right thing according to the law.
- Determine the will of God by the Word of God not by circumstances. That's what Joseph did in 1:24. Joseph totally disregarded the circumstances when he had the word of God.

For more information see commentary on *The Gospel of Matthew* at relationalconcepts.org

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