

Grace Among Us – Part One
The Announcement - Matt. 1:18-25
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Dec. 5th, 2021

Intro:

- During the next four weeks of the Christmas season, we are going to again turn our attention to the familiar story of the birth of Christ. I trust that most, if not all of us, know the general timeline and major players—Joseph and Mary, the angels and shepherds, the star and the wise men. Each week of our short series, we will take a deeper look at these passages with the hope that each week we will come away with a clearer image of these events and understand the various ways of how and why these things matter to us.
- The first passage we are turning to is Matthew, chapter one, starting with verse eighteen. This passage gives us the details of God’s interaction with Joseph, and from this passage, we are going to focus on what we can understand about God.
- The opening of the book of Matthew, which is the opening of the New Testament, starts with a genealogy, a listing of the names that connect the event of the birth of Jesus with the greater faith story of the Bible and God’s interaction with humanity.

Matt 1:1 ESV

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

- Jesus Christ is the focus and the fulfillment of the prophecy and the promise that was reconfirmed to David the King and established first to Abraham the patriarch, the father of the faith, and the father of the faithful (he will be the focus of our winter into spring series).
- This genealogy connects everything from the Old Testament to the New Testament, and points to this Man, Jesus, as the one they have eagerly anticipated. The perfect prophet, the pure priest, the king of all kings, the prince of peace, the wonderful counselor, the everlasting father, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world, the one who would crush the head of the great serpent, the redeemer, the restorer, the righteous one, the messiah.

Matt 1:18-20 ESV

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Understand that God can speak to anyone, anywhere at anytime

- These were two God-fearing and upright people living in a small town. They had not been physically intimate, and she was found to be with child. I’m not sure how the conversation went down between Joseph and Mary, but I can imagine it was a difficult conversation to have . . . and from Joseph’s response and the angel’s communication, Joseph did not believe Mary.

- He was afraid to marry her, perhaps because he thought she was delusional, or immoral, or if he did, people would think that he was immoral. Because he was a good man and did not want to hurt her, he would divorce her quietly. While he was still considering all these things, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.
- Now we have to ask why God waited until now to communicate directly with Joseph. He could have sent the angel Gabriel to both of them instead of just communicating to Mary before she became pregnant (see Luke 1:26-38). That would have been clearer and easier for both of them. So why did God wait to communicate this news to Joseph?
- We have to believe that God is perfect in every way, including how, what, and when He communicates. So, His words and His timing are intentional. Now it could be that God waited to communicate to Joseph so that Mary would be able to see more of his character. It also could be that Joseph needed to struggle with these ideas to understand and wrestle through what it could mean to and for him if this was indeed true. God will never tempt us, but He will test us, and He tests us not for His information but for ours and other people.
- In my life, I have learned to listen to the voice of the Lord, and many times it is like a GPS. He will give me a destination, and then I have a choice to move forward or not. As I move, I follow His leading. And during some stretches, the GPS is silent. It may start with “in 87 miles merge onto Highway 100,” and then there is silence for that stretch of road. But, when it comes time to make a change or take a turn, at transition points, it calls out to “turn at the next light.” And when I start going the wrong way, it tells me repeatedly to turn around and reroutes a new course.
- So, if you feel like God is silent, then keep going in the same direction as the last instruction. Trust that God is leading you and keep moving forward. On the other hand, God may be talking to you, but you have the “music of your life” turned up so loud you have a hard time hearing anything else.
- Why this matters—no one is outside His reach. God will guide you when you need it most. He will be found by you, if you seek Him, trust Him, keep moving in His direction.
- God told Joseph what had happened and told Him what he was to do. And then God provided more information, not only that Mary is pregnant by the Holy Spirit, but also that she will have a son, and that God Himself will name Him. “Jesus is what you will call Him.” And the reason this is happening is “He will save His people from their sins.”

Matt 1:21 ESV

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Understand that God saves His people from their sins

- This is the primary reason why Jesus came in the flesh. Not to provide temporary relief. Not to teach morality. Not to gain a following, but to “save His people from their sins.” This is His primary objective—both the power and the penalty of our sins.
- Also notice what He did not come to do. He did not say that at this point He will save you from the sins of others. He did not say that He would deliver you from everything that is difficult. He did not come to give you money and health. But, He did come to deliver you from you. He will make all things new in the end, but He gave us what we need the most, saving us from our sins.

- And notice that He is saving “His people from their sins.” He does not save everyone from their sins, which means that not everyone is saved from their sin, only those who are “His.” So how do you know you are His? By receiving Him as your savior and confessing Him as Lord with your life!
- Why this matters –
 - This gives us hope—that those who will believe in Him will never perish and have eternal life.
 - This gives us peace—knowing that we are right with God because of what Jesus has done.
 - This gives us perspective—knowing what He came to do and what He did not come to do. That means we can trust Him for what He said He would do and not hold him to things that He did not say He would do. There are people who lose their faith in God because they hold Him to things that He never promised and then walk away.
- Matthew then goes on to tell us that what the angel communicated to Joseph was a direct fulfillment of what was spoken by the Spirit of God through the prophet Isaiah in the past.

Matt 1:22a ESV

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.”

Understand that God fulfills His promises

- God never promises something that He will not do. Twenty-seven percent of the Bible is prophetic, which contains around 1817 prophecies, with 350 of those about Jesus. (<https://www.ligonier.org/posts/fulfilled-prophecy-demonstrates-divine-inspiration-scripture>)
- The vast majority of these prophecies have been fulfilled, and we are still waiting for the right time for all of them to be completed.
- Why this matters—He has been faithful in the past; He will be faithful in the future. You can trust what the Bible promises because it comes from the mouth of the faithful and true one who knows all things and does not lie. Nothing and no one can keep Him from fulfilling His word.
- This specific prophesy from Isaiah 7:14 proclaims what was being fulfilled in Mary, and His name is Immanuel which means God with us.

Matt 1:22b ESV

(which means, God with us).

Understand that God is with us

- God is beyond us, God is above us, but God is also with us. He is with you in the good and the bad, and He is with you in all things. He understands. He knows. He has not left you nor forsaken you, and you are never alone. So don’t believe the lie that you are all alone. If you are in Christ and Christ is in you, you are never alone, without companionship, hope, help, or healing.
- Why this matters—knowing this truth helps with our fear, our loneliness, and our distresses. This helps us to be strong, not to be afraid. It gives us both confidence and comfort. And you need to know this and all these things this day.

Conclusion and Communion

- From this story about the incarnation of the Son of God, understand and remember that God can speak to anyone, anywhere, at any time. Trust Him. Understand and remember that God came to save His people from their sins. Trust Him. Understand and remember that God keeps His promises. Trust Him. Understand and remember that God is with us. Trust Him. Be encouraged and receive the strength to continue to persevere with hope, peace, and joy.