

The Birth of Emmanuel

Matthew 1: 18-25

This morning we have read a very familiar passage of Scripture which deals with the birth of Christ our Lord. It is a story that we have heard all our lives. I remember gathering in the gymnasium of Hiddenite Elementary School and hearing one of the faculty read Luke 2:1-20 each year during our Christmas assembly.

Although we are familiar with the passages that speak of Jesus' birth, it is a story that never grows old. It is an account of sovereignty, grace, splendor, and salvation. The coming of Christ to this earth in the form of a man was absolutely necessary for the redemption of mankind. Had there been no birth, there would have been no death. Had there been no death there would have been no substitutionary atonement and we would yet be in our sins. I cannot think of Christmas without also being reminded of Calvary. As we celebrate the birth of our Lord in the coming days, I pray we are also reminded of all that He fulfilled as He lived life upon this earth. This passage speaks of the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His birth was the most significant ever!

Our text deals with Joseph, the man espoused to Mary as she was found with child. It reveals a conversation Joseph had with the angel of the Lord and his obedience to the will of God. I want to examine the [details](#) of this divine encounter as we think on: [The Birth of Emmanuel](#). We find the angel reveals:

I. The Miracle of His Birth (18-20) – Anyone who has ever read or heard the details surrounding the birth of Jesus realizes His birth was nothing less than miraculous. At this point Joseph is completely unaware of God's plan for his life, but he will soon discover the miracle. We notice:

A. The Holy Conception (18, 23a) – [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.](#) Joseph had no idea the woman he is engaged to marry is with child, but this is no ordinary pregnancy and the child within her womb is no ordinary child. Prior to their marriage, Mary is found with child of the Holy Ghost. She had not known a man and yet she is with child. Isaiah prophesied this hundreds of years prior (Isaiah 7:14) and now the time has come for Christ to be born. [Mat.1:23a – Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son.](#)

- This miraculous detail is undeniable. It remains a point of contention in our day. Some who identify with the Christian faith find it hard to embrace the virgin birth. We could not have a sinless Savior had He not been born of a virgin. He would have been born in sin, as we were, and would not have been able to secure our salvation. He was conceived by the supernatural power of the

Holy Ghost. You maybe can't explain it, but you must embrace it! [1 John 4:9 – In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.](#)

B. The Honest Confusion (18b-19) – [When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.](#) ^[19] [Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.](#) Jewish culture in that day was different than American tradition. Prior to the marriage ceremony there was an espousal period, typically lasting 10 – 12 months. During this time of engagement the couple made preparations for life together and were expected to remain physically pure for each other. Although they had not officially celebrated the marriage, they were already bound to the agreement. Any infidelity during the espousal period would have been considered adultery and punishable by death.

- Take a moment to consider how Joseph must've felt at this time. His plans for a home and family had been turned upside down. He genuinely loved Mary, but he was having second thoughts about following through with the marriage. He intended to put her away privately and not make a public spectacle out of the situation. What begun as the happiest moment in his life quickly brought confusion, heartache, and fear. This was to be a glorious birth, bringing hope and life to humanity, but Joseph couldn't see all that at this point.
- We discover a comforting thought here for our lives. We cannot see the big picture, the grand plan that God has for our lives. Often we feel there is more difficulty in life than there is joy and triumph. However, after the darkest valleys or longest nights, we enjoy the breathtaking sunrise on top of the mountain. In times of confusion and doubt, continue to trust in the Lord.

C. The Heavenly Confirmation (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.](#) As Joseph tried to comprehend all he was facing, the angel of the Lord appeared with good news. There was no need to fear taking Mary as his wife. She had not been unfaithful. This was all within the divine plan of God. The child she carried in her womb was conceived of the Holy Ghost. There would be challenges to face and ridicule to endure, but this was all orchestrated of God as Christ would be born!

- Christ came to earth to redeem and pardon humanity. Life will have its share of difficulty and adversity, but as long as we are walking with the Lord, according to His divine plan, we need not fear what a day may bring forth. We are secure in Him and He will faithfully guide!

II. The Majesty of His Birth (21-23) – As the angel continues to speak to Joseph, he begins to realize this will be no ordinary birth, this is certainly not an ordinary child. The angel declares Mary will bring forth a Son, the One the world has longed and waited to see. He will be known as:

A. JESUS (21) – *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* *Jesus* means *Jehovah is salvation*. What a name, the name of Jesus. In that day Jesus was a common name. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, Joshua. At His birth, Jesus became a special name, a pre-eminent name.

- This was the name chosen by God. It speaks of who He is. It declares His deity as the Son of God. Jesus is the name known in heaven, recognized by the angels. It is the name that brings fear to Satan and the forces of hell.

- Never has a name endured the ages of time as the name Jesus. It is still the name that brings comfort to those in despair, salvation to the sinner, and hope to the hopeless. It is a name both loved and hated, cursed and honored, received and rejected; but, Jesus is a name above all others. *Acts 4:12 – Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* *Phil.2:9-11 – Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:* ^[10] *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;* ^[11] *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* There's no other name like Jesus!

B. Emmanuel (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.* This is His name that is seldom spoken, but it holds special significance for all of mankind, especially the Christian. *Emmanuel* means *God with us*. For thousands of years God had appeared only in Spirit, primarily within the veil, hovering over the Mercy Seat. In Christ, God came to dwell among me. Through Him we see the personification of God in the flesh.

- It reminds us of Jesus' humanity. His was no ordinary birth, not just another child. He came as God in the flesh. He came as the perfect God-Man. He was born of a virgin, conceived of the Holy Ghost.

- On that faithful Christmas, God came in the form of a man to dwell among the fallen creation. *John1:14 – And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* Isn't it amazing that Christ came at all? He left all the splendor of heaven, laid aside His glory, and was robed in flesh, all for you and

me! [Phil.2:7](#) – But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. Without our Emmanuel, there would be no salvation; had He not come, we would still be lost. Aren't you glad He came as a humble babe to redeem us?

III. The Morality in His Birth (24-25) – The response and actions of Joseph reveal the morality involved in the birth of Jesus. Through this we also discover truth for our lives. Consider:

A. Joseph's Dedication (24) – [Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:](#) We don't discover a new revelation here, but it is a simple profound truth. Joseph was committed to the will of God for his life. He was dedicated to serving the Lord whatever the cost. There is no sense of regret or denial. Joseph simply does as the Lord instructed him to do. He took Mary as his wife without delay or hesitation.

- Through the account of Jesus' birth we discover much dedication. We see the dedication of God the Father to His creation, the dedication of Christ the Son, willingly coming to earth as the atonement for sin, as well as the dedication of Mary and Joseph, being used of the Lord to bring all of this to pass. I pray we will be challenged in our walk with the Lord and remain completely committed and dedicated to the Lord.

B. Joseph's Discernment (25a) – [And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son:](#)

Joseph also understood the significance of the birth. This was no ordinary conception. He understood the holiness and purity involved. Joseph refrained from any physical contact with Mary prior to Jesus' birth. This was a miracle of God and Joseph had no desire or intention of seeking to get in the way. He was focused on God's plan, not his own.

- Again we are challenged in our personal walk with the Lord through the actions of Joseph. Through our relationship with Jesus, we have become part of something far greater than we can imagine. We may not always understand where God is leading or exactly what He is doing, but we must be submissive to His will for our lives. We need to remain focused on the plan God has for our lives rather than our immediate wants and desires. There is more at stake than our personal plans. The sovereign hand of God is at work around us. I want to be used of Him instead of being placed on the shelf, out of the way!

C. Joseph's Declaration (25b) – [and he called his name JESUS.](#) Joseph also followed the Lord as he proclaimed the name of the child. There would be enough ridicule and speculation to come, but Joseph was undeterred. He wanted the world to know the child born of the virgin womb of his wife

was none other than Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. The long awaited Messiah had come to redeem a fallen race from sin. Joseph couldn't think of keeping the good news quiet.

- With that I am reminded of how Christmas is viewed in our day. I am sure many associate Christmas, or at least in their minds the origin of Christmas, with Jesus, but I fear He is not the focus. For many it is more about getting everything on their wish-list. I will admit I have received many nice gifts, but the greatest was the gift of salvation. I praise the Lord for the day the good news was proclaimed. I rejoice for the day I received the good news of the gospel. I want to be as Joseph and identify with my Lord. I want the world to know Jesus came, lived, died, and rose again to provide for our salvation. He is the reason for the season. May we proclaim His birth to a world that desperately needs to hear!

Conclusion: We will celebrate Christmas in a couple of days. This morning we were privileged to be reminded of the miraculous birth of Christ the Lord. Although it was thousands of years ago, His birth remains fresh and real in the hearts of all believers. I pray we will worship the Lord, giving praise for His coming, during this wonderful time of year.

I trust you realize the significance of His birth. He was born with purpose. He came to earth to die, not for sins He had committed, but for the sins of the world. Jesus was born to provide for our redemption. Have you received the glorious gift of salvation? Is the Christmas story a familiar story or can you honestly say it is personal for you? If you have never been saved, Jesus stands ready to save you today. He came for you, just as He did for me. Why not seek Him today?