

The Birthday of the King

Matthew, a Preaching Series

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Bible Text: Matthew 1:18-23; Matthew 12:46-50

Preached on: Wednesday, May 14, 2014

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Verse 1, "The book," the scroll, "of the," beginning, "the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac." If you'd like to, you can make a note that that takes place in Genesis 20. "Isaac begat Jacob," that's Genesis 28. "Jacob begat Judas and his brethren," that's Genesis 25. "And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Tamar," that's Genesis 29. "Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth." What book would we find that in? Ruth, yup, good job. "Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias," that's 2 Samuel 12. You put those in there and you can find where those are recorded. "Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa." Verse 8, "Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon." Jechonias is kind of a key fellow. In Jeremiah 22, he was cursed. He was cursed in Jeremiah 22 with a promise that he would never have a descendant sit on the throne of David. Now think about what I just said: he was just cursed with a promise that he would not have a natural descendant sit on the throne of David. How are you supposed to have a son of David sitting on the throne if someone down there in the downline was cursed with not being able to have that? Verse 12, "And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel," but none of them were kings. "And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."

Interesting, it doesn't say, "Joseph begat Jesus," rather. It says, "Joseph was the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ." So all of a sudden we realize that Jesus is not a natural born descendant of Jechonias and so we circumvent the curse by having a legal adoption of sorts whereby you have a descendant, a descendant. Have you ever viewed anybody's adoption papers? Probably not. You probably don't go looking for those, but I have seen a set with my own eyes from a particular state that says, "From

now on, Such-and-such child will be counted as the biological child of So-and-so." Now think about that: will be counted as the biological child of said adult. So for all legal purposes, the child is counted as biological but is, in fact, not. But legally is.

Verse 17, "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise," here's how it happened, here's how it went down, "When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Now, in the Jewish culture, there is this thing known as betrothal. It could be as long as a year. It could be as short as several months, rarely was it shorter than that. It was an engagement but much more important than an engagement. It was so important as an engagement that if the engagement was broken off, it was actually called a divorce. Obviously the marriage wasn't complete until there was a consummation of the union, until there was intercourse. We understand that. We got that, but when a father of the groom, the father of the bride, would come together and make an arrangement for their children, often the children did not know each other very well and at any given time during the next year when the father of the groom deemed it appropriate because provisions had been made for him to care for his new wife, he would then go with a great entourage and pick up, or I should say, gather his bride to himself. There would then be a great ceremony with lots of fanfare.

So we are forced with wondering, "Joseph, what did you think," we're at the end of verse 18, "when that young lady was found with child?" Oh Joseph, it's from God. "Oh yeah." Now, when a young lady today is pregnant and it's understood that she and her husband are expecting, she says it's from the Lord and we all understand what that means, it's a gift from God. But when Mary said it, when Mary said it, "The Father is God," imagine that day for Joseph. Pretty memorable.

Verse 19, "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example," and how would he do that? A stoning. There were two ways to handle this: you could either stone the violator or you could privately send her away in shame. So he was "not willing to make her a publick example, was minded," or reminded or put in his mind, "to put her away privately," privily in the old King James. "But while he thought on these things," while he was thinking about this, how do I deal with this, "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream." You talk about a memorable week for Joseph.

"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." Now, I don't know how old Joseph is at this point but probably Mary was a young teenager. Very, very normal culturally for a young lady to be promised to a man in her early teens and so it doesn't seem far fetched to say that Joseph may have been in his late teens. I've heard others guess that his age was much older and, quite frankly, that freaks me out so we're not going there.

Verse 21, and if you're going to guess, guess safely. Verse 21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet," Isaiah, "saying, 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. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not." That's an old euphemism for he did not have sex with her. There was no consummation of the union until "she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he," that is Joseph, "called his," that is the child, "he called him Jesus."

Today we're going to talk about the birthday of the King. There are some firsts in this passage when it comes to the book of Matthew. We find the first mention of marriage and divorce in the book of Matthew and it does happen again. It is a theme in Matthew and we're going to talk about it. I'm not going to skip over it just because I think that you might know what divorce is. I love you enough to deal with the hard stuff. By the way, let me just go ahead and beat you to the punch: you don't have to be absent on that week. We don't think you're second rate if you've been divorced. Hello? Anyone else in here? Yeah, we don't think you're second rate because you're remarried. It just so happens that the Scripture will talk about it. The first angelic visitation is in Matthew in this passage. The first Old Testament quotation in Matthew is in this passage and there are many. But I want to talk about Jesus tonight and my time is limited and so I want to get on with it.

Number 1: he was supposed to be, let me read that differently, not as if, "Well, he was supposed to be the son of Joseph." That's not what I mean. I mean he was supposed to be the son of Joseph. It was assumed that he was the son of Joseph. Well, how do you know that? Well, first of all, let's just think through this and then I'm going to show you a good hard fact. First of all, you know that he is conceived in Nazareth, he is born in Bethlehem. There is some travel that takes place after she's found with child and they have not come together yet as husband and wife.

But there are clearer passages. I'd like you to look at Matthew 13. Keep your place here and look at Matthew 13. Look further in the book with me. I don't really want to guess so let's just show you that he was supposed to have been the one who begot Jesus. By the way, Jesus never got away from this. I know this is a study in Matthew, but in your devotions as you read through John, do you know what you're going to find Jesus called? A child of fornication. John 8, he was accused of being a child of fornication. In other words, Jesus went through his entire adult life with everyone supposing that his mother was cheap and that had either been messing around with Joseph before they were married or was messing around and the tales are still told that she was messing around with a local garrison of Roman soldiers and Christ was begotten. Well, such blasphemy doesn't even deserve another minute.

Matthew 13, look at verse, please, 53, "And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into his own country," what was his own country? He was from where? Nazareth, which is a part of what part of Palestine? If you had to choose between Judea, Samaria or Galilee, what would you pick?

Galilee. Good, thank you. "When he came into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence," which is an old word that means "where did it come from?" "Where did this come from, this man's wisdom, and these mighty works?" How in the world did he start doing this?

Look at the next phrase, "Isn't this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" Didn't he grow up in the shop over there with Joseph? "And they were offended in him." They stumbled over Jesus. They were bothered by him. They did not like the fact that old boy who grew up here and played with our kids is now teaching us and doing miracles. Miracles we can do, but try to talk for God to us and we have an issue. I don't suppose that will ever change. Have you ever known a kid preacher that tries to preach to his home crowd? It rarely ever works because, "I remember you when you were slapping other kids in the nursery." Right? "I changed your diapers." Yeah, do we have to go there? I mean, I can't tell you how many, thankfully the older I get, the less of them there are when I go home. Oh, I can't believe I said that. Anyway...

Verse 58, "And he did not many mighty works there," and why did Jesus not do many mighty works? Why? Because they were unbelievers. That's right. They were poor, poor believers. They did not believe what they saw and so he did not do many mighty works. Did not.

So you see that Joseph was considered to be the father of Jesus. Now, may I please show you back in chapter 1, go back there and look, please, in verse 19. Joseph makes a decision to not punish his dear espoused wife, his spouse. Like I said, it's a cultural uniqueness. He did not want her stoned because he loved her. He was a just man. Isn't that what it says in verse 19? You know, I looked that up because I wanted to know and you'll notice this up here, please: this is the word "just" in Matthew 1:19 in the Greek and down here in Genesis 6:9 in the Greek. That is a Greek translation of the Hebrew text. We find that there is but two people mentioned as being just in the entire Old Testament and one of them is Noah. Now think that through. Think that through. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, Eli, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Manassah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. None of them are called just. What kind of man was a man who the only other person described up to that point as just is a man who was one of eight to survive a flood. The other was called just by David and his name was Ishboseth which means "man of shame" and he was the son of Saul, but I think based on the fact that that is a narrative of a story, the only moderator comment that we have calling someone just because here is Matthew describing someone in the story named Joseph and he calls him just. In Genesis, it is Moses, a moderator, describing someone in the story named Noah and calling him just. There are but two people to this point who are known as just in the Bible: Noah is one of them, Joseph is the other.

But it gets even more phenomenal than that. Matthew doesn't use that term again. Look at verse 19 of chapter 27. Maybe we in the body of Christ should also see the virtue of a man who is called just who adopts someone else's children. A just man. Now, as you look

at Matthew 27 and would you please look at verse 19 and here is Pilate's wife, "When he was set down," when Pilate was set down, "on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." Now think about that. The only other person in the entire book of Matthew other than Joseph who is known as just, the one that Joseph raised. Has it ever dawned on you that Jesus was greatly influenced by Joseph? Do you have nephews or nieces that need influence? If Jesus grew up before the Father as a tender plant in Isaiah 53, then Jesus was greatly influenced by the adults in his life. We're not done parenting just because our children are 18. We're not done raising children just, folks, every time we come to this house of worship, we are confronted with the fact that there are young people that are being greatly influenced and I don't think it's a mistake. If you believe that this book came from God out of heaven, I do not believe it's a mistake that Joseph and Jesus are the only one that Matthew uses this term "just man" about.

Then, as if that's not bad enough, or good enough, continue with verse 20, "But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered," that's Pilate, "and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just," and the same Greek in all three places in Matthew, "this just man: see ye to it." Matthew, Pilate's wife and Pilate all use a term and they're the only ones that use the term and they only used it about two different people in the book of Matthew and one is Joseph and the other is Jesus. I say to you that I don't believe God is doing anything but showing us that Joseph had an amazing impact on Jesus.

Please don't think for a moment that because Jesus was God in the flesh that meant he didn't fall and scrape his knee. Please, how can you be a partaker of Adamic flesh and not trip and skin your knee? Not hit your thumb with a hammer in the carpenter's shop? Do you know that Jesus had to be shown how to put a table together by Joseph? "He grew up in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man," says Luke 2. This is no small thing that Joseph is a just man and why wouldn't we consider him just? He's the biological offspring of King David, but that doesn't always seal the deal, does it? We saw a lot of jerks that were offspring of King David.

But here's a man that was so in love with his bride-to-be that although he was suspicious of her conduct and fervent about justice, that by the way, is love for God. Suspicious of what needs to be highly regarded and suspiciously sinful and yet so full of love that you try to satisfy both justice and love and he was so concerned about suspicion and fervent about justice, he reflected a very Jehovah-like consternation or conflict in which he knew he could not marry her but he also couldn't watch her die.

And what do we know about Joseph? We know that he's present when Jesus is 12. We know that he's looking for him in Luke 2 when he's 12 and staying in the temple. We

don't know much about Joseph because when Jesus is dying on the cross in John 19, there is no Joseph taking care of Mary. There is none. Joseph probably died while Jesus was a teenager. Banishment is hard and harsh, Joseph is thinking in Matthew 1, but it is better than death and, who knows, maybe it's better than her damnation. She's pregnant and she's blaming it on God. She's obviously not repentant so he doesn't even know if she's one of Jehovah's kids anymore. If she's dead, what happens to her? With a love and concern for a woman that he wasn't sure he could even trust anymore, Joseph shows himself a just man.

Now, here's my thing: I was struggling tonight thinking, "How in the world am I going to pull application out of this in 35 minutes giving something meaningful?" Do you know what? I know for a fact I don't even have to here. This is so loaded, you have to be Helen Keller to not see it. Talk about a lesson in not jumping to conclusions. How about that for Joseph? You want to talk about a lesson about being willing to hear the voice of God in case I might have something wrong here in my judgment. A God who called the entirety of the universe into existence can handle a virgin birth, a virgin conception. Do you see how that works? If your God is so small that he needs millions of years to create everything, then I don't blame you if the next thing you deny is the virgin birth. You're just a liberal is all you are. Go make an honest living. Go do something with your Sundays and Wednesdays and quit perpetrating the fraud. A Christ who was born of a man and a woman is just as sinful as you are and as sinful as I am and he can't even die for his own sins, let alone mine, because he has Adam's sin nature in him.

So in Matthew 1, you're there, I know you are, let's look at five statements that tells us that Jesus was born of a virgin and maybe there are more but here's where I see it. Look at verse 18. Of course, I suppose, verse 16 is pretty clear so there are six, really. "Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." The very change of the "begot" pattern is proof of a virgin birth, but in case it's not enough, there are five more. Look at verse 18, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Alright, so that's two. Now look at verse 20, "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." So that's another statement of the virgin birth. Now verse 23, he quotes a verse that talks about the virgin birth, that's pretty clear. Then verse 23 also, he says that God is actually in this person. It's God with us. It's no longer God is necessarily in us and although it's good news that God is for us, to be able to look at this baby and say God is now with us, that must mean that he's the offspring of God then and therefore divinity can give begottenness to no thing or nobody except divinity, right? That makes sense. Then there is the last statement in verse 25, "and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus." So they had not even come together for another nine months after he found out she was pregnant. I'm assuming nine months. Who knows, maybe it wasn't very obvious until well into her time.

Why do we need a virgin birth anyway? Well, I can think of three reasons and there are probably more. 1. I gave the first one to you while we were reading it: you had to get

around the curse of Jehonias. He couldn't have a natural born descendant sit on the throne so he needed a virgin birth. We need Jesus to become the legal child of someone in that line because he's the son of David that is also the king of Israel. Yes?

2. For God to be a man. You read all through the Old Testament and you're going to find out that God took on the form of a man but did not actually become a man. If you would like a couple of examples, you have the story of Abraham in Genesis 18 where three men come to his tent door. One of them is clearly the Lord and two are his angels. Abraham even calls one of them Lord. Clearly God took on the form of a man but did not actually become man. Temporary versus permanent. And in order for us to have someone die for the sins of the whole world, we need someone who's able to do that which is infinite. If he's going to shed blood for all the sins that have ever been committed which, by the way, brings with it an infinite or endless or boundless or incomprehensible penalty of an eternal damnation from the presence of God. To satisfy an infinite God with an infinite payment for an infinite obstruction, an infinite transgression, takes infinitely righteous blood produced only by an infinite God. So if Jesus were a perfect man and there hasn't been once since the pre-fall Adam other than Jesus, but if he were just a perfect man, then he could die for one other man but not every man. But because he's God and he's infinite, he can pay for the sins of the whole world: men, women, everybody. He tasted death for every man, Hebrews 9, and he cannot do that if he's not infinite and he cannot be infinite without being God. So that's the second reason.

I would say the third reason is to avoid the sin nature of Adam. Surely we understand that the responsibility of sin and the sin nature itself is passed down through the father. Exodus 34:7, it says that, "I will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children and the children's children unto the third and fourth generation." And since every father in my upline has been a sinner, that third and fourth generation carries well on to me and even beyond me because I am the worst sinner I know. So three reasons why you need a virgin birth.

Now this virgin. We've already seen that she had other children: James, Joses, Judas, Simon and sisters. Remember that in Matthew 13? So the idea that she went to heaven without dying which is a Catholic teaching, it's called the Assumption of Mary, is not biblical. We don't find that in the Bible at all and we believe the Bible. The fact that she died a perpetual virgin is just as stupid. You see in verse 55, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary and his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas and his sisters?" Alright, there you have it. You have some of her other sons mentioned. That word "born" probably to her and Joseph after the birth of Jesus.

Now, I want you to notice the next time we see Mary. Let's look at chapter 27 and I want you, please, to notice verse 54 for some context and then we'll be done. "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." Look here, "And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother

of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children," which we find out from another passage is...please notice it doesn't call her the mother of Jesus.

Now there's a doctrinal point here and I'll make it and then I'm going to move onto the application and we're going to close in prayer. She is not known as she is in chapter 12, I didn't show you that passage, we didn't have time, where it says, "Jesus, your mother and your brothers are outside." And Jesus, listen to this, says, he looks at them and says, "Who are my mother and my brothers? But they that do the will of my Father, they are my mother and my brothers and my sisters." Isn't that something?

Then in chapter 13, he's preaching in Nazareth and they say, "Isn't this Mary's son and aren't his brothers James, Judas, Joses and Simon? Aren't they here with us and his sisters?" Then we get to the cross and we don't even find Matthew having the courage to say and, "Oh, Jesus' mother was there." I know John does. We're not talking about John. I know John does but Matthew doesn't do it. Matthew says, "She is the mother of James and Joses." Why? Here's why: because it doesn't matter who she is at this point. It has nothing to do with Jesus' mom at the cross. It is absolute blasphemy to say that in heaven you have God the Father and at his right hand is Jesus and at his right hand is Mary. I've never needed to pray through the mother of Jesus. I've never needed to seek mercy from the mother of Jesus. Please do not fool yourself into thinking that evangelicals and Catholics are really the same thing, we just disagree on a few minor points. No, dear friend. No, we don't. We disagree in every way, shape and form with the scheme of salvation and here is what your attitude ought to be, listen to me: your attitude ought to be like Jesus in Matthew 12, "Who are my mother and my brothers and my sisters but they that do the will of my Father?" Jesus was willing, look up here, to say, "My momma is not even my momma if she doesn't serve my God."

Some of you for years have been toiling behind, desperate for the approval of unsaved people. I'll tell you a story from the book of John, you know it, it's the marriage in Cana of Galilee and Mary comes to Jesus and says, "They have no wine," and Jesus basically says, "Sorry." I am not saying Jesus was disrespectful, I'm saying there comes a time when we care more for the will of the Father than we care for what blood relatives have to say.

Let's pray.