

POWER HOUR

12/22/2024

Lesson Text:
Matthew 1:18-25

Background Scripture:
Isaiah 7:10-16

Devotional Reading: John 1:1-14 &
1 John 4:9-14

“GOD’S MESSIAH IS BORN”

NLT TRANSLATION

Golden Text: And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. *Matthew 1:21 NLT*

Time: 6 or 5 B.C.

Place: Nazareth

Matthew 1:18-25 NLT

18 This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. **19** Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. **20** As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. **21** And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” **22** All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet: **23** “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’” **24** When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. **25** But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

In the incarnation God was made flesh and dwelt among us so that we could experience Him firsthand. Our lesson this week unfolds the powerful message of God, who came down to live with us.

1. The setting (Matt. 1:18-19). The Christmas events unfolded in the little village of Nazareth, where Joseph, a carpenter, plied his trade. Joseph was engaged to be wed to Mary when he discovered that his bride-to-be was pregnant. Joseph did not know at that time that the Holy Spirit had divinely intervened in Mary's life. The text describes Joseph as a "just man" (Matt. 1:19). He was a sensitive man of good reputation in his village, and he wanted to deal with the predicament in a manner that would cause Mary no public shame. {There were two phases involved in a Jewish marriage contract. First was a public announcement concerning the upcoming union. From that time on, the union was indissoluble except through death or divorce. This arrangement usually lasted for a year, during which each was to be faithful to the other. The purity of the bride and the faithfulness of her husband were proved during this separation in which they continued to live with their parents. (They were, however, referred to as husband and wife throughout this time.) It was after this waiting period that the final phase of the marriage took place. The husband, in a special entourage, went to the home of his bride and took her back to his own place. Two important facts in Matthew 1:18 set the stage for what happened next. First, we are told that Mary was espoused to Joseph. They were in the engagement period when they were still living with their own parents but considered to be husband and wife. Second, we are told that it was "before they came together"; that is, they were not living together and did not have a physical relationship. The only conclusion Joseph could arrive at after hearing of Mary's condition was that she had been immoral and unfaithful to him during their espousal period}

2. Joseph encouraged (Matt. 1:20-21). While Joseph was confused and struggling with everything that was suddenly happening in his life, there came encouragement from a divine source. God spoke to him, giving him instructions through an angel in a dream. The message of the angel to Joseph was simple and concise. Mary's child was to be the promised Savior. His name was to be Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. Joseph was to take Mary to be his wife, for the Child that she carried was conceived of the Holy Spirit. {He was to be named Jesus, the Greek equivalent to the Old Testament name Joshua. The name means "the Lord saves," and in this case, it was meant to communicate to the world that salvation was being made available to the inhabitants of earth. For Jesus would "save his people from their sins."}

3. The prophecy fulfilled (Matt. 1:22-23). God is concerned about details. Matthew wrote that “all this was done” in order to completely fulfill what God had said. Every detail was necessary in the provision for humanity’s salvation. Every Jew knew about the importance of Bible prophecy, especially as it related to the coming of the Messiah. The Old Testament was full of such prophecies. The Child was born in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy down to the very last letter. Upon the birth of Jesus, God Himself was going to be in the midst of His people. And the reason He was coming into their midst was to provide salvation from their sins. {We cannot overemphasize the importance of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. It was prophesied in the Old Testament, fulfilled in the New, and accomplished through a direct work of God’s Holy Spirit. Since humanity had become tainted with sin because of Adam’s fall, resulting in the lost condition of mankind, a pure and holy sacrifice was needed for the payment of sin. Only Jesus could provide the pure sacrifice that would accomplish such a payment.}

4. Joseph obeys (Matt. 1:24-25). The assurance of the angel dispelled Joseph’s fears. He did all that the angel had told him to do and took Mary home with him. The text tells us that she remained a virgin until the Child was born. Joseph also gave the name Jesus to the Child in accordance with the angel’s instructions. {Joseph and Mary did not have a physically intimate relationship until after the birth of Jesus. Matthew was not just publicizing personal information that is none of our business; rather, he was confirming that even their marriage did nothing to call into question the virgin birth. Jesus is referred to here as their “firstborn son,” so we know that there was a physical relationship afterward and that they had other children. So important is the virgin birth that God protected it in such a way that it should never be doubted. Joseph and Mary named the boy Jesus as they had been instructed. This was a popular name in biblical days, but what separated this Jesus from all others is the truth given in Matthew 1:16. Here Matthew wrote, “Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “Messiah.” The title means “anointed,” and it separated Jesus from all others as the Anointed One from God.}

POINTS TO PONDER

1. A joyous work of God can initially be difficult or impossible to discern as such and

thus can temporarily be a cause for distress and confusion (Matthew 1:18-19).

2. The Lord will graciously prevent us from any uninformed actions that would get in the way of His plans (vs 20).
3. Our obedience to God can contribute-in however small a way-to the salvation of others (vs. 21).
4. All that God has promised will be fulfilled in time (vs. 22).
5. One of the most comforting names of our Lord tells us volumes about His attitude toward us – “God with us” (vs. 23).
6. When we are sure of the Lord's will, we can do things without fear or regard for what others may think (vss. 24-25).

CONCLUSION

A local school puts on a concert in late December, but it excludes any traditional carols that have any reference to Christ. No nativity scene is allowed in front of the city office building. The age-old “Merry Christmas” has given way to a more contemporary “Happy Holidays” as the seasonal greeting of choice. The world is trying hard to forget that Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

QUESTION(S)

- Why was Joseph in such confusion when he heard about Mary's condition?
- What might have caused Joseph to be reluctant to wed Mary?
- How did God stop Joseph from quietly divorcing Mary?
- What was God's explanation for Mary being pregnant before the marriage was consummated?
- What name was Joseph to give the son to be born to Mary, and what reason did God give for choosing this name?
- What prophet did Matthew quote, and what did he emphasize?
- Why is the virgin birth of Jesus so important to mankind?
- How did Joseph respond after he awoke from his unusual dream?

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is ***“Salvation Prepared For All People”***

Lesson Text: ***Luke 2:25-38***

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