

Matthew 1:18-25 Whose Son Is This? Falls Ch. PM 12/21/2025

Not every book of the Bible is about Jesus' earthly life - just the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Not every Gospel records the birth of Jesus - just Matthew and Luke.

Luke, the doctor, seems to have written as though he interviewed the mother, Mary. Luke told the story of the birth of Jesus from the standpoint of Mary.

Matthew seems to have written as though he interviewed Joseph. Matthew told the story of the birth of Jesus from the standpoint of Joseph.

Because of whose son this baby is, we must worship and obey Him!

We are right to make a big deal about the birth of Jesus, because of whose son this Child is.

1. The Son of David. (v.18-20)

One of Matthew's larger purposes in writing this Gospel of Matthew as a whole, was to present Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the true King of Israel. In order to do that, Matthew had to start by showing how the birth of Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament revelation. Since a king of the Jews had already reigned generations before, named David (v.6), the Messiah would need to be the first-born son of whichever man currently held the title, "Son of David." That man's son, and only that man's son, and only that man's firstborn son, would be the next rightful heir to the throne, and thus gain the title, "Son of David." This explains the presence of the family tree or genealogy at the beginning of the Book of Matthew.

What we learned from the genealogy was that the place where Matthew backed up the story was to the moment when the man who possessed the title 'Son of David,' was a man named Joseph (v.1,16,20). So Matthew's next task in writing was to show the exact unfolding of events that resulted in Jesus Christ becoming the first-born son in Joseph's family. That would prove that this was the birth not just of a baby, but of a royal baby, who was king at the time he was born. This sequence of events was of immense significance for the Jewish people.

So in verse 18, Matthew logically backed up the story to the precise point during which Joseph was engaged, but not yet married. At that moment, Joseph was still without a son, but Joseph had become engaged to be married. Since Joseph was soon getting married, it meant that Joseph now had the impending new potential after the wedding to have his own first son soon. As these verses showed, the Son came sooner into Joseph's family, and in a different way into Joseph's family, than Joseph had expected. Matthew revealed to us in verse 18 that Mary, the fiancé of Joseph, was found to be already pregnant, before the wedding! Yet Matthew was very careful to point out that Joseph and Mary had not done anything wrong, they had not been together in physical intimacy.

In Jewish law, in the Book of Deuteronomy, formal engagement to be married, or betrothal, was much more weighty than our American custom of

engagement. In those days, Jewish betrothal began about one year before the wedding, AND, the engagement in the ancient culture was itself already a binding legal contract. The Jews viewed an engagement contract how we view a marriage contract. That is, there were only two ways to end an ancient Jewish engagement: either by death or by divorce. They were consistent, since whenever one of the two fiances died during the engagement, the other fiance was considered a widow or a widower! They were also consistent in the divorce way to end an engagement. If the man decided to divorce his fiancé, that man had to go through the same legal procedure as he would be required to go through if he were seeking a divorce from a spouse in a marriage. Notice that verse 19 uses the term 'husband' for Joseph even before their wedding. Not our term fiance, but rather their term husband, was the correct word that the ancient Jews used for a man who was engaged or betrothed, even before the actual wedding day. Interestingly, on the woman's side, the woman was not yet called a wife during her engagement. The woman was not called his wife until the wedding day. In properness and holiness, the woman remained living in her father's house until the wedding day. Only later, after the wedding a husband invited the betrothed woman to his own home during and as a part of the public wedding ceremony, only then could she be called his wife. Only then would they consummate their marriage bond as husband and wife.

v.19 - Also in the law of God recorded in Deuteronomy, any Jewish woman who lost her status as a virgin before her wedding day was no longer eligible to be married to her fiancé, her betrothed, her QUOTE "husband." If she slept with anyone, it was not an option to go through with their wedding; instead, she would be given a legal certificate of divorce, because their engagement was broken by her unrighteous actions. Joseph, being righteous, and learning that she was pregnant, wanted to do the morally right thing and the legally correct thing - in the most appropriate and wisest and best way possible. So, rather than Joseph taking Mary to the court and there disgracing her in public by accusing her of an illicit action resulting in her pregnancy, Joseph desired to do the God-honoring thing in the most kind and loving way possible. Joseph created his own plan to avoid putting Mary to shame by deciding on a quiet divorce from the engagement agreement. There was only one thing Joseph did not know...EVEN THOUGH PREGNANT, MARY TRULY WAS A VIRGIN, and therefore Mary remained legally and morally eligible to stay engaged to Joseph. Mary could continue down the pathway to eventually become married to Joseph in all righteousness. Because of that fact, the result was the right step for Joseph was the opposite action than Joseph's idea. There was only one right thing for Joseph to do in order to uphold the law of God, that is, Joseph must stay engaged to Mary!

This exact situation gives us a greater appreciation for all that was impacted by Joseph's next action. Will Joseph do the right thing and continue his

engagement to her and keep planning to marry her, or will Joseph do the wrong thing and divorce her from their engagement? Here was the cost - if Joseph were to divorce his fiance Mary, it would have the result that Jesus, at His birth, would not become the legal Son of David, the next king of Israel. The only way for Jesus to gain that legal title of king, would be for Joseph to be the husband of Mary at the time of the birth of Jesus, thus ensuring that Jesus would become the first son within Joseph's house. Verse 16, "... and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ."

God the Father of Jesus was tracking Joseph the father-to-be. God sent an angel to make sure that the series of events happened as they needed to happen. Verse 20 is large with significance. The significance is that before Joseph acted on his best and wisest human thinking of how to honor God, how to best keep the law, and how to show mercy to Mary, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, asking Joseph to reconsider his next action. How else would Joseph have opened his mind to a new option, a situation that was caused by a miracle of God – the fact that Mary was pregnant yet a virgin, by the mighty power of God? Notice the exquisite beauty of Matthew's careful words in verse 20, how he recorded that The Angel of the Lord referred to Joseph as the Son of David, showing that heaven's messenger knew what the genealogy record also showed. Joseph was the one man who must marry her. Also, in verse 21, for Joseph to be the one who had the right to give the name to the child, as the angel instructed in verse 21, would necessitate that Joseph would formally acknowledge Jesus as the firstborn son in Joseph's own household, and thus for Joseph to officially agree to confer onto Jesus the title "Son of David." Verses 24 and 25 show that Joseph followed all 3 commands that the angel of the Lord gave - 1) Joseph kept Mary as his fiance until the wedding when she became his wife, (2) even after the wedding day, Joseph preserved Mary's status as a virgin until she gave birth to a Son, and (3) Joseph obeyed the angel's specific instruction by officially giving the baby boy the name Jesus. The Bible consistently shows that Jesus is the Son of David, the legal heir to the throne of the nation of Israel. Jesus is the King of the Jews.

This was not a cover-up, but a revelation! We shout it from the mountaintops! We pray that these verses would be read and understood all around the world today!

Fast forward.....to Matthew 27:37, this was when Jesus was fully grown, had already preached the gospel and had completed His miracles, and then was hung on a cross, Mathew records for us what was written on the sign above Jesus' head on the cross: "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS." It was literally true and legally true. It still is. Because of Jesus' resurrection, Jesus retains the title and so Jesus is actually the currently reigning King of the Jews.

2. The Son of Abraham. (v.21-23)

Son of Abraham was the term that our author Matthew previously wrote in chapter one, verse one, to show that Jesus was the promised Savior. Remember that Matthew was writing to Jews, who knew the promises of God to Abraham, such as in Genesis 22:18, when God promised to Abraham, "...in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,..." Paul described it this way in Galatians 3:16, "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ." So, Christ is the offspring of Abraham, or the son of Abraham. The term Son of Abraham referred to the long-promised Jesus, the true Ram needed to save Isaac by taking his place. We do not need saving from knives, but from sins. In verse 21, "...you shall call his name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

In verse 22 Matthew explicitly stated why all of this took place, "All of this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet..." It was the Lord who had spoken through the ancient prophets, such as The Lord speaking to King Ahaz in Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Ahaz would not trust in God and do what he was told. Joseph would trust in God and do what he was told. This is what Matthew quoted in verse 23, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel. Which means God with us." There is a contrast between Ahaz and Joseph here that gets us thinking about ourselves. Do we trust in the promises of God for our salvation?

Matthew understood the reason that all of this took place – in order that prophecy would be fulfilled. It was to secure for Jesus the title Son of Abraham. The Name Immanuel. The name Jesus. Jesus fulfilled the promise. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy. Jesus is with us. It was not a Ram that could save Isaac or us, but rather it was the Lamb Jesus, who saves us from our sins.

3. The Son of God. (v.24-25)

Whose biological son was this child? We all agree that Mary was the biological mother, for she was pregnant carry the baby. We all agree that Joseph was the adoptive father, for this was his family. But who was the biological father? Matthew seemed to be asking this exact question throughout chapter 1, by saying in verse 1 Son of David, Son of Abraham, in verse 18 "with child," in verse 21 a son, in verse 23 a son, in verse 25 a son. The question Matthew wants us to focus on by now is Whose Son is This? Notice how focused Matthew was in his writing - that this Child was never described in chapter one or even in chapter two as Mary's son or Joseph's son. In fact, five times in chapter two, Matthew used the phrase "the Child and His mother Mary." We are drawn back to Matthew's point, "Whose Son is this?" It is not until we fast-forward to chapter 2, verse 15 that we how another prophecy was fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." Then, as a

ringing confirmation, we fastforward to Matthew 3:17 where behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased." Who is speaking? God the Father!

Not only is Matthew's goal accomplished in chapter one, verses 24-25 by showing that Jesus was not the son of Joseph in the physical sense, but Matthew's goal is repeatedly confirmed throughout his Gospel account - that is, *Jesus' origin is traced to God the Father Himself*. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Savior, the newborn Child of Christmas, is none other than the divine Son of God! Jesus is rightly called Immanuel, God with us! God the Father is Jesus' biological Father, which hasn't happened since Adam was formed directly by God from the dust. This is exactly why Paul refers to Jesus Christ as the Second Adam in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5. The Son of God has come to take on human flesh as the second Adam and the last Adam in order to reverse what damage was caused by the first Adam in the Fall into sin. Simply put, Jesus the Son of God, has come to save His people from their sins.

Conclusion:

King Ahaz faced a big problem from an enemy that threatened everything. Ahaz made his own plan to trust a foreign nation with a strong army. God had a different plan. Ahaz refused to trust God for the sign.

Joseph faced a big problem from a scandal that threatened everything. Joseph had made his own plan to quietly divorce Mary. God had a different plan. Joseph received instead God's plans, and what God had begun to accomplish in the birth of Jesus. May we, like Joseph, submit our plans to God.

May we, like Joseph, give our hearts and minds to God.

May we know that God is with us, Immanuel, in order to bless us in every season of our lives.

When we are in a season of distress, facing a big problem that threatens everything, may we turn to God for comfort. When we are in a season of joy and blessing, let us see it as coming from Immanuel, our God who is near us in order to bless us.

In all seasons, may we rest with contentment in the knowledge that God is with us in the person of Jesus. May we have the trust, love, and obedience to receive the blessings of Immanuel.

Since the baby Jesus is the Son of Abraham, the Child of promise, who came as promised, we can believe that He will come again as promised. Since the baby Jesus is the Son of God, we can worship Him.