

SERMON OUTLINE

In Matthew 1:18-23 we observe 3 actions encompassing the conception and birth of Christ.

- I. Joseph acted righteously.
 - A. By caring for Mary (vs. 18-19a).
 - B. By obeying the law (v. 19b).
- II. God acted powerfully.
 - A. By sending an angel with a message.
 - 1. Don't be afraid (v. 20a).
 - 2. The Child is of the Holy Spirit (v. 20b).
 - 3. Name Him Jesus (v. 21).
 - B. By Fulfilling His promise (vs. 22-23).
- III. Joseph acted obediently.
 - A. By taking Mary as his wife (v. 24).
 - B. By naming the Child Jesus (v. 25).

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, December 20, 2015

Passage: Matthew 1:18-25

Memory Passage: Matthew 1:20-21

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 1:18-25.** Write a sentence expressing the primary point Matthew wants us to understand about Jesus' birth?
- (b) Explain the relationship of a couple who was "betrothed." Was it like engagement? Marriage? Dating? Something else?
- (c) What does the phrase, "before they came together" mean, and why was this a problem for Joseph?
- (d) Mary is "with child from the Holy Spirit" (a fact Joseph has yet to learn). What does this mean? How do you think the 1st century reader would have reacted to this statement if they did not already know the story? How do 21st century readers react?

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 1:18-25 & Deut. 22:22-27.** According to the law, what should Joseph, "a just man," do with Mary?
- (b) How does divorcing Mary quietly allow Joseph both to remain "just" and allow him to keep from shaming Mary?
- (c) Why does Matthew say Joseph sought to "divorce" Mary even though they were not yet married?
- (d) Consider Joseph's internal struggle as he considered doing the "right" thing. If the Holy Spirit had not been involved, would Joseph have benefited from doing the right thing (divorcing her)? Would Mary? Have you been confronted with doing the right thing which would in turn reveal someone else's sin? How did you feel? Did you do the right thing? Explain.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 1:18-25.** Explain how v. 20 can be used as a good illustration of God's perfect timing.
- (b) How does the angel's address of Joseph as "son of David" connect Joseph to the context of Matthew's gospel (cf. 1:1)? How does it inform Joseph of his role in the unfolding story?
- (c) What bearing would the nature of Mary's conception have on relieving Joseph of his fear of marrying Mary?
- (d) Compare and contrast Gabriel's visit with Joseph to his visit with Mary you studied last week in Luke 1:26-38.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 1:18-25, Is. 40:2, Jer. 31:31-34, Ez. 36:25-27, & Zech. 13:1.** What do these OT passages teach you about God's plans for His people concerning their sin?
- (b) Do you think the Jews of Jesus' day would have expected these OT promises to be fulfilled in this way? Why or why not?
- (c) Of whom is the angel speaking when he says "his people" in v. 21? Explain and defend your answer from Scripture.
- (d) What does v. 22 teach you about the words of an OT prophet, and why is this important?

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Matt. 1:18-25, 2 Kings 16:1-9 & Is. 7:1-17.** Explain the storyline of 2 Kings 16:1-9 & Is. 7:1-13.
- (b) Explain both the immediate/partial and future/full fulfillment of Is. 7:14.
- (c) What comfort did the promise of "Immanuel" bring to those living at the time of King Ahaz? What comfort does it bring for those living during Jesus' day? What comfort does it bring to you, and in what situations will remembering it strengthen you to live in a way that more fully glorifies God this coming week?
- (d) In what ways are you struggling to obey God's word, and how does Joseph's obedience (v. 25) encourage you to more faithfully listen and obey?

DATE: December 20, 2015

PASSAGE: Matt. 1:18-25

The Virgin Birth Brings God to Us