

Meeker Christian Church  
12-22-24  
The Christmas Story part 2

In case you missed one of the points of last weeks sermon - John 1:14 we shared a birth announcement: 14 And the Word became 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.

The announcement of the most important and significant event for mankind for all ages - The very manifestation of God being birthed by a human mother for the purpose of providing the salvation opportunity for all mankind.

What would your emotion be if Mary had been your daughter or the woman to whom you were engaged! Seriously? Is it any wonder some people in their hometown wanted to venerate her - others to stone her!

In the writing of the Apostle John we bypass most of that to get directly to a description of who the child was and His fulfillment of the O.T. prophecies to become eternal light for the souls of redeemed mankind.

Today we look at Matthew's account of the same supernatural birthing of the Christ Child: Matthew 1:18-25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Joseph found himself in a real dilemma!! The parents of Joseph and Mary had worked out a bride price at their engagement as required by custom. It is interesting that earliest bride prices were a groom reimbursing the father for the loss of a worker on the farm. It evolved through the ages as a sign of respect. Perhaps our contemporary engagement ring is comparable. In our scripture, Joseph had paid the price. Joseph had been absolutely righteous and anticipated their soon to be wedding. Then this! We you can see in the scripture how he proceeded to deal with the dilemma.

*19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.*

In Joseph's mind, his training and experience the most decent thing he could do was divorce their engagement and let her family deal with the embarrassment.

*20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream,*

It appears Joseph fell asleep during his trying to figure things out;, likely it was fitful sleep at best while still struggling with what appeared to be the reality of the situation!!!

- behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” 24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep,

I must chuckle every time I read this account - Joseph trying to sleep away the impossible circumstance life has apparently given him and “he was aroused from sleep!!!!” The understatement of the day- aroused!! I would guess he may have bounded out of bed praising God and doing back flips because suddenly the great dilemma all made sense with the angelic quote coming from a familiar Jewish Old Testament study, Talking about Jesus becoming the light as we did last week! - Even this message about the birth of Jesus brought light into a dark world for our man Joseph:

*24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.*

The way Matthew wrote this it sounds like they were married right away, before Jesus was born, which would certainly have affirmed the greatness of the righteous character of Joseph much less the consolation, love, and respect for Mary.

Oh yes P.S. We have the names of 4 sons and know of daughters as well, of Mary and Joseph: James, Joseph, Jude and Simon and along with daughters whose names are not listed for us.

Matthew 13:55-56 55 Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?”

Cross reference: Mark 6:3

We continue in Matthew 2:1-12 2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, This second chapter begins some undisclosed period of time AFTER Jesus was born. Mary, Joseph and Jesus were still in Bethlehem and the wise men sought for an audience with them. The wise men were asking around Jerusalem: 2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

The wise men inquired around in Jerusalem the possible whereabouts of this newborn king of the Jews. Short of divine revelation the only logical way the wise men had made it this far is because some Jew in their lives had done what all the Jews were always supposed to do and that was reach out and teach others of the one true God. Teaching them from the O.T. containing the revealing prophecies of this potentially world affecting potentate born in a little village near Jerusalem. The wise men were convinced! Herod was more than a little disturbed that someone may have been born who would threaten his own rulership. And he immediately set about using his resources to assure his continued reign.

Continue in Matthew chapter 2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, Herod inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;  
For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.' "

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." 9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

—The wise men arrived at a house which some teach could have been a year or year and a half-after the birth of the messiah. The wise men presented their gifts But they were warned about Herods complicity and returned home another way.

*12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.*

It is pleasant to leave the Christmas story on a happy upbeat note - sort of happy feeling, good ending that might be interpreted as... for the well-being and life assurance and satisfaction of the hearer.

But Matthew is inspired to record a followup message that I believe is to wisely be taken to heart every season of the year.: Listen ... Matthew 2:13-23

*13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."*

— The wise men departed for their own countries. The Lord Himself appeared in a dream to Joseph this time instead of a messenger angel with a troubling - authoritative, no option, no measured response. Just do it was definitely inferred!!!. Joseph had experienced enough training in righteous response, coupled with his relationship with Mary to see God in action first hand. Joseph did not question or try to negotiate with truth's ultimate authority.

*14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,*

Do you get the sense of urgency requiring immediate action? - they left during the night!--- An important lesson in life for you and me and every devoted Christian: If God says it (reveals it to us in the Bible or however we receive the message), if the message is from God, then that settle it. Do it or expect consequences - period.

*14 When Joseph arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt 15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."*

Did you happen to catch in that 14th verse? Jesus is now a “young child” no longer referred to as a baby??? Observe the outcome of the complete obedience of Joseph and Mary. It is interesting to note the integral timing of all these things - the wise men brought resources for indigent Joseph, Mary and Jesus to enable them to make the journey to Egypt and live there for perhaps up to 4 years. Meanwhile back in Bethlehem...

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more.”

God does not do or allow anything without a corresponding lesson. In this case we are reminded that God cares for His own. Right down to the smallest detail. But we may also note that God took care of Joseph and Mary not just for them, but HE took care of them to take care of Jesus and He did it 2,000 years ago to save your soul today!

Matthew 2:19-23 Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child’s life are dead.” 21 Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

— But so we understand Mary and Joseph lived in the real world - no so different from our own we are told:

22 But when Joseph heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

What you think I may have skipped over or missed with the Christmas story is actually that which is recorded in Luke with the shepherds and the more familiar manger scene minus the wise men which are only mentioned in Matthew just as the shepherds are only mentioned in Luke. The details are slightly different, but

the message is the same. And for today I want you to be so encouraged - starting with the Christmas story, but also to take a minute and check on what Jesus is doing today and what he has to say - directly to you...

John 14:1-4 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."

He took care of Joseph and Mary and to the smallest detail is trying to take care of you. And I close by repeating Paul's prayer for you:

Ephesians 1:18-22 15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.