

### Lesson 3 - THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST     Matthew 1:18-25

**(Matt. 1:18)** - The apostle Paul wrote, *“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (Gal. 4:4-5). The apostle Matthew was inspired by God the Holy Spirit to record some details of this glorious time of the Savior’s birth - *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.”* God’s Word teaches us that Jesus Christ was (and is) the Son of God by nature - *“God sent forth HIS SON.”* This tells us that the Savior is Himself God manifest in the flesh. In His nature as deity, He is equal with the Father and the Spirit in every attribute of deity. God’s Word teaches us that Jesus Christ was (and is) perfect man - *“made of a woman.”* The sinless humanity of Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary who was a virgin not yet married to her husband Joseph. It was a miraculous conception - *“she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.”* The virgin birth of our Savior is a fundamental truth of true Christianity. He was the seed of woman (Gen. 3:15) and not the offspring of Adam. Adam came from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:17); Christ came from heaven - *“The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man [Christ] is the Lord from heaven”* (1 Cor. 15:47). Adam fell and was a sinful man; Christ was sinless and without blemish as typified by the Passover lambs and was therefore qualified to save sinners by His sinless reconciling death. The Spirit of God came upon Mary in a powerful way and formed the humanity of Christ within her (Luke 1:35). So even though His deity had no beginning, His sinless humanity had a beginning as indicated by the word *“birth”* which is literally *“genesis.”* His sinless human body is that earthly tabernacle that was fitted and made ready for Him according to that which was written in the book of God’s eternal decrees (Heb. 10:4-7). The apostle John described it by the following - *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt [lit., tabernacled] among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14). Because as the Surety of God’s chosen people, and the debt of all their sins had been imputed to Him, the Son of God had *“to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people”* (Heb. 2:17).

**(Matt. 1:19)** - At the time of Mary’s pregnancy, she and Joseph were legally espoused, but they had not yet come together as man and wife. Though this was the case, the espousal required a legal divorce to be dissolved. Joseph was *“a just man,”* i.e. he was righteous in God’s sight by the blood and righteousness of Christ imputed to him and gave evidence of God’s grace within through faith in Christ (Rom. 3:24; 4:6-8; 5:9; 2 Cor. 5:21). Joseph did not want to bring shame upon Mary, but not understanding yet what had happened to Mary, he thought of a way to divorce her quietly and privately.

**(Matt. 1:20)** - This *“angel of the Lord”* was most likely Gabriel who appeared to Zacharias and later to Mary (Luke 1:19, 26-27). Gabriel means the man who stands in the presence of God (cf. Dan. 8:16; 9:21). Many believe that Gabriel was the Son of God Himself Who took an angelic form in Joseph’s dream and to convey messages from God to sinners. On the other hand, another angel, Michael, whose name means the one who is like God, is also thought to be the Son of God in angelic form. He is the one who makes warfare against the enemies of God’s people (Dan. 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). Christ frequently made appearances in the Old Testament and was called *“the Angel of the LORD”* (Gen. 22:11-15; Exod. 3:2; Judges 13:21; Psa. 34:7; Zech. 3:1-10). The angel told Joseph to marry his espoused wife and informed him that Mary was with child by the Holy Ghost.

**(Matt. 1:21)** - The angel told Joseph that Mary would have a son. It was the custom that the father would name the child. As God was (and is) the eternal Father of the Son, it was He Who named the child, not Joseph. “JESUS” was the New Testament name for “Savior,” translated from the Old Testament name “Joshua” (Heb. 4:8). This name means “salvation” or “the LORD is salvation,” thus, it means “for HE shall save His people from their sins.” “His people” describes all whom God the Father chose and gave to Christ before the foundation of the world (John 6:37; 17:1-2; Eph. 1:3-7; 2 Tim. 1:8-10). These are the elect of God, chosen out of every nation (Jew and Gentile) to whom God does not impute sin (Rom. 8:33) and for whom Christ died and arose again having brought in a perfect righteousness whereby God has justified them and given them spiritual life (Rom. 8:34). These are the ones Christ came to save, and these are the ones He DID save by the sacrifice of Himself. He saves them “from their sins.” As they all fell in Adam into a state of sin and death (Rom. 5:12), they shall all be saved by the blood and righteousness of Christ, their Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer (Rom. 5:21). As their sins were imputed to Him for which He died under the just wrath of God, His righteousness is imputed to them for which they are justified and raised unto life and glory.

**(Matt. 1:22-23)** - Matthew makes it clear that the incarnation and birth of Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah (ex. Isa. 9:6-7; 7:14). It is a fact that God could not suffer unto death, and man cannot satisfy and live, but Christ, the Godman, both suffered unto death and satisfied unto life. Our Savior is the Man Christ Jesus, so He could suffer, bleed, die, and make satisfaction to offended justice for sinners. But He was not limited by His humanity - “In HIM dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). “They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” This is the Person of Christ for which He was qualified to be the Savior of sinners (Heb. 2:14-17). Notice that all that is spoken here is in line with the everlasting covenant of grace, all conditioned on the Lord Jesus Christ and not on sinners who are to be saved by Him. The Messenger declared three “shalls” that were sure to take place:

(1) “SHE SHALL bring forth a Son” - Mary’s pregnancy and the birth of the Messiah was sure and certain to take place despite all of the sins, failures, and opposition of sinful people throughout the Old Testament up to the time of His birth. The whole salvation of God’s people was placed on the shoulders of Christ, and He had to be brought forth of a virgin, walk the earth under the law as God manifest in the flesh, die on the cross as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of God’s people, and be risen from the dead because of His work to justify them by His righteousness.

(2) “And THOU SHALT call His name Jesus” - His name identifies and distinguishes who He is and what He came to do. Because of the goodness and power of Almighty God, nothing and no one could stop this great work of salvation accomplished by Jesus. His very name tells us this.

(3) “For HE SHALL save His people from their sins” - His death was not an attempt to save His people. His death did not make salvation possible or even probable. His death secured the full salvation of every sinner for whom He died and arose from the dead - “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11).

**(Matt. 1:24-25)** - Having received divine instructions as to what he was to do, Joseph was obedient to the word of the Lord. He received Mary into his home to care for her, but they did not consummate their marriage until after the child Jesus was born. Eight days after His birth, the child was circumcised and officially named JESUS (Luke 2:21). We do not know the exact date of His birth, but we do celebrate His birth, along with His life, death, and resurrection; for HE IS OUR SALVATION!