

***Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas***  
***Fredericksburg Bible Church***

*107 East Austin*

*Fredericksburg, Texas 78624*

*830-997-8834    [jthomas@fbgbible.org](mailto:jthomas@fbgbible.org)*

**C1414 – April 16, 2014 – Matthew 1:18-25**  
**The Virgin Conception**

Last week we dealt with Matthew's genealogy of Jesus the Messiah in 1:1-17. This is very Jewish. You're going to have to learn to think like a Jew to appreciate these sections of Scripture. The Messiah was defined as the anointed seed of David who would fulfill the Davidic covenant. This is why Matthew begins with "Jesus the Messiah, the son of David." The Messiah had to be the rightful heir of the Davidic promises. What were the Davidic promises? 2 Sam 7:16, "your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." The genealogy is Matthew's defense of Jesus as the One who is the rightful heir of the Davidic throne and kingdom. Matthew also says Jesus is "the son of Abraham." Why Abraham? Abraham is the father of the Jewish people. He was the original recipient of the Abrahamic covenant. What was promised in the Abrahamic covenant? Gen 12:1-3, a land, seed and worldwide blessing. The Abrahamic covenant is the original covenant and the Davidic amplifies the seed aspect. Together the covenants are defining the kingdom, the nature of the kingdom and the lineage of the king that is to come. It's Davidic as verse 6 shows but not only Davidic; also Solomonic. It was David through Solomon. 2 Sam 7:12, "your descendant after you, who will come forth from you,...I will establish his kingdom...I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." David had other sons but there was only one son through whom the Davidic promises would be established and that son was Solomon. Solomon's kingdom and Solomon's throne will be established forever. That is what you see in verse 6, "David was the father of Solomon" showing that this is the Davidic heir lineage. Everyone who follows Solomon in verse 7 down to Jeconiah in verse 11 was a Davidic king and sat on the Davidic throne. Jeconiah was cursed. We see that in Jer 22:30, "Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah." Did Coniah have children? Sure,

verse 12, “Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel.” So the curse is not saying Coniah wouldn’t have any children. He actually had seven children. Neither is the curse saying that Coniah’s children wouldn’t have throne rights. They all had throne rights. What the curse is saying is that even though they had throne rights they could not sit on the throne and exercise those rights. No direct descendant of Coniah can ever sit on the throne. Look at the list of these men following Coniah; Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, Abihud, Eliakim, Azor, etc...all these men had throne rights but not one of them sat on the throne. Why not? Because they were under the curse. The question is “How are you ever going to get a descendant who can avoid the curse and sit on the throne? Adoption. Verse 16, “Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.” Who gave birth to Jesus? Mary, not Joseph. Up to this point it was always the father gave birth to the son. At this point the structure shifts. Mary gave birth to Jesus. Joseph is not the physical father of Jesus. Why couldn’t he be? Because if he was Jesus would be under the Coniah curse. But Joseph was rather the legal father of Jesus by adoption because he was the husband of Mary. When he names Jesus in the next pericope he is formally adopting him as his own son. So Jesus does get his throne rights from Joseph but what can Jesus do that none of the other men from Jeconiah could do? Exercise those throne rights, actually sit and rule on the throne. Legally Jesus is the heir of David through Solomon. It has to be this way. Jesus cannot get his throne rights from Mary. Mary is not a descendant of David’s son Solomon. She is a descendant of David’s son Nathan. So Joseph married a girl in the same family and same tribe but Jesus could only get his throne rights from Joseph. We are not studying Luke’s genealogy of Mary but as a short aside what does Mary’s genealogy accomplish? It shows Jesus’ physical descent from Adam, demonstrating He’s a true human being and physical descent from the house of David, showing he’s a true physical descendant of David. Jesus had to be a true human being physically descended from the house of David. Ultimately Jesus had to have both legal throne rights as well as physical descent. Joseph gives Him the legal rights, that’s Matthew’s entire point; Mary gives him the physical descent, that’s Luke’s point. Matthew is confirming genealogically that Jesus is the king and he has the right to sit on the throne of David but more importantly that he has the right to exercise His rule over the kingdoms of the whole world. This king was walking around in the world that He was to come and reign over. Now did He do that? Did He exercise His throne

rights? No. Why not? Because the exercise of His reign is contingent on the nation Israel's acceptance of Him as the Messiah and they rejected Him!

Did they have any excuse, on the basis of this genealogy to reject Him? No, what's remarkable, and Dwight Pentecost is famous for pointing this out, nobody in the Gospels or Acts ever challenges Jesus' legal throne rights. You can only imagine if someone came along saying they were the Messiah what would be the first thing the scribes and Pharisees would do? Trot down to the Temple to check the records. And if there had been any flaw in His descent they would have immediately accused Him of being an impostor. So even though the nation rejected Him, it was not because He was outside the Davidic line and therefore ineligible to claim the Davidic throne. It must have been something else, it must have been the hardness of their hearts. But it's Jewish genealogies like this that can break through the hardness of heart. Here's a testimony that was sent to me last week by one of my friends at the seminary. He got this from a pastor in Hawaii. The pastor says, "Two years ago a young Jewish man began attending Mililani Community Church with his wife and little daughter. He was not a believer. He only came because he is a loving husband and father and wanted to support his family. But over the past two years as we have continued our series of verse by verse expositions of the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord opened his heart to understand that Jesus really is God's Messiah, the true king of Israel and the Savior of the world! Last year He trusted Jesus as His personal Lord and Savior."<sup>1</sup> See, that's the power of this kind of stuff to Jews. This is so Jewish it reeks.

Tonight we turn to the birth of Jesus, who is called Messiah. Now why does this come next in Matthew's argument? What did verse 16 show? That Jesus was not the biological son of Joseph. So who was the father? Is Mary a fornicator? What's going on? Verse 18 begins with Matthew stating the subject matter. **Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows.** The conjunction **Now** (Gk *de*) indicates the transition to the new pericope. Matthew refers to Him as **Jesus Christ** (Gk *Iesou Christou*) as he did in verse 1. What does **Christ** mean? It's the same word as the Hebrew Messiah. So Jesus Christ, Jesus Messiah, same thing, don't distinguish between Christ and Messiah, they're the same word, they both mean "the Anointed One." The translators, for who knows what reason, decided to translate some of them as Messiah and others as Christ. In verse 16 they translated it Messiah, in verse

18 they translate it Christ. That's his title. What's his name? **Jesus**. What does it mean? YHWH saves. Who's YHWH? That's God's pre-eminent name in the OT. So who is Jesus? He's God. So this is **the birth of Jesus Christ** who is God who saves. In other words, what doctrine is taught here? The incarnation. Incarnate just means "in" "flesh." So the question is "How did God come in flesh?" Matthew says it occurred **as follows**, adverb of manner. It occurred in this way.

Something must be unique because up until this time in history how many ways had humans come in the flesh? Three ways. First, Adam came in the flesh by God creating him directly out of the dust of the earth and breathing into him the breath of life. Second, Eve came in the flesh by God creating her directly out of the side of Adam. Third, all flesh since Eve came into the world by God creating them indirectly through conjugal relations of a man and woman. How did God come into the world as human flesh?

The answer begins in the middle of verse 18 at the time Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant. **When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.** The time was after **Mary had been betrothed to Joseph** but **before they came together** in marriage. So it was during the betrothal period. Betrothal in Jewish culture was not the equivalent of an engagement in our culture. The betrothal was drawn up as a legal contract between the father of the groom and the father of the bride. Both fathers were taking upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining the purity of their son or daughter in preparation for the marriage (cf the wonderful analogy based on this custom in 2 Cor 11:2-3). During this preparation period the man was considered 'husband' and the woman 'wife' even though they could not legally engage in conjugal relations. The betrothal period lasted a minimum of one year. This period gave ample time to discover any evidence of fornication such as getting pregnant. If fornication was discovered then the betrothal could only be broken by filing for divorce. M'Neile summarizes the strength of the betrothal, "...a betrothed girl was a widow if her *fiancé* died (Kethub. i. 2), and this whether the man had "taken" her into his house or not. After betrothal, therefore, but before marriage, the man was legally "husband"..."<sup>ii</sup> Joseph was therefore legally her husband prior to the marriage as verse 19 affirms beyond a shadow of doubt. It was during this betrothal period that it was discovered that she was pregnant. Matthew is very careful to point out

that the discovery occurred **before they came together**, that is, before they had married and had conjugal relations. What difference does it make? If the pregnancy had been discovered after they were married and had come together then it would have naturally been concluded that the child was Joseph's. But since they had not come together then this was highly unlikely (though there were questions, cf Lk 1:31, "supposedly the son of Joseph"). So it was during the betrothal period that Joseph discovered that she was with child. Luke 1:26-38 fills in the picture by explaining that the Holy Spirit conceived the child during the period of betrothal when Elizabeth was in her sixth month. It was at that time that the angel announced to Mary that she was with child. At that time she left Nazareth and travelled to Elizabeth's, staying with her for three months. So adding in travel time to and fro, when she returned it became apparent over the course of time that she was pregnant. Since Joseph knew that no one since Adam and Eve came into the world any other way than conjugal relations then he logically concluded that Mary had committed fornication by being with another man while she was gone to Elizabeth's. This would have been a shocking and devastating discovery. However, verse 18 alerts us to something Joseph did not know at the time; namely, there was now a fourth way human flesh had come into the world; **by the Holy Spirit**. So right away we know that the incarnation was unique. It had never occurred before and it has never happened since, it is a one of a kind way of conception. Therefore Mary had not committed fornication.

Verse 19, **And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly**. Observe, was **Joseph** considered her **husband** during the betrothal? Yes. They weren't married but they were husband and wife. That doesn't quite compute in our culture. That's why you have to become a token Jew to understand the Gospel of Matthew. He was her husband. What did he plan to do in light of the discovery? To **send her away**. To **send her away** is the technical Greek term for "divorce." He planned to divorce her. Again, they weren't married but the betrothal was a legal contract and therefore divorce was necessary to break the contract. Now he went through some thought to come up with this plan. He actually had four options. First, he could marry her anyway. However, to do so would implicate him as being the father of the child. This would mean he broke the law by having conjugal relations with Mary during the betrothal period. The text tells us he was **a righteous man** and so he

didn't want to break the law. Second, he could file legal proceedings that would demand she be stoned to death (Deut 22:23-24). Though this was rarely carried out in the first century the law gave Joseph this option. Joseph didn't want to do this because he loved her. Third, he could disgrace her by publicly divorcing her. This would greatly affect her reputation in society. As Josephus says, "Divorce was social status."<sup>iii</sup> She would be reduced to the level of a harlot. The text says he did **not want to disgrace her** so this option was not open to Joseph. Fourth, according to the Mishnah he could divorce her privately by handing her a bill of divorce in the presence of two or three witnesses. This would meet both the righteous standards of the law and eliminate defaming her character so this is the course Joseph decided to take.

There's not much about Joseph in the NT so we want to capitalize on these two things. First, Joseph was a **righteous man**. This means that he did not want to break the Law of Moses. To have married her would have appeared like he had broken the laws of betrothal. Joseph did not even want to appear as though he had done this. So he had a very high respect for the Law. Second, Joseph loved Mary deeply. This is apparent in that he did not want to **disgrace her**. To have publicly divorced her would have totally destroyed her reputation in society. Joseph then, in order to navigate a safe path that kept in balance both his respect for the law and his love for Mary, chose to follow the only course that would protect both interests, he would privately give her a bill of divorce in the presence of two witnesses. In the end both her reputation and his own to some degree would be salvaged. So Joseph was a very compassionate man. He was very probably a believer in the OT sense.

Verse 20, **But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." 21**"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." At this point I can only imagine that he was relieved. But notice the situation for this angelic visitation was **when Joseph had considered this**; that is, when he had thought through all his options and concluded that he would divorce her privately, **an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream**. The fact that it was **in a dream** shows that Joseph was exhausted from sorting through the difficulties of what to do upon discovering this painful information and so he had fallen into a deep sleep. In the dream **an**

**angel of the Lord** said to him, **do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife**; Joseph had good reason to **be afraid to take Mary as his wife**. It would make him appear to be breaking the law. Joseph was a **righteous man** and did not want to appear unrighteous. In other words, it would have damaged his reputation. The angel explains why he should not be afraid by saying, **the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit**. Now since the Holy Spirit is not explained did Joseph know of the Holy Spirit? Yes, Joseph understood who the Holy Spirit was. Several passages in the OT indicate that there is a Holy Spirit. The OT does indicate a triune concept of God though we wouldn't argue that it was as well understood as we have in the NT, but we would argue that it was understood well enough (e.g. Isa 61:1). Now why would God go to such an extent as to send an angel to reveal this information? In order to ensure that Jesus is adopted into the line of David in order to receive legal throne rights. If Joseph didn't marry her then he couldn't adopt Jesus and then Jesus would not have been in the line of David; He wouldn't have been the King. So the whole reason God sent the angel was to secure Joseph's marriage to Mary. Now the explanation of the angel was that the **Holy Spirit** had chosen to conceive **the Child...in her**. Did Joseph accept this explanation? Yes, he did. He had faith that this was true. Did he know of the virgin birth? Did he know of Isa 7:14? Maybe. Did he understand it? Probably about as well as you understand it. So Joseph was to **take her as his wife** to bring him into the line of David. At the same time do you think some stigma might be attached to Joseph nonetheless? Certainly there are going to be people who do not accept this explanation. So yes, there will be some stigma but this is necessary so that Jesus can get throne rights from Joseph who will adopt him into his family.

In verse 21 the sex of the child is revealed. Some people say it's not just the sex but it's pointing to Dan 7 the Son of Man. That may be but it's not clear to me. What is clear is that the sex is not revealed in verse 19, only that it was a **child**, but in verse 21 it is revealed that the child is a son. **She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins**. Now what's interesting is that over in Luke the angel Gabriel also told Mary you shall name Him Jesus. Why was this information given to both Joseph and Mary independently? Confirmation. Scripturally, when someone gets a voice from God there's independent verification. It's not that I got a word from God and there's no independent source of verification. There's always verification. So the fact that they both had a revelation to

name the son Jesus verified they had received a word from God. Mary and Joseph eventually would have talked about it. Who named the son? Jewish mothers often name sons but who named Jesus in verse 25? Joseph. So what does it mean that Joseph named Him? It means that Joseph is his legal father. What's this pointing to again? It points to Joseph's transfer of his Davidic throne rights to Jesus. At the same time since it was through adoption Jesus avoids the Coniah curse so He can actually exercise His throne rights. At this point you have a true heir to the Davidic throne on earth. This is amazing. For the first time since 586BC you have a legitimate heir to the throne. Somebody who can sit on David's throne. Interestingly, did He sit on David's throne? No. The PD's say yes, at the ascension he went to the right hand of the Father and sat on David's throne in heaven. But is the Davidic throne a heavenly throne or an earthly throne? An earthly throne. So he has throne rights, he has the right to exercise those rights but He never has exercised those rights. Why? Because Israel rejected Him and the taking of the throne is contingent on Israel accepting Him. But here He is.

Now this name, **Jesus**, we commented on in verse 1, verse 18. What name do we commonly in our society that is the equivalent of Jesus? Joshua. Joshua is from the Hebrew word Yeshua from which we get **Jesus**. What did Joshua do in the OT? He led the conquest. Was he successful? Did they conquer every square inch of real estate God promised to Abraham? No. So what is to be the name of Mary's son? Also Joshua. Jesus is a second Joshua. What's He coming to do? Finish what the first Joshua failed to do; complete the conquest, give them the land, restore the kingdom. What is required for that to happen? What did the people have to do in order to have conquest the first time? They had to obey the word of God. What word of God? The Mosaic covenant; the Law of Moses. Could they do that? No. They could only produce partial obedience. So what were the results? Partial obedience results in partial conquest. So how do you get total conquest? Perfect obedience. Well how are the people going to produce perfect obedience? Go back to the name... What is Jesus going to do? What does his name mean? He will save His people from their sins. How is He going to do that? He's going to die a sacrificial death for their sins, Isaiah 53. In what covenant did God promise to forgive their sins and give them a new heart so that they would obey? The New covenant. So what is Jesus coming to do? Be the founding sacrifice of the New covenant. What will happen when the nation receives Jesus as their Messiah? The New covenant will be fulfilled; Jesus will forgive their sins and



give them a new heart so that they will obey completely. What will be the results? A complete conquest and the kingdom will come. Jesus is the second Joshua and a greater Joshua because ultimately He will do what the first Joshua never did, forgive them of their sins and give them a heart that will obey so they can have total conquest. That's what the Book of Revelation is all about; Jesus appearing as the second Joshua and completing the conquest. But it all hinges on Israel putting their trust in Him and being given a new heart that will perfectly obey. Then the conquest will be complete and the kingdom will come. So the way to the kingdom is through the cross. You can't get there apart from the cross.

Why was Joseph to name his son Jesus? It's a play on the meaning of the name: **For he will save His people from their sins.** So His name fits His mission. The mission is quite clear, to **save His people from their sins.** Which people is he thinking about? God only has one people. Israel. They are His people by virtue of what? The covenants. All this is about the covenants. Don't jump to the Church and read back that Jesus' mission is to come and save Jew and Gentile in one body, the Church! There is no Church, nobody knows anything about a Church at this time. That's reading the Epistles back into the Gospels. So how are you going to read this? As Jesus saving the covenanted Jewish **people.** The salvation will be contingent on the nation's acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. Upon the acceptance He will willingly die for their sin and lead the conquering of Rome and establishment of His kingdom and throne. Isn't that what Daniel taught? Isn't that what they'd be thinking?

Now we come to the prophecy that stands behind why Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary. Before we do, notice two things. First, there is nothing miraculous about the birth. The virgin birth is true, that's verse 25. It states that Mary remained a virgin until she gave birth. After that she no longer remained a virgin. But we're not defending the virgin birth as miraculous. The birth was a birth like any other birth in a fallen world. What are we defending then? The virgin conception, that was miraculous. What was the miracle? The miracle was that there was no human sperm that joined with Mary's egg. But at the same time it's important that there was Mary's egg. Why is that important? Why can't it all just be the Holy Spirit? Because Jesus had to be a true human. If He's not a true human He can't die for human sin. He gets that from Mary. At the same time the Holy Spirit

must be involved. Why? So that Jesus is born without sin. He's got to be a true human without sin. Second, we're not defending the Immaculate Conception. That's a doctrine of Roman Catholicism that developed in veneration of Mary. It says that Mary was conceived without sin and that's supposed to explain how Jesus was born without sin. Of course, the Scriptures don't say a word about Mary's conception so it's theologically contrived and we object to it. What we do not object to is the virgin conception. That is what we are holding to, the doctrine of the virgin conception, that's where the real miracle is

In verse 22 Matthew tells us why **all this took place to fulfill what was spoken**. So why did the Holy Spirit conceive this child in Mary? In order to fulfill OT prophecy. Now this is Matthew's first quotation of the OT to show fulfillment of prophecy. He is going to use this expression **all this took place to fulfill** multiple times in order to convince his Jewish audience that Jesus has fulfilled prophecy (cf 2:15, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4). Notice how the prophecy came about. The prophecy **was spoken by the Lord through the prophet**. That's about as accurate an expression as you can find anywhere in the NT to express the process of inspiration. The source of the prophecy is **the Lord**, the means by which the Lord spoke was **through the prophet**. What prophet? Isaiah. So there you have the normative way Scripture was formed. God speaking through a man. So we have Isaiah. What chapter and verse? 7:14. **"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."** This comes from the Septuagint translation but let's turn there. Matthew insists that this is a prophecy of the virgin conception and that it was fulfilled in Mary and Jesus by the Holy Spirit. This is a difficult section of the OT, not so much as to whether Isaiah prophesied the virgin conception but as to what immediate relevance the prophecy would have to the original audience. What was the historical situation? The kingdoms had long been divided. The northern kingdom of Israel has made an alliance with Aram to conquer Judah. Why would they want to do that? To unite all twelve tribes under Israel. They're trying to overcome Judah. Ahaz was the Davidic king in Judah. In verse 2 what's his response when the enemy moves in? He's afraid, "his heart and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind." What is he expecting? Defeat. And inevitably the victor puts the defeated king to death, not a pleasant prospect for Ahaz. So God in verse 3 sent Isaiah and his son

out to meet Ahaz. In verse 4 he's to tell him, "Take care and be calm, have no fear..." Why? Verse 5, they have "planned evil against you..." verse 6 is the plan but verse 7, the Lord says, "It shall not stand nor shall it come to pass." So the plan will be spoiled. There was no reason to fear. At this point, however, Ahaz was not convinced. He was still shaking in his boots. Humanly, he saw no way to survive. So in verse 10 the Lord sends another message to Ahaz. Verse 11 is the message, "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven." In other words, ask whatever you want, ask God to split the Red Sea, ask God to raise someone from the dead. Whatever you want God will do it for you. But what happened in verse 12? "Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!" It sounds pious, it's not pious. The LORD said ask for a sign, Ahaz said I will not ask. Verse 13 shows this is the proper interpretation, "Then he [Isaiah] said, "Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?" Isaiah was put out with Ahaz. This was a guy who didn't trust the Lord. So in verse 14 he says the Lord is going to give you a sign whether you like it or not. Here's the sign: "Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." <sup>15</sup>"He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows *enough* to refuse evil and choose good. <sup>16</sup>"For before the boy will know *enough* to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken." Now Matthew only picks up verse 14. He insists that verse 14 was fulfilled in Mary and Jesus. However it looks strange that he would peel verse 14 off from verses 15-16 and insist that only verse 14 was fulfilled in Jesus and Mary when verse 16 seems to require that it be fulfilled in Ahaz's day. So it goes without saying that commentators have had a difficult time sorting this one out. There are a number of explanations. I've taken different views at different times. The view I like best now is that this is a prophecy that is general enough to have two interpretations and therefore two fulfillments. This view derives from the fact that in verse 14 the Hebrew for "virgin" is *alma* which refers to "a young woman of marriageable age." In Israel such a woman would be a virgin. Thus *alma* had overtones of virginity about it in Israel. This is why the Septuagint translators chose the Greek word *parthenos*, which always means virgin, to translate *alma*. However, *alma* is general enough that it can refer either to a young woman of marriageable age or strictly a virgin. This opens up the possibility for a double fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14-16. The near prophecy would be a young woman of marriageable age would get married and have a child whom she

would name Immanuel and before the child knew right from wrong the alliance between the two kings Ahaz dreaded would be broken. This near prophecy would be a sign relevant to Ahaz. In all truth we don't know who this young woman was but we do know that the alliance was broken within two years. The far prophecy would be to the whole house of David, a virgin would have a child. Matthew quotes only this portion and uses the Septuagint in order to secure his point. The far prophecy then would be the virgin Mary conceived a son whom the people would call Immanuel, which translated means, "God with us." So I see a double fulfillment here because of the general nature of the term *alma* which can refer to a young woman of marriageable age or strictly a virgin. The prophecy of a young woman was fulfilled in Isaiah's day as a sign to Ahaz; the prophecy of a virgin was fulfilled in Matthew's day as a sign to the whole house of Israel. "Matthew, by quoting this prophecy, proves conclusively that Jesus is the Messiah promised by God through the prophet Isaiah."<sup>iv</sup>

Back in Matt 1:24 **And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, 25but kept her virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.** So Joseph, being a righteous man, was obedient to **the angel**. I suspect he confirmed things with Mary and they both shared the content of their angelic visitations as a verification. Their families would have known. Their fathers would have to be convinced. And so when the time came for the presentation he took her as **his wife**. Uniquely, however, verse 25, he **kept her virgin until she gave birth to a Son**. Usually the marriage was consummated on the night of the marriage but not in this case. An important point is they were married nonetheless because the marriage is defined exclusively by covenant. They made a covenant. Within the covenant Joseph **kept her a virgin until she gave birth**. The implication is that afterwards he did not keep **her a virgin**. There's no such thing as the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary. Mary consummated her marriage with Joseph and they had other natural children. But this child was not natural but supernatural. And Joseph **called His name Jesus** because of the nature of His mission as revealed by the angel.

In summary, after the genealogy a Jew would wonder who the father of Jesus was when he was born of Mary but not by Joseph. Verse 18 sets out to explain the answer. During the betrothal period the Holy Spirit miraculously

conceived the child within her. This was a totally unique way of being conceived in the world. Connecting this with Luke's account when Mary became pregnant she travelled to her cousin Elizabeth's house. After three months she returned. Having been gone for three months plus travel time it was not long before verse 19, her husband Joseph, realized that she was pregnant. With four options before him and wanting to remain righteous and not disgrace her, he decided to divorce her privately by handing her a bill of divorce in the presence of two witnesses. In verse 20, when he had thought through this and come to this course of action he fell asleep and an angel appeared to him telling him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because the Child conceived in her was conceived of the Holy Spirit. In verse 21, this child was a son and when he was born he should call His name Jesus. The reason is a play of the name of Jesus, for he will save His people from their sins. The nation was under divine discipline for breaking the Mosaic covenant. This covenant could only kill. It demonstrated that they could not produce perfect obedience. Jesus had come to pay the penalty for their sin establishing the sacrificial basis of the New covenant. If they received Him as their Messiah then He would forgive their sins and lead them in the final conquest and establishment of His kingdom and throne in Jerusalem. Verse 22 explains that His entrance into the world took place to fulfill the OT prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. The prophecy quoted in verse 23 had a near fulfillment to King Ahaz by way of a young woman who married and conceived a son she named Immanuel. Before he was old enough to tell right from wrong the Aram-Israel alliance was broken. The prophecy also had a far fulfillment to the whole house of David by way of a virgin who would conceive a son whom the people would call Immanuel, which means, God with us. By way of the virgin conception by the Holy Spirit Jesus avoided any sin and could be a fitting sacrifice for sins. In verse 24, in light of the angelic visitation when Joseph awoke from his sleep he obeyed the angel and took Mary as his wife. Surely before they married they talked about the angels that had visited each one of them and confirmed the truth of the message as from God. But verse 25, Joseph kept her a virgin even after they married until she gave birth to a Son. At that time Joseph named Him Jesus, conferring upon him the rights of the Davidic throne and because of the adoption Jesus had the right to sit and exercise His rights on the throne.

What can we learn from these things? First, Jesus is the legal heir to the Davidic throne. This is seen in that he is the Son of David through Solomon.

Joseph was a son of this line through Coniah and therefore had rights but could not exercise those rights. Joseph passed these rights on to Jesus through legally adopting Him as his son. Second, Jesus can exercise his legal rights to the Davidic throne. This is seen in that He was conceived in the virgin Mary. As such he was not in the cursed line of Coniah. By being adopted into Joseph's line he could exercise the legal rights conferred upon him. Third, the virgin birth is how God took to Himself human flesh. This was a totally unique way of coming into the world. The Holy Spirit conceived the Child in the virgin Mary's womb. This was necessary to render Him sinless and capable of saving from sin.

---

<sup>i</sup> E-mail correspondence with Dr. David Olander of Tyndale Theological Seminary on 04/14/14. See the Mililani Community Church website for information about the pastor and this community of believers. <http://www.mcchawaii.org/>

<sup>ii</sup> M'Neile, *St. Matthew*, pp 6-7, cited by Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 42.

<sup>iii</sup> Cited by Ed Glasscock, *Matthew: Moody Gospel Commentary*, p 43.

<sup>iv</sup> Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 46.

[Back To The Top](#)

Copyright (c) Fredericksburg Bible Church 2014