

Christmas Eve, December 24, 2014 at 6 PM

God With Us

A Chronology of the Four Gospels Regarding Our Savior's Birth!

Part 7:

Matthew 1:18-25 – God Sends a Message to Joseph through an Angel!

Join Us: **Christmas Day at 10 AM**; **Sunday, December 28 at 10 AM**; NY's Eve at 7 PM



Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Here we are on Christmas Eve; much preparation has been made:

- Decorations have been placed!
- Gifts have been purchased!
- Food has been prepared!

The celebration is ON! Furthermore, *I'm so glad that our gathering here and now is part of your celebration!*

Tonight is part 7 of our **"God With Us"** sermon series! In part 6 we focused on John, *the one sent by God to call people to repent* – to ♦see their sins, ♦be sorry for their sins, and ♦receive the Christ as their Savior. Also, in part 6, we looked at two prophecies – †one about Jesus and †another about John. As God knew *in advance* what would happen in their lives, so He also →knows everything about us, →loves us with an everlasting love, and →wants to bless us both now and forevermore!

As we move into part 7 of our GWU series, the red number **7** on the lower timeline is our focus tonight!

1. **God Can Bring Great Change into Our Lives:** We now turn to Matthew chapter 1; in part **2** of this series we looked at vv. 1-17, *which focused on Jesus' connection to Joseph, David, and others – all the way back to Abraham. Now* we move forward to verse 18; the Bible says: ^{NIV} **This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married** *[thus was engaged]* **to Joseph,**

but before they came together *[thus before they had you know what], she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. //*

- a. So Mary knew how she became pregnant – *The Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her* (Luke 1:35 NIV), yet who would ever believe such a story? Can you imagine her saying to Joseph or her parents: Yes, I am pregnant, *but I have never been with a man; the baby is from God!* So what were Mary's options? Since no one would believe her, *she put all of her trust and confidence in the Almighty God!*
- b. As Mary's life dramatically changed, *with her conception of the Christ of Christmas*, so our lives greatly changed when God made us His holy children through Jesus:
 - i. We were REFUSING God's forgiveness; now we have RECEIVED God's forgiveness.
 - ii. We did trust in what WE WERE DOING; now we trust in what JESUS HAS DONE.
 - iii. We were SEPARATED from God; now we have been UNITED to God.
 - iv. We did live as WE DESIRED; now we *try* to live as GOD DESIRES.

2. **We All Need God's Guidance:** ¹⁹ **Because Joseph her** *[Mary's] husband was a righteous man [a believer in God's Word and the promised Messiah] and did not want to expose her to public disgrace* *[to openly say: that child is not mine], he had in mind to divorce her quietly* *[to secretly end their relationship and go their separate ways].* ²⁰ **But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of**

David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins [that was Jesus mission AND He fulfilled it].” //

- a. Two special messengers: Following our GWU timeline, Mary was visited by an angel and became pregnant **in December of 6 BC**; then she ♦*traveled to* and ♦*spent about three months with* Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptizer. Up to that point, *about three months into her pregnancy*, Joseph knew nothing. However, *when Mary returned to Nazareth and was showing*, Joseph was ready to divorce her quietly. Therefore, *God provided him with special guidance through an angel*: “...do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” That message was a game-changer for Joseph; he needed it, *so God provided it!*
 - b. The Bible: Jesus has walked in our shoes: ♦He lived; ♦He was tempted in every way; ♦He hungered; ♦He thirsted; ♦He suffered; and ♦He died. Therefore, He is *fully equipped* to †understand us, †guide us, and †help us *in every circumstance!* Jesus can communicate with us through an angel – even though I haven’t experienced that yet myself, *but He always wants to communicate with us through the Bible!*
3. **God Has a Plan**: ²² **All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:** ²³ **“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”--which means, “God with us.” //** That is the name of this series: **“God With Us!”** People sinned, so God planned to send His Son; then, *in the fullness of time*,

He did! Now, *through our faith in Him as our only Savior, we are saved!* God also has a plan for each of our lives; furthermore, *God works that plan through His word!*

Consider these words of the LORD: ^{NAU} **Isaiah 55:10** “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹ So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” As we **learn and live** God’s Word, *He will work His plan in our lives!*

4. **God Is Calling Us to Follow**: ²⁴ **When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.** ²⁵ **But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. //**
 - a. Joseph and Mary in harmony: They both *learned and faithfully followed* God’s plan for their lives. Imagine their conversation about what to name their son, *then discovering that both of them were told to name Him Jesus!*
 - b. Us in harmony: When →husbands and wives OR →parents and children OR →teachers and students OR →pastors and parishioners agree to *learn and be guided by all of God’s Holy Word*, *they will also be in wonderful harmony with each other!* God bless you!

Conclusion: Please join us: Christmas Day at 10 AM as →Jesus is born and named, also as →Shepherds hear, angels praise, and Mary treasures! And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

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Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230