

Refuge City Church — Sunday, December 17
Christmas Series: “Above Every Name”
The Gospel of Matthew — “His name, Immanuel” (Matthew 1:18-25)

Introduction

- After having proved Jesus’ rightful claim to the throne, Matthew begins to tell His ‘earthly’ story.
 - Beginning with what is called, the doctrine of the *Hypostatic Union*, or *Incarnation* [God became flesh].
 - The beauty & uniqueness of Christianity. The only religion that can make the claim that God came down to pursue a loving relationship with man.
 - Every other religion mandates that man has to work his way to God.
 - Let’s not forget that Jesus always was [John 1:1], and chose to take the form of man in the ‘natural’ way of birth.
 - **Philippians 2:6-7**, “...though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”
 - **John 1:14**, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...”
- Last week: As we explored the gospel found in the genealogy of Jesus, the God of grace now manifests himself in the likeness of men.

“Divinely conceived” [verses 18-19]

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.”

- *Genealogy* [vs. 1] & *birth* [vs. 18] = same meaning
 - Last week, we looked at Jesus’ human ancestry. Now, Matthew gives us Jesus’ divine connection.
- By the time we pick up the story, Mary had been betrothed [engaged] to Joseph.
 - **Luke 1:26-27**, “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary.”
 - Jewish custom saw that a couple betrothed was essentially married.
 - The only way to break the engagement, according to the Mosaic law, was through divorce.
- Mary was found to be with child.
 - Mary’s initial reaction to the angelic revelation: confused & afraid.
 - But she stepped out of her emotion, continued to listen to the Lord and willingly submitted to what He had asked her to do.
 - **Luke 1:35, 38**, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God... And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

- **FOCUS:** “The Most High will *overshadow* you.”
- The only time we see this word used is in relation to the glory of God.
 - [transfiguration] **Matthew 17:5**, “He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud *overshadowed* them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”
 - [ark of the covenant] **1 Kings 8:7, 10-11**, “For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim *overshadowed* the ark and its poles... And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.”
- This is a purely divine and miraculous occurrence.
- Matthew immediately defines Joseph as ‘just’ [righteous].
 - By this account, he is a man who believed in God and had been obedient to the Mosaic law.
 - He had options before him that he could legally use to rectify the situation.
 - He could, by law, publicly divorce her and shame his wife.
 - She could have been killed for her ‘transgression’ [Deuteronomy 22].
 - He could have divorced her quietly; which he resolved in his mind to do.
 - Joseph’s *mercy*: “I’m not going to give to her what she rightly deserves.”
 - When we consider our own emotions in the midst of uncertainty and trial, we may immediately react to match our emotion to the situation, and make sure everyone knows about it.
 - When we consider our emotion in light of God’s faithfulness, we may tend to scale back our emotion to do what’s best for those involved [a nice gesture]; but that’s about as far as our humanity will go.

“Divinely revealed” [verses 20-23]

- “But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).”
- A divine revelation, this time given to Joseph through a dream.
 - “Son of David” = solidifying Jesus’ claim to the throne.
 - Another divine revelation = “Don’t act on your emotion. Listen to the Lord.”
 - “You shall call his name Jesus” = Yahweh is salvation/Yahweh saves
 - **Isaiah 9:7**, “Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.”
 - Even though Jesus was a very common name in the day, there were already signs this child would not be.
 - Prophecy was being fulfilled right in front of Joseph’s eyes, and by word of the Lord directly.

- **Isaiah 7:14**, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
- Immanuel = God with us!
 - Matthew knew and trusted the scriptures as God’s spoken word through man.
 - So we should do the same. What we read today, is what they read then... the very Word of God!
 - **2 Peter 1:21**, “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
- Immanuel can refer to the incarnation of God becoming man... but it doesn’t end there.
- *Yahweh with us* would bring salvation to all people through His death and resurrection.
- Immanuel, God with us, would fulfill His promise...
 - **Matthew 28:20**, “...I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
 - **Psalms 23**: we don’t have to fear because our Shepherd is with us and leads us.
 - **Joshua 1:9**, “...the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”
 - **Luke 19:10**: He came to seek us and save us.
 - **John 10:10**: He came to give us life abundantly.
 - **Isaiah 61**: He came to heal our broken hearts and set us free!
- That is Immanuel... God with us.
- Through this revelation, Joseph chose to obey the Lord and continue with his marriage to Mary.
 - When God appears, He grants us the power to respond to our circumstances with *faith, love, and grace*; despite what culture may have to say.
 - **QUOTE**: “God has still ways of making known his mind in doubtful cases, by hints of providence, debates of conscience, and advice of faithful friends; by each of these, applying the general rules of the written word, we should take direction from God.” [Matthew Henry]
- The dual nature of Jesus presented in Chapter 1.
 - He is fully Man, as proven through his genealogy.
 - He is fully God, as proven by the virgin birth, and fulfillment of prophecy.
 - If Jesus were *merely* human, He would have still had full right & claim to the throne.
 - But, he would not have the claim to be the Son for God and therefore save people from their sins.
 - **Mark 2:5-7, 10-11**, [healing the paralytic] “And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ‘Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’... ‘But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—he said to the paralytic— ‘I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.’”
 - So, as C.S. Lewis put it, Jesus is either “a liar, a lunatic, or He is Lord”.
 - Everyone has to give an account of Jesus! All of humanity, every religion, and belief system gives an account of the deity of Jesus. *You have to as well!*

- When time itself is centered around the life of Jesus, there is something to consider... is Jesus who He said He is? Is He the promised Messiah? Is he God incarnate?
- Some are going to write Him off because they can't wrap their mortal mind around His miraculous birth. Does that make Jesus invalid??
- **Romans 3:3-4**, "...Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar..."
- Our faith in Jesus is not based on what people believe. It's solely based on who God is!

"Divinely sealed" [vs. 24-25; conclusion]

"When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus."

- The name of Jesus, although very common in that day, had credence in both what it means and who He is.
 - I love my name! Not because of what it means, but because it was given to me by parents who love me and call me their own.
 - It connects me to something greater than myself.
 - Although Cameron means "crooked nose", Stevens has it root meaning in "crown".
 - Given that my parents raised me in the Lord, and I eventually came to an understanding and belief in the Lord, I am connected to the family of God!
 - So it's not my earthly name that defines me. It's not our ethnicity or culture that determines our outlook on life. It's the promise of Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, that defines who we are.
 - That's why the Apostle Paul would declare, "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him." **[Romans 10:12]**
- What matters most of all is that we believe in the most holy name of Jesus Christ!
 - **John 1:12**, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."
 - **Romans 8:16-17**, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ..."