

## **“The Miracle”**

December 4, 2016

Matthew 1:1, 16-25

### **I. Introduction**

This morning, the 2<sup>nd</sup> candle of the Advent wreath reminds us of the wondrous miracle of the birth of Jesus Christ. The American College Dictionary defines a miracle as “*an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause.*” I suspect that we have all seen or heard of things that could be called miracles. We hear about people who are found alive days after a massive earthquake. Perhaps you know personally someone who was protected in a difficult or impossible situation—like a terrible car crash and they just walked away—or someone who was healed when the doctors had given them little or no hope—a tumor just disappears for no reason.

There is one miracle that we all have experienced—the miracle of birth. At one point in time each one of you was one little cell. During the first 9 months of your life, that single cell split and split again developing into a person with the traits—both physical and emotional—that make you you. How one little cell knew what to do is a miracle of God. David put it this way in **Psalm 139:1, 13** “**O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.**” Some births are more miraculous than others. We hear about people who are told there is no chance that they can have children who later miraculously have a child. This is a “God thing.”

There are several miraculous births recorded in the Bible: there is Isaac who was born to Abraham who was 100 years old and Sarah who was 90 years old (**Genesis 17:17-19; 21:1-7**); there is Samson who was the son of Manoah and his barren wife (**Judges 13:1-25**); there's Samuel who was born to Elkanah and Hannah (**1 Samuel 1:1-20**); there's John the Baptist who was born to the elderly couple of Zechariah and his barren wife Elizabeth (**Luke 1:5-25, 80**). But the greatest miracle birth of all is the one we are celebrating in 3 weeks, the birth recorded in these verses in Matthew.

### **II. Three Purposes of the Greatest Miracle Birth**

In **Ephesians 2:10** Paul wrote, “**For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**” God has a purpose for every person that's born but He seems to have a special purpose for those born miraculously—for example, consider the lives of Samson or Samuel. This miracle Baby born to the virgin Mary was no different.

In these opening verses to the Gospel of Matthew we are given 3 names or titles for this baby—names which really tell us the purposes of His birth in the beginning of His story.

### **A. First title: He is the Christ**

The first title and name of this baby is the Christ. It took 17 verses for Matthew to show Jesus' human lineage but in one verse, the fact of Jesus' divine conception is given. It can't be described, it is a miracle. He is called the Christ. "*Christ*" is a Greek word and "*Messiah*," its Hebrew equivalent word, both mean "*the anointed one or the sent one from God.*" Whether in Greek or Hebrew, Jesus was sent—He came from God. He is the Son of God. He is the Messiah. He is the Christ.

In verse 18, the word "*birth*" is the same basic word in Greek as the word "*genealogy*" in [Matthew 1:1](#). In the Scripture we read this morning, Matthew is really giving a parallel account of Jesus' ancestry, but this time from Jesus' divine side—His heavenly Father's side. There is no way that Matthew, or for that matter anyone else, could explain the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Matthew doesn't even try. It is a mystery—just as much a mystery as how God created the Universe or how there can be one God in 3 persons or how we can be changed when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior. Just like Joseph and Mary, we must accept it by faith.

By God's plan Jesus didn't just appear as God in adult form, He came to earth as a baby; miraculously, He was born to a virgin. We really aren't told a lot about Mary in the Scriptures. She was probably a native of this little tiny town called Nazareth, and because of its small size, came from a relatively poor family. From [Luke \(3:23 & 1:36\)](#), we learn that her father was Eli and that she had a cousin Elizabeth.

Since girls were usually betrothed when they were 12 or 13 and since Mary was betrothed to Joseph, it is assumed that Mary was around 12 or 13. From the verses from Luke which Joan and Yvonne read, we know that Mary was a godly woman. She was submissive to God's will—as they read from [Luke 1:38](#) Mary answered the angel and said, "**I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.**" She believed God, but she did wonder how she could conceive. In [Luke 1:34](#) "**Mary asked the angel, 'How will this be, since I am a virgin?'**" but she never questioned that the angel was sent from God or that what he said was true. In [Luke 1:45](#), Elizabeth says of Mary "**Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!**" Mary was humble and had a thankfulness and love for God which we see in her song which we call the Magnificat in [Luke 1:46 – 55](#). Turn to [Luke 1:46-49](#).

We don't know much more about Mary and we know even less about Joseph. But there is one thing we *can* be sure of—since God chose Joseph to be the foster father of the Christ, of God's anointed Son, Joseph must have been a righteous man. Like David, he must have been a man after God's own heart. This miraculous birth to Mary and Joseph wasn't an accident, God had a plan. **Turn to Galatians 4:4-5; now turn to Colossians 1:15-20.** Jesus was wholly/completely God and wholly/completely man—He was the greatest miracle baby. He was—He is the Christ; the Messiah, born to Mary and Joseph.

### **B. Second Title: He is Jesus**

**Verse 21 of Matthew 1** tells us the 2<sup>nd</sup> title and purpose of this baby. **“His Name will be Jesus.”** *Jesus* is Greek for the Hebrew name *Joshua*—both mean *“Jehovah will save”*. Unlike other men named Jesus or Joshua who could only tell of God's salvation, this Jesus, born of Mary, **“will, as the angel said, save His people from their sins.”** As Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 1:15**, **“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”**

When we see a baby, our wish and prayer for him or her is that he will grow up strong and healthy and that she have a long, successful life. By comparison, this baby, Jesus, was born with the purpose to die for the sins of the world—to be the Savior of all mankind. In **Luke 2:29-30** when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus into the Temple to be dedicated, Simeon said, **“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation.”** Later, John the Baptist said in **John 1:29**, **“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”** BUT Jesus didn't just die; **1 Corinthians 15:4** reminds us **“that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”** To show that He had conquered death and that His sacrifice was accepted—that He really was the Savior of the world—Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, where He now intercedes for all those who call Him “Savior”—“Jesus.” In **Philippians 2:9-11** Paul wrote, **“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** This miracle Baby born to Mary and Joseph is the Christ, He is Jesus, and His 3<sup>rd</sup> title is:

### **C. Third Title: He is Immanuel**

As we were reminded last week, Jesus' virgin birth was prophesied in the Old Testament. God spoke through Isaiah in **Isaiah 7:14** when he said, **“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”** *“God with us.”* Jesus wasn't just sent from God as the anointed One, called the Messiah; He isn't just the Savior of mankind;

He is also God Himself. As Paul wrote in [Colossians 2:9](#), “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.” This is why Jesus said in [John 14:9](#) to Philip “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” This miracle Baby of Mary and Joseph is Immanuel, “*God with us*;” He is Jesus, “*the Savior*;” He is the Christ, “*sent from God*.”

### III. The Response

We started out this morning by saying that God has a special purpose for any miracle baby. This was especially true about Mary’s Baby. He was sent by God with the explicit purpose of providing a way of salvation for all who believe in Him. But He was more than just someone special like Moses or John the Baptist; He was God in human form. Because they responded to God’s call in faith and trust, Mary and Joseph were called to raise up their Messiah; their Savior.

So what is your response to this miracle baby?

**A. Is He your Savior?** In [1 Peter 3:18](#), Peter wrote, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.” Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins so that you would not have to spend eternity in hell. In [2 Peter 3:9](#) we are told that God doesn’t “want anyone to perish, but every one to come to repentance.” But every person must make a choice. [Romans 10:13](#) says “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Have you accepted this gift? Have you asked Jesus to be your Savior? Why not?

**B. Is He your Messiah and your God?** How about those of you who claim to have accepted this gift from God? Is Jesus really your Messiah—the king of your life? Is He your God? Who has control of your life? Is Jesus Christ (first) number 1 in your life? Rephrasing what Jesus said in [Mark 12:30](#), “Do you “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind?” Putting it a different way, have you given Him the best that you have of your time, your talents, your treasures, your thoughts? By your actions—not just your words—can everyone see that you belong to Christ? Do those around you see the fruit of the Spirit--love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)) in your life? If not, why not let the miracle of being born into the family of God continue to grow and transform your entire life? Become all you can be through the power of the Holy Spirit moving in your life.

