

Fourth Sunday in Advent – 2025

Saturday, 12/20 at 4:00 & Sunday, 12/21 at 9:00

Pastors are called to equip the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12). *Let's understand and work together!*

Mary Is Pregnant! But Joseph Is Not the Father!

Text: Matthew 1:18-25 NAS 2020

By the Holy Spirit: Let's ♡understand and ♡apply it in our lives!

Chr. Eve 4; Chr. Day 10; New Year's Eve 4; New Year's Day 10

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Things of *temporal significance* sometimes catch our attention, for example:

- The prediction of a snowstorm!
- A sale at a favorite store, offering 80% off!

If our attention is grabbed, *then we will react* – ♡by staying home when it's snowing **or** ♡by going shopping to get a deal.

Today, our gospel reading is **the Christmas story according to Matthew**. God is trying to catch our attention:

- To cause us to stop and think!
- To help us know He will keep every single promise!
- To grip us to the core regarding death and hell!
- To make us open to repenting and believing!
- To move us to celebrate a Christ-centered Christmas!

1. **Awkward:** ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah [the One whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit after He was baptized] **was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit.**
 - a. Betrothed: Lenski: “The Jewish betrothal was a solemn promise before witnesses [Ruth 4:9-12], embodying the essentials of the marriage vow. No further promises followed.” // *They were married!*
 - b. Before they came together: Between being betrothed and coming together there was a gap of about 12 months. During that time, they were ✦not to live together ✦nor have sexual relations.
 - c. Found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit: Mary had no way of proving her innocence, *and she could have been punished by death (Deut. 22:23-24)*. Sadly, in the US, at least 70% of people choose, *prior to marriage*, to ✦live in sin and ✦place themselves under God’s divine judgment. Even after marriage, *few repent* 😞.
2. **Dangerous:** ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, since he was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.
 - a. A righteous man: Joseph believed in the coming Messiah, *so he lived according to God’s Law. Today, Christians trust in Jesus and follow the Bible!*
 - b. Did not want to disgrace her: It would be **bad enough** if Joseph and Mary had sex before coming together. It would be ***much worse*** if – *while betrothed* – Mary had sex with another man. Joseph could have stated that openly; instead, *he planned a secret divorce*.

3. **Explanation:** ²⁰ But when he had thought this over, 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.”
- a. Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife: The child living in her womb is not the child of another man.
 - b. The Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit: Joseph did not completely understand then, *and neither do we today*, but he ♦**trusted** the words of the holy angel and ♦**accepted** the explanation. // Let us always trust God’s word, *even when we cannot fully understand it!*
4. **Wonderful:** ²¹ She will give birth to a Son; and you shall name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”
- a. **Mary**: As the mother, she was to ♦carry, ♦give birth to, and ♦raise the Child.
 - b. **Joseph**: As the legal father, he was to name the child Jesus.
 - c. **Jesus**: As the Son of God, His task was to ♦perfectly follow God’s will and ♦die on a cross, *for the purpose of saving us from our sins!*
5. **Fulfillment:** ²² Now all this took place so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: ²³ “BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN WILL CONCEIVE AND GIVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND THEY SHALL NAME HIM IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US.”

- a. THE VIRGIN WILL CONCEIVE AND GIVE BIRTH TO A SON: In today's OT reading ([Isaiah 7:10-16](#)), a virgin conceived in the normal way to assure King Ahaz of the LORD's help against his enemies.
 - b. THEY SHALL NAME HIM IMMANUEL: That name applies here to Jesus, He is **God With Us** – *to take away our sins*. **Do you** believe it? **Are you** trusting in Jesus alone for your entrance into heaven?
6. **Obedience**: ²⁴ And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, ²⁵ but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he named Him Jesus.
- a. Joseph... did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: Angels, *like pastors*, are messengers. They are tasked with speaking God's messages, *not their own*.
 - b. Kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son: The text implies *normal husband and wife relations after Jesus was born*. The people of Nazareth said of Jesus: **Matt. 13:55-56** "Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?"
 - c. He named Him Jesus: Which means: ***The Lord saves!*** He did His work for you! Have you received Him?

Let Us Pray: Dear LORD, TYSM for keeping Your promise to send Your Son! Please get everyone's attention soon and lead all lost ones to repent and believe!

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