

A PRELUDE TO *BIBLICAL* EVANGELISM

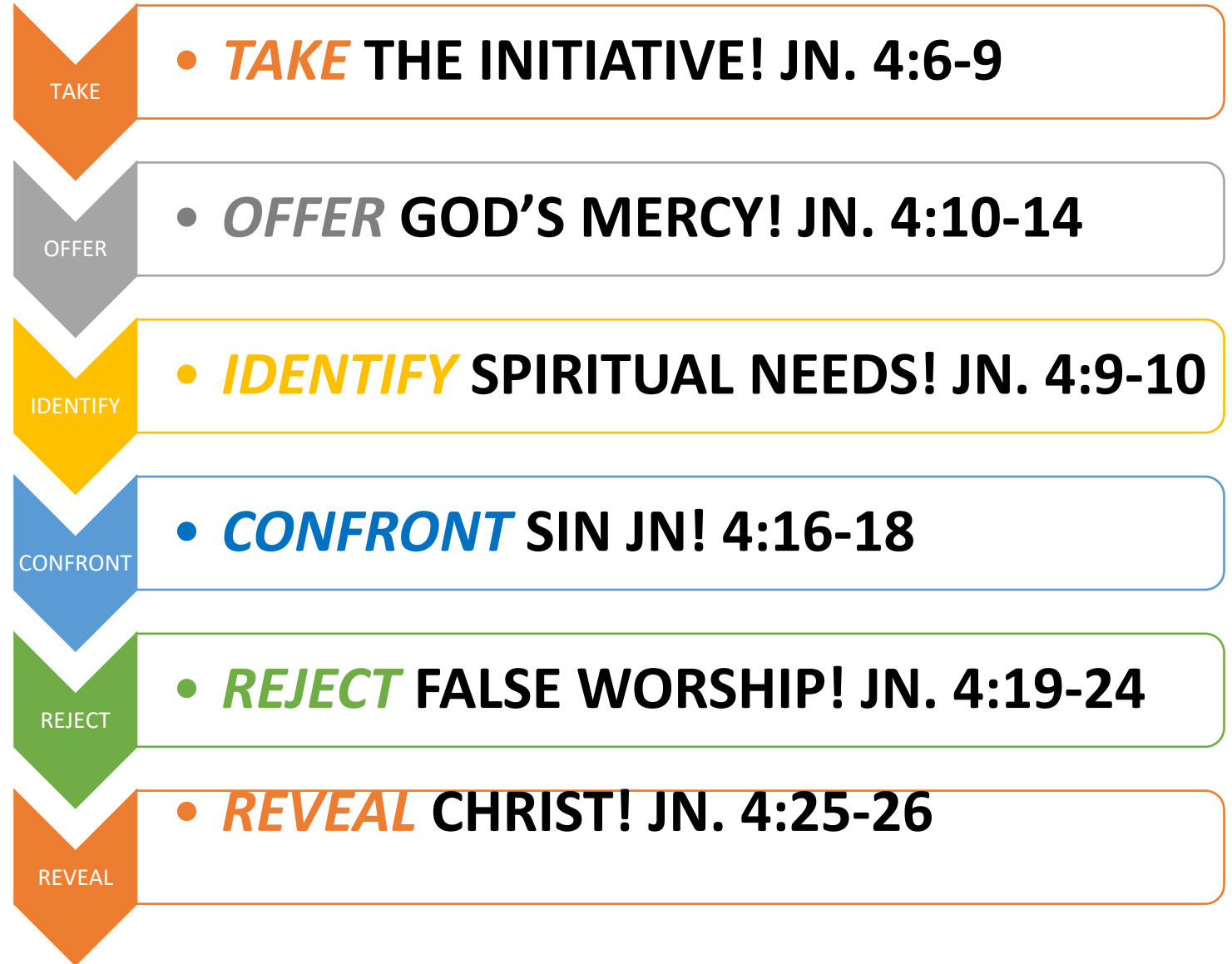


A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots growing over stone ruins. The tree's roots are massive and spread out over the ground and the ruins. The background shows more stone structures and lush green foliage.

THE FRUIT OF
THE RIGHTEOUS IS A
TREE OF LIFE,
AND HE WHO IS WISE
WINS SOULS.

PROVERBS 11:30 NASB

PRINCIPLES
FOR
BIBLICAL
EVANGELISM
FOUND IN
JOHN 4, “THE
WOMAN AT
THE WELL.”



I. WHAT'S *SO IMPORTANT* ABOUT CHRIST'S *VIRGIN BIRTH*

II. THE *ASSAULT* ON THE *VIRGIN BIRTH* OF CHRIST

III. WHY THE *VIRGIN BIRTH* IS ESSENTIAL.

IV. THE *VIRGIN BIRTH* AND PROPHECY.

V. GOD BECAME A MAN.

VI. THE SIMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT.

JOSEPH'S *RESPONSE*

- Have you ever imagined being in *JOSEPH'S* shoes? Think about his predicament. Joseph is a righteous man, betrothed to a chaste young woman. The future looks bright as he maps out plans to build a family with his soon-to-be bride. But then he hears the shocking news—*MARY IS PREGNANT*. That's no small dilemma for Joseph, especially since he is obviously not the father of the child.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

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- Initial news of **MARY'S PREGNANCY** presented **JOSEPH** with a **twofold** problem. A caring and responsible person concerned about doing the right thing, Joseph was unwilling to proceed with his original plans once he perceived that a crucial part of those plans was no longer acceptable. His difficulty was intensified by the reality that he was a righteous man, genuinely concerned about doing what was right according to God's Law.
 - **FIRST**, when **JOSEPH REALIZED MARY WAS PREGNANT**, he knew he could not go ahead with their marriage. He knew he was not the father and, based on what he knew at the time, he had to assume that another man was.

- **SECONDLY**, Joseph's difficult decision concerned how **HE SHOULD THEN TREAT MARY**. Because he was a good and loving man, he was grieved at the thought of shaming her publicly (*a common practice in those days when a wife was unfaithful*), and even more so at the prospect of demanding her death, as provided for in **(DEUT. 22:22–24.)**

“IF A MAN IS FOUND LYING WITH A MARRIED WOMAN, THEN BOTH OF THEM SHALL DIE, THE MAN WHO LAY WITH THE WOMAN, AND THE WOMAN; THUS, YOU SHALL PURGE THE EVIL FROM ISRAEL. 23, IF THERE IS A GIRL WHO IS A VIRGIN ENGAGED TO A MAN, AND ANOTHER MAN FINDS HER IN THE CITY AND LIES WITH HER, 24, THEN YOU SHALL BRING THEM BOTH OUT TO THE GATE OF THAT CITY AND YOU SHALL STONE THEM TO DEATH; THE GIRL, BECAUSE SHE DID NOT CRY OUT IN THE CITY, AND THE MAN, BECAUSE HE HAS VIOLATED HIS NEIGHBOR’S WIFE. THUS, YOU SHALL PURGE THE EVIL FROM AMONG YOU.”

- We don't know if he felt **ANGER, RESENTMENT, OR BITTERNESS**, but he certainly experienced **SHAME** at what he had to assume was true. However, Joseph's concern was not primarily with his own shame and embarrassment, but with Mary's. **(MATT. 1:19) says, "NOT WANTING TO MAKE HER A PUBLIC EXAMPLE, [JOSEPH] WAS MINDED TO PUT HER AWAY SECRETLY."**
- Therefore, **JOSEPH'S** plan was to **DIVORCE MARY SECRETLY** so she would not have to endure the **disgrace** of everyone in the community knowing about her supposed sin. **NOT MANY HUSBANDS EVER DISPLAY SUCH FIRMLY HELD AND DEEPLY FELT LOVE FOR THEIR WIVES.** Of course, eventually, when the marriage didn't occur, everyone would have found out that something had gone wrong. But at least in the meantime **MARY WOULD BE PROTECTED FROM HUMILIATION AND DEATH.**

SCRIPTURE REMINDS US TO FORGIVE

(EPH. 4:32) “BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDER-HEARTED, FORGIVING EACH OTHER, JUST AS GOD IN CHRIST ALSO HAS FORGIVEN YOU.”

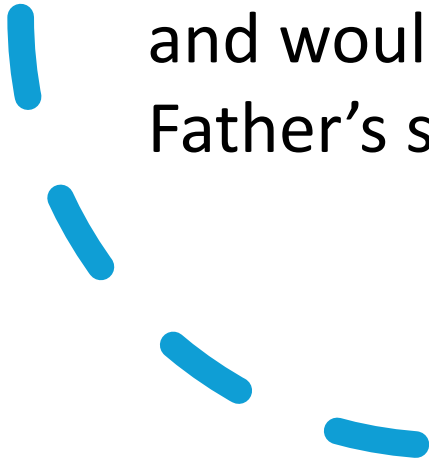
(COL. 3:13) “BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND FORGIVING EACH OTHER, WHOEVER HAS A COMPLAINT AGAINST ANYONE; JUST AS THE LORD FORGAVE YOU, SO ALSO SHOULD YOU.

- ***THE LORD, HOWEVER, IN HIS SOVEREIGN PROVIDENCE AND WONDERFUL GRACE***, intervened directly and spared Joseph the further trauma of actually carrying out his divorce plans. ***“BUT WHILE HE THOUGHT ABOUT THESE THINGS, BEHOLD, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM IN A DREAM, SAYING, ‘JOSEPH, SON OF DAVID, DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TAKE TO YOU MARY YOUR WIFE, FOR THAT WHICH IS CONCEIVED IN HER IS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT’”*** (MATT. 1:20).
- That verse underscores the ***MIRACULOUS NATURE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH*** and the ***SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER SURROUNDING THE ENTIRE EVENT***.
- It also provides ***DIVINE ASSURANCE TO JOSEPH (“SON OF DAVID”)*** and to us that ***JESUS HAD LEGITIMATE ROYAL LINEAGE THAT **LEGALLY** CAME THROUGH JOSEPH AS A DESCENDANT OF KING DAVID***.

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- ***THE ANGEL'S WORDS PROVIDE THE ULTIMATE AND MOST IRREFUTABLE **TESTIMONY** TO THE ESSENTIAL TRUTH OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND TO THE PROPER RESPONSE JOSEPH WAS TO HAVE TO MARY'S EXTRAORDINARY SITUATION.***

THE *SIGNIFICANCE* OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

- At this point in Matthew's narrative, we know **TWO INDISPUTABLE FACTS.** **ONE**, Mary is pregnant, and **TWO**, Joseph is not the father of the child. A **THIRD** crucial fact comes by way of angelic revelation. The child in Mary's womb was conceived by the Holy Spirit. **THAT MEANS MARY IS STILL A VIRGIN.**
- But what was the **SIGNIFICANCE OF MARY'S PREGNANCY** even though she had not had relations with Joseph or any other man? Joseph likely would have spent some time puzzling over that question if the divine messenger had not immediately clarified his pronouncement with these words, **"AND SHE WILL BRING FORTH A SON, AND YOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME JESUS, FOR HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS"** (MATT. 1:21).

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- The angel tells Joseph that Mary will actually bear a son. And not just any son, but Jesus, who ***“WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS.”***
 - ***GOD CHOSE THE NAME JESUS FOR HIS SON*** because its basic meaning defined the fundamental, overarching purpose for the Son’s coming to earth. **JESUS** is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, Jeshua, or Jehoshua, each of which means ***“JEHOVAH (YAHWEH) WILL SAVE.”***
 - ***THE BABY MARY HAD CONCEIVED BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT*** and would give birth to in the plan of God would grow up to testify to the Father’s salvation and ***WOULD HIMSELF BE THAT SALVATION.***



- BY HIS OWN **SACRIFICIAL DEATH** ON THE CROSS AND **TRIUMPHANT RESURRECTION** FROM THE GRAVE HE WOULD SAVE HIS OWN—ALL THOSE WHO ARE DRAWN FROM SIN TO **REPENTANCE** AND WHO **RECEIVE FAITH** TO EMBRACE **HIS ATONING WORK**.



- HERE'S THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH: SINCE JESUS WAS CONCEIVED BY THE AGENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, GOD WAS HIS FATHER; HIS LINEAGE WAS A HOLY ONE. THEREFORE, JESUS WAS ABLE TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS. THAT'S THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRISTMAS. REJOICE IN IT!

THE *OCCURRENCE* OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

- **MATTHEW'S** explanation of the *SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH* came within the revelatory dream **GOD GAVE TO JOSEPH**. Such extraordinary, direct communication evidently occurred while Joseph slept.
- **MATTHEW** does not record any detail of Joseph's immediate reaction, except to say that he woke up and obeyed the angel's instructions: ***"THEN JOSEPH, BEING AROUSED FROM SLEEP, DID AS THE ANGEL OF THE LORD COMMANDED HIM AND TOOK TO HIM HIS WIFE, AND DID NOT KNOW HER TILL SHE HAD BROUGHT FORTH HER FIRSTBORN SON. AND HE CALLED HIS NAME JESUS"*** (MATT. 1:24–25).

- You can imagine how great Joseph's feelings of amazement, relief, and gratitude must have been once he realized what the Lord, through the heavenly messenger, had told him. ***NOT ONLY COULD HE GO AHEAD AND GLADLY TAKE MARY AS HIS WIFE WITH HONOR AND RIGHTEOUSNESS***, but also, ***HE COULD REJOICE AT THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING ALLOWED TO BRING UP GOD'S OWN SON***.
- ***THE WEDDING CEREMONY OF JOSEPH AND MARY*** likely took place soon after Joseph received the angel's announcement. Matthew makes it clear that Mary remained a virgin until after Jesus was born, implying that normal marital relations began after that time. That, along with the references to Jesus' brothers and sisters (**MATT. 12:46; 13:55–56; MK. 6:3**), proves Mary was not a virgin for her entire life, as some claim.

- Finally, **JOSEPH** followed through on God's command in (**MATT. 1:21**) and named the baby **JESUS**, indicating, as we've already seen, that **HE WAS TO BE THE SAVIOR**.
- The amazing fact of **JESUS' SUPERNATURAL BIRTH** is the only way to explain the **PERFECT, SINLESS LIFE HE LIVED WHILE ON EARTH**. A skeptic who denied the virgin birth once asked a Christian, **"IF I TOLD YOU THAT CHILD OVER THERE WAS BORN WITHOUT A HUMAN FATHER, WOULD YOU BELIEVE ME?"** **"YES," THE BELIEVER REPLIED, "IF HE LIVED AS JESUS LIVED."**
- **CHRIST'S VIRGIN BIRTH IS A NECESSARY COMPONENT** that helps us believe and make sense of the entire story of **HIS PERSON** and **WORK**. His extraordinary conception and birth, not before or since equaled, is an amazing reality that we should with **JOY** and **GRATITUDE** never

TAKE FOR GRANTED!!!!!!!!!!