

Entering the Will of God

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, *she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.* **19** Then Joseph her husband, *being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.* **20** But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. **21** And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. **22** Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, **23** Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. **24** Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: **25** And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Exposure Felt

- Up to this point, there is no evidence that Joseph knew anything about the supernatural pregnancy. Therefore, Joseph pondered all of the logical explanations of this situation.
- Their relationship was at the point of contemporary engagement, but with much deeper ties.
- Though Joseph was struggling emotionally, he did not act out and express the pain he was feeling. He did not return hurt for hurt.
 - o Psalm 34:19 – Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: But the Lord delivereth him out of them all.
- His love for Mary directed his response to the pain he was feeling.
 - o 1 Peter 4:8 – And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.
 - o Galatians 6:1 – Brethren, [¶]if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
 - o Ephesians 4:32 – And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
 - o Colossians 3:12 – Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;
- His Godly response came after he got alone with the Lord in prayer. (v. 20)
- Dealing with difficulties should be before the Divine.
 - o Hebrews 4:15-16 – **15** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. **16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
 - o John 15:7 – *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*
 - o Matthew 6:33 – But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

- Philippians 4:6-7 – **6** Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. **7** And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
- John 16:13 – *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*
- Romans 8:13 – For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.
- Hebrews 13:5 – *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Evidence Found

- Jesus' mission from the beginning was to save the lost. He then commanded that the mission be continued with those who have accepted salvation through Him.
 - Matthew 20:28 – *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*
 - Luke 19:10 – *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*
 - John 20:21 – Then said Jesus to them again, *Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*
 - Matthew 28:18-20 – **18** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* **19** *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* **20** *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* Amen.
- Salvation in Christ saves people from the penalty of their sins at salvation, the power of sins through sanctification, and the presence of sin at glorification.
 - Galatians 4:4-7 – **4** But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, **5** To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. **6** And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. **7** Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.
 - Hebrews 2:14-18 – **14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; **15** And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. **16** For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. **17** Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. **18** For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.
- The angel's message in Joseph's dream revealed the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies that the Messiah would be born of a virgin.
 - Isaiah 7:14 – Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, And shall call his name Immanuel.

- Isaiah 9:6 – For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: And the government shall be upon his shoulder: And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Experience in Faith

- The example of Joseph and Mary seeking God's will for their life and obediently following it should confirm for couples that happiness is found in obedience to God.
 - John 14:21 – *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*
 - John 15:10 – *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*
- Joseph's obedience was found in difficult times, not a smooth-sailing season
 - John 15:14 – *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*
 - Hebrews 5:8 – Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

Experiencing the Will of God

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that **all the world should be taxed**. **2** (*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*) **3** And **all went to be taxed, every one into his own city**. **4** And **Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Beth-lehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)** **5** To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, **being great with child**.

Extent of the Experience

- The decree may have been called by Caesar Augustus, but God was calling the shots.
- Prophecy revealed that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem.
 - Micah 5:2 – But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, *Though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.
- The scribes explained to Herod where He would be born.
 - Matthew 2:5-6 – **5** And they said unto him, In Beth-lehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, **6** And thou Beth-lehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.
- The common people knew who Jesus was based on Old Testament teachings.
 - John 7:42 – Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Beth-lehem, where David was?

Endeavors in the Experience

- Joseph's commitment to Mary brought shame from those around him but significance in heaven.
 - John 8:41 – *Ye do the deeds of your father.* Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.

Equipping for the Experience

- The 75-mile uphill journey must have been difficult for anyone, and Mary was nearing the end of her pregnancy.

- Obedience is not always the easy path.

Equipping for the Will of God

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. **7** And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Expected End from the Beginning

- This is the time of the Lord's performance that Elizabeth believed with Mary.
 - o Luke 1:31-33 – **31** And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. **32** He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: **33** And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.
 - o Luke 1:38 – And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.
 - o Luke 1:45 – And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.
- One battle was over; the journey to Bethlehem. Now it was time to begin the next phase.

Excitement Enjoyed for the Babe

- Joseph and Mary had to choose what the focus of the moment would be. Will they enjoy the fulfillment of God's promises and blessings in their lives with baby Jesus, or fuss because their circumstances are different than others?
- Jesus lying in a manger is cute for a children's play in our time, but how often do we overlook God's blessings to focus on differences in our situations compared to the next person?

Entitlement Extinct for Believers

- Jesus entered the world in a food trough for animals, but He will return in power and glory.
 - o Matthew 24:30 – *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*
- Believers are not living for this life but for the life to come in heaven for eternity.
- Jesus lived his life for God's glory rather than His own.
- Because His life lacked glam and fame, many missed all that He has to offer. Many will miss His return because they fail to see the return they receive in Him.
 - o Luke 21:34 – *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*
 - o Titus 2:12-13 – **12** Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; **13** Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;