

## Episode #651 Matthew 1 Part 5-Joseph's Obedience

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being "in Israel," in contrast to believers today who are "in Christ."

II. Last time we saw that Joseph was contemplating divorcing his betrothed wife Mary quietly when she was found pregnant by the Holy Spirit. An angel appeared to him and told him not to be afraid to take her as his married wife. This child was by the power of the Holy Spirit, and His name was to be Jesus for He would save His people from their sins. This was all a fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. We discussed how it was a fulfillment and that this means the passage is "filled full" or proven true once again.

### III. The Birth of Christ.

#### A. Verse 23. Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 7:14.

1. "The" virgin, Greek *parthenos*. Translated from Hebrew *'almah*. This is said not to mean "virgin" (the Hebrew *bethulah*), but there is no evidence in Scripture that this word is ever used except when a virgin is meant.
2. In the case of Ahaz in the past, this probably referred to the young woman he was about to marry, Hezekiah's mother, Abi the daughter of Zachariah. In the filling fuller of the passage, it meant Miriam the Lord's mother, who was still a virgin when she conceived!
3. Immanuel. But this was not His name, or Hezekiah's name! "Name" means reputation, a true reputation being based on a true character. In Hezekiah's days God was with Judah. In Christ's case, He literally was God with us.
4. Being interpreted = the only time Matthew does this. He supposes his Jewish readers will know what this means, but does this just to emphasize it.

#### B. Verse 24. Joseph's Obedience.

1. Took to him his wife = this would include the feast celebration and a procession in which she came to his house. At this point they were officially married, not just betrothed.
2. She started as a betrothed wife, and when He was born she was a married wife. Some have tried to make the story "relatable" by calling her an "unwed teenage mother." But this is totally inaccurate! As Luther said, God honored the institution of marriage by seeing that His Son was born into it. It is not right to blaspheme God while trying to make His word "relatable."

#### C. Verse 25. The Birth.

1. Did not know = by experience, a euphemism for sexual activity. They were married and she was brought into his home, but this one exception to the usual practice was made. Notice the clear implication: that the usual marital relations would have begun after His birth. Luke 2:22, she was unclean for forty days after the birth. Luke 2:39, they then moved back to Nazareth, where the normal marital relations would have begun. The fact that they had other children (James and his siblings) shows that they did do this. Matthew 12:46-50; 13:55, 56. Mary was no "perpetual virgin."
2. Firstborn = since sovereignty was usually given to the one born first, the title "firstborn" came to mean "the one to whom power, authority, and responsibility was given." Tatian quotes these words in 179, and twelve other

fathers before the fourth century. These words are contained in just about every manuscript. Yet the modern texts eliminate these words based on just two ancient Greek manuscripts: the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. This is weak and suspicious evidence! There is no question about this word in Luke 2:7.

IV. Conclusion: The faithful human, legal father of the Lord, Joseph, is most impressive. He is a just or righteous man, and he considers the dilemma he faces carefully and thoughtfully in order to do the right thing. When the angel spoke to him and gave him God's command regarding the matter, he heard the angel and did as he said. We should learn from the righteous attitude and Godly obedience of this young man.