

Sermon Notes
Pastor Dale Barrett
March 6, 2011

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW
“The Birth of a King”, Part 1

Text: Matthew 1:18-25 (read Luke 1:26-38)

I. The Betrothal and Marriage of Joseph and Mary

A. The Betrothal

(There were two basic stages to marriage - the betrothal and the wedding)

1. Choice of spouse generally made by family
2. It was the official arrangement with a formal prenuptial agreement before witnesses - entered the state of betrothal wherein they were legally bound by contract.

B. The Wedding (formal ceremony)

1. Bridal party escorted to groom's home for the wedding supper.
2. Here parents and friends gave blessing; the father of the bride drew up wedding contract.
3. Couple consummated their marriage; wedding festivities lasted a week or more

C. Fitting the story of Joseph into the cultural setting

1. By Matthew, Mary must be about four months pregnant; Luke 1:36,56, she has been living with her relative, Elizabeth, about three months.
2. She was engaged - betrothed to Joseph (“pledged to be married”), and returned to Nazareth where “she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit”.
3. Joseph's dilemma
 - a. He could not marry her - that would have been interpreted as condoning her adultery.
 - b. His concern for Mary's long-term reputation and because he was a “righteous” man (wanted to obey the law)

II. The Historicity and Certainty of Jesus' Virgin Birth

- A. A review of the genealogy, 1:16
1. "of whom", the Greek relative pronoun, *hes*. The feminine gender points to Mary
 2. Matthew here emphasizes that Mary is the biological parent while the genealogy establishes Joseph as the legal father of Jesus.
 3. Matthew also uses the passive form of the word "was born" to indicate that Mary was acted upon to give birth to Jesus. (Divine passive - assumed God is the agent of the action)
- B. The revelation to Mary, Luke 1:26-38
1. The angel, Gabriel, appeared to Mary in Nazareth where she was already betrothed to Joseph (1:27), and a virgin. He revealed "*You will be with child and give birth of a son and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end.*"
 2. She asked the right question, "How will this be...since I am a virgin?" The response? "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God..."
 3. Mary responds, "I am the Lord's servant...May it be to me as you have said", and goes to visit Elizabeth "in the hill country of Judea"
- C. The revelation to Joseph, 1:20-25
1. Take Mary home as your wife (wedding) "because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you are to give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from their sins."
 2. When Joseph awoke from his dream, "he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife."
 3. "But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son", so we see the uniting of the human and the divine in Christ - wholly man and wholly God (Gospel of John).

III. The Prophecy and Fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14

- A. Matthew's usage of the "fulfillment formula"
1. For the first time Matthew points to an event or teaching of Jesus that fulfills an Old Testament passage normally cited.
 2. Matthew uses the fulfillment formula in the following passages, including 2:5,6; 2:15; 2:17,18; 2:23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 11:10; 12:17-21; 13:14,15; 13:35; 21:4,5; 26:32; 27:9,10 (only in Synoptic gospels, 5 times in John)
 3. There are three ways Matthew uses this formula in tying Jesus together to Old Testament passages:
 - a. A direct prediction of an event in Jesus' life and ministry that brings to actualization the predicted prophecy, i.e. 1:22,23
 - b. A way in which Jesus' life and teaching bring to full meaning the entire Old Testament scripture, i.e. 4:17-20
 - c. A way in which Jesus' earthly life and ministry are a divinely-orchestrated analogical or typological correlation to Israel's history, i.e. 2:15; 17,18
- B. Matthew's usage of Isaiah 7:14
1. Some have suggested that there is no real fulfillment in this prophecy in the day, but it is totally messianic in heralding the coming Messiah
 2. The context is interesting to note.
 3. The miraculous nature of the virgin birth, communicated in the use of the word "*almah*" here, as well as the word for sign, "*ot*", never refers to an ordinary event. Prophets did not always know the timing (I Peter 1:10ff) of fulfillment of messianic prophecies.

CONCLUSION