Complications From the Virgin Birth

Matthew 1:18-25

Intro: Are you ready to obey God no matter what the risks?

I. v18-19 - The Possibility of Mary’s Rejection

A. v18 - The legal case for Mary’s rejection was adultery.

 1. What was the relationship between Mary & Joseph?

 a. Betrothal - engagement - was as legally binding as marriage.

 b. A dowry was paid at betrothal time to protect Joseph’s investment.

 c. The betrothal period usually lasted 10 to 12 months.

 d. This is a good example for us - short engagements often result in short marriages!

 2. Mary’s pregnancy became obvious by the time she returned from Elizabeth’s home.

a. She was found to be with child.- She would have been 3 months pregnant by then.

b. She went immediately to Elizabeth after the angel’s birth announcement to her (Lk 1:38-40).

 c. Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant at that time (Lk 1:36).

 d. She probably stayed with Elizabeth until John was born (Lk 1:56).

 3. She probably told Joseph since she owed him an explanation.

a. He probably wanted to believe her - but God had not performed a miracle in over 4 centuries.

b. He had his reputation to protect & the reputation of his family. He was, after all, a direct descendant of King David (Matt 1:2-16).

B. v19 - What a choice he had to make! What were Joseph’s options?

 1. He was a righteous man.

a. So he couldn’t just marry her anyway because that would stain his family & his genealogy.

 b. The Law of Moses said he would be committing adultery!

 2. He was a merciful man.

a. He could have been spiteful & full of revenge & insisted on the Law of Infidelity: If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the girl’s virginity can be found, ﻿she shall be brought to the door of her father’s house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father’s house. You must purge the evil from among you. - Deut 22:20-21.

b. He decided to protect his reputation but also be merciful with Mary by enacting the Bill of Divorce without Stating Cause: If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house . . . - Deut 24:1.

c. This divorce could be given privately in front of only 2 witnesses. Joseph was determined not to take Mary to court!

 3. What would you have done if you were him?

II. v20-23 - The Necessity of God’s Revelation

A. God honors those who honor Him!

1. I Sam 2:30 - Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.

 2. The Lord said, My Father will honor the one who serves me. - Jn 12:26

B. God solved this problem by sending His angel.

 1. Joseph pondered this problem so much he dreamed about it at night.

 2. Matthew records 4 revelations during dreams:

 a. This one.

 b. To Joseph about the Egypt trip (Matt 2:13).

 c. To the Magi about how to get home (Matt 2:12).

d. To Pilate’s wife about avoiding the decision about what to do with Jesus (Matt 27:19).

 e. God directs those who ponder His will!

C. What was the revelation?

1. v20 - Joseph, son of David - this was to remind him he was in the proper family to have the Messiah.

2. v20 - Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife - his fear to marry Mary was to stain his family - but to provide the Messiah would be it’s greatest honor!

3. v20 - Because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. - Lord Jesus would become God in flesh!

 a. Emmanuel means “God is with us!”

b. “Nature shows God is above us - the Law show God is against us - but the gospel shows God is with us & for us!”

4. v21 - You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins - named after Joshua the leader of Israel & Joshua, one of the greatest high priests. Jesus became both!

 a. Jesus saves you from guilt - His blood washes you white as snow.

b. Jesus saves you from the power of sin - the Holy Spirit indwells you to provide power to conquer sin.

c. Jesus saves you from eternal punishment - the consequences of sin is death (Rom 6:23) but Jesus will provide your resurrection & entrance into heaven!

III. v24-25 - The Privilege of Mary’s Reinstatement

A. v24 - Joseph heard God speak & he immediately obeyed.

 1. He arose from his sleep & implemented God’s plan.

2. When God speaks to you through His word - He expects you to arise from your sleep & do something!

B. v25 - Joseph accepted God at His word.

1. He waited for Mary to give birth - You need to make God’s ministry the priority of your life!

 2. He followed God’s directions completely - he named the child “Jesus”.

How far have you taken God at His word? He has promised you life - abundant & eternal! How much are you willing to risk for it? Are you willing to trade in your life to gain His?

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