

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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