

## Sermon Outline

### "The Birth of Jesus Christ ", Matthew, Part 2 – Matthew 1:18-25 Joshua Harris – May 13, 2012

#### Introduction

1. The birth of Jesus shows us why Jesus really is the Christ—the promised Messiah. It reveals the unique identity and the unique mission of the most influential, powerful, and most talked about man who has ever lived.
2. Christ is a title—it's the Greek form of the word *Messiah*. The Messiah is God's chosen one, anointed and specially appointed by God for his special purpose. Jewish people had been waiting for hundreds of years for the Messiah promised by the prophets. They knew he would be a descendent of the great King David. They knew he would bring salvation.
3. For Matthew to call Jesus "Christ" is quite a powerful claim. He's saying, "Jesus is the promised, specially chosen one of God." The immediate, obvious question any person would ask is, "What's so special about Jesus? How do we know Jesus is the Christ?" Lets take a look at four things that Matthew tells us about Jesus that help us understand his identity and mission.

#### 1. Jesus is the Son of Mary

Jesus is human—Jesus is the offspring of a female human being; Jesus was born a human.

Two important implications of Jesus humanity:

- a. Jesus humanity means he *understands us*- (Hebrews 14:5) He is able to sympathize with our weakness and has been tempted in all the ways we have. (Isaiah 53:4) He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows.
- b. Jesus humanity means he can *represent us* before God the father- Jesus is one of us therefore he can represent us. (1 Timothy 2:5) Jesus is the mediator-- go between—for God and mankind because he truly is a man.

#### 2. Jesus is the Son of God

- a. Jesus did not have a human father. Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus. "*Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born who is called Christ.*" (Matt. 1:16) Mary was a virgin. Joseph was a godly man. They had not come together.
- b. Greatest miracle recorded in Scripture: "... *she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.*" (v. 18) "... *that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit*" (v. 20). This is the same Spirit that hovered over the water in Genesis 1. God took on our human flesh.

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Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Son of God. He is not only fully human, he is “truly God.”

If Jesus had been no more than a very remarkable, godly man, the difficulties in believing what the New Testament tells us about his life and work would be truly mountainous. But if Jesus was the same person as the eternal Word, the Father’s agent in creation, “through whom also he made the worlds” (Heb. 1:2), it is no wonder if fresh acts of creative power marked his coming into this world, and his life in it and his exit from it. It is not strange that he, the Author of life, should rise from the dead. If he was truly God the Son, it is much more startling that he should die than that should rise again.

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The mystery of the Incarnation is unfathomable. We cannot explain it; we can only formulate it. Perhaps it has never been formulated better than in the words of the Athanasian Creed. “Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man... perfect God, and perfect man... who although he be God and man: yet he is not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the manhood into God.” Our minds cannot get beyond this. What we see in the manger is, in Charles Wesley’s words, Our God contracted to a span; incomprehensibly made man. Incomprehensibly. We shall be wise to remember this, to shun speculation and contentedly to adore.  
—*J.I Packer, Knowing God*

- c. Each of us is called to answer the question, “Who is Jesus?” Matthew’s words make it clear that we can only rightly know and understand Jesus identity and mission when we believe that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit and is the Son of God.

### 3. Jesus is the Son of David

Out of all his ancestors, Matthew picks Abraham and David to highlight to help his readers understand who Jesus is. This is significant because God made two of his biggest promises to these men.

- a. The *promise given to Abraham*- Genesis 22:18 “in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth will be blessed” Jesus is a descendent of Abraham.
- b. The *promise given to David*- 2 Samuel 7. David is given a promise that one of his descendants would be established as King over a kingdom that would never end. And so ever since then God’s people have been waiting for a son of David to arise who would fulfill this promise.
- c. Joseph was a godly man. Just as God choose Mary to bear Jesus, so he chose Joseph to care for his son. Joseph was selflessly seeking to protect Mary from greater shame. He

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took Mary as his wife. And do you see the cost this for Joseph? In taking Mary as his wife he was joining himself to the shame of what those around him would have considered an illegitimate, sinful pregnancy. In a very real sense Joseph and Mary were the first people given the privilege of suffering scorn for being identified with Jesus.

### **4. Jesus is God with us to save us**

- a. In Jesus, God is now with us his people in the most incredible sense. Read verses 21-23 again. Here Matthew is quoting from Isaiah 7: 'Immanuel' meaning "God with us." In Jesus birth we see the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy written over 700 years earlier.
- b. Matthew started the story of Jesus by showing a family tree marked by wicked rulers, adultery, murder and prostitution. That's not just the genealogy of Jesus, but that's the story of the human race.
- c. Jesus came to save us from our sin. He saves us from the punishment our sins deserve by taking it on us on the cross. And he saves us from the power of sin by giving us new life so that we can obey God.
- d. Only Jesus can save us—he is the Son of God. He can do what we could never do ourselves. He can conquer death and sin. The forever King we've longed for has come.

### **Fellowship Starters**

1. Take time as a care group to read Matthew 1:18-25
2. Why does Matthew make the point that Jesus is the son of Mary? Why is it essential to our faith that Jesus is fully human (see Romans 5:18-20; Hebrews 2:14-18, 4:15-16)?
3. Why is it significant that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (see vv. 18 and 20)? Why is Matthew's editorial comment in verses 22-23 both massively important and mysteriously unfathomable?
4. What do you learn about Joseph in these verses? How is Jesus the legal heir to David's throne?
5. Josh shared that Mary and Joseph embraced the scandal and shame of Jesus' birth. In what ways do you embrace or avoid the scorn or shame of being identified with Jesus?
6. What is Jesus' unique mission (see verse 21)? How is Christmas inseparably linked to Calvary?