

Matthew 1: v. 1-25.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

² Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. ³ Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. ⁴ Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. ⁵ Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah. ⁷ Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. ⁸ Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. ⁹ Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. ¹⁰ Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. ¹¹ Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. ¹² And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. ¹³ Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. ¹⁴ Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. ¹⁵ Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. ¹⁶ And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. ¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations. ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." ²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Luke 2: v. 1-7,& v.21-24

And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. ⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

²¹ And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

²² Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Introduction

It is sometimes very difficult to know what to preach at Christmas, especially when you have been preaching sermons about Christmas for nearly 30 years.

However this year is a first for me. As I prayed about it, it came clearly to me that I should preach a **Joseph Christmas** and a **Mary Christmas**.

There are **three key characters** in the Christmas story. These are **Joseph, Mary and Jesus**. Today I will interact with the text that involves Joseph and Jesus and next week on the 22nd December we will cover a **much bigger text** involving the life of Mary as it relates to the birth of Jesus. We will also interact with the Old Testament prophecies that are fulfilled in the text that is covered over these two Sundays.

1. **The family tree of Joseph. – Matthew 1: v. 1-17.**

It is important that we first establish who Joseph was and this is discovered by tracing his ancestry from Matthew Chapter 1: v. 1-17.

I am not going to read all the names. I will just read v. 1-2 and v. 15-16..

(N.K.J.)

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¹⁵ Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. ¹⁶ And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

There are some clear purposes in Matthew tracing the ancestry of Joseph.

Firstly, Matthew who was a Jew, wanted to establish that Joseph was a true Jew. **The second purpose** is to prove that he was a **descendent of King David** and therefore had the right to have the title of being the **King of the Jews**.

It is also important when you start studying the New Testament to also realise that Joseph was also a **descendent of the first man Adam**.

Luke 3:23-38

²³ Now Jesus Himself began *His ministry* at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) *the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, ²⁴ the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Janna, the son of Joseph, ²⁵ the son of Mattathiah, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, ²⁶ the son of Maath, the son of Mattathiah, the son of Semei, the son of Joseph, the son of Judah, ²⁷ the son of Joannas, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, ²⁸ the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmodam, the son of Er, ²⁹ the son of Jose, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, ³⁰ the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonan, the son of Eliakim, ³¹ the son of Melea, the son of Menan, the son of Mattathah, the son of Nathan, the son of David, ³² the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, ³³ the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶ the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷ the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, ³⁸ the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*

Tracing the ancestry of Joseph back to Adam is not important to the Christmas story, but nevertheless it is important for the person of Jesus who was the second Adam.

It is important that we understand that Jesus was a Jew, Jesus is still a Jew in

In spite of all that we read in the Old Testament, about God's chosen people backsliding and following idols. God has always kept a remnant of His people.

The reason for this is that **God still has a plan and purpose for His people for all eternity**.

Jewish people must believe in Jesus (Yeshua) to go to Heaven.

It is then that they become **Messianic Jews**.

They are still Jewish and God's promises still apply to them today.

They will never be Gentiles like us. They are still **God's chosen race** and we must respect them in that way.

We must also respect the **promises made to them by God in the Old Testament**.

Recent events have persuaded me to teach next year a few sermons designed to **teach and educate us all on God's purposes for Israel.**

I will deal with all the Bible verses relevant to this subject.

It is best to finish the Acts series now because we have come to a new phase in the book and a new Pastor can pick up easily where I left off.

We have covered the most important history of the early Church, which was in fact Jewish, but God in His mercy included the Gentiles in His New Covenant.

I am excited about spending some of my Christmas and New Year break preparing for this new series.

It will be the first time I have taught extensively on this important subject.

Please pray for me that I will be clear and simple, Biblical 100% correct and we will all be blessed through the process.

2. **Joseph had faith in the Virgin Birth of Mary's Son Jesus – Matt. 1: v.18-25.**

There are a number of important facts in this passage concerning Joseph.

a) **Joseph was engaged to be married to Mary.**

Firstly we need to understand that this was not a 21st century engagement.

We are specifically told that they **had NO SEX together.**

At this time in Jewish history an engagement was a promise made between families, with the consent of the bride and groom.

Sometimes it happened many years before the marriage. (10 years)

After the promise of marriage was agreed, the groom then spent time completely separated from his future wife so that he could concentrate on building a new house or extending the family home.

This would usually at least take 9-12 months.

It was during this preparation time that Joseph discovered that his bride to be **was pregnant!**

If you are a man how would you feel?

I expect that if you were Joseph at this time then you would feel deeply hurt, deeply betrayed, and you would have lost complete trust in your beautiful bride to be.

We are not told exactly what emotions Joseph felt in his heart, but we are told that he wanted to divorce her quietly.

Joseph did not want to shame Mary, so that the effect of her sinful behaviour in the community would be limited.

There was a battle going on in the mind of Joseph.

It was a battle to know the truth about Mary's pregnancy.

I imagine the devil might have said to Joseph that Mary got pregnant with one of the boys in the village, but **God told him** something different.

b) **Joseph believed in the words of the Angel in a dream. – v. 20.**

The first thing that I need to point out is that Joseph had a dream.

It was not a personal experience with an Angel in a physical way, like Abraham and other Old Testament characters.

He didn't actually see the Angel personally.

We have all had dreams and most of the time they are our **brain unwinding** and they are full of mixed up things that we have thought about over the previous few days.

The doctors tell us that dreams are a healthy way of de-fragmenting the brain. By this I mean **de-cluttering our mind.**

In other words, giving it a spring clean so it operates correctly.

However some of our dreams can be influenced by satan.

Therefore, we need to be careful!

Nevertheless some dreams can be influenced by God's Holy Spirit.

For Joseph at this time, he needed **God's help to discern where the dream came from.**

I personally have had very few dreams that I believed were direct inventions by God.

However, after each dream it was **confirmed either immediately or years later that the dream was in fact God speaking to me.**

The first dream was **prophetic**. By this I mean it was God fore-telling about a future event in my life.

I dreamed that I was getting on and off buses looking for somewhere to live in Edinburg, Scotland. **I specially remember that I was having a very hard time.**

At the time I had no intention of ever going to live in Edinburgh nor any idea that one day I would do my **theological training in Edinburgh, Scotland.**

However about 3 years later, I relived the experience, **just like the dream.**

I was almost ready to give up going to Bible College at the time, and suddenly I remembered the dream. I was getting on and off buses looking at property to rent from the local government.

Most of the homes had smashed windows, were in a terrible state, and areas were so bad, I found it difficult to say to God that I would live there.

However I surrendered to God and said Yes to one house.

When I returned to the government office I was told that the house I chose needed so much work that I could not have it and that they had nothing for me.

It was then that I remembered the dream.

This gave me the confidence to carry on. Eventually God gave us a wonderful house to live in, in the country near Edinburgh.

This house was a blessing to both Wendy and myself and we lived there for 3 years.

The second dream was dreaming that there was an **earthquake or some disaster in Kobe.**

At the time of my dream, the earthquake was actually happening in Kobe.

England is 9 hours behind Japan in the winter. It was the great Hanshin earthquake of January 17th 1995. The significance to me was confirmation that God had called us home from Kobe to protect us from this earthquake and that the difficult time we had accepting our closed door to Japan was actually the sovereign purposes of God.

So what I am saying is that **Joseph must have been very convicted that his dream was from God.**

Nevertheless he had to exercise some **“faith”** in the words of the Angel.

In other words, Joseph had to believe in the “Virgin Birth” of Jesus.

He had to believe that somehow God had planted a special seed into the womb of Mary.

This must have taken lots of **“faith”** on the part of Joseph.

The question we need to answer in our hearts today is **“Do we believe in the virgin birth ourselves?”**

If you say **“YES”** I do believe, then you can celebrate this Christmas, with **“JOY”** that God, the creator of this world came into this world for a purpose.

That purpose was to save YOU from the punishment of your sins.

- c) **Joseph believed that he had a responsibility to name the child “JESUS” and that this child was going to be a Messianic Saviour. – v. 21.**

Joseph is now understanding the importance of the birth of this baby.

He is told that Mary will have a son. That was great news.

He was also told that this son was going to **save His people from their sins.**

This is very interesting. Q. **Whose sins was this baby going to forgive?**

Whose people is this baby coming to rescue?

The answer is the **Jewish race.**

We know that later on the Gentiles, that is us, if we are not Jewish, **would be included in God’s New Covenant.**

However it is important to note that Matthew clearly points out to Joseph that this baby is going to **save the Jewish people from their sins.**

Joseph with all of his Jewish ancestry would have understood the need for a Saviour for the Jewish chosen race.

The New Covenant was **never designed for the Gentiles** exclusively, but God in His mercy **grafted the Gentiles onto the Jewish vine.**

We will deal with this fully next year.

- d) **Joseph had to believe that his dream was in line with the Messianic prophecy concerning the Jewish Messiah. – v. 22.**

Matthew quotes from Isaiah Chapter 7: v. 14.

(N.K.J.)

¹⁴Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

It is very clear that the word "**Immanuel**" means God with us.

The Christmas season for believers in Jesus Christ is a celebration that God came to be "**WITH US**".

In other words, **our creator became a man.**

He came to live on this earth. He came to show us what God is like.

He came to show compassion on those special needs people who were hurting both physically, emotionally and spiritually.

He came to die for the sins of the whole world. He came to die for you and me.

Joseph had to believe, what we must believe and that is that Jesus, was the God -man who came into this world to rescue us from the wrath of God to come!

3. Joseph obeyed the words of the Angel and followed the Jewish customs concerning child birth. – Chapter 2: v.24-25.& Luke 2: v. 1-7, and v.21-24.

a) Joseph followed through on the Angel's command.

We are told in v.24 and v.25 that Joseph woke up from the dream and did what the Angel had commanded him.

Joseph married Mary in spite of the fact that she was pregnant with a child that he did not create from his human seed.

Joseph followed through with the commands given to him by the Angel.

This is an important verse. It is a challenge for us to follow through on the words that God speaks to us about in our lives.

When we start reading the Bible for ourselves, we find many challenges to obedience.

Some believers follow through on these commands and some believers say I will **follow through later, but never do.** Other believers carefully follow through and obey God's commands and are blessed by God Himself.

The Christian life is not about rules and regulations. It is about your personal relationship with God, through Jesus.

The question I need to ask you today is.

How is it going in your relationship with God?

Are you following through with His commands and instructions.

If not why not **determine to start today?**

What has God been speaking to you about at this moment of time?

I would like to encourage you to be like Joseph.

Have faith in God's word and follow through on His commands and instructions.

b) Joseph went to his own city, Bethlehem to fulfil prophecy. – Luke 2: v.1-7.

It would have been very easy for Joseph to say. Hang on a minute. Don't you realise that my wife is 8 months pregnant and could give birth at any time.

Tell this Caesar Augustus guy that when my wife has had the baby we will come along to Bethlehem and register for our taxes.

Joseph could have said, "I am sure that this important person will understand?!"

If we are honest and we had been Joseph at the time, we might have said something similar.

However Joseph knew that there was something really special about the place for the birth of Jesus.

So Joseph put his pregnant wife on a donkey and walked from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Those of you who came on the Israel tour in April 2018 went by bus, we didn't walk. You may remember the road from Bethlehem to Nazareth? it was a a mountain road through hills.

Today, even by expressway it is 157 k.m. By donkey it would have been difficult, but walking, even more difficult!

- c) **Joseph named the baby Jesus, marked Him a Jew and dedicated Him to God. (Luke 2: v. 21-24)**

Exodus 13: v. 1-2. In N.K.J.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine.”

Lev. 12: v. 1-3. In N.K.J.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. ³And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

Joseph followed through and obeyed the words of the Angel concerning naming the baby **Jesus**. Joseph also had the baby circumcised and dedicated to God.

Joseph did **everything right according to God’s word.**

Joseph has a wonderful testimony for obedience, faith and understanding the importance of Jesus. He was certainly a model servant of God.

Application

Although we have looked at a little application as we have been going over the text, it is good to take home important principles and apply them to our lives today.

1. Make sure that you win the battle of the mind.

Everything goes through our minds and it is a great battleground for satan. Do not be humanly persuaded by people, whoever they are, and however famous they might be.

Be persuaded by the literal reading of God’s word, in the historical context of that word, through the writers of these words.

(2 Timothy 3: v. 16.)

¹⁶All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

2. Make sure that you understand the purposes of God for His chosen people, the Jewish race, and the importance of Israel as a nation in God’s future purpose. I plan to make this as clear and as simple as I can when I teach on this subject next Jan/Feb.
3. Make sure that you follow through and obey the things God speaks to you about in His Word. It is so easy to say, I will think about it and never actually obey. Of course things need to be tested, but God has plenty of time to confirm His word in your circumstances.