

THE PROMISE OF IMMANUEL

ISAIAH 7:14; MATTHEW 1:18-25

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. ” (NKJV)

Matthew 1:18-25 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. (NKJV)

Introduction

This year as I read through the bible, I color coded each passage that described the kings of Israel and Judah. Red for “bad” kings and blue for “good” kings. May I say that there were many more passages highlighted in red than blue? Did you know that after the death of Solomon, the kingdom was divided and every king of the northern Kingdom of Israel was a bad king? And most of the kings of the southern Kingdom of Judah were bad as well? (9 of the 20. One king started bad but repented)

For example, behind the mention of their names and who their parents were was found either of the following: “...he did evil in the sight of the LORD” or “...did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD.”

Today we are introduced to king Ahaz, the 11th king of Judah since the separation of Israel and Judah. In 2 Kings 16 he is introduced like this:

2 Kings 16: 2 Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

During his reign, the king of Israel, and the king of Syria repeatedly attacked Judah. God sent Isaiah, the prophet of God to Ahaz. No matter how bad Ahaz was, God was going to protect Judah. God's message to Isaiah, to give to Ahaz was simple: "*I will be your Ebenezer.*" That is my loose translation, not Isaiah's. It is during this conversation that we are given a most wonderful announcement concerning the Messiah:

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

Most of you are familiar with the beautiful story of the announcement of the Messiah's birth to Mary. However, in this passage in Matthew, we are an observer to the announcement from an angel to the soon to be husband of Mary.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph – the custom of marriage today is much different than it was in the first century. Normally two families would agree to the union of their children. All the negotiations would commence concerning the dowry (the price for the bride, paid by the grooms father), on dates, and where they would live, etc. A public announcement would be made and the couple would now be "pledged." This is a binding agreement that could only be broken by death or a bill of divorce. The pledge normally lasted a year and this was considered the time needed to ensure that the bride was pure. This custom is the reason why Joseph is referred to as the husband of Mary in verse 19 of Matthew 1.

...before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit - We will deal with this in more detail next week, but know that the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was going to carry the King of Kings and that a miracle of conception would take place by the Holy Spirit of God.

Mary conceives and she begins to "show" that she is pregnant. It appears that Joseph did not know what was going on because of the phrase "*she was found with child.*" This implies that Mary had not told Joseph of the visit by the angel, and her miracle of conception.

Obviously this is shocking news to Joseph as he is not the father. For everyone concerned, both sides of the families, this would be seen as scandalous. Sexual relations were not permitted during this year.

According to the Law, sexual unfaithfulness during the betrothal was considered adultery, Joseph had several choices. 1) He could go ahead and marry her and suffer a lifetime of humiliation, disgrace and gossip, 2) he could follow the Law and stone Mary to death (Deuteronomy 22:23-24), or 3) he could give her a bill of divorce. This third option would still bring disgrace to both families.

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.

Joseph, the husband of Mary is spoken very little of in the Bible. His part in being the earthly father of Jesus and raising him is all we have. We see him at his conception and birth. He is present when Jesus is left in Jerusalem at the Temple, but then the Bible is silent concerning him.

We learn a lot about Joseph in this verse. He is a kind and compassionate man that does not want to take Mary's life, even though that was the Law, but he was willing to give her a bill of divorcement in private, so that they could both move on with their lives.

We are not let in on the discussions between Mary and Joseph concerning Mary's pregnancy, only that Joseph was a "just man" and was considering to give her a divorce.

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.

Have you ever wrestled with a tough decision? I am not talking about where to go for lunch. I am talking about a decision that has many implications for years ahead. This is the position of Joseph. He would be within his rights to divorce her. There is going to be an impact on both families and the town in which they live.

An angel appears to Joseph in a dream and reveals everything to him. The "angel of the Lord" tells him that he should go ahead and get married because she had not done anything immoral or wrong. Her pregnancy is due to the working 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."

The central message to Joseph is found in the next two verses. Mary is going to have a son and His name shall be called "Jesus." I am reminded of the song, "What a Lovely Name" by Charles B. Wycuff. Vestal Goodman could really sing this song with great feeling. It has always moved me.

There's a name above all others,
Wonderful to hear, bringing hope and cheer.

It's the lovely name of Jesus,
Evermore the same, what a lovely name.

CHORUS:

What a lovely name, the name of Jesus.
Reaching higher far, than the brightest star.
Sweeter than the songs they sing in heaven.
Let the world proclaim, what a lovely name.

Thru His name there's wondrous power,
Power to redeem, making sinners clean.
By His pow'r He cleansed the leper,
Opened blinded eyes, caused the dead to rise.

CHORUS:

He'll return in clouds of glory,
Saints of ev'ry race, shall behold His face.
With Him enter heaven's city,
Ever to proclaim, what a lovely name.

CHORUS:

How about the song that Bill and Gloria Gather penned.

“Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. There’s just something about that name. Master, Savior, Jesus
Like the fragrance after the rain. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Let all heaven and earth proclaim.
Kings and kingdoms will all pass away, but there’s something about that name.”

Yahowshua

Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua. The Hebrew word Joshua is translated as “Yahowshuwa”
which means = Jehovah is salvation.

What a marvelous truth. No wonder that is the name that God chose for Immanuel. “Thou shall
call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Jehovah is Salvation.

*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.”*

Obviously the prophet was Isaiah and we have that prophecy and promise in the 7th chapter of Isaiah. Let's read it again for the words never tire; "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

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. (NKJV)

Isn't it wonderful how Joseph did exactly as the Lord had spoken through His messenger?

Conclusion

Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, God spoke through His prophet Isaiah in a promise to a wicked king that He would spare the people of Jerusalem. In that promise to Ahaz, was the prophecy concerning the coming Messiah. The time had come and it was time for the birth of Immanuel.

"Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. There's just something about that name. Master, Savior, Jesus

Like the fragrance after the rain. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. Let all heaven and earth proclaim.

Kings and kingdoms will all pass away, but there's something about that name."

Bob Crowder