

God with Us!

Tentative Main Idea: Because the Messiah, King Jesus is begotten of the Spirit, God is indeed with us!

If you could ask them, most people would acknowledge that Jesus Christ was an extraordinary person. Even the most skeptical people wonder how there came to be so much "legend" surrounding an obscure historical figure like Jesus, and how so many of His followers, even 2000 years later, have allowed themselves to look like fools in their allegiance to Him. Yet many don't seem to seriously ask themselves, "If even half of what is said about Jesus is true, how did He come to be who he was?"

This most unique figure in all of history has a very well-documented life. But Jesus' life didn't start with His birth on this earth. In fact through the Old Testament prophet Micah (5:2), God promised that out of Bethlehem, *"...One shall go forth for Me to be a ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity!"* Jesus Christ is the great "I AM" from eternity past

And Jesus' life didn't finish with His death on the cross. He is not just the Alpha; He's also the Omega! Indeed, Jesus was raised from the dead, the Eternal King of Kings and Lord of Lords, without beginning and without end!

As we examine Jesus' life here on this earth, we find that it is bookended by two major interventions of the Spirit of God in the normal flow of history, interventions by which God wants to unmistakably communicate something special about Jesus. First of all, we see the Spirit's action in the virgin birth of Jesus and then in Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4).

In the Matthew 1 genealogy that we looked at last week with Pastor Stan, we see an ordinary process that started way back in the Garden of Eden when God intervened to create the miracle of life! He made man able to engender or beget a human child in a woman. All through that genealogy, we read of fathers engendering sons. But in verse 16, we see evidence of God again stepping into the normal processes to work a miracle, when it says, *"Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah."*

Because there is a break from the pattern we read about all through that genealogy, that of each father begetting his son, it is clear from the text that there was no blood relationship between Joseph and Jesus. The next few verses, 18-25 give a more detailed account of the miraculous birth of this promised Messiah, an account that leaves only one possible conclusion, Jesus is indeed the Son of God!

Let's read through these verses together:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Prayer

You can imagine Joseph's confusion and disappointment when he found out that Mary, the young woman to whom he was engaged, was pregnant. The only thing he knew for sure about the baby was that it wasn't his child because he knew he had not yet had marital relations with her. The Mosaic Law released him from his marriage contract and allowed him to turn her over to the authorities for punishment. But Joseph was a good, kind man, and he didn't want to disgrace Mary. So he planned to send her away secretly, keeping her from public scorn or even worse, death by stoning.

But God had something that He wanted to reveal about this child that was to be born. And if ever a man needed a word from God it was Joseph. If he was to be just in his treatment of Mary and considerate of the child that was to be born, he needed to hear from God!

So God sent an angel, a messenger from God, to Joseph who said, *"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*

Let's examine that message from God a little more closely. *"Joseph, son of David..."* If he would have said, *"Joseph, son of Jacob, grandson of Matthan..."* it would have made more sense to Joseph and been closer to the genealogy that Joseph knew and Matthew recorded. But remember that Matthew's genealogy revealed

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that Jesus was the rightful heir of David's throne and God was revealing something special to Joseph, that Jesus was the promised King prophesied in the Old Testament.

Then the angel said the most incredible thing! Mary was not pregnant because she had relations with Joseph or with any other man. *"Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."*

That message is consistent with the account in Luke where we read about the angel speaking to Mary, bringing her a message from God. The angel said that the Holy Spirit was to come on Mary and overshadow her in a most miraculous way so that she would conceive and bear a Son.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

Lk.1:30-35 NASB

The angel was explicitly saying that this child was not an ordinary child. He was "conceived" through the action of the Holy Spirit so that He was "holy" and was to be called "Son of God." If this child had been conceived from the seed of a man, a descendent of Adam, that child could never be "holy" and could never be called "Son of God."

So it is clear that Mary had some idea of what was going on in her body as the baby started to grow in her womb. But Joseph had to be terribly perturbed when the baby started showing. He obviously didn't have the explanation until the angel told him, "...*the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*"

Let's dig a little deeper into that word translated "conceived" in our text. It comes from a Greek word which speaks to procreating, to engendering, to begetting. So another way to translate this word is that Mary's child was engendered, or procreated, or begotten by the Holy Spirit. Young's Literal Translation reads, *"Joseph, son of David, thou mayest not fear to receive Mary thy wife, for that which in her was begotten [is] of the Holy Spirit..."*

The word translated "conceived" in the NASB and "begotten" in Young's Literal Translation is a very important word.

"Begotten" is the word used by the old KJV. In fact all through the genealogy in verses 1-17, it speaks of each father begetting his son. So "to beget" is primarily used of the male parent generating offspring.

One clear way to see the meaning of beget is to read Genesis 5:1-3. Genesis 5 starts with an account, a genealogy of the descendants of Adam.

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of (that is, he begot) a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.

Notice the use of two particular distinctive ideas in these verses, that of creating or making on the one hand and that of begetting on the other.

So a good way to understand the word beget is to contrast it to other words, like make or create, those same words used in Genesis 5:1-3. For instance, a man can create a painting with a very faithful representation or image of a man. He can even make that likeness into a three dimensional image, a statue that looks like a man. He can even create a three dimensional robot that can carry on some of the functions of a man. But a man cannot beget a painting of a man, or a statue of a man, or a robotic substitute for a man. A man can only beget another human being of the same substance he himself is.

In the same way, a monkey cannot beget a donkey or a cow but rather only one of his own kind, one of the same substance the monkey is made of.

God created the world and the animals; and just like Genesis 5:1-3 says, God even created mankind through Adam and Eve in His own image. But what God begets is God. That is why the Nicene Creed that we will later read together as a confession of what we believe about Jesus, says that Jesus was begotten, not created or made, and that He is one substance with the Father, very God of very God.

But what difference does it make that Jesus was begotten of God? Listen now as I read Psalm 2 to you. It is noteworthy that the truth that the Messiah was to be the Son of God was first revealed in this psalm. Notice how the One begotten of God, is prophesied to be KING! This Messianic Psalm is written in the format of

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three speakers, King David, God the Father, and King Jesus Christ, the one who was begotten of God, the Anointed One, the Messiah!

KING DAVID

¹ *Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?*
² *The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,*
³ *"Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"*
⁴ *He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.*
⁵ *Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,*

GOD THE FATHER

⁶ *"But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."*

KING JESUS

⁷ *"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.*
⁸ *'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.*
⁹ *'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"*

KING DAVID

¹⁰ *Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.*
¹¹ *Worship the LORD with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.*
¹² *Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!*

So this KING JESUS, the only begotten of the Father, is the promised Messiah!

But notice in verse 21 of Matthew 1 that this child, begotten of God through the Spirit in the Virgin Mary is to be Savior. *"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."* The emphasis is that He, Himself "...will save His people from their sins."

He Himself will accomplish salvation! The angel did not say, "Call His name Jesus because He will set up a ladder so that His people can climb out of sin and rise above their misery and their problems." No, "Call His name Jesus, because He Himself..." is Savior!

The name "Jesus" is an English representation of the Greek name *Iēsous*, which is a translation of the ancient Hebrew *Yehoshua*. The name Yehoshua is formed from Hebrew root words signifying "Yahweh is salvation" and is translated in our English Old Testament as "Joshua."

But the name of Jesus is significant, not because of some divinely given transliteration of a certain sounding name, but rather because of the person the name represents. Salvation is found in Jesus for the English speaker. Salvation is found in Jesús for the Spanish speaker. It is found in Yehoshua for the Hebrews.

That is because for every English, Spanish, and Hebrew speaker, salvation is found in the person that name represents. As we look at Jesus, the One begotten of God the Spirit so that He is "very God of very God," we can indeed say, "Yehoshua, Yahweh is salvation! Jesus is Savior!" We can say that because it is through that child begotten of the Holy Spirit in womb of the Virgin Mary that the eternal plan of God was brought to fulfillment as He Himself became our salvation! God the Son who was with the Father and the Spirit in eternity past became flesh, begotten in the Virgin Mary, and born in the flesh to give Himself for our salvation!

Matthew next in verse 22 and 23 interrupts his history with an editorial note, inspired by the Spirit of God. *"Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'BEHOLD THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL' which being translated means 'GOD WITH US.'"*

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Truly, because the Messiah, King Jesus is begotten of the Spirit, God is indeed with us! Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled!

Verses 24 tell us that when he woke up, Joseph "...did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary to be his wife but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son, and he called His name Jesus."

For Joseph it all started as an impending scandal that had to have broken his heart, one that was going to touch him personally and that he wanted desperately to avoid. Yet as he was in turmoil that dark night, God showed up, and Joseph began to see what was what was happening to Mary through the eyes of faith, instead of seeing Mary's situation through the curious stares of his neighbors.

The spectacle of his fiancée's pregnancy by another man no longer made Joseph fear. Rather the astounding thing to him was that God would beget His Son Jesus in the womb of a young virgin so that Jesus the Messiah was very God of very God while at the same time being fully human.

Because he believed, Joseph came to see that the "love child" the neighbors would whisper about was really a love child of a different kind! Jesus was the full expression of the Father's love, the Father who loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son to be our Savior!

I want to ask you this morning, do you believe that the child in Mary's womb was begotten of God? Do you believe that Jesus is indeed the Son of God? Is Jesus king in your life?

The enemy of our souls has waged a continual battle against the fact of the deity of Jesus Christ since God revealed the truth to Joseph, that the baby in Mary's womb was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Starting with the whispers of Joseph and Mary's neighbors and the insinuations of the religious leaders that Jesus was an illegitimate child, incredulous men and women have always denied that Jesus is God. But if Jesus is not God in the flesh, then He Himself cannot save us and God is not with us.

Listen to the exhortation of the Apostle Paul in Col. 2:9 See *to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ, for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.*

I have asked one of our elders, Brett Davisson, to lead us in a confession of our faith in Jesus Christ, using the words of the Nicene Creed. I'd like to ask you to join in confessing your faith in Jesus if indeed you believe God's testimony regarding His Son Jesus.

Nicene Creed (excerpt):

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

When you worship Jesus you bow before God the Son. When you worship Jesus, you bow before the eternal Son of God!

