

# ADVENT 2009

## *Looking Beyond the Manger*

### **Study 10 - Matthew 1:18-25: Promise**

#### **Text: Matthew 1:18-25**

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study (we recommend three separate readings)
- Listen to sermon preached on November 29<sup>th</sup>
- Group discussion during week of November 30<sup>th</sup>

#### **Matthew 1:18-25 *English Standard Version (ESV)***

##### **The Birth of Jesus Christ**

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Sermon Idea: "Looking Beyond the Manger: Promise"

#### **First Reading – *What does this passage tell you about God?***

1. Read Matthew 1:1-17 for context. Describe God's plan of salvation from Matthew 1:1-25.

2. What promises are fulfilled (or are beginning to be fulfilled) in Matthew 1:18-25? What do the fulfillment (or the beginning of fulfillment) of these promises tell us about God?
3. List the 'supernatural' ways God works in Matthew 1:18-25.

**Second Reading – *What does this passage tell you about yourself?***

1. Given the rationalistic and 'scientific' world we live in, what ways do people challenge the account of Jesus' birth in Matthew 1:18-25? How do you respond to these objections?
2. After Joseph's initial skepticism, he fully accepted God's plan as relayed by the angel. Describe how you may have overcome skepticism in your life about the virgin birth, or the incarnation.
3. Mary and Joseph did not receive advance notice that God would work through them in a powerful way. Are you prepared for God to work through you in ways He desires, and you cannot foresee? Explain your answer.

**Third Reading – *What does this passage tell you about how you should live?***

1. How do you live in light of the promises of Matthew 1:18-25? Describe how these promises could more fully impact your life.
2. Given the objections and outright disbelief in much of our culture with regard to the virgin birth and incarnation, how do you confidently live out the reality of Matthew 1:18-25?
3. How should we view the manger in light of these verses? What difference should it make in your life?
4. Why is Matthew 1:18-25 the best present anyone could ever receive at Christmas time? Why should it revolutionize the world?

**Summarize the passage:**

What is the **theme** of the passage (i.e., a sentence that captures the timeless essence of the passage)?

What is the **aim** of the passage (i.e., how should you respond to this passage in thought and behavior)?

**Prayer Requests**

## Study 11 — Luke 1:39-56: Reception

### Text: Luke 1:39-56

Ways in which you will interact with the text:

- Personal study;
- Listen to the sermon preached Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>
- Group discussion during week of Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>

### Luke 1:39-56 *English Standard Version (ESV)*

#### Mary visits Elizabeth

<sup>39</sup> *In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, <sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."*

#### Mary's Song of Praise: Magnificat

<sup>46</sup> *And Mary said,*

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,*

*<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,*

*<sup>48</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.*

*For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;*

*<sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.*

*<sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.*

*<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;*

*<sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;*

*<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent empty away.*

*<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,*

*<sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever."*

<sup>56</sup> *And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.*



- Write out any prayer requests that come to mind as you read this text and interact with these questions.

**Third Reading—*What does this passage tell you about how you should live?***

1. What are ways in which God does unexpected things in redeeming good out of bad situations?

2. What is your “song” of prayer for God’s work in your life right now?

- Write out any prayer requests that come to mind as you read this text and interact with these questions.

**Summary:**

- What is the **theme** (a sentence that captures the timeless essence) of the passage?

- What is the **aim** (how should this passage inform your thoughts and behavior) of the passage?

*Prayer Requests*