

Two Sides Of The Story – Matthew 1.18-25

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. ²⁰But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. ²²Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ²³Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us. ²⁴And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; ²⁵and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JESUS (Matthew 1.18-25, ASV).¹

Memory Verse – And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. – Matthew 1.19

Every story or event has more than one side to how things happened or what went on. The birth of Jesus Christ was no exception. We do not have to look any further than Mary and Joseph to see there are different things happening in their lives, different emotions, reactions to the events, and ideas on how to handle the situations.

We have spent some time looking into the affairs of Mary and the events which mostly surrounded her, so, now we are going to look at Joseph and how he dealt with this entire situation. We find his story mainly in the book of Matthew, after the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

A couple of things we should know about the gospels before we go any further, this will help us understand why we find some parts of the Christmas story in certain books and not in others. It should help us to understand why we need to be more precise in our account of these events when we tell others and even when we display them.

Each of the first four books of the New Testament represent something about Jesus Christ. There are many things we could say, but for space and time let us narrow it down to just a couple for each book.

- The Gospel Of Matthew portrays Jesus Christ as a King, some forty times Matthew uses some expression of “the kingdom of heaven” or Kingdom of God.” All reflecting Christ’s sovereign rule over all. Because of this we do not have the details of His birth but are told of a great tragedy resulting from His birth. We do find the wisemen visiting Him at a home, bringing Him kingly gifts (which we will talk about these later); honoring and worshiping the King of kings and Lord of lords. We also have for us the kingly line listed at the beginning of Matthew (1.2-17). This genealogy is to prove Christ had the right to sit on the throne of His father king David as prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 9.7; Luke 1.32).
- The Gospel Of Mark portrays Jesus Christ as a Servant, therefore there is no birth event, no childhood events, only the beginning of Christ’s ministry. No one cares about where or when a servant was born; we just want to know did they do their work? One, interesting fact about Mark is he is quick and to the point about Jesus Christ’s activities and responses, until we come to His trial, crucifixion, burial and resurrection.
- The Gospel of Luke portrays Christ as a Man, and we all know from our own lives we want to know all the details of a child’s birth. This is what we find in the book of Luke. Luke being a doctor was well suited to give us all these details, painting a great picture of the life of Mary and Joseph along with her cousin Elizabeth and Zechariah. We find the manger, stable, swaddling clothes, shepherds, angels and all the other details we might expect on such a joyous birth. Visited by lowly

¹ [American Standard Version](#). (1995). (Mt 1:18–25). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

people those are the very ones Christ came to save (not lowly in physical appearance but in heart – humble). Today the Messiah is still looking for these kinds of people; James says, “Submit yourself before God” (James 4.7), then again, he writes, “Humble yourself before God and He will lift you up” (James 4.10). As the Psalmist said, “God is looking for a broken and contrite spirit, a humble spirit” (Psalm 51.17).

- The Gospel of John portrays Jesus Christ the Messiah as the Living God, Who has always been and always will be (IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1.1)).² Therefore, being that Christ has always existed He has no birth and therefore, we find nothing in the book of John. John is unique because this is where we find the seven (7) “I Am’s” of Jesus Christ – I Am the Living Water (4.10, 13, 7.38) I Am the Bread of Life (6.35, 48), I Am the Light of the World (8.12), I Am the Gate and the Good Shepherd (10.9-11), I Am the Way, the Truth, and Light (14.6), and finally I Am the True Vine (15.1).

Each of the gospels are unique and present to us a different perspective on who our Christ is, on how we should approach Him and with what grace and majesty He came to earth to save us from our sins to bring righteousness into our lives; giving us access to His Father in Heaven.

Joseph was just like us, a man who felt confused by the events happening around him. He sees his lovely bride pregnant and knows he did not do it. Therefore, he has to decide what to do, under Jewish law they are married enough the punishment is solely his. She could be stoned for her shameful act of betrayal of their marriage vows.

But “her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things...” (Matthew 1.19-20. ESV),³ as Joseph thought about what to do, he did not make a rash decision but took his time. He loved Mary and did not want to cause her any more harm than would already come from her pregnancy out of wedlock.

Behold, what a great word, it calls our attention to what is about to happen. However, some times in our lives we have a ‘behold’ moment, a time when we are thinking, contemplating what to do and then what seems to us as an out of nowhere a thought pops into our head. But, think, could the Lord be giving us this help, or one of His angels; we might not really know, but Joseph had a ‘behold’ moment and the angel of the Lord told him what was going on and to be faithful, keep Mary as his wife and press on.

Wow! Could any of us have done what Joseph and Mary did in those days? I do not know; it is easy sometimes to think we could and would but the fact is we do not know because we were not there. We are here and there are many times we fail right here, so there we are.

Application

1. Tell about a time when you only had one side of the story and when you got the rest of the story it really made a difference in the whole story? Please explain.
2. Have you ever had a ‘Behold’ moment? Describe it. What was that like? How did it make you feel? Please Explain
3. Read the Seven ‘I Am’ passages listed above. After reading all of them discuss at least two of the “I Am’s” explaining what Jesus Christ meant and how it would apply to your life? You can use other scripture to support your explanation.
4. Commit to learning Matthew 1.19 and find one person to share the Biblical Christmas Story with.

Prayer

God of my heart and soul, Your ways are always Higher than mine and should be followed. But I know I do not. Lord thank You for Your love and compassion on me, such a sinner. I did not deserve Your Son nor His sacrifice. I pray I will live a life worthy of Your gift, Lord help me to share it today and every day until Christ returns. I pray all this in Jesus Christ’s Name, Amen.

² [The Holy Bible: King James Version](#). (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Jn 1:1). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mt 1:19–20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.