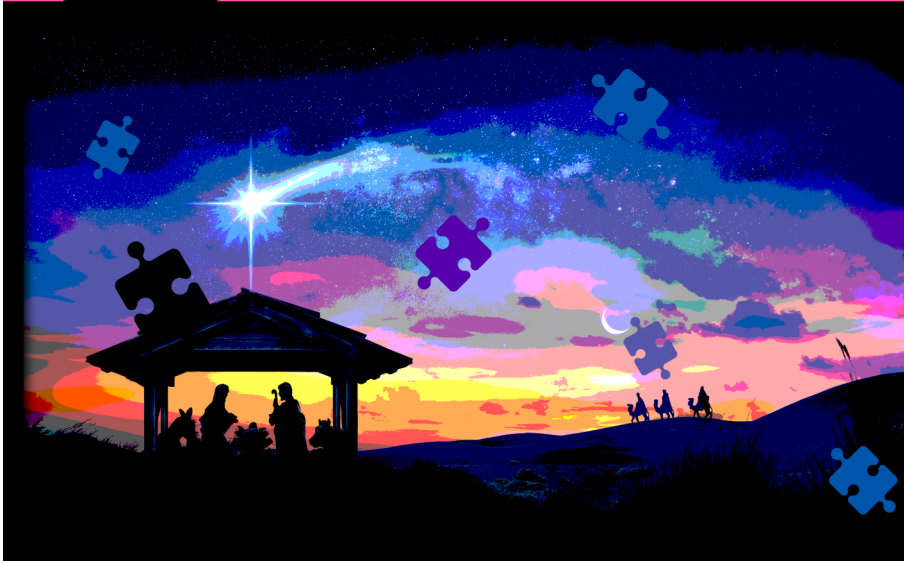


PART ONE: A CHILD IS BORN — A SON IS GIVEN



(Isaiah 9:6a LSB) For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us.

(John 3:16 LSB) For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Today we begin a four-part study in which we will examine one of the two most important events in the history of earth, i.e. when God became a man so he could save his human creation from their sins. The Apostle Matthew gives us his God-breathed account of the birth of Jesus Christ as observed by human eyes and as determined by the sovereign will of God.

Matthew begins by giving a brief account of the earthly parents of Jesus—Mary and Joseph.

I. A brief introduction to Mary and her role in the child being born and the Son being given.

A. Mary was engaged to Joseph and before they were married she was found to be pregnant.

- (Matthew 1:18 LSB) **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.

B. Mary was betrothed (pledged) to Joseph.

Betrothal was the first stage of marriage in ancient Jewish culture, usually lasting for a year before the wedding night, more legal than an engagement.

C. Mary was a virgin.

- (Luke 1:26–27 ESV) In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 **to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph**, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

- D. Mary's plan likely was that she and her good, righteous husband-to-be would be married and have many children.
- E. Mary had not planned on being the mother of the Son of God.
- F. Mary had not planned on being pregnant before she was married.
- G. There is no way Mary could have known God's plan for her.

H. However, Mary was a woman of faith and was prepared to do God would have her to do.

- (Luke 1:28–30 ESV) And he came to her and said, "Greetings, **O favored one, the Lord is with you!**" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, "**Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.**"

II. A brief introduction to Joseph and his role in the child being born and the Son being given.

A. Joseph was a righteous man.

- (Matthew 1:19 LSB) And Joseph her husband, **being a righteous man** and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

B. Joseph loved Mary and thought that sending her away secretly would be the best solution to a very difficult situation.

- (Matthew 1:19 NLT) Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

C. Joseph was hesitant and conflicted—he still wanted to take Mary to be his wife.

D. But to be true to God he could not marry an immoral woman, could he?

III. An angel provides the necessary context—this is the work of the Holy Spirit—which allows Joseph and Mary to fulfill their purpose in God’s plan.

- (Matthew 1:20–21 LSB) 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 One who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 **“And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus**, for He will save His people from their sins.”

A. The angel comforts Joseph and exhorts him to go ahead and marry Mary.

B. She has not been unfaithful—Mary is pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

C. What kind of person does it take to believe/accept news like that?

D. The angel told Joseph that this series of events would lead to Jesus saving his people from their sins.

IV. These events were taking place because the Lord was fulfilling his sovereign purpose as it was spoken through the prophet Isaiah.

- (Matthew 1:22–23 LSB) **Now all this took place in order that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled**, saying, 23 “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.”

V. Joseph obeyed the commandment of the angel because he was chosen as a “piece of the providential puzzle” to fulfill the will of the Lord.

- (Matthew 1:24–25 LSB) And Joseph got up from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, 25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

VI. These things were happening now because it was God’s chosen time that he would become a human, i.e. he would come “in flesh”—his incarnation.

Don Stewart ... God became a human in Jesus Christ. This is known as the “**incarnation**.” Incarnation is from the Latin meaning “in flesh.” Although it is not a biblical word it presents a biblical truth. Jesus is the eternal God who became flesh and blood. Jesus became a man at a point in time in history. He did so without giving up His oneness with God. He became a human being without a sin nature. “In flesh” means more than Jesus had a physical body - He was a complete human personality.

- (Galatians 4:4–5a LSB) **But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law.
- (Philippians 2:6–7 LSB) [*Christ Jesus*], who, **although existing in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 **but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a slave, by being made in the likeness of men**.
- (John 1:1 LSB) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, **and the Word was God**.
- (John 1:14 LSB) **And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, glory as of **the only begotten from the Father**, full of grace and truth.

CONCLUSION: What “piece of the providential puzzle” are you? Am I? Where do we fit?

Are we people of faith who are ready to leave our plans behind and follow the will of God?