

B. Miraculous Birth of the Christ

The Influence of Matthew's Purpose for Writing

How did Matthew's purpose in appealing to Jews integrate itself into his own Gospel account?

- Integrating Jewish tradition
 - Matthew uses extensive quotes from the Old Testament. In his 53 direct quotes and allusions, Matthew draws no less than 25 of the 39 Old Testament books.¹⁴
 - In the first two chapters of Matthew there are no less than 16 references to the Old Testament.¹⁵
- How does Matthew use his appeal to Jewish tradition?
 - Matthew uses the authority of familiar scripture to make direct conclusions for his readers.
 - He continues throughout the Gospels to reaffirm his assertions.

What is unique about how the birth of Jesus is described?

- Jesus is born of a virgin
 - In verse 18, the words, “of Jesus Christ” in the Greek text are in the emphatic position. This implies that the circumstances of Jesus’ birth are different from everyone else in the genealogy.¹⁶
 - Jesus was made pregnant by the Holy Spirit. This is different from Greek myth about fake deity making themselves turn into human form. The miracle performed by God did not require Him to assume a material form.¹⁷
 - The Angel of the lord that appears to Mary to tell her that she will become pregnant does not tell her a medical explanation of how this would become possible. It is truly miraculous. Somehow, God would “overshadow” Mary by His

¹⁴ Richards 527

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ HCSB Study Bible 1609.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Spirit “to bring about a miraculous conception. Once formed in Mary’s womb, Jesus was born through the normal process that brings children into the world.”¹⁸

- “Thus, from the beginning Jesus had two natures. His divine nature as God’s Son was joined with a human nature, in Mary’s womb, by direct act of the Author of all creation.”¹⁹
- God is not limited in His work by our own understanding.
- How was Jesus’ immaculate conception received?
 - Mary and Joseph were engaged and “had not yet come together.” These facts, as recorded by Matthew, emphasize that Mary and Joseph were not living together as husband and wife when Mary become pregnant.
 - The custom of the day was for the man to subject his unfaithful fiancée to divorce and public humiliation.²⁰
 - Joseph was righteous in
 - “not want[ing] a wife who was guilty of adultery”²¹ and
 - “Not being vindictive” and allowing mercy to temper “his sense of doing what was right”²² making plans to divorce Mary as quietly as possible.
- How Does Joseph overcome not wanting a wife guilty of adultery?
 - Required the Angel of the Lord to testify to the validity of God’s will and work being done by directing and explaining the miraculous events to Joseph.
 - This a role played multiple times throughout the Gospel accounts. The first is when an angel appears to Zachariah to tell that he will father John the Baptist in his old age (Luke 1:5). Again, in Luke 1:26 to first tell Mary that she will become pregnant.
 - We’ll see the involvement of Angels aiding in the fulfillment of directing people through the Gospel of Matthew.
 - Joseph is reminded that he is a descendant of David

¹⁸ Knight, George W. *A Simplified Harmony of the Gospels: Using the Text of HCSB*. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2001), 9.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid 14.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

- Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience, yes – but the fact remains, the scripture here is God breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). The appeals to Jewish tradition are more than just logical and informational sprinkles; they are transformational to our understanding of our Messiah.
 - The angel of the Lord reminds Joseph that he is the son of David – that he is the descendant of a great king and worthy to receive this surprising intelligence of his relation to the Messiah (Matthew 1:20).
 - Joseph was a carpenter (Matthew 13:55) and we see the tendency of those who are born to little and given great honors or privilege to disregard what honor they’ve been given. The angel’s reminder is a reminder for Joseph to value himself.
 - The same can be said to every believer – the son’s and daughters of the one true living God. That we can forget the dignity of our birth to remember the dignity of our new birth.

What is the significance of Jesus’ name and being called Immanuel?

- “Jesus” is the same name as “Joshua”. There are two Joshuas in the Old Testament who both illustrations of the coming Messiah.²³
 - Joshua – Israel’s captain at their first settlement in Canaan.²⁴
 - Joshua – Israel’s high priest at their second settlement after the captivity.²⁵
- There is a reason that Jesus is given his name. that He will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21).
 - Jesus didn’t come to deliver the Jews from their sins – not to deliver them from Roman control.
 - Matthew is answering, one of the questions a Jewish skeptic would have been asking, that is “What has happened to the promised earthly kingdom of Israel?”²⁶

²³ Henry, Matthew. “St. Matthew.” In *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible Vol. 5*, (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company), 7

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Richards, 527.

- From his Birth we know that Christ is the Son of God and the mediator between God and Man
 - Fulfilled Prophecy referred to by Matthew back to what was told to king Ahaz in Isaiah 7:14.
 - Matthew will continue to point out those fulfilled prophecies.
 - Immanuel is a curious name but very precious in that it identifies Christ as “God incarnate among us” ²⁷
 - Immanuel – God with us: is the cause of a major change in the self-narrative all people have.
 - From the perspective of our nature, we see God as greater and bigger and better than us.
 - From the perspective of the law given to us by Moses (the perspective of Matthew’s audience and our context), we see God our punisher.
 - But Immanuel, allows us to see God as God with us. Jesus brings God and Man together.

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²⁷ Henry, 8.