

“The Miracle”
December 4, 2022
Matthew 1:1, 16-25

I. Introduction

This morning, the 2nd candle of the Advent wreath reminds us of the wondrous miracle of the birth of Jesus Christ. The American College Dictionary defines a miracle as “*an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause.*” I suspect that we have all seen or heard of things that could be called miracles. We hear about people who are found alive days after a massive earthquake. Perhaps you know personally someone who was protected in a difficult or impossible situation —like a terrible car crash and they just walked away—or someone who was healed when the doctors had given them little or no hope—a tumor just disappears for no reason.

There is one miracle that we all have experienced—the miracle of birth. At one point in time each one of you was one little cell. During the first 9 months of your life, that single cell split and split again developing into a person with the traits—both physical and emotional—that make you you. How one little cell knew what to do is a miracle of God. David put it this way in **Psalm 139:1, 13** “**O LORD, you have searched me, and you know me. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.**” Some births are more miraculous than others. We hear about people who are told there is no chance that they can have children who later miraculously have a child. This is a “God thing.”

There are several miraculous births recorded in the Bible: there is Isaac who was born to Abraham who was 100 years old and Sarah who was 90 years old (**Genesis 17:17-19; 21:1-7**); there is Samson who was the son of Manoah and his barren wife (**Judges 13:1-25**); there’s Samuel who was born to Elkanah and Hannah (**1 Samuel 1:1-20**); there’s John the Baptist who was born to the elderly couple of Zechariah and his barren wife Elizabeth (**Luke 1:5-25, 80**). But the greatest miracle birth of all is the one we are celebrating in 3 weeks, the birth recorded in these verses in Matthew.

II. The Greatest Miracle Birth

In Ephesians 2:10 Paul wrote, “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” God has a purpose for every person that's born but He seems to have a special purpose for those born miraculously—for example, consider the miracle babies Samson and Samuel and John the Baptist. This miracle Baby, Jesus, born to Mary was no different. In these introductory verses to the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew gave 3 names or titles for this baby—names which really tell us the purpose of His birth at the beginning of His story.

A. First title: He is the Christ

One of the first titles and names of this baby is found in [verses 1 & 16](#): “**who is called Christ.**” If you've been in church for very long, you know that “*Christ*” is a Greek word and “*Messiah*” is its Hebrew equivalent. They both mean “*the anointed one or the sent one from God*,” *i.e.* “*Christ*” means “*the sent one from God*.” Whether in Greek or Hebrew, Matthew said that Jesus was sent. He wasn't an accident—He came from God; *i.e.* He is the Son of God. He is the Messiah. He is the Christ.

It took 17 verses for Matthew to show Jesus' human lineage but in one verse, the fact of Jesus' divine conception, His miracle birth, is given. In [verse 18](#) Matthew gave an account of Jesus' ancestry, but this time from His divine side—His heavenly Father's side: “**This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.**” There is no way that Matthew, or for that matter anyone else, could explain the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Matthew doesn't even try—it's a miracle. Jesus' conception was a miracle. It is a mystery—just as much a mystery as how God created the Universe or how there can be one God in 3 persons or how we can be changed when we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Just like Joseph and Mary, we must accept it by faith.

In God's plan Jesus didn't just appear as God in adult form, He came to earth as a baby—He was born to His mother, Mary. Parents are important in preparing their children for becoming adults, so what do we know about Jesus' parents? We really aren't told a lot about Mary in the Scriptures. She was

probably a native of this tiny town called Nazareth. Because of its small size and poor reputation—remember in [John 1:46](#) Nathaniel said, **“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”** Mary probably came from a poor, insignificant family. From [Luke 3:23 & 1:36](#), we learn that her father was Eli and that she had a cousin by the name of Elizabeth.

Since girls were usually betrothed when they were 12 or 13 and since Mary was betrothed to Joseph, it is assumed that Mary was around 12 or 13. From the verses from Luke which Betty & Jill read, we know that Mary was a godly woman. She was submissive to God’s will—as they read from [Luke 1:38](#) when the angel appeared to Mary, she answered and said, **“I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.”** Mary believed God, but she was human and wondered how she could conceive. In [Luke 1:34](#) **“Mary asked the angel, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’”** but she never questioned that the angel was sent from God or that what he said was true. In [Luke 1:45](#), Elizabeth said of Mary **“Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!”** Mary was humble and had a thankfulness and love for God which we see in her song in [Luke 1:46-55](#). Let’s look at part of it, [turn to Luke 1:46-49](#). You can read the rest of Mary’s song at your leisure.

We don’t know much more about Mary, and we know even less about Joseph. In [Matthew 13:55](#) Matthew tells us that Joseph was a carpenter. But there is one thing we can be sure of—since God chose Joseph to be the foster father of the Christ, of God’s anointed Son, Joseph must have been a righteous man. Like David ([Acts 13:12](#)), he must have been a man after God’s own heart.

This miraculous birth to Mary and Joseph wasn’t an accident, God had a plan. [Turn to Gal. 4:4-5;](#) [now turn to Colossians 1:15-20.](#) God had a plan; He sent Jesus who was wholly/completely God and wholly/completely man—He was the greatest miracle baby ever born—to die on a cross for the sins of the world. He was—He is the Christ; the Messiah, born to Mary and Joseph.

B. Second Title: He is Jesus

Back in [Matthew 1:21](#) the angel told Joseph the 2nd title and purpose of this baby. **“His Name will be Jesus.”** **“Jesus”** is Greek for the Hebrew name **“Joshua”**—both mean **“Jehovah will save.”** Unlike

other men named Jesus or Joshua who could only tell of God's salvation, as the angel said, this Jesus, born of Mary, "will save His people from their sins." As Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:15, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." In 1 John 4:14 John wrote, "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world." He is Jesus—He is the Savior of the world.

When we see a baby boy or girl, our wish and prayer for them is that they grow up strong and healthy and that they have a long, successful life. By comparison, this baby named Jesus was born with the purpose to die for the sins of the world—to be the Savior of all mankind. Jesus came to die for sinners. In John 1:29, John the Baptist said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" BUT He didn't just die; turn to 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. To show that He had conquered death and that His sacrifice was accepted—that He really was the Savior of the world—Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, where He now intercedes for all those who call Him "Savior" or "Jesus." In Philippians 2:9-11 Paul wrote, "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This Baby born to Mary and Joseph is the Christ, He is Jesus, and 3rd He is Immanuel.

C. Third Title: He is Immanuel

Throughout the Old Testament Jesus coming was foretold. In Isaiah 7:14 Isaiah prophesied, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." "Immanuel" means "God with us." Jesus wasn't just sent from God—the anointed One, called the Messiah; He isn't just the Savior of mankind; He is also God Himself. As Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." Hebrews 1:3 says, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word." This is why Jesus told Philip in John 14:9, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." This miracle Baby of Mary and Joseph is Immanuel, "God with us;" He is Jesus, "the Savior;" He is the Christ, "sent from God."

III. The Response

Jesus was a miracle baby with a special purpose. He was sent by God with the explicit purpose of providing a way of salvation for all who believe in Him. But He was more than just someone special like Moses or John the Baptist; He was God in human form. Because they responded to God's call in faith and trust, Mary and Joseph were called to raise up their Messiah; their Savior.

So, what is your response to this miracle baby?

A. Is He your Savior? In the verses we read from [1 Corinthians 15](#), Paul wrote “**that Christ died for our sins**” ([1 Corinthians 15:3](#)). Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins so that you would not have to spend eternity in hell. In [2 Peter 3:9](#) Peter wrote that God doesn’t “**want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**” But every person must make his or her own choice. [Romans 10:13](#) says “**Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**” Have you accepted this gift of eternal life in heaven? If you have accepted God’s gift, then you have received the Greatest Gift ever given on Christmas Day. If Jesus isn’t your Savior, why not be part of the greatest miracle ever to happen—accept God’s gift of eternal life.

B. Is He your Messiah and Lord? If you claim to have accepted this gift from God, is Jesus really your Messiah? Is He the king of your life? Is He your Lord? Who has control of your life? Is Jesus Christ first in your life? Rephrasing the words found in [Luke 10:27](#), “**Do you “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind?”**” In other words, have you given Him your time, your talents, your treasures, your thoughts? To put it a different way: by your actions—not just your words—can everyone see that you belong to Christ? **Turn to James 3:13-18.** In [Matthew 7:20](#) Jesus said, “**By their fruit you will recognize them.**” What does the fruit of your life say about you? Paraphrasing Jesus in [Matthew 16:15](#), “**Who do you say Jesus is?**”

Communion Devotion – December 2022

1 Corinthians 11:23-31

The miracle Baby, Jesus the Christ, Immanuel, came into the world to give every person the opportunity to reestablish a relationship; to make a new covenant with God. As we read earlier from [1 Timothy 1:15](#), “**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.**” But every person must choose to believe or not to believe. As Paul told the Philippian jailor in [Acts 16:31](#), “**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.**” If you believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and if you have made Him your Lord—then whether or not you are a member of TBC, we invite you to join us in this celebration of God’s love and your birth into God’s family—God’s awesome, miraculous gift to you. If you choose not to follow Him, if you choose not to accept His free gift, then this Table isn’t for you. You can’t celebrate something that hasn’t happened. You can’t give thanks for a gift you never received.

If you belong to the family of God, if you are a Christian, then this Table is a time to celebrate; it is also a time to take inventory of your heart. Is Jesus really your Lord? As Jesus said in [Luke 14:26](#), does your love for Him dwarf your love for those close to you? Has sin slowly crept into your heart? Is there a part of your life that you have held back from Him? Do you have perhaps a “pet” sin? (You may rationalize that it’s not that bad, but in [1 Corinthians 5:7](#) Paul wrote, “**Get rid of the old yeast, i.e., sin, that you may be a new batch without yeast (sin)—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.**”) To hang onto sin is a slap to Jesus’ face, that’s why Paul says to examine your heart.

As the elements are being passed and the music plays softly, as well as thanking God for all His promises, including the promise of eternal life in heaven, look truthfully at your heart, at your mind. Get rid of any thoughts or actions—any sin—that shouldn’t be there. Open your heart to Jesus who stands at the door knocking, waiting for you to let Him in.