

## Sermon – The Process of the Coming of Christ, He Still Arrives Like This

### Matthew 1:18-24

Preached at Cloverdale and Maxwell 12/3/23

**<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. <sup>20</sup> But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”**

**<sup>22</sup> So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: <sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”**

**<sup>24</sup> Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, <sup>25</sup> and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.**

#### How Christ Came – The Process

The Bible outlines the manner or let’s call it the process by which Jesus is born and arrives on the earth. May I be so bold as to hypothesize that there is a set process and sequence of events leading to his arrival.

He arrives through a marital process or relationship. The first phase of the process is revealed through a relationship.

Mary is espoused or in our terms today, she is engaged to Joseph. Therefore, the Jewish engagement or betrothal process is a key first part of the process for the arrival of Christ.

- The groom goes to the bride’s father to negotiate the price he must pay for the bride.
- After the bride price is agreed to and paid, all parties review the marriage contract.
- There is a mikvah or washing for both the groom and the bride.
- If all parties agree to the contract terms, then they approve the agreement with a cup of wine. The groom symbolically gives his life for the bride and the bride in turn accepts his life and gives him her life.
- There is a separation or gap between the engagement and the actual wedding ceremony.
- The groom departs but says to the bride he will return for her. In the meantime, he leaves a token of his promise and a best man is involved in assisting the bride to be prepared for the future groom’s arrival.

Mary is legally engaged and has completed the first phase of the process and is in the gap, waiting for Joseph the groom to arrive.

While Mary is waiting, the Holy Ghost shows up and performs His work in her life. He starts working on the inside.

Eventually, what the Holy Ghost starts on the inside starts to be seen or there is visible evidence that a change is taking place. What the Holy Ghost is doing is starting to show.

The Joseph factor. He sees evidence of a change. He doesn't understand why or how but in the natural, it doesn't make sense.

- He was just or a law-abiding righteous man. He followed the law.
- He had legal grounds for a divorce.
- Had justification for not following through with his part of the contract, since it appears Mary failed to keep her contractual obligations.
- Loved her enough to do it quietly to help avoid controversy perhaps, but not enough to come back for her to complete the marriage process.

Joseph doesn't make an immediate decision, he thinks about it first. However, he is leaning heavily on getting the divorce.

While he is thinking about the divorce, God sends him a word for his current situation. God has a word for your right now situation as well. What does God tell him:

- Calls him by name, reminds him of his lineage, in other words, who he belongs to.
- Tells him to not be afraid. Joseph must have been afraid in this situation and decision he had to make.
- God is in the middle of what is happening for a reason and purpose.
- God shares the plan and the process....Jesus is coming out of this process.
  - Salvation is coming out of this.
  - The King is coming out of this.
  - The answer is coming out of this process.
- God explains to him that this is the fulfillment of prophesy. It must have been important for Joseph to know that what was happening was connected to the prophesy.
  - He has a role and opportunity to participate in a major Kingdom event. His problem is for something much greater.
- God is using his problem for something greater.

Question. Why does God do it like this? What does this reveal to us?

- It is consistent with His plan for us (See Leviticus 23).
- It shows His great mercy and love for us.
  - We have sin that gives God the right to divorce us.

- When we repent and follow the process, He forgives us and the same Holy Ghost at work in Mary overcomes us and prepares us for the coming of Christ.
- Gives us hope that the plan is in effect due to partial fulfillment. He gives us a sign. Jesus' coming down to us is the sign of hope that God's plan of redemption and salvation is still in effect.
- Joseph had original plans that he thought was over. It wasn't over, God was just making a Kingdom adjustment that made him famous.

**<sup>24</sup> Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, <sup>25</sup> and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.**

Then....after the dream, after the word, Joseph rises up. The word is designed to get you up and moving again. Look at the steps. He's dealing with a serious decision. He doesn't go into hastily but waits and in the process God delivers him a word of hope. It is through this hope and understanding that the Holy Ghost is working that he is able to rise up with a new mind. A resurrected mind.

These steps and the power of the word from God allows Joseph to obey God's plan for his life. He has the power now to do what he couldn't do before....take Mary as his wife.

He has the power to wait on the Lord and doesn't connect with Mary until after the miracle child is born.

Obedience to the word is still a major factor in the plan of the Kingdom.

## Sermon – The Process of the Coming of Christ, Part 2

Preached at Cloverdale and Kilby 12/10/2023

### Matthew 1:18-24

**<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. <sup>20</sup> But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”**

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Background: Last week we looked at how God outlined the process by which Christ would be born. We analyzed the steps in this process through the Jewish wedding ceremony that has three phases. We looked at how God dealt with Joseph in helping him to understand the process and change his mind.

Joseph becomes famous from following God’s plan rather than his own plan. God’s plan is always better than what we come up with.

Let’s continue our analysis of this story and the process.

He calls his name Jesus. Why Jesus?

- Because God instructs him to give him that name.
- Because the name translated means Jehovah is salvation.
- If the prophecy says God is with us, then Jesus is God with us. When we have Jesus we have God with us and His salvation.
- Salvation is in Christ. There is a process by which salvation comes.

Why should we care about what happened over 2,000 years ago? Christ has already come and gone, is this story still applicable today? Yes, this is more than a story.

The process still works the same way. In our life we will be faced with major decisions that will keep you up at night. There will be troubling situations. But the same process that brings Jesus and salvation into the world, is the same process God uses today to bring salvation into your situation. The word He



delivered to Joseph back then, still works today. When things don't happen according to your plan, check with God.

Let's look deeper again at what is happening to our two main characters.

Mary – enters a relationship with Joseph and gets engaged. It is a contract. The first phase of the process requires a relationship with the groom.

- The Holy Spirit (Luke 1:27-38) comes upon her; God's power is at work through
- Jesus is conceived and starts to live in her.
- The Holy Spirit is at work while she waits for the outcome.
  - Protects her along the way as she waits.

Joseph – enters a relationship with Mary and gets engaged. It is a contract. He is in relationship and as he waits a situation arises that he doesn't understand and he has to make a major decision. He goes through a process or the steps.

- Recognizes he needs some answers to a problem.
- Doesn't act hastily, he lies down.
- While he waits, he receives a word from God.
  - Remember who you are in this situation.
  - Don't be afraid.
  - Will let him know if God is involved and controlling the situation.
  - Jesus is coming out and being revealed in the situation you are dealing with.
    - Somebody is about to see Jesus at the end of this.
  - What you are going through is the fulfillment of God's plan. This is not just about you, involves the salvation of others.
  - Allows Joseph to participate in the fulfillment of Kingdom work.
- He gets up with a new mind and a new plan. Has repented or changed direction from what he was going to do. He has the power to obey the word of God.....while he waits.
- Extends mercy and grace to Mary.

Application today: If you are a believer and in relationship with Christ, then you have followed the same process whether you know it or not. What God tells Joseph, He speaks to us in the same manner and purpose.

- Recognized you need Jesus and that he is pursuing after you. That Jesus has paid the price for you.
- You turn from your past life and previous way of thinking.
- You wake up with a new mind, new hope, and a new direction.
- The Holy Spirit will come upon you with power. Power to do what?
  - To discern and understand the word in such a that it facilitates Jesus' arrival.
  - To make Kingdom decisions that will make you great in the Kingdom and fulfill the plan of God.
  - To extend mercy and serve others.
  - To show people how the power of God is working in your life.

- Power to obey the truth.
- Jesus is coming out of what you are going through. Salvation is coming out of this for somebody.

This is not just a story about Mary and Joseph....this is a love story about God and us. Same process.

Why does God do it this way?

- He shows us how Christ comes into our lives. It's a relationship.
- If I follow the steps, Jesus will show up for me too.
- He will send the Holy Ghost while we wait. We don't wait in our power, we wait with His power.
- He works the same way in us. In the middle of the relationship. What he wants to do on the inside, He wants to be revealed to others.
- How we wait on him as part of the process. God uses this our tribulation; and through our tribulation, he demonstrates how salvation comes.

Example – my initial military training experience. I didn't understand the process or the desired end result and almost missed it.

I don't want to miss when he comes again. It's the same process to show us how to get ready.

- First, become engaged and enter into covenant relationship with Christ.
- The Holy Ghost will come upon you and help you to wait on him. While you wait, the Holy Ghost is working it out.
- He's coming back in the same manner and order of the feasts. Just follow the steps.

What's next for us to do today? Walk in the process and put yourself in the story.

- Everyday follow the Daily Steps. When we know the end of the story and how this turns out, we can praise him in advance. We can praise him while we wait.
- Don't make major decisions without him. Wait for the word and look for the signs He gave Joseph.
- What he does for Joseph, he does for you. Your role is important. You play a part in the Kingdom process.

You experience your own miracle birth when you believe in his miracle birth and obey. Be aware, the hardest step in the process is step 2. Some of us have sleeping problems and you must lie down before you can get up fresh with a new mind.

We will go through the same process; same Holy Ghost; same inner workings; same plan; same process.

Key Points:

- There is a process that God has ordained to fulfill His plan in the earth.
- Jesus is the fulfillment of the plan and through him comes salvation.
- The process God uses reveals the relationship He has and desires with us. The same process and relationship Mary and Joseph have is the same process he desires for us.
- How God deals with Joseph is the same word and process He deals with us when we face major decisions.



- Just because it is legal, doesn't always mean that God is in it.
- The same process God uses to bring Christ into the world from heaven, is the same process by which He will return.
- Once you start your relationship with God, expect the Holy Ghost to start a work on the inside that starts to show on the outside. Others will start to see a kingdom difference in your life as you wait on Him.
- Like Joseph, you will be able to do things through the understanding of the word that you were never able to do before.
- God wants you to see the role you play in the fulfillment of His plan. You are important to the work and purpose of the Kingdom....don't you know that?

Don't trust what you see, but what you believe.

It has always been. A love thing.