

# **Matthew 1:18-25 – The First Advent For Joseph’s Eyes**

TSK, JFB, Henry, Gill, Vincent, Pulpit, GreekLexicon, Barnes, Trapp, Poole, Gaebelin, Calvin, Clarke, Geneva, Robertson,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: There is nothing wrong in celebrating the Advent. Heaven and earth celebrated it! But the Advent (基督降临节) is not about children...or trees...or lights...or gifts...or fruit cakes...or family...or music...or emotions. That’s what Satan wants you to focus on this time every year. Satan takes good things like lights, gifts, and family and friends and makes you focus on them. But the Advent – **the Lord Jesus taking on human flesh in order to die for the sins of the world – is and must always be the real focus of the Advent.** You will hear today about the real meaning of the Advent today.

Our headings are:

**The Dilemma (困境)**

**The Dream**

**The Duty**

Our goals are: **That you will see that Jesus, who was truly God, took on a fully human body in order to be the proper sacrifice (献祭) for your sins, and that you will then love and serve him better.**

## **The Dilemma**

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother **Mary was betrothed (被许配给) to Joseph, before they came together,** she was found with **child of the Holy Spirit.**

### **1. Joseph had a dilemma!**

**What was Joseph’s dilemma?**

**It looked like Mary sinned.** Joseph was a godly man who wanted a godly wife, but Mary, to whom he was betrothed, pledged to be married, but not living together yet, had become pregnant. He did not know the child in her was the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit. It was a most difficult situation for a godly man who was supposed to be betrothed to godly woman.

**Then he had to deal with the family consequences.** It would have brought great shame to the family, his and hers.

**Then he had to deal with the social consequences.** They would have been looked upon as wicked people and ostracized (被放逐, 被排斥) from society. Chastity (贞洁) was held in high esteem in Jewish culture.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

### **2. Joseph, being a kind and a just man (literally: righteous 正义的), and not wanting to shame his wife and make her a public example, wanted to quietly separate from her.**

“To make a public example” referred to public **shaming by public the imposition (实施) of discipline**– even death under the Old Testament law (Deuteronomy 22:23-24). He might have asked Mary to go away to some place far away, maybe to a relative.

### **3. Joseph was well within his rights to separate from Mary under normal circumstances.**

If a woman were not a virgin (committed adultery before marriage), she could be divorced without any incurring any guilt on the man’s part.

### **4. Lessons:**

**a. A godly man should want a godly wife.** He should never settle for less. Settling for less is a recipe for disaster. A godly man taking an ungodly wife is like baking a cake with salt instead of sugar because salt looks white like sugar.

**b. It is the duty of the Christian to cover the sins of the repentant (悔改者).** Love covers a multitude of sins. You cover the sins of the repentant unless it is a public sin that must be exposed

for the benefit of others around.

**c. But this passage was not primarily intended to teach that you must “be like Joseph” when you undergo moral scrutiny** 监督. It was not intended to teach that you must “be like Mary” so that you can be used by God. **This account was primarily to teach that the Divine Jesus took on frail humanity (人性) in order to be fit to obey and suffer in your nature so you could be reconciled to God.**

## **The Dream**

20 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.**

**1. Joseph then thought about the dilemma he was in; he did not react impulsively (冲动地) .**

**2. As he was thinking, Gabriel, the angel, appeared to him in a dream and encouraged him to keep Mary as his wife.**  
(This was “an angel of the Lord” not “the angel of the Lord” as the old KJV says. The Lord has many angels.)  
**The word “behold”** meant that Gabriel was going to say something important. So Joseph had to listen intently.

**3. How did Gabriel encourage Joseph to take Mary as his wife?**

**a. Gabriel called Joseph a son of David. So the Son Joseph would raise would be a Son of David also.** This would confirm the OT prophecy.

Jeremiah 23:5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to **David a Branch of righteousness**; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 6 In His days **Judah will be saved**, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

**b. Not only would Joseph’s Son be a Son of David, he would be a King also.** (Luke’s account)  
Luke 1:32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the **throne of His father David.**

**c. Gabriel told Joseph that Mary had not sinned but God’s Holy Spirit supernaturally worked in Mary, using her body, to create a body for the Savior.** Luke used the term “overshadow.” (“Overshadow” was a marriage picture of a man spreading his skirt over his bride - a picture of her being under his care.) This fact would have cleared Mary of any wrong doing.  
Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of **the Highest will overshadow you**; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

**d. Gabriel then expounded 阐释 the nature of the work of the child in Mary’s womb: He would be called Jesus and he would save HIS people from their sins.** “He” is emphatic 强调的. Literally, “he” is the one that shall save – not any other. And **Jesus’ name shall reflect his work!** Jesus is the same as the Hebrew word “Joshua,” meaning “Jehovah saves,” or “Jehovah is (the source of) salvation. Jesus’ name contains the promise of salvation.

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

**e. Gabriel established his testimony** 见证 by appealing a 2<sup>nd</sup> time to prophecy 预言. Joseph, a godly man, would have known this prediction from Isaiah. So the thought of a virgin conceiving a child would not have surprised him.

Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: **Behold, the virgin shall conceive** and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

**Mary was an unmarried virgin.** Some modern translations like to use the term "young woman" instead of "virgin" to refer to Mary, but this is wrong. "Young woman" is not the same as virgin, obviously. A young woman having a child is not strange!

**f. Gabriel confirmed that Mary's child would be "God with us." The baby Jesus was great in his heavenly origin (his position).** "Immanuel" was not really a name, but a reflection of Christ's Deity 神性. He is called the Son of the Highest. His body may have come from Mary's physical body, but it was without sin. Christ's very nature was that of the Son of God.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor 策士, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

### **3. Lessons:**

**a. You have the Word of God to direct you today.** Don't sit and wait for signs in the sky, dreams, or visits from angels. While those ways of communicating were sufficient for the times, you have something better today: The full Word of God. Learn it!

**b. Jesus is the Son of God (a title of Deity) and Jesus is the son of David (fully human).** He was fit to die for your sins!

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator 中保 between God and men, **the Man Christ Jesus**, 6 who gave Himself a ransom 赎价 for all, to be testified in due time.

As God, **he had all power in heaven and on earth.**

As man, **Joseph, his father, was from David's family** (Lk 1:27) and Mary, his mother, was from David's family (Lk 2:5).

He came to save. **He saved his people from the coming wrath by his life and his death!**

Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions 过犯, He was bruised for our iniquities 罪孽; The chastisement 刑罚 for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes 鞭伤 we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

**c. Everyone, no matter how good he thinks he is, still needs a Savior. Mary was not saved because she was morally upright. She was morally upright because she was saved.** She was a sinner who needed a Savior and she acknowledged that.

## **The Duty**

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

**1. Being roused from his sleep, having seen the vision (异象), and having heard the words of Gabriel, Joseph took Mary as his wife.**

**God's purpose was before him.** That child was destined for the good of the nations.

Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will **set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed**; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

**So Joseph played his part** in God's plan of redemption (救赎) .

**2. Can you imagine the difficulty Joseph had to face with those around him with a pregnant wife and**

### **not being fully married?**

Can you imagine the dirty looks Joseph and Mary got from their neighbors? Can you imagine the mockery (讥讽) he received if he tried to tell people that the baby in his wife's womb was conceived by the Holy Spirit? Yet he kept Mary as his wife.

25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

### **3. He then refrained (克制) from any intimate relations with Mary, confirming the holiness and purity of Jesus.**

#### **4. Lessons:**

**1. When God speaks through his Word, or through his servants in the pulpit (讲台), or through elders, or through your father in your home, listen.**

**2. Work now for the expansion of the kingdom. Play your part in God's plan of redemption.**  
Psalm 132:15 I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. 16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation, And her saints ( 圣徒 ) shall shout aloud for joy.

**3. Working for Christ is not always easy.** The Gospel might seem like foolishness to the world. Your life might seem like foolishness to the world. But you must persist in doing well! Duty to God pushed him forward against the derogatory (贬低的) looks and laughs.

### **Conclusion:**

Jesus was truly God who took on a fully human body in order to be the proper sacrifice for your sins. God prophesied this in Genesis, many prophets said so, the angels said so, and King David said so. Christ's humanity was further pictured in the signs and ceremonies in the Old Testament.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. You must view the Advent properly.** The Advent is not about children, presents, fruitcake, Santa Claus, or Christmas trees. When you think of the Advent, think of it as the first step to the cross. The Advent pictured God's love for the lost and the hope that he offered. Yes, learn principles from Mary and Joseph, but think of the purification from your sins! Think of Christ's "dying" love. Think how Jesus set aside the glory of his Divinity to be born to die for you.

### **2. When you view the Advent properly you will love and serve the Lord better.**

**a. You will play your part in God's plan of redeeming those lost in sin and misery through the sharing of the Gospel. You will remember that your work is much more than putting money in the Salvation Army bucket to feed the poor.**

**b. You will play your part in God's plan of sanctifying成圣 those whom he has called to himself.** You will be the best wife you can be, the best husband, the best parents, the best children, the best elders, the best employers, the best friend, the best evangelists ( 传道人 ), and the best encourager. Let the work of Christ be seen in your life. This was the

purpose for The Advent.

Finally, to non-believers: Remember these words: Philippians 2:9-10 “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth...” Will you bow now to the King and let him adopt (收养) you as his child, or will he have to stomp you under his feet? Think carefully and make the right choice.