

WHEN GOD CAME TO EARTH

Text: Matthew 1:18-25

1. GOD WAS IN THE EARTH BEFORE HIS BIRTH.

Matthew 1:18

Mary was "...with child...." I concur with the words of Dr. Suss in his classic children's book, "A person's a person, no matter how small."

This past December 1 in a monumental case brought before the Supreme Court, Justice Sonia Sotomayor said, "The issue of when life begins has been hotly debated by philosophers since the beginning of time. It's still debated in religions. So when you say this is the only right that takes away from the state the ability to protect a life, that's a religious view, isn't it?"

I Chronicles 16:33b says: "...He (God) cometh to judge the earth." Genesis 18:25b: "...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" We do pray for the unborn in our country, for the Supreme Judge of the Earth is the One who declares the embryo a child.

Jeremiah 1:5 and Galatians 1:15 states that the prophet Jeremiah and the Apostle Paul were called for service while they were yet unborn! God most certainly was addressing them as viable life! John the Baptist, while being carried by his mother Elizabeth, showed an emotional response when Mary, who was carrying the Lord Jesus, walked into the presence of Elizabeth. Luke 1:44: "For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy."

Mrs. Sotomayor may speak long and hard about it being a matter of debate, but the Holy God and Judge of the Earth has already made the ruling. And He shall not be overruled!

2. GOD WAS ENTRUSTED TO THE NOBLE FAMILY.

Matthew 1:19, 20

Mary and Joseph both stem from the lineage of David. II Samuel 7:16 says, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." The skeptics in the district in which Christ was reared said in Luke 4:22c: "...Is not this Joseph's son?" Matthew traces Christ's line of descent through David's son Solomon, and Luke traces a line of descent through David's son Nathan. Why is this important? Let's look up together Matthew 1:6-11 showing us Joseph's lineage. Now look at Jeremiah 22:28-30; we discover that Joseph's line would never have a physical descendent that would ascend to the throne of David. Ah! But on the other hand, we observe that through Mary the physical legal right to David's throne was passed to the house of Nathan - an ancestry that Luke ascribes to Jesus. To use the language of Isaiah, the throne "branched" (Isaiah 11:1). God's unconditional promise to David - that his offspring will reign forever - was still good; it was just transferred to the lineage of a different son of his. Thus we see Jesus is Son of David, Son of God.

3. GOD ALONE CAN SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS.

Matthew 1:21-23

Let's look at Matthew 1:21: "And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." Make a comparison here with Zechariah 9:16a: "And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people...." Throughout the Old Testament God alone is revealed as the Savior of His people. Isaiah 43:3a: "For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour...." Mary gave witness to this herself in Luke 1:46 and 47: "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

All of the other religions of the world will attempt to show you the way. Christianity makes the only claim that our Savior is the Way (John 14:6). Our faith is exclusive. We boldly say there is no other way. This is not one of many paths to God. This is the only path to God.

Matthew 1:23: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew claims this Jesus is God come to earth.

Peter identified Jesus as God. II Peter 1:1: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

John recognized Jesus as God. John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Paul clearly states that Christ is God. Titus 2:13: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." I Timothy 3:16: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

The writer of Hebrews dogmatically affirms the Deity of Christ. Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

Then there is another aspect that pinpoints the technicality that God went through to identify Christ as God. The angel of the Lord gives Joseph a command, "...thou shalt call His name JESUS..." (Matthew 1:21b). It is amazing to know that in reality, Christ was older than Mary and Joseph! He is "...The Ancient of Days..." (Daniel 7:9).

Psalms 93:2: "Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting." John 8:56-58: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM."

Luke 20:41, 42: "And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand."

It was the custom of that day that the father would be the one who declares the name of the child. We see this in the naming of John the Baptist. Luke 1:62-64: "And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God." Therefore, Joseph not being Christ's father did not have the authority to name Jesus. Only God, the Father had the authority to name Jesus!

4. GOD'S BIRTH IN THE EARTH BRINGS AUTHORITY TO US IN A NEW BIRTH.

Matthew 1:24, 25

Throughout our text we see JESUS is spelled in all capital letters. In the Old Testament we observe that Jehovah God is identified by capitalizing the letters of LORD. In God's wisdom, this is something that goes a little beyond explanation, other than that the Lord wanted us to get the message as to who Jesus was and what jurisdiction He would have over His followers. We see a sweetness in the character of Joseph as I would like to point out by underling certain words in our text: Matthew 1:24, 25: "Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS." Joseph obeyed and gave the authority to God by naming the Child the name God had chosen.

There is a message here for us as well. Isaiah 43:1: "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." Genesis 32:28: "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Christ called Simon by a new name in Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." In Revelation 2:17 and 3:12 Christ tells us that He has given us a new name. So each and every one of us who have been birthed in the Kingdom of God have abdicated the authority of our lives over to Christ who has the authority to name us.

I Peter 1:23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Christ's birth guaranteed us a new birth. Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

-Pastor Pope-