

The Unexpected Child (Matthew 1:18-25)

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Date: 08 December 2024

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[0 : 0 0] came to earth, born, fully God, fully man, born of a virgin. That is the significance largely about Christmas and who that baby is, is significant. So you have in your sermon outline, I encourage you to follow along. We're going to look at Jesus came from heaven, he came as a servant, all the way to death, to rescue people from sin. But now let's talk about this theology thing before we get to Matthew chapter 1 that I spoke of earlier. There are attributes that God shares with humanity. So we are made in His image and there are some attributes of who God is that He shares with humanity. For example, humans can love, humans have a sense of justice, it's interesting, it's interesting as you go around the world that every nation that I'm aware of has first degree murder as something that is punishable as a crime because everyone kind of understands that's bad. Well where did that sense of justice and that goodness and the badness of first degree murder come from? We all, we didn't just transport that idea throughout all humanity as Americans.

No, every nation has this understanding and have laws on the books that this is wrong. Humanity has some form of grace while it's marred, some form of goodness that's marred, but some appreciation for truthfulness even though it's marred, it's there. We also have rational thought. It's marred but it's there and all humanity shares these attributes that we have that God has given to us. But there are also attributes that we don't share, that humanity does not share that God possesses. God has them but humanity does not have them. For example, God knows all things, no one knows all things. God is all powerful, omnipotent. We are not all powerful. God is sovereign over all things. We are not sovereign over all things. So there are some attributes of who God is that are not shared with humanity and there are attributes that are shared with humanity.

Those attributes that are not shared with humanity, I want to just talk about here for a moment, that is in his independence and he is self-sufficient. He is independent and he is self-sufficient. God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything. He does not need humanity for companionship.

He does not need the stars in the sky to give him light. God does not need us oxygen to breathe in order to exist. God does not need food or water to sustain his life. God does not need rest or sleep to recover from work. God does not need to be worshiped in order to be satisfied.

Paul proclaims this information, this aspect of who God is to the people of Athens. Paul finds himself in Acts chapter 17 verses 24 and 25 and he is proclaiming Christ to them and he's using this argument and he says to them that in Athens he says this, the God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything since he himself gives to all mankind life, breath and everything. The implication is clear. God needs nothing from humanity and humanity needs needs the Lord in order to sustain life. When God has heard enough from Job and his three friends, Bildad, Zophara and Eliphaz, they're in the book of Job in the Old Testament. At some point God tires of all of that they have said and then speaks and when God speaks to Job after he has become exhausted of hearing from him, Job he says this in Job chapter 41 verse 11, the Lord responds to Job kindly, it's a rhetorical question but the Lord is making a statement, he says to Job, who has first given to me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole earth is mine. The implication is clear that no one has ever contributed to God anything that didn't already originate from God himself as creator. I have this box with me and I'm going to need your imaginations to work with me in order for this illustration to work. Imagine before time, before creation God exists.

[5 : 0 6] God exists, he's one God in three persons, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. At some point in time he chooses to create and he creates all things and so now I need your imaginations to work with me because we're going to put, this is a big box, it can fit all things of creation in the box in your imagination with me. So he creates the universe, the stars, dark matter, whatever that is, quasars,

things in the night sky that both seen and unseen go in the box.

Because that also sets forth time, let's put time in the box, it's a created thing. Light, put light in the box. Then we turn to planet earth, all the things that fly in the air, the birds of the air, all the things that are on earth, all the sea creatures, everything put in the box. And then the apex of God's creation, humanity, he creates and put that in the box as well. And so if you will, this is what I mean by God is independent and self-sufficient. So all creation now is tightly in this box, it's a big box, it can hold it. And just in case you're curious how big some of this creation stuff is that's in the box, let me just recite a few fast facts. Apparently, according to what we have been able to discern, up to this point of all that we can see, there is one septillion stars in the sky, in the universe, one that is followed by 24 zeros. And in case you're thinking how do you get to septillion, you have million, billion, trillion, quadrillion, quintillion, sextillion, septillion. So it's out there, 24 zeros.

That's how many stars, and God knows each of them by name, those stars are in the box. And God, and look at the argument that Job makes there in Job 41 verse 11.

Who has first given to me that I should repay him? There's the rhetorical question. No one.

Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine. Basically, Job, everything in the box is mine. So what can you give from the box to the Lord that I haven't already created? Nothing, Job. And that's what he's communicating.

And this is what God, this is what makes God, this is the word, oh now the word just escaped me. Transcended. This is what God, that makes God transcend. That's not exactly the word, but the word too. He transcends creation. He is outside of creation. He's not a part of creation. And this is what makes God different than many gods of all the religions. So you look at God, the raw, the Egyptian God of the sun. Well, the sun God is in the box. God is not in the box. It's not a part of creation. This is what sets God apart from all other things. People throughout history have claimed and entertained the idea that God has created human beings because he was lonely and needed fellowship with other persons. But look at the record of Jesus' prayer. That thought does not comport with what

[8 : 39] Scripture says. Look what Jesus' prayer, before he goes to the cross, in his own words, he indicates something radically different than this. In John chapter 17, verse 5, listen to Jesus' prayer. And now, Father, this is, he's likely in the Garden of Gethsemane. Some would put this prayer in the upper room.

Regardless, this is the night that he was betrayed. He's praying and he says, and now, Father, glorify me in the presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. Before the box, and all that's in it, before the world existed, Jesus is praying and he says, Father, glorify me with the glory in your presence. I want, Lord, I look forward to going to cross and being resurrected from the grave because glorify me now in the presence with your glory, with that what I had before the world existed. Before everything in the box, Jesus is saying to the Father, I enjoyed the glory that was with you here before creation. And so, I look forward, Father, to that, to being with you and enjoying that glory that we had before the world was created. Isn't that beautiful? Then, the implication is there is a sharing of glory between the Father and the Son.

Before creation, he needs no one. This thought that God created because he was lonely does not comport with Scripture. Continuing in that same chapter, John chapter 17, in the same prayer, Jesus is praying to the Father and he says something else. He says, Father, I desire that they also, to whom you have given me, be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. The Son was loved by the Father before the foundation of the world and he wants those that were going to be his to also see that glory that he had with the Father before creation. The implication is that there's love, communication between the Father and the Son well before the creation, well before everything in the box existed. So we see before creation unity and community and adoration and love and honor and glory that existed with God before creation. He needed no one. And so if we understand these events,

God exists. He always was, he always will be, he is eternal. God is the ultimate reality and then at some point in time God creates all things. Part of the apex of His creation in the box is humanity who is made in His image. The difficulty is that mankind then sins and Adam and Eve, after Adam and Eve and since Adam and Eve all of humanity is now in a state of sin and needs to be in God out of his rich mercy, wants to reconcile humanity to himself but it's going to require a sacrifice.

Knowing that he purposes in his heart before creation, he is a lamb slain before the foundation of the world, before the foundation of the world, creation, he purposes in his heart to die for humanity

that he will create that he knows that one day will fall and he knows that he is going to provide that perfect sacrifice that is going to be acceptable to the Father for the sins of the world. And that is what is so amazing about Christmas is because the one who would be born into a virgin and laid in a manger, that little baby

Jesus would be the one at that specific time where God would so choose to condescend to earth, take on human flesh in order to provide that perfect sacrifice. And you say, well Scott, how does this pertain to Christmas? And Matthew chapter 1 that you said we would get to and I was wondering when you would finally ask that question. Thank you. So now if we turn to Matthew chapter 1 we are going to get to the text for today and there is a good summary verse in the midst of these verses that will be spotlighted for us today more than the others. But let us read Matthew 1 verse 18 verse through 25. Now the birth of Jesus took place in this way when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph.

[13:59] Before they had come together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit and her husband Joseph being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in the dream saying Joseph son of David do not fear to take Mary as your wife for that which is conceived in her from the Holy Spirit. She will bear you a son or she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sin. All this took place to fulfill the Lord what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which means God with us. When Joseph woke from his sleep he did not he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and he took his wife but knew her not until she had given birth to a son and he called his name Jesus. I want you to look with me to verse 21 because verse 21 if I were to write a

Christmas letter this year and send it to friends and family I believe this year would be this verse because it encapsulates what's so amazing about Christmas. She will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. I would like for you to repeat this verse with me here at this time. Matthew 1, 21 would you please say this with me she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sin. His mission is provided. Why did Jesus come to save people from their sins? He will save his people from their sins. The glory of Christmas is not that it marks merely the birth of some great religious leader but that Christmas celebrates a long anticipated coming of God himself. Christ's arrival God had hardwired our souls to wait long for. He did not come in the clouds or the wind or fire and earthquake. He did not come in the form of a bird of the air or beast of the field or a great sea creature. He comes in the fullness of creation as human. He came taking the form of man dignifying human humanity as the apex of his creation. God long endured sinful humanity with great patience and now scandalously is the one found in human form. Micah 5, 2 we read this from the

Old Testament. Prophecy of the one who would come who is Christ. But you O Bethlehem Ephrathah who are too little to be among the great clans of Judah from you shall come forth for me one who is to be a ruler of Israel whose coming forth is of old the ancient of days from ancient days. So what is so unexpected about Christmas? This is so stunning. It is at the first Noel the first Christmas God himself inaugurated Christmas if you will. He condescended to earth. The moment finally had come for the one who would save his people from their sins.

That is what is so amazing about Christmas. So in our sermon outline Jesus came from heaven. Secondly he came as a servant. It's wonder enough that Jesus came at all. The second member of the Godhead would condescend to earth to take on human form. That's wonder enough but that he would come as a servant.

Is all together befuddling. If we we call who Jesus is as second member of the Godhead fully God to come as a servant is contrary to our flesh. If I were to think about how someone would come who is of royalty I would not consider someone coming as a servant. Someone I would anticipate in my flesh that Jesus would have come and he would usurp Caesar's authority. He would come and seize Herod the Great's authority. Someone who would have authority and reputation and power and might. In fact what we saw sadly this weekend with Syria a rebel force overtaking a regime there the Assad regime in Syria that just happened this weekend. This is how I would anticipate we would see someone of great power coming into this earth not as a servant. I would expect someone to come and enjoy leisure and comfort and prestige. Someone who had who enjoyed the privileges of being served that's how I would have anticipated this. But we read in Philippians before we get

there he came quietly to a remote dusty town full of shepherds. He came as a commoner and he came to a commoner rather someone a young virgin woman. He came as a vulnerable baby being born fully human and he came as a servant. When we read Philippians 2 5 through 8 we read this Paul is encouraging the church at Philippi and he's encouraging them and he says have this mind among yourselves which is also in Christ Jesus. Who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped or a thing to be held on to. But he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even the death on the cross. But do you see how he came taking on the form of a servant. Jesus came from heaven he came as a servant he did not come as a dignitary. He had at his command the ability to to summon legions and legions of angels at his command but we read in Luke 9 58 that foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head. He came as a servant. The disciples learned firsthand that even the Son of man came to be not to be served but to serve. So I wonder for us in terms of an application that we ought to be a people who are servant-hearted who serve following out the way of our of our master Jesus Christ. So Jesus came from heaven he came as a servant but how far did he take this servant hood how far did he take it all the way to death. Most of us have a stopping point as to when our service to one another will expire. You witness this in your home maybe you'll help dust or vacuum clean the garage clean the toilets and shower but not the dishes today.

[21 : 37] I've served enough. As an aside I did not know how selfish I was or shallow my willingness to serve until I had got married. Then my pride and my shallow willingness to serve was put on full display and for me to be confronted much.

It's not funny Frank. But this is not the pattern of Jesus. Jesus is our standard for what it means to be great in his kingdom. If we want to be a great we must be a slave to all. Jesus was a good shepherd. He is the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. Previously I referenced a verse in Mark 10 45 I want to read it again but now I want to read it in its totality. Look how Jesus served. For even the Son of man came not to be served but to serve and how far did he take that service and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Christ's denial of self his self-service extended and deepened far beyond mere inconveniences of life into costly self-sacrifice even the final sacrifice and death. He gave his life as a ransom for many. The condition of man since the fall was one of bondage to sin and corruption and death. Humanity having disobeyed God we were slaves to sin and death and children deserving of wrath. But Christ gave his life as a ransom. His life sacrificed for the sake of others and the price paid that was paid was for the release of others. His death was a substitutionary death to make payment for sin his life for others and now that the ransom has been paid we who have trusted in Christ life death and resurrection have been delivered from the dominion of sin and death into the perfect union of this with the Son of God where there is no more condemnation.

Imagine Christ on that night when he was betrayed turned over to Rome and to be killed. Imagine with me the evening began with Christ washing his disciples feet there in the upper room an act of great service. That's one thing but it's an altogether thing then to then rise from that supper lead his disciples to the garden wait and agony for his captors to come while his disciples could not remain awake. Walk alone the excruciating path that the foot washing and the Passover meal that he just had and shared forecasted. He was a servant but he was a servant even unto death he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross. So Jesus came what is the meaning of Christmas? Jesus came he came from heaven to earth he became a servant all the way to death to rescue people the last point to rescue people from sin. We are now fully answering why Jesus came to earth this is not merely that he descended from heaven it's not merely even just to die the descent from heaven to be born was for a purpose it was humility on mission par excellence the death of

[25 : 30] Jesus was no accident in history he came to die and live again to forgive sin. The extent of people's rebellion was now matched and surpassed only by his sacrifice Romans 5 8 says it this way but God shows his love for us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us did you see there in verse 8 his motivation but God shows his love for us he is motivated by love in that while we are still sinners Christ died for us this is what I love about Christ we don't need to be a people who clean ourselves up before we come to the Lord he knows our state we are sinful people and even in that sinful ugly detestable dead spiritually state Christ died for us so the magic in the spirit of

Christmas is not that just merely God himself came from heaven as a man it is not merely that he humbled himself and came as a servant it is not merely all of that that he even came to die to unfold his service to us it is that all of that is yes but it also includes that he came down and did all of that to rescue us from sin and this is the promise that the messenger came to Joseph to say so we're going to conclude with the verse that we we wanted to emphasize in the very beginning that we recited Matthew 1 21 and she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sin when I think about an appropriate response to that verse to the why Jesus came I I can think of three responses the first is to believe she will bear a son you will call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sin the first natural response is then believe for the very purpose of why he came that's the whole point if he came to forgive sin then trust Christ for the forgiveness of sin that's why he came so believe and you say well Scott what is it that you believe you believe in his person and his work let me describe what what I mean there's a lot of people throughout history that have have the name of Jesus there are still people living on this earth that have the name Jesus but that's not the right Jesus you have to have the right Jesus well what is the Jesus that came 2,000 years ago you have to believe in the right person what is the right person the person that before time enjoyed communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit one God and three persons who then created everything in the box that's the person who condescended the second person the Godhead who condescended was born of a virgin 2,000 years ago you have to believe in the right person the person who is fully God and fully man and his name is Jesus Christ the second person of the Godhead that's the right person then you believe what is it that you're to believe in his life his sinless life that he lived to make him a perfect sacrifice that when he died he would be pleasing to the Lord and being able to provide that perfect sacrifice that God would require he lived a sinless life he died a death for sin and he rose from the grave three days later and a person who trusts all for what to forgive sin for all those who would believe in him so what's the purpose of Christmas she will bear a son you will call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins this invitation to be saved from the penalty of sin is open to all Christ did this for all when I was 19 years old my brother asked me a question that provided me plenty of tension internally and it was there at 19 years old my response because my parents had shared the gospel with me I went to churches that had proclaimed the gospel to me this good news of Jesus Christ is is the day or is a year in which I believed in Christ for the forgiveness of sin for myself and if today is a day like that for you I encourage you to do so so one response to this message of Christmas is believe and why he even came to save people from their sins secondly what's a second appropriate response gratitude when was the last time that you had considered who Jesus is the second person of the Godhead from beginning of time and what he had purpose to do even before he created all things on your behalf and mine when was the last time you said Lord thank you thank you for coming thank you for saving your people from sin thank you that I have the opportunity to know you thank you that

I was once dead in sin and now I am alive unto God thank you Lord when was the last time you expressed gratitude to the Lord for his work in coming and dying and the third appropriate response that I could have is this as we are reminded what Christmas is about is to to share this good news with others you're gonna have people over to your home perhaps for Christmas or you're going to go somewhere you work somewhere in town you have roommates you go to school somewhere you live in a neighborhood with folks and it's our opportunity to testify what this meaning of Christmas is all about and so may we be a people who give testimony to what the Lord has done both in history and in our lives I can think of those as three very appropriate responses believe be grateful and testify I would like to conclude with this verse again and may you repeat this verse with me one more time as we conclude let's be reminded

Matthew 121 she will bear a son you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins would you pray with me father father in heaven may this truth of your sons coming motivated by love to serve humanity to the point of dying for sin be settled and rooted deeply in our hearts you have come not to entertain or or merely be the most incredible story ever told but you came to restore us rebels to the Lord to the Father draws closer in the days ahead to be to be ambassadors of Christ where you have placed us or may we be a people who trust you may we be a people who express our gratitude to you and be a people who testify to what you have done both in history and in our life we love you Lord and it's in your beautiful name Jesus we we pray these things amen