

**Church Year Story 5**  
**Christ's Birth Is Foretold to Joseph**

*Catechism and Memory Verse*  
*from the Congregation at Prayer for the Week*

**BIBLE STORY: CHRIST'S BIRTH IS FORETOLD TO JOSEPH**  
Matthew 1:(1-17) 18-25

**Central Thoughts**

- Jesus' flesh and blood humanity descended from Adam, Abraham, and David.
- Jesus is conceived of Mary's flesh and by the Holy Spirit, so that He is both true God and true man but without sin.
- His name is Jesus because He is the Lord God Himself in the flesh, Immanuel, who shares our humanity and saves us from our sins.
- Joseph receives the Word of God and believes it, even though it will call him to a life of suffering and sacrifice.

**Discussion Questions**

What is a genealogy?

*A family tree, naming those from whom a person descended.*

What is Jesus' human genealogy filled with?

*A family of sinful men and women.*

Why is Jesus called "Christ"?

*Christ means "Anointed One." It is a title that designates Jesus the Son of David, the true King of Israel, and the Savior to whom all the Old Testament Scriptures pointed.*

What is betrothal?

*It is the legal contract of marriage. Mary was Joseph's wife by betrothal.*

What had not yet happened between Mary and Joseph?

*They had not yet "come together"—they had not yet had sexual intercourse*

What had happened to Mary?

*She was "found with child of the Holy Spirit."*

Why was Joseph troubled when he found out that Mary was pregnant?

*He knew that he was not the father, so he assumed that Mary had committed adultery with another man.*

How is Joseph described?

*A just man, that is, one who lives by faith in God's promise of salvation.*

What did Joseph contemplate doing?

*He contemplated divorcing Mary secretly so that she could be wife to the man whose child Joseph believed she was carrying (Deuteronomy 24:1ff).*

Who appeared to Joseph in a dream?

*An angel of the Lord.*

What was the Lord's message to Joseph?

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

What should Joseph have been reminded of by his dream?

*How the Lord had revealed Himself in dreams to the patriarch and prophet Joseph in the Old Testament.*

What did the Lord teach the Old Testament Joseph about the things he suffered at the hands of his brothers?

*"[They] meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:20).*

What should Joseph have learned from his Old Testament counterpart?

*Though he was called upon to suffer as the guardian of Jesus and husband of Mary, God intended this birth for good "to save many people."*

How was the Child conceived in Mary's womb?

*By the Holy Spirit.*

Why is it important that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit?

*So that He would be born sinless, without the corruption of original sin.*

What does the Lord tell Joseph that the Son is to be named?

*He is to be named Jesus "for He will save His people from their sins." Jesus means, "the Lord is salvation" or "the Lord saves." (Notice how the genealogy highlighted the sinners of Jesus' family tree.)*

Why did the birth of Christ happen this way?

*To fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophets: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14).*

What does the name "Immanuel" tell us about Jesus?

*Jesus is not only named "the LORD is salvation" but He is that Lord and God in human flesh.*

Why did Joseph do what the Lord had told him?

*He believed the Lord's Word.*

### **Meditation on the Bible Story**

Jesus descended from Adam, Abraham, and David according to the flesh. The Son of God truly became man and made man's flesh and blood His very own. He was the sinless Son of God in human flesh who became the sin bearer for us and all of humanity. Joseph is the legal husband of Mary by betrothal, but he knows that he is not Jesus' biological father. He has never had sexual relations with Mary. Mary is a virgin. The Lord tells Joseph in a dream that the child in Mary's womb is conceived by the Holy Spirit. He is the Son of God, the Lord Himself, who has become man in Mary's womb that He might save His people from their sins. He is Immanuel, God with us, because He has joined Himself to our flesh and blood. He is conceived and born without sin, so that our sin might be imputed to Him as the innocent sin bearer and Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The Lord tells Joseph not to be afraid to take to himself his wife and to be guardian of Jesus. The Word of the Lord to Joseph is confirmed by the dreams of the Old Testament patriarch Joseph and by the Word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel." Because he believed the Lord's Word, Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. Joseph kept Mary a virgin until she had brought forth her first born Son. Joseph confessed his faith in the Lord's Word by naming Him Jesus as the Lord had commanded.

### **Prayer on the Bible Story**

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the Virgin birth of Your only begotten Son, who was conceived without sin by the Holy Spirit and named Jesus to save His people from their sins. As you strengthened Joseph by Your Word to be a faithful husband to Mary and earthly father to Jesus, so strengthen us by Your Word and Spirit to be faithful to our Savior no matter what we may suffer; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



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