

NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW 1 (PART 2)

THIS IS A VERY FAMILIAR STORY TO MANY OF US WHO HAVE READ THE BIBLE AND YET IT IS ALSO A FAMILIAR STORY TO NON-BELIEVERS AS WELL BECAUSE OF THE IMPACT AND INFLUENCE OF CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD. THE BIRTH OF JESUS IS COMMEMORATED AND CELEBRATED AROUND THE WORLD IN A VARIETY OF WAYS AND THOUGH WE CAN CERTAINLY LAMENT THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF THE HOLIDAY AND THE PROMOTION OF SANTA AND GIFTS OVER JESUS CHRIST - IT IS AMAZING TO THINK HOW IMPACTFUL THIS HISTORICAL EVENT NOT ONLY WAS - BUT STILL IS - ON THE WORLD.

BUT, AS WE WILL SEE THE ACTUAL EVENT WAS AT THE SAME TIME MORE SIGNIFICANT AND LESS SCRIPTED THAN MOST PEOPLE KNOW. MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT OF THESE EVENTS CONTAIN DIFFERENT ELEMENTS THAN LUKE'S (THE ONLY OTHER GOSPEL THAT RECORDS THE BIRTH NARRATIVE) AND WE WILL DISCOVER WHY MATTHEW REPORTS WHAT HE DOES AS WE LOOK AT THE TEXT TOGETHER.

MATTHEW 1:18-19 - MARY IS PREGNANT, JOSEPH IS PERPLEXED

MARY AND JOSEPH ARE BETROTHED AND MARY FINDS OUT THAT SHE IS PREGNANT. WE DON'T READ OF THAT ACCOUNT IN MATTHEW (IT'S IN LUKE 1) BUT WE ARE TOLD THAT THE CHILD IS "BY THE HOLY SPIRIT" (V. 18).

"BETROTHED" - "THE FIRST STAGE OF MARRIAGE IN JEWISH CULTURE, USUALLY LASTING FOR A YEAR BEFORE THE WEDDING NIGHT, MORE LEGAL THAN AN ENGAGEMENT (NASB LANGUAGE NOTE)"

ESV STUDY BIBLE - THE CUSTOM OF BETROTHAL WAS DIFFERENT FROM "ENGAGEMENT" IN MODERN SOCIETY. CUSTOMARILY THE PARENTS OF A YOUNG MAN CHOSE A YOUNG WOMAN TO BE ENGAGED TO THEIR SON. A SECOND STAGE OF BETROTHAL INVOLVED OFFICIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND A PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENT BEFORE WITNESSES, WHICH WAS A LEGALLY BINDING CONTRACT AND COULD BE BROKEN ONLY BY A FORMAL PROCESS OF DIVORCE.

DEUTERONOMY 22:13-24 - MOSAIC LAW DEALING WITH SEXUAL RELATIONS - SPECIFICALLY RELATING TO A NON-VIRGIN WOMAN TAKEN AS A WIFE.

THE FIRST EXAMPLE (V. 13-19) RELATES TO A MAN LYING ABOUT HIS NEW WIFE'S VIRGINITY AND BEING PROVEN WRONG. THE SECOND EXAMPLE (V. 20-24) IS THE APPLICABLE EXAMPLE WITH JOSEPH AND MARY'S SITUATION. THOSE WHO ENGAGE IN SEXUAL RELATIONS OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE WERE TO BE STONED. SUCH ACTS WERE CONSIDERED GREAT EVIL AND THE NATION WAS COMMANDED TO "PURGE THE EVIL FROM ISRAEL".

DEUTERONOMY 24:1-4 - MOSAIC LAW REGARDING DIVORCE AND "SENDING AWAY" WIFE IF "INDECENCY IS FOUND IN HER". THIS WOULD HAVE LIKELY BEEN THE PASSAGE JOSEPH WAS CONSIDERING APPLYING TO HIS SITUATION WITH MARY, BECAUSE OF THE SUPPOSED "INDECENCY" WHICH LED TO HER PREGNANCY.

JOSEPH DISCOVERS THAT MARY IS PREGNANT AND IS LEGALLY ALLOWED TO STONE MARY (BASED ON DEUTERONOMY 22). THE TEXT SAYS THAT HE IS A "RIGHTEOUS MAN" (V. 19) AND THOUGH CERTAINLY DEVASTATED THAT HIS FIANCEE IS NOT SEXUALLY PURE, HE PLANS TO SHOW KINDNESS TO HER AND "SEND HER AWAY" PRIVATELY (BASED ON DEUTERONOMY 24).

//////IN THE ACTUAL STUDY WE ONLY COVERED THIS SECTION AND STOPPED FOR THE DAY. WE MOVE ON TO THE NEXT VERSES THE FOLLOWING WEEK - (SEE MATTHEW 1(PART 3))