



Father Joseph's Outline for the Sunday before the Birth of Christ

Matthew 1:1-25 - Sunday 12/21/2008

“Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:20-21)

The purpose of the birth of the Christ is to save His people from their sins! Who are His people?

- The Evangelist Matthew hints at the answer to this question at the start of his Gospel where he writes, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1).
- The figure of the Patriarch Abraham is representative of the salvation being brought to all nations, rather than being exclusive to one nation:
 - “As for me, this is My covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations.” (Genesis 17:4)
 - “Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring- not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.” (Roman 4:16)
- So, the Christ came to save His people, who are all nations.

What is the meaning of the angel saying that the Christ was save His people from their sins?
Examining samples from the genealogy tree of Jesus:

- “Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab” (Matthew 1:5).
 - It is significant that Matthew included in the genealogy tree of Jesus a number of women, which is very unusual.
 - In the book of Joshua we read about Rahab: “So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.” (Joshua 2:1)
- “And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.” (Matthew 1:6).
 - Uriah was a Hittite. He was the first husband of Bathsheba. Uriah was a very loyal and obedient servant and soldier to David.
 - David betrayed Uriah by arranging his death to cover up his own act of adultery with Bathsheba. This story about David is one of the most tragic and disgraceful incidents in the Bible.

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- According to tradition, the Prophet King David wrote Psalm 50/51 when he realized the gravity of what he had done and in repentance to beseech God to forgive him. “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy, and according to Your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” (Psalm 50/51:1-2)
- Bathsheba became the mother of Solomon with her second husband, King David.
- “Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos” (Matthew 1:10)
 - Manasseh was the son and successor of King Hezekiah of Judah. He remained king for 55 years, a monarch noted as much for his longevity as for his evil and corruption in front of the Lord.

Points to Ponder

- Examining this small sample, as well as the entire list of the genealogy tree of Jesus, shows that sin dominated most of their lives. Righteousness is an exception, rather than the norm.
- This explains the prophecy in the Old Testament, “The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned” (Matthew 4:14).
- The fall from the divine grace started with Adam and Eve when they first disobeyed God, but the rest of the human race was not in need of salvation because of what Adam and Eve did. Rather, they were in need of salvation because of their individual responsibility.
- The apostle Paul explains this concept clearly that all human beings are in need of the salvation of God, “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” (Roman 3:22-24)

Important: after the fall of humanity, under the tyranny of the devil, and after becoming subject to death, it had become impossible for the human race to be liberated from death without the help of God Himself.

Through different means, the devil was able to trap all human beings, while at the same time God was working consistently to make the salvation a reality. The birth of Jesus marked the start of the last phase of this salvation, where every part of that plan was falling perfectly into its proper place.

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel” (Matthew 1:23; see also Isaiah 7:14). The birth of the Christ from a virgin was the sure sign about the coming of the Christ that God had spoken about seven centuries earlier.

The figures in the genealogy tree of Jesus were sinful people and all were subject to the tyranny of death. Christ does not draw honor away from Himself by being part of this sinful lineage. Instead, through His divinity and uniqueness, He has redeemed the honor of this lineage and of

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all humanity because He chose to be born as a full human being and become part of the sinful human race, yet remain without sin, to renew them back into the state of holiness.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, I confess that You are the Anointed One of God and the salvation that came into the world to save me. I beseech Your goodness with true tears of repentance to include me among Your saved flock. O Lord, do not forsake me. Do not leave me alone, and do not allow the devil to trick me with his crafty ways. My soul desires You, O Lord; do not let me fall prey to sin. Save me, O Lord, and grant me Your divine glory, along with that of Your eternal and compassionate Father and Your all-holy and life-giving Spirit. Amen.

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