

Nothing is Impossible

I. ADVENT! The Coming of the King

The arrival, appearance, emergence, dawn, birth, rise, 2nd coming

John 3:17 For God did **not send his Son into** the world **to condemn the world**, but in order **that the world might be saved through him.** [slide 1]

INCARNATION – In the Beginning ... and the WORD became Flesh! Over and over...

God keeps His promises (no matter how strange) the Center of the Story!

II. The Solution is in the Family

A. A Child is Born

Isa 9:6 For to us **a child** is born, to us a **son is given**; and the **government** shall be upon his shoulder, and **his name shall be called** Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace.** [slide 2]

7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, **on the throne of David and over his kingdom**, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The Fullness of the Trinity is love. Righteousness Peace Joy

B. Mary, Virgin Mother - Impossibilities

1. The Messenger and Mary

Luke 1:26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, **27** to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the

virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O **favored one**, the Lord is with you!"

29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will **conceive** in your womb and **bear** a son, and you shall call his name **Jesus**. 32 He will be **great** and will be called the **Son of the Most High**. And the Lord God will give to him the **throne** of his father **David**, 33 and he will **reign** over the house of Jacob forever, and of **his kingdom** there will be **no end**."

Curiosity -

34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 And the angel answered her, "The **Holy Spirit** will come upon you, and the **power** of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the **Son of God**. ...

37 For nothing will be impossible with God."

38 And Mary said, "Behold, ***I am the servant of the Lord***; let it ***be to me according to your word***." And the angel departed from her

2. What this meant for Mary

In the Middle East, a person's place in **the community is their primary source of identity**.

Different from our individualistic culture – we might introduce ourselves with our first name and what they do vocationally.

We might learn a Middle Eastern woman's tribal affiliation, her oldest son's name, and her placement within her entire extended family before we might learn her first name!

Utmost importance to public reputation: a person's actions reflect on their family & community, bringing **honor** or **shame** to the people around them. Honor killings. <John 8 - woman in adultery>

Mary will soon face her entire family - and Joseph - explaining that **this child is the product of the Holy Spirit** – he will be **the Promised One!**

A young poor girl from a small village, will be the mother of the Messiah?

Who would believe her? If she is not stoned to death, she could be cast out of her community, divorced by Joseph, and scorned by all who knew her.

3. Why This is a Big Deal.

This is no small surrender.

For a modern Westerner, being thrown out of our family and community would be extremely painful, but **we could survive**. Our identity as an individual would make it possible to **move on, get a job, and forge a new life**.

For an ancient girl — Apart from her family, she would have no home, no income, no prospects. Apart from her people, she would hardly be considered a person.

When Mary says, **"I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled,"** she is **surrendering** to God's purposes, **trusting** in his vindication and his sustaining hand.

With humility she accepts both the honor God gives her and the shame that will come upon her.

When we met Jesus, family issues. “Holy roller! Wrong path.”

Contrasts: Zechariah was an older man, an honorable priest serving in the most honorable place on the planet: the temple.

Mary is a young girl of no status, a country bumpkin from Galilee.

Elizabeth’s pregnancy will restore her honor among her community.

Luke 1:24 After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, ..., saying, **25** “Thus the Lord has done for me..., to **take away my reproach** among people.”

Stories Collide: Mary visits

Luke 1:41 And **when Elizabeth heard** the greeting of Mary, the **baby leaped¹ in her womb**. And Elizabeth was **filled with the Holy Spirit**, **42** and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “**Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!** **43** And why is this granted to me that the **mother of my Lord** should come to me?”

45 And **blessed is she who believed** that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

Mary’s response to this blessing is worship.

Luke 1:46 And Mary said, “My **soul** magnifies the Lord, **47** and my **spirit** rejoices in God my Savior. **[slide 3]**

49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. **[slide 4]**

The proud are scattered; rulers are conquered,

The humble are exalted; the hungry are filled, the rich are starving.

Mary’s song.

¹ σκιρτάω – to jump for joy

C. Joseph the Father - Pressures

Jesus is the love of God Incarnate. Joseph chosen to be a dad to him.

Being a parent is pressure! Adoptive dads wonder, “Am I being a good dad?” When the child grows up will he appreciate or resent me? What was it like?

When Joseph woke up from his prophetic dream, did he feel like a dope for discounting Mary’s claims?

Matt. 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. **[slide 5]**

Did he feel inadequate to be the father of IMMANUEL? **[slide 6]**

Did he worry about how, as a refugee, he was going to physically protect and spiritually nurture his family when they got to Egypt—so far from his own home and family support system?

I was terrified as a young dad. 3 jobs. 18 units. No money. No prospects.

Did he strain to make a living in a foreign land, since he couldn’t depend on his Aramaic-speaking customers in Nazareth?

Later how did he take the 12 year old’s question, “Didn’t you all know I had to be in my Father’s house?” Mary was treasuring these words in her heart.

Did it cut Joseph to the core? Was this yet another reminder to Joseph that he was indeed not the father?

Observations of JOSEPH:

1. First Description: He was **a righteous man**, yet **didn’t want to shame Mary openly**.

Matt. 1:19 And her husband Joseph, being a **just man** and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.²

Joseph was in a tough place. If he refused to expose MARY as an adulteress, then it would seem to everyone else that he must have been the one who got her pregnant in the first place. He would have **lost his reputation** as a righteous man.

What's more, in addition to publicly shaming Mary, it was within Joseph's legal rights to impound her dowry and demand a refund for the bride price he had paid.³

Joseph could have then gone on to find another wife, one without so much baggage.

Matt. 1:20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in **a dream**, saying, "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.

And in the face of the ridicule he would receive, Joseph agreed to take Mary as his wife and her son as his own child.

2. Joseph is a dad who dreams and who saves his family by going to Egypt! (reminds us of Joseph the patriarch— dreams and exile in Egypt also saved his family from famine and death.)

3. Joseph's legacy to his son:

For the sake of God's kingdom and the salvation of his people, Joseph, a righteous man, likely spent the rest of his days enduring the reputation of raising a bastard, a child born in sin.

² lit. Secretly

³ Later Jewish law demanded a man charge his wife immediately if she was not a virgin. Roman law accused any man who failed to do so to be a pimp who was exploiting his wife as a prostitute.

Joseph taught Jesus much more than woodworking. He modeled for his adopted son how, for the joy set before him, to despise the shame, and to embrace the cross.

God took away Jesus' shame by raising him from the dead, I cannot help but believe he will **do the same for Joseph** on the day of resurrection.

How awesome will it be when Jesus, the Lord of all, honors his adopted father, who suffered so much for him and yet refused to deny his son before men?

Matt 10:32 So everyone who **acknowledges me before men**, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, **33** but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in Heaven.

Will Joseph break down in tears when his adopted son says to him before his heavenly Father and all humankind, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Blessed are you whom people said all kinds of evil against because of me."

Maybe then Jesus will even add: **"You're the best dad, ever."**

III. The Kingdom has begun & Nothing is Impossible

Personal Inadequacies, Medical Impossibilities.

How well have you loved you love? –St. John of the Cross

The Fullness of the Trinity is love.

The Fullness of the Incarnation is love.

Jesus is the love of God Incarnate.

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;

