Advent IV: Matthew 1:18-25: The origin of Jesus

1. <u>Vs. 16</u> alerts us to the fact that, though Joseph was Mary's husband, Jesus was born of Mary only.

2. We know from the Gospel of Luke that after Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months she returned to Nazareth. Several months had passed since the time of the Annunciation. She alone knew that she was with child, that is of people living in Nazareth. She was engaged to Joseph before she conceived. Lk. 1:27.

3. How did Joseph discover that Mary was with child? There are several possibilities: a) She herself informed him; b) He observed it; c) Women close to Mary knew it and told Joseph. But we don't know.

4. <u>Vs. 18</u>: δὲ simply links this account to the genealogy and elucidates vs. 16 in particular. τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, genitive of possession, is placed prominently forward. γένεσις (not γέννησις found in the T.R.) means "origin, birth". In this account it includes the explanation of the conception and birth of Jesus. οὕτως ἦν "was as follows". Note that Mary is called <u>His</u> mother, for obvious reasons. συνελθεῖν αὐτοὺς denotes marriage as opposed to engagement, not sexual intercourse. εὑρέθη: AAT reads "it was found that"; KJV, NKJV, RSV, NIV and JB read "she was found". This is recommended. TEV and NEB read "she was found out" which implies that Joseph discovered it. That is an interpretation, not a translation. εὑρέθη clearly means that this was exceptional. The ἐκ phrase, which denotes origin and cause, modifies ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα, not εὑρέθη. This vs. and the latter part of vs. 20 clearly state the cause and origin of Jesus' conception.

5. <u>Vs. 19</u>: ὁ ἀνὴρ plainly means "husband". αὐτῆς is genitive of relation. Now follows a subordinate causal clause. The word δίκαιος reminds us of Lk. 1:6 and 2:25. And though the word is not applied to Mary, she was plainly a believer. Zacharias, Elizabeth and Simeon were δίκαιοι, justified by faith. It denotes their relationship to God. In other words Joseph was a child of God. Only NIV reads: "a righteous man". KJV, NKJV and RSV read "a just man". justus is Latin for the Greek δίκαιος. AAT is poor: "a good man". It's more than that. The other translations are not recommended: LB: "a man of stern principle"; TEV: "a man who always did what was right"; JB: "being a man of honor"; NEB: "being a man of principle". δίκαιος denotes his relationship to God. καὶ means "and therefore". Out of his justification flowed his sanctification. He did not want to hurt Mary. δειγματίσαι: Bengel says: "The simple form δειγματίζειν occurs in Col. 2:15. For both δεῖγμα and παράδειγμα denote that which is exhibited as a public spectacle." He did not want the public to consider Mary as an adultress. ἐβουλήθη means "he came to a decision". ἀπολῦσαι is the standard term for divorce. λάθρᾳ: Bengel writes: "without a public trial, without even a record of the reason on the writing of divorcement." Even before the angel appeared to Joseph, his attitude and decisions were guided and caused by the Lord Himself. This is not to be overlooked. The only point we are making is that Joseph was not cruel.

6. <u>Vs. 20</u>: The first four words comprise a genitive absolute. KJV, NKJV, RSV, LB, TEV make this attendant circumstance (while or as) and translate "consider" or "think about". JB and NEB translate it "he resolved" as an aorist. Perhaps the former is preferable. He had already resolved to divorce Mary but was giving it some further thought. Even after a decision, an important decision, has been made, a wise man thinks it over again before acting. We think that is the point. While Joseph was in great sorrow and contemplation, ἰδοὺ "behold" "of all things". In the hour of great need and sorrow, the Lord intervenes to cause us to do the right thing and to banish our sorrows. This angel was probably Gabriel, who had already appeared to Mary, Lk. 1:26. κατ' ὄναρ occurs only in

Matthew. Acts 2:17 may be a parallel but we do not believe, with Lenski, that it is the fulfillment of Mt. 1:19. It speaks of a different subject. This was no ordinary dream, because of the word ἐφάνη. He actually appeared. It reminds one of Hebr. 1:14. υἱὸς Δαυΐδ occurs often in NT of Jesus. But the sole exception is this one addressed to Joseph. It denotes high honor. Note how often the Scriptures say to God's children: "Fear not" which implies that they are fearful. παραλαβεῖν "take to yourself". Here γυναῖκα plainly means wife. σου denotes relationship. She already was his wife because of betrothal. Because of Deut. 22:23.24, Ylvisaker maintains that "the pledge of betrothal was binding before God as wedlock itself." Lenski considers it only a Jewish custom. At any rate she is already considered Joseph's wife. Now follows an explanatory γὰρ telling him why he should not be afraid to do so. Scripture never says "Fear not" without giving the reason why. γεννηθὲν means "conceived" "generated". Life begins at conception. The ἐκ phrase is in the predicate this time. "Holy Spirit" does not need the article to be definite. It is definite.

7.　　Vs. 21: δὲ "and" joins to the preceding. The male sex of Jesus is foretold. καλέσεις amounts to an imperative. Thus far Joseph has been told to do two things: a) To take Mary unto himself (and all that is involved in being a good husband, her protector), b) To give the Son a specific name. By the way, no prophecy in the OT gave Jesus this name, the name by which He is most commonly known. But it was prophesied very shortly before His birth, only to His parents. See Lk. 1:31. Now follows another explanatory γὰρ giving the reason for the name. αὐτὸς is plainly emphatic. "He Himself" excludes all other possibilities. σώσει means "to rescue and bring safely". It covers His entire Soteriological work. Because of αὐτοῦ, gen. of relation, τὸν λαὸν refers to the Covenant people but also includes the Gentiles by extension. ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν eliminates any and all ideas of Jesus as a political Savior. αὐτῶν is subjective genitive. They are the cause and they are responsible. Jesus came to save and separate man from the guilt and power of sin. How simple and important! There'e just no Christmas without forgiveness of sins.

8.　　Vs. 22: The 25th ed. of Nestle begins a subparagraph here, indicating that these are the words of the Evangelist. The 26th ed. seems to indicate that from here to 'Εμμανουήλ we have the continued message of the angel. Those who take the former view, point out that this formula, or variations thereof, is frequent in Matthew. Those who take the latter view, point out that the angel assured Joseph that this was all according to prophecy. We have no opinion on this matter. Τοῦτο ὅλον, not just a part of it, but all of it, was all of God's plan, prophecy and governance. γέγονεν "came to pass with lasting results". ἵνα plainly denotes purpose. ὑπὸ: The Lord is the efficient cause of prophecy. διὰ: The prophet is the instrumental cause. Both spoke. Note that ῥηθὲν and λέγοντος are derived from the same verb, λέγω. God was the primary speaker, the prophet, the agent.

9.　　Vs. 23: The word 'Ιδοὺ is important, something like "look here". In Is. 7:14 this prophecy is called a sign, a clear proof of the help and deliverance of the Lord. In Is. 7:14 both the Hebr. and the LXX have the article before "virgin" as does Mt. 1:23. Only KJV and RSV have "a virgin". All other translations have the definite article, and rightly so. There was only ONE virgin who conceived and gave birth. For this reason alone this must be called a rectilinear prophecy, not a typical prophecy. Both the Hebr. and LXX have "thou shalt call" as in vs. 21 here. The prophecy refers either to Joseph or Mary with "thou". Here we have "they", both Mary and Joseph and millions since that time. Bengel says of this passage: "There are many particulars, in which Matthew observes that the event announced by the angel corresponded exactly with the prediction of Isaiah: 1) A virgin pregnant and becoming a mother; 2) A male child; 3) The nomenclature of the child; 4) The interpretation of the name." The last clause in vs. 23 could not have been spoken by the angel. It was written by the Evangelist who translated the Hebrew into Greek for his readers: "With us God." Bengel: "It signifies θεάνθρωπος (God-man). For the union of the divine and human natures in Christ is the

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foundation of the union of God with man." Ylvisaker: "He who was conceived in Mary by the Holy Ghost and who was born of her is God with us, God one of us, God, a part of humanity, God in our flesh and blood. There are these two natures in this one person, a truth fraught with the most glorious comfort." Concerning the prophecy, Lenski quotes Delitzsch. We quote in part: "The incarnation is, indeed, a veiled mystery in the OT, but the veil is not so dense that it admits of no rays striking through. . . . This 'virgin' was and remained a riddle in the OT, mightily stirring up the inquiry and search (I Peter 1:10-12), and awaiting a solution in historic fulfillment." Lenski: "'Immanuel' was not a given name but was descriptive of the divine nature of Jesus and of His incarnation."

10.	Vs. 24: Fahling: "Joseph hesitated no more. He understood and believed. . . This is indeed a characteristic of the silent saint, of whom in all the Scriptures not a word or phrase is recorded. Silently he performed his duty. And the highest duty towards Mary and the unborn Jesus demanded immediate marriage, which would afford not only outward, but also moral protection to both. . . . Thus Joseph showed his faith. The sole purpose of his marriage to Mary was now to legitimize the Child, the Messiah, whose advent was now at hand." Well said.

11.	Vs. 25: καὶ: KJV, NKJV and NASB render it "and". All others have "but". That makes sense. There was one exception in their relationship, until she gave birth. It was a conclusion which Mary and Joseph drew from what Gabriel had told each of them. The second καὶ means "and then" when Jesus was born. Joseph is the subject of ἐκάλεσεν. See vs. 21. Many have followed Luther who called Mary "semper virgo", which means "always a virgin". That can't be proved or disproved nor is it an article of faith. On the one hand ἕως οὗ does not necessarily mean that they had intimate relations after the birth. On the other hand οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν "he was not knowing her" might indicate the continuous practice after the birth. Bengel says: "With regard to the remainder of her married life, the reader is left to form his own opinion." Fahling: "Really it does not matter. The chief consideration is not 'What think ye of Mary?' but 'What think ye of Christ?'" Lenski: "The ordinary reader must take it that Mt. was altogether unconcerned about the intimacy after the birth." True. It is none of our business. What happens between husband and wife is extremely personal and their business only.

12.	Read the thought-provoking article on "The Obligation of a Rightful Betrothal" on page 7 of *Kretzmann's Popular Commentary of the Bible*, New Testament, vol. 1. This is in keeping with Ylvisaker's view as opposed to Lenski's view. The essence of marriage begins with a promise, not just with a ceremony.

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