

Saviour:
Saviour in His Coming
Matthew 1:18-25

March 26, 2017

Dr. Steve Horn

Text Introduction: Easter is on Sunday, April 16, this year. On the Thursday and Friday of Holy Week, our Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra along with **Ballet Magnificat** will present a musical oratorio titled, *Saviour*. **Ballet Magnificat** is a professional Christian ballet company that has been described as the premiere Christian dance company in the United States. Their professional touring companies have performed both nationally and internationally.

I have been listening to this music in preparation for preaching now through Easter. It is stirring and worshipful. This work is about God's passion for His people. The story, which takes us from creation through resurrection, is a picture of God pursuing His people. I so hope you come. It is going to be a wonderful experience.

To prepare us for our own reflection and celebration of Easter, I am exploring the same theme of **Saviour** for our preaching times as we approach Easter.

His passionate pursuit of us that calls us to relationship started at creation, and we continue to see it in the fall. We see this continued rebellion throughout the Old Testament as the story of Israel as a nation unfolds. The prophets of the Old Testament begin to point toward the Messiah coming—a Saviour. Most people heard this prophecy of a Saviour as a political savior rather than a spiritual Saviour. They missed that His purpose in coming was to be the One who would come to take away our greatest problem of all—our sin.

Today, we move the story of God's redemption to the New Testament—to the birth of Jesus Christ.

Text: The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit. 19 So her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

20 But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 See, the virgin will become pregnant
and give birth to a son,
and they will name Him Immanuel,
which is translated "God is with us."

24 When Joseph got up from sleeping, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her 25 but did not know her intimately until she gave birth to a son. And he named Him Jesus.

Introduction:

Hopefully, our survey of history has shown us that we desperately need a Savior. The creation event could not reconcile us to God. The reason? Sin. God setting apart a nation for Himself could not reconcile that people to God. The reason? Sin. Trying to keep the law could not reconcile people to God. The reason? Sin. We need a savior. Religion does not reconcile us to God. Good works do not reconcile us to God. Being born into the right family does not reconcile us to God. Only God can reconcile us to God.

We must understand that this mission to save people from their sins is the whole purpose of Jesus' coming. Throughout the New Testament, over and over again this is the expressed reason of His coming.

- John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- To Zacchaeus in Luke 19:9-10 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."
- To the disciples in Mark 10:45, Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
- John the Baptist declared, as recorded in John 1:29, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
- And from the lips of Paul in 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

As we look at the manger, we see not a baby, but we see God, in the flesh, the one who cared for us so much that He came to save us from our sins.

This passage gives us three signs that are important not to miss in building our understanding of God's plan for reconciling us to Himself.

The Nativity of Jesus affirms that He is Saviour.

Most of us have heard this description of the birth of Christ so many times that we do not catch the important theological event that is taking place. No ordinary birth is being described here. The miraculous virgin birth is being described. The virgin birth is . . .

- Announced by the angel
- Predicted by the prophets
- Determined to be true by his earthly Daddy

I particularly think that this last proof is essential. Along with the Scriptures' testimony of Mary's virginity, the one person who would know best about her virginity is Mary. Joseph wouldn't know for certain.

Every time I have come to this text before us today, I have thought of Joseph's obedience. But, this week, I sensed an even greater truth. Something happened to Joseph. He moved from divorce to trust. He believed. He believed in the virgin birth. Just as the eyewitnesses to the resurrection are the most important witnesses to the resurrection, Joseph is the most important eyewitness to the virgin birth.

Ravi Zacharias often tells the story of an interviewer's interview with one of the most famous interviewers of all time—Larry King. King was asked, "Who would you most like to interview?" King answered "Jesus." Then the interviewer asked King, "And, what would you like to ask Him?" King reportedly said, "I would like to ask Him if He was indeed virgin-born? The answer to that question would define history for me."

Zacharias then said, that he asked through a mutual friend of King's to use that story. King said, "Sure, and tell him I am not being facetious."

Is it important that Jesus was born of a virgin? We always say that Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection. And that is true! But Christianity also hinges upon the virgin birth of Christ. And, here is why.

The Nature of Jesus assures that He is Saviour.

There is a story that one day C.S. Lewis was sitting in his office in the English department when a friend, who was an unbeliever, wandered in. There were carolers below in the courtyard singing Christmas carols and as the two were speaking, they could hear them singing a Christmas carol that contained words about Jesus' virgin birth. His unbelieving friend said to C. S. Lewis, "Isn't it good that we now know better than they did." C. S. Lewis said, "What do you mean?" "Well, isn't it good that we now know more than they did." "I am afraid that you will have to explain," Lewis said. "Well, isn't it good that we now know that virgins don't have babies." C.S. Lewis looked at him incredulously and said, "Don't you think that they knew that? That is the whole point."

And, indeed, it is the whole point.

See, the nativity of Jesus points to Jesus' virgin birth, but what is the point of the virgin birth?

The virgin birth points to the nature of Jesus. Because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, He is fully God. Because He is born of Mary, He is fully man. Because He is fully God, He was without sin. Because He was fully man, His sacrifice could pay the penalty for our sin. In this, we can be fully reconciled back to God even in our sin.

Our sin leaves us with a problem. Paul revealed the problem of sin in almost every letter. Perhaps no place is this more clear than in Ephesians 2. There Paul indicated the problem of sin in these terms. Sin causes us to be "dead," and "children of wrath." (Ephesians 2:1, 3) In Romans and Colossians, Paul referred to our problem as being "enemies" of Christ. (Romans 5:10 and Colossians 1:21) Most of all, the New Testament calls us objects of God's wrath, destined for destruction, and destined for eternity separated from Christ because of sin. This is the problem of sin. In addition, in most cases, sin causes us to be ignorant of our problem.

We need a Saviour, and the nature of Jesus assures us that we can have that Saviour.

The Name of Jesus announces that He is Saviour.

Even His name means that He is Saviour. "Jesus" is more than just a name. The name speaks to the purpose of His coming. The angel announced the reason that Jesus was to be His name. "Because He will save His people from their sins."

Today, in recognizing Jesus as Saviour, some people struggle. On the one hand people struggle that they might even need a Saviour. On the other hand, others struggle that they can be saved.

To the first point, we all need a Saviour. To the second struggle, all can be saved.

So What?

Let Him do what He has come to do.

Join Him in what He has come to do.