**Research: on the Birth of Jesus**

Matthew 1:18-21, 24,25

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

**Birth** in Greek is *genesis* which means “ begat, nativity, birth” (blueletterbible.org, Strong’s 1083).

**Came together** in Greek is *synerchomai* which means “come together, of conjugal cohabitation” (blueletterbible.org, Strong’s 4905).

“N**ow the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise;**not in the ordinary course and manner in which children are conceived and brought forth into the world (*with child of the Holy Ghost* [**Luke 1:35**](http://biblehub.com/luke/1-35.htm)), but in this wonderful manner” (Matthew Poole’s Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“**Now the birth of Jesus Christ -**The circumstances attending his birth.

**“Was on this wise -**In this manner.

**“Espoused -**Betrothed, or engaged to be married. There was commonly an interval of ten or twelve months, among the Jews, between the contract of marriage and the celebration of the nuptials, yet such was the nature of this engagement, that unfaithfulness to each other was deemed adultery” (Dummelow, www.studylight.com).

“The narrative implies a distinction between betrothal and marriage. From the moment of her betrothal a woman was treated as if actually married. The union could be dissolved only by regular divorce. Breach of faithfulness was regarded as adultery, and was punishable with death ([Deuteronomy 22:23](http://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/22-23.htm), [Deuteronomy 22:24](http://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/22-24.htm)), and the woman's property became virtually that of her betrothed, unless he had expressly renounced it; but, even in that ease, he was her natural heir” (Vincent’s Word Studies, www.biblehub.com).

**Holy Ghost** in Greek is *pneuma* which means the Spirit of God, the vital principal, the rational spirit, the soul, essence, breath, wind, movement, air, ghost, inspiration” (blueletterbible.org, Strong’s 4151).

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man,* and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

**“Joseph her husband.**—The word was applied with strict accuracy from the moment of betrothal onwards.

**“Being a just man. . . .**—The glimpse given us into the character of Joseph is one of singular tenderness and beauty. To him, conscious of being of the house of David, and cherishing Messianic hopes, what he heard would seem to come as blighting those hopes. He dared not, as a “righteous” man, take to himself one who seemed thus to have sinned. But love and pity alike hindered him from pressing the law, which made death by stoning the punishment of such a sin ([Deuteronomy 22:21](http://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/22-21.htm)), or even from publicly breaking off the marriage on the ground of the apparent guilt. There remained the alternative, which the growing frequency of divorce made easy, of availing himself of a “writ of divorcement,” which did not necessarily specify the ground of repudiation, except in vague language implying [disagreement](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/1-19.htm) ([Matthew 19:3](http://biblehub.com/matthew/19-3.htm)). Thus the matter would be settled quietly without exposure. The “bill of divorcement” was as necessary for the betrothed as for those who were fully man and wife” (Ellicott’s Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“***Her husband -*** The word in the original does not imply that they were married. It means here the man to whom she was espoused.

“***A just man.*** The meaning is that he was kind, tender, merciful; that he was so attached to Mary that he was not willing that she should be exposed to public shame. He sought, therefore, secretly to dissolve the connection, and to restore her to her friends without the punishment commonly inflicted on adultery. The word just has not unfrequently this meaning of mildness, or mercy.

“***Put her away privily*** - The law of Moses gave the husband the power of divorce, [Deuteronomy 24:1](http://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/24-1.htm). It was customary in a bill of divorce to specify the causes for which the divorce was made, and witnesses were also present to testify to the divorce. But in this case, it seems, Joseph resolved to put her away without specifying the cause; for he was not willing to make her a public example. This is the meaning here of "privily." Both to Joseph and Mary this must have been a great trial. Joseph was ardently attached to her, but her character was likely to be ruined, and he deemed it proper to separate her from him. Mary was innocent, but Joseph was not yet satisfied of her innocence” (Barnes Notes, www.biblehub.com).

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

“***He thought on these things -*** He did not act hastily. He did not take the course which the law would have permitted him to do, if he had been hasty, violent, or unjust. It was a case deeply affecting his happiness, his character, and the reputation and character of his chosen companion. God will guide the thoughtful and the anxious. And when we have looked patiently at a perplexed subject, and know not what to do, then God, as in the case of Joseph, will interpose to lead us and direct our way.

“***In a dream*** - This was a common way of making known the will of God to the ancient prophets and people of God,

“***Son of David*** - Descendant of David. The angel put him in mind of his relation to David perhaps to prepare him for the intelligence that Mary was to be the mother of the Messiah - the promised heir of David.

“***Fear not*** - Do not hesitate, or have any apprehensions about her virtue and purity. Do not fear that she will be unworthy of you, or will disgrace you.

“***To take unto thee Mary thy wife*** - To take her as thy wife; to recognize her as such, and to treat her as such.

“***For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost*** - Is the direct creation of divine power. A body was thus prepared pure and holy, and free from the corruption of sin, in order that he might be qualified for his great work the offering of a pure sacrifice to God. As this was necessary in order to the great work which he came to perform, Joseph is directed by an angel to receive her as pure and virtuous, and as every way worthy of his love” (Barnes’ Notes, www.biblehub.com).

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

“**Took unto him his wife.**—These few words cover a great deal. They imply the formal ratification of the betrothal before witnesses; the benediction by a priest; the marriage-feast; the removal from the house that had hitherto been her home to that of Joseph. They imply also that what had seemed evidence of guilt among the [neighbors](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/1-24.htm) of that home, brought with it to Joseph’s mind no ground for blame. To them, if they were not told the history, and it is not probable that they were, it must have been deemed an act of exceptional mercy and forbearance” (Ellicott’s Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

“***Knew her not*** - The doctrine of the virginity of Mary before the birth of Jesus is a doctrine of the [Scriptures](http://d.7769domain.com/r/rd.html?#http%3A%2F%2F7769domain.com%2FAd%2FGoIEx2%2F%3Ftoken%3DODF1Y0hpNmh5eU0zZlFXekh4bXJRTy84NE1Wd0VIMUE2TWdZV0ZVYmU0VzhTTUc2RzMwQXNWMWdvdjBWWkpGbmUyNlExSU4zbzg5ZzZiQjdpelU2bEtCcjNkZy9UTnBmT2t3MlVBSko1Q01sUXdyMU5qZnhzVHYzYVZRQ3BMRlF5MU9LVUM2VjJSVm4yNm5QUElyWFpFQnc2M2lnaHpUbUlaanBGQWVIcmVZPQ2), and is very important to be believed. But the Bible does not affirm that she had no children afterward. Indeed, all the accounts in the New Testament lead us to suppose that she did have them. See the notes at [Matthew 13:55-56](http://biblehub.com/matthew/13-55.htm). The language here evidently implies that she lived as the wife of Joseph after the birth of Jesus.

“***Her first-born son*** - Her oldest son, or the one who had the privilege of birthright by the law. This does not of necessity imply that she had other children, though it seems probable. It was the name given to the son which was born first, whether there were others or not.

“***His name Jesus*** - This was given by divine appointment, [Matthew 1:21](http://biblehub.com/matthew/1-21.htm). It was conferred upon him on the eighth day, at the time of his circumcision, Luke 2:21” (Barnes’ Notes, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).