

**Unprecedented Promise - Matthew 1:20-25**  
**Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

**Notes from the Sermon**

There are so many things to celebrate concerning Jesus' entrance into the world as a baby whose first crib was a manger. His birth and life were truly unprecedented. Yet, I don't know about you, but I can have doubts. It is a story that happened long ago and concerns an invisible God who often seems absent from the affairs of the world and my life. Is Jesus really more like Santa Claus, something we believe in only to discover later that the idea is really more of a myth? When I have doubts one way I wrestle those down is to think on the truth we are addressing in the sermon this week, the reality of all the promises, predictions, and pictures painted in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in the birth, life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The Old Testament story focuses in on three persons (OK, one is a group). The first is that of God, creator, sustainer, rescuer, the One True and Living God revealed in the story. The second is Israel, the nation that begins with another miraculous birth as God keeps a promise. God called a man named Abraham to follow Him, made a ton of promises to him, but all those promises depended on Abraham having a kid. Yet, he and his wife were really old when the story of their lives begins, and God waits another 25 years before He keeps the promise of a child. So a 99 year old dude and 90 year old lady have a child. The descendants of this child become a nation chosen by God and loved by Him. Yet they become slaves in Egypt so God makes His glory known by rescuing them from slavery, making them a nation, and giving them a land. Israel though, is never faithful. From the start they run from God, deny Him, worship other gods, and get themselves involved in all kinds of wicked practices and injustices. God is faithful, they are not, and the people of Israel really do not offer any hope for us as you read the Old Testament. Yet, the third is another promised son from the descendants of Abraham, one who will be the True King, Great High Priest, and The Prophet. The Old Testament has over 300 passages that picture or prophecy this single person who would come into history. Our text this week references one of those, as Isaiah the prophet predicts a virgin birth and a child born who is to be known as God with Us. This child/King would reign in righteousness, peace, and justice, and bring redemption and rescue to His people. Matthew tells us that this prophecy is fulfilled in Mary's conception and delivery of Jesus on that Bethlehem night.

But this is not the only time Matthew connects the Old Testament texts to the life of Jesus. In fact, all of the New Testament writers show us that all of these promises came true in the person of Jesus. Matthew is writing his Gospel account primarily to fellow Jewish people as he seeks to show that Jesus is the Messiah that had been promised in the Old Testament and that they as a nation had been waiting for over a span of hundreds of years. Isaiah told the Old Testament king Ahaz that the birth of a child would be a sign for he and Israel. Ahaz had a son, and in one way there is a short fulfillment of the prophecy, as the kingly line of David was continued and God had promised. Yet, this child is not born of a virgin, and he too is a failure in the role of ruling with justice and righteousness. So the nation awaited the true and fuller fulfillment of this promise, the miraculous birth of the child who would become the king described in Isaiah 9 ("For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will rest on His shoulders...") The promise about the sign came from the lips of Isaiah around 700 years before the Bethlehem night, and for many it seemed beyond the scope of possibility. Yet, here is the virgin birth and the humble King with the name that reminds us of His purpose. He will be called Jesus, which means "Our God saves." But keep reading Matthew's Gospel. Over and over Matthew will show us Old Testament prophecies and ideas connecting them to Jesus and showing how Jesus fulfills these. But it is larger than this. Over 300 Old Testament passages pointing to this one person who would arrive on the human scene, who would be both God and man. And Jesus is the fulfillment of all of them.

What we have is the revelation of a glorious God who is telling a great story and making His sovereign purpose known to us. And we have an unprecedented person, promised in ages past born in Bethlehem. When we celebrate Christmas it can seem surreal, and maybe mythical. But Jesus is no myth, and he is not just an ordinary human being. He came to make the invisible God visible, and to accomplish our God's purpose in saving us. We can know, without a doubt, that Jesus is the true King and Savior. These prophecies and Jesus' fulfillment of those leave us with tangible evidence of a reasonable faith. When we ask people to believe in Jesus we are not asking people to take a leap of faith in a fairy tale. No, we are calling people to put their faith in a real, yet unique person born in history, yet whose coming is woven into the story of Scripture from the earliest pages. And this King can truly save!

**Bible Reading for the Week**

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
John 17	John 18	John 19	John 20	John 21	Song of Solomon 1	Song of Solomon 2

Reading from this past week: Matthew 1:20-25

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Matthew 2:1-11

**Family Worship**

Song - *Angels from the Realms of Glory*

<https://youtu.be/bjyvuf4ZFcY>

Gospel Project

Story: Jesus was born.

Story Point: Jesus came to bring us life.

Big Picture Question: How does the Holy Spirit help Christians?

Answer: The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

Scripture: John 1

New City Catechism

Question #52: What hope does everlasting life have for us?

Answer: That we will live with and enjoy God forever in the new heaven and the new earth, where we will be forever freed from all sin in a renewed, restored creation.

Verse: Revelation 21:1-4

Scripture

Matthew 1:20-25

\*What is the prophecy Matthew quotes in this text (look it up) and how does Jesus' birth fulfill this prophecy?

\*How many other prophecies from the Old Testament can you recall that were fulfilled in Jesus' coming into the world?

\*How can the truth that the Old Testament prophets made so many predictions about Jesus and he fulfilled them all help us when we have doubts?

Prayer

\*During the fourth week of Advent, pray that we would experience peace in our lives because we have peace with God because of Jesus.

\*Ask God to help you and your family behold Christ's glory revealed in the Scriptures.