

The Saviour

our Lord Jesus Christ

Matthew 1:21

Joseph and Jesus

Joseph was Jacob's son and Abraham's great-grandson. He was sold by his brothers to a group of merchants on their way to Egypt (Gen. 37). There, they sold Joseph to the chief of the royal guard in whose house he faithfully served. When his master's wife cast her eye on Joseph and she asked him to lie with her, he refused, saying that by doing this, he would do evil and sin against God (Gen. 39:9). She kept insisting and at some point, he fled the house as he realized the danger being there alone with her at the time, aware of his own weakness.

His mistress' false accusations led to Joseph being imprisoned, despite his faithfulness. Yet, even there in prison he served with great faithfulness. When the chief jailer noticed how reliable Joseph was, he put him in charge of all the prisoners. One day, two of Pharaoh's high officials were put there as well. One night, they both dreamed and looked for someone to interpret their dreams. They spoke to Joseph as he was put in charge of their care and with God's help, he was able to interpret their dreams. What Joseph told them, exactly happened: the cupbearer was restored in his former position, whereas the chief baker was hanged, just as Joseph had said.

Two years later, the mighty Pharaoh had two dreams, but none of his wise men was able to interpret them. At that point the chief cupbearer remembered Joseph who had helped him while in prison. So, called to appear before Pharaoh, Joseph

confirmed that only God could give the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. God gave Joseph grace to interpret them and also wisdom to counsel Pharaoh what he should do. Everyone realized that this was an urgent matter since God had shown them through Joseph that after seven years of abundance, a great famine would come that would last seven years. Having given him his signet-ring, Pharaoh delegated the authority to Joseph to act for the benefit of his country and people and called his name Zaphnat-Paaneah (Gen. 41:45). This means *revealer of secrets* as well as *saviour of the world*: both names truly applied.

The birth of the Saviour

The above details beautifully illustrate things concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. The name Jesus was given by his father Joseph (not of the Old Testament but of the New Testament), who adopted Him according to the instructions the Angel gave him (see Mt. 1:20-25). In fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14, the name given to Him was Emmanuel, *with us God*, which is true of the Lord Jesus Himself, the great Saviour-God. Thus, the Angel told Joseph to call Mary's Son *Jesus* or *Yeshua* (Mt. 1:21), which means *Yahweh* (or, Jehovah) *is salvation*. The Greek translation of Yeshua is *Jesus*.

This name, whether in Hebrew or Greek, implies that the Lord Jesus is God *and* Man, in one blessed Person. This is an unfathomable mystery, but a great reality: praise God! That's why Paul wrote, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (1 Tim. 3:16 NKJV). Did you already bow the knee to Him? One day, every knee in the whole universe will be forced to do so (Phil. 2:10-11). Now we may do so because we love Him.

When the prophet Isaiah wrote about these things, the two tribes of Israel had a wicked king, Ahaz. His country was in danger to be invaded by enemy forces, but the Lord gave comfort by introducing, prophetically, the Virgin's Son, called Emmanuel. Through Him God would give deliverance. This was based on what God had said in the Garden of Eden about "the Seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15; please read the whole chapter). He also spoke about the consequences of Israel's unfaithfulness (Isa. 7:10-25).

The New Testament brings the fulfillment as we saw above, but now I'd like to emphasize the miraculous way these prophecies were fulfilled. It never happened that a virgin gave birth, because in order to conceive she will need to have a sexual relationship with a man, who should be her husband, after which she no longer is a virgin. Mary was a virgin when she conceived through the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18), *but she was also a virgin when she gave birth to the Lord Jesus* (Mt. 1:23-25). Something like this never happened before and will never happen again. Praise God!

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