

**A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS**  
**VII. God's Confirmation Of Messiah's Virgin Birth**  
**(Matthew 1:18-25)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. If Messiah was to be God come in the flesh as a supernatural work as explained by the angel Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:35, that fact of necessity would need to be verified by the testimony of Mary's husband Joseph.
- B. Matthew 1:18-25 plainly explains this fact, so we view the passage for our insight and edification:

**II. God's Confirmation Of Messiah's Virgin Birth, Matthew 1:18-25.**

- A. When Mary was humanly found to be with child during her betrothal to Joseph, since he "was a righteous man, it was inconceivable to him that he would marry one who was carrying what he would presume to be another man's child," Matt. 1:18-19a; J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 54.
- B. Joseph was also a considerate man who did not want to accuse Mary publicly of immorality so that she would be stoned to death, so he had decided to break the engagement by a private divorce, what was required at the time to end their betrothal, Matthew 1:19b; *Ibid.*, p. 53-54.
- C. However, while Joseph was thinking on this difficult yet necessary step he believed he must take, he had a dream that completely changed his viewpoint: the dream led him immediately to take Mary to live with him in marriage so as to protect her reputation and that of her unborn Child and Messiah, and for Joseph not to have relations with her though she was his wife until she had delivered Jesus, Matthew 1:20b with 1:24-25.
- D. The dream and its contents were thus so influential that they serve as God's confirmation of Messiah's virgin conception and His eventual virgin birth (as follows), Matthew 1:20b-23:
  - 1. First, in Israel in Joseph's day, having a "good dream" that one could remember for it to be interpreted was "popularly regarded" as a mark "of God's favor." (Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, 1972, vol. I, p. 155. The mere fact that Joseph had a very clear dream about an angel of the Lord communicating to him during his time of difficult decision-making relative to his plans to divorce Mary would have signaled to him that God favored him and was communicating helpful advice to him!
  - 2. Second, the angel addressed Joseph by name, adding the arresting title "son of David" that was very unusual in ordinary circumstances, what would have sparked the interest of Joseph and prepared him to accept what truth the angel was about to tell him, Matthew 1:20b; *Ibid.*, p. 154.
  - 3. Third, the angel's order that Joseph "fear not" (*me phobetheis*) is written in the aorist middle subjunctive, expressing the prohibition, "Do not start to fear for your own benefit." (*Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; *Ibid.*, The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 427; Dana & Mantey, A Man. Gram. of the Grk. N. T., 1957, p. 301) The angel countered Joseph's inner bent to avoid marrying a woman whose child would not be his just opposite a normal dream where the dream would enhance Joseph's anxiety against such a marriage, Matthew 1:20c. The angel's knowledge of Joseph's inner desire to avoid uniting with Mary and of the angel's countering of it in the dream indicated this was not a normal dream but was authored by a supernatural entity.
  - 4. Fourth, the angel's explanation of the source of Mary's pregnancy as being the Holy Spirit would fit the known Biblical Genesis 1:2 precedent that Joseph would recall where the Holy Spirit's hovering over the inanimate earth was the Cause for the miraculous formation of all life on earth, Matthew 1:20d. Thus, the angel's explanation for Mary's pregnancy had a distant but nevertheless Biblically supportable precedent.
  - 5. Fifth, where Joseph had considered Mary's unborn fetus to be an illegitimate child produced by sin, the angel strongly countered that concept, saying of the Child, "For He Himself will save His people from their sins:" The Greek text uses the intensive pronoun *autos* (Himself) in addition to the verb *sosei*, "He will save" to emphasize Christ's future deliverance of Israel from her sins in contrast to Jesus being an illegitimate product of what Joseph had assumed was adultery, Matthew 1:21; *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.
  - 6. The angel's announcement of the virgin conception and birth of Messiah fit the known Isaiah 7:14 prophecy that Joseph would have recognized either in his dream or at a later time, Matthew 1:22-23.

***Lesson:*** *The arresting, encouraging, correcting, Biblically verified nature of Joseph's dream convinced him to reverse course in his plan to divorce Mary so that he immediately took her to be his wife and did not have relations with her until she had delivered her firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Immanuel.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we rejoice in God's validation through Joseph of the virgin birth of Christ. (2) May we also pay heed to God's clear circumstantial and Biblical corrections and encouragements of us in our lives.*