



## Session 2



# THE ANGEL SPOKE TO JOSEPH

## Matthew 1:18-23

Having satisfied the question of Jesus' lineage, Matthew set off to further prove Jesus as Messiah by offering proofs of how Jesus' birth also fulfilled Old Testament Scripture. In ancient Jewish tradition, a man and woman planning to be married were required to observe a time of betrothal. Unlike a modern-day engagement, betrothal was a legally binding union, dissolvable only by divorce. During the time of betrothal, the man and woman were legally bound, but were forbidden from having sexual relations or living together in the same house.

Identifying Joseph as a righteous man, Matthew made it clear that the events about which he was writing happened before Mary and Joseph were intimate. During the betrothal, Joseph discovered Mary was pregnant, and being a righteous man, he did not want to publicly shame his betrothed. Joseph decided instead to quietly divorce Mary. Joseph's righteousness spoke more of his adherence to Jewish law and his faith in God's commands than it was implying Joseph was perfect—a good distinction here.

Unsure of next steps, Joseph was confronted in a dream with a message from God. The angel assured Joseph that Mary had not been unfaithful to him. The baby in Mary's womb was from the Holy Spirit. The angel's announcement reminded Joseph of his historical lineage as Joseph is called "son of David" by the angel. The angel warned Joseph not to divorce Mary, but to continue the betrothal, guaranteeing that Jesus, as Joseph's legal son, would be the rightful heir of David's throne.

The child was to be given the name *Jesus* a very common name for Jewish boys at that time as the name itself meant "Yahweh is salvation." A common name for an uncommon baby, uniquely qualified to "save his people from their sins." Matthew concluded this section of his Gospel by quoting another of Isaiah's prophecies and clearly identified Christ's conception as fulfillment of this Old Testament prophecy (*Isaiah 7:14*).