

Monday, 23 July 2018 *Matthew 1:18*

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Do I sometimes wonder if I am truly made in the image of God? Yes, sometimes a wee little bit. But the LORD, God the Almighty came to a virgin and God, the Son was conceived as God, the Incarnate Son. Absolute, complete, total proof that man is created in the image of the LORD, God, the Almighty. Like conceives like.

Tuesday, 24 July 2018 *Matthew 1:18-21*

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

A dream. One of the ways we find in Scripture that the LORD, God, the Almighty communicates with His children is through dreams from the Holy Spirit. Frequently in the Scriptures, but still from time to time today. I am one of those individuals who never remembers his dreams and it used to concern me. What if the Holy Spirit spoke to me in a dream and I didn't remember? How awful. Then one day, I asked the LORD to cause me to remember any dream in which He spoke to me. End of worry.

Wednesday, 25 July 2018 *Matthew 1:22-25* *Isaiah 7:14*

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

One the important ways in which the LORD, God, the Almighty confirms that a message from Him is that it confirms prophecy, or is in accord with a passage of Scripture, often followed by a recall of the confirming passage. I need to be suspicious of any statement by me or others that begins with

the phrase, "The LORD told me..." and is not followed by an appropriate quotation and certainly not one taken out of context. Don't quote something like the following: "Judas ... went and hanged himself." Matthew 27:3-5 and "You go, and do likewise." Luke 10:37

Be exceedingly careful that our claims of devine leading are consistent with all of Scripture.

Thursday, 26 July 2018 *Matthew 3:11*

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Writing this on a Lord's Day afternoon following a Worship Service that centered on a Believer's Baptism. A very moving event that was in accordance with our Lord's teaching (Matt.28:19), but it was not the Baptism of the Holy Spirit referred to in this passage.

No, this is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that comes to all believers as they accept the offer of the LORD, God, the Almighty to forgive their sin and restore them to the family of the LORD. The Spirit enters the repentant sinner's being immediately to begin and guide the transforming process.

Friday, 27 July 2018 *Matthew 3:16-17*

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

The beginning of the ministry of God, the Son, as Jesus the Christ, the Incarnate Son of God. Joined by God, the Spirit to bring the message of salvation by grace to the fallen creation; an awesome moment.

We celebrate the Nativity, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and Pentecost as important events in the foundation of the Church. Why not this, the First Pentecost, the joining of God, the Son by God, the Holy Spirit to work the will of God the Father to restore the Creation to the LORD, God, the Almighty.

Saturday, 28 July 2018 *Matt 4:1, Mark 1:12, Luke 4:1*

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Mark 1:12 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

Luke 4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness

Mark uses a stronger verb than either Matthew or Luke but it should not be taken to indicate any reluctance on our Lord's part to go out into the wilderness. Rather it would appear that Mark is conveying the power, the urgency bestowed by Holy Spirit to begin the ministry with prayer and fasting.

Is not this a good indication that we need to begin every undertaking for the Lord with a season of prayer and fasting. See Acts 13:1-4 for an example. Think for a few minutes upon the amazing success of the mission trip of Barnabas and Paul, led by the Holy Spirit and fueled by prayer and fasting on the part of the sending church. Scripture does not report but I won't be surprised to find out that the prayer and fasting by the saints of Antioch didn't continue.

Lord's Day, 29 July 2018 Psalm 119:58

I entreat Your favor with all my heart; be gracious to me according to Your promise.

Lord, it is Your promise that never fails. It is Your grace, mercy and love that is ever present. My promises are fickle things, tossed in the wind, bowing to the demands of self. Heal me, Lord, You know that my desire is to be obedient and keep Your words, but the flesh is weak. O, Lord, that my promises would be yeas and amen in you.

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



July 23-29, 2018

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: Titus 3:15b

Grace be with you all.

A poignant prayer, Lord, that Your grace would pour down over the [congregation] and all associated with it. We pray that grace not only for us but for all with whom we contact. May the Spirit move through us in power to declare the grace, mercy, and peace of Your Kingdom to all.

We pray, not only for the aggregate ministry of the [congregation] but also for our individual ministries in the vineyards where you have planted us. Amen

To fear or not to fear, that is the question.

The fear of the Lord, an expression that occurs many times in Scripture, 142 in the ESV in various forms, is not well understood in the Church today. For many, the phrase represents a weak and flabby description of an overly saccharine spiritual being of some sort. It certainly does not include the concept of the LORD, God the Almighty who spoke all things into being and who controls all things.

Join with me in examining the fear of the LORD and seeking an understanding of life in the Kingdom of Heaven in the here and now as guided by that fear.

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