

This Baby Disrupts Everything

Matt 1:18-25

We can't help but laugh when new parents ask the question, "When will things get back to normal?" We have tried various answers to try to get the idea across. "When he graduates from college" gets the idea across. "Now this IS normal" is a good one. But the point is that once a baby arrives in your home everything else is reoriented toward that baby. Because of this new little one in your life, you sleep, eat, work, and play differently.

While the birth of your baby will change your life, the baby whose birth we remember today brings a change to every life. If a new baby disrupts the routine of your daily life, this baby has come to disrupt not only our lives but the very nature of life and death.

Some six hundred years before this birth, the Prophet Isaiah recorded a message from God about a baby that would be born to be a Divine Sign. This baby would be born to a Virgin. This baby would be called "Immanuel"-that is "God is with us". He would bear the titles, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. He would be destined to rule over an international and eternal kingdom. All this is to say, "This baby would be God."

Even before this tiny little newborn boy let out his first cry, or took in his first breath of earth's air, this baby had already thrown into complete disarray the laws of Biology and the Laws of Spirituality. Biology 101 teaches us that Virgins do not have babies. Spirituality 101 tells us that God is spirit, holy, and omnipresent. God is the Creator of everything. Humans don't give birth to God. God does not cry for his momma. God does not wear diapers, does He? If you are looking for religion that will bow to your logic, and crumble into your neat categories, this baby has come to disrupt your life.

The baby Jesus would reframe the marriage of Mary and Joseph. Just the fact that we say "Mary and Joseph" says a lot. As the man and the elder, Joseph culturally would take the lead in their relationship. Now Joseph was having dreams of angels basically telling him to follow Mary's lead, because this is God's doing. If you are out to make an argument for the man to be the "Spiritual Leader" of the home, this family is going to cause you trouble. Notice Joseph does not consummate the marriage until after the baby Jesus is born. The marriage of Mary and Joseph was not the foundational, domestic, society forming relationship we want it to be. It was an arrangement used to carry out the salvific mission of God. If you want a faith that conforms to your definition of who can be called and how, this baby has come to disrupt your life.

This baby, as He lay in a feed trough was making a mess of local politics. As a rule, Politicians love babies. They are the greatest props, photo opps, and future taxpayers all rolled into one tiny cuddly body. But Herod was not looking for the infant Jesus for a photo. He was looking to have this baby killed. The Child was a threat to this king. If you are looking to justify your pursuit of power, if you live by "might makes right", if you believe

“blessed are the rich, the powerful, and the comfortable,” then you pray, “God bless me”, this baby has come to disrupt your life.

This baby, as the angels announced His arrival, made a complete mess of the religious norms as well.

We have uncouth shepherds exuberantly praising God. The religious experts don't even want to go and see Him? Those considered “irreligious” come out as holy rollers while the people known as devout suddenly appear complacent, detached and unaffected. If you want to belong to the church of the dignified, the professionals, the neat, the sweet, or the elite, this baby has come to disrupt your life.

This baby, before He took His first step or said His first word was already changing international policy. Wise men arrived from a far off land- a land that once had conquered Israel. Now these rulers came not to be given homage but to pay homage to the King of Israel. They had not been conquered by an army but by a baby. They came bringing gifts to Him as they would a reigning king. They bowed in reverence and worship. Never has a baby done so much for international relations. If you belong to the church of “God and Country” and take refuge in the church of the patriot, this baby has come to disrupt your life.

Would life every go “back to normal”? Was the old stability lost forever? Maybe stability is overestimated. Our ways of doing marriage, family, religion, politics, and global policy should only be stable as long as they are good. Sin and death were so stabile it seemed they ruled the world. But now at the birth of this poor babe in an obscure town, these things that held humanity captive were already shaking in their shoes.

The angel's pronouncement to Joseph about Mary really says it, “She will bear a Son and she will name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matt 1:24) The very birth of Jesus destabilized what He would ultimately overthrow. This Baby as Y'shua would cleanse from sin all who trust in Him. As the Prince of Peace, He will put an end to human strife and warfare. As the King of Kings, He will destroy oppressive and self seeking regimes. As Lord of Lords, He will establish the Kingdom of Righteousness. We have not yet seen all He will do but we can tell a great deal about the end from its beginning. Bethlehem's baby is the world's Savior, Redeemer, Judge, and Ruler.

Not only will things never go back to normal, but the pieces are still in the air and it is yet to be seen what we will be. Jesus is still shaking up marriages, families, cultures, religion, and politics, and it is a good thing. God's Son has visited our lives with Divine disruption. We don't look for things to get “back to normal.” Instead we pray, “Thy Kingdom Come”.

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