

Title: Christ Fulfilled the Law
Text: Matthew 1: 22-25; Luke 2: 21-24
Date: December 24, 2017
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Matthew 1: 22: Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and [a virgin] shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24: Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Joseph “*knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son.*” Why did God include this fact in his word? Why was this necessary? The Lord Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin. But just as necessary, the Lord Jesus was born of a virgin.

Proposition: It was necessary that the Lord Jesus be conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of a virgin and be born of a virgin in order that he might fulfill, not only the prophets, but also the law, establishing his people in everlasting righteousness, while honoring God his Father.

Matthew 5: 17: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Illustration: The cup filled full!

When “*the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy*” (Lu 2: 10) it was not good advice, but good news! *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Lu 2: 11)* The good news is that God the Father sent his Son to fulfill the law for his people.

Romans 8: 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

So this is why Joseph knew her not until after she had brought forth her firstborn son. Christ must fulfill the law for his people. But what did that have to do with Christ fulfilling the law?

Luke 2: 21: And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22: And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord; 23: (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) 24: And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

CHRIST FULFILLED THE LAW BY HIS BIRTH

Joseph knew her not until after Christ was born so that Christ would come forth from the womb fulfilling the law of God.

Notice verse 23, “As it was written in the law of the LORD, Every male that OPENETH the womb shall be called holy to the LORD.” Every child of Adam comes forth from our mother’s womb law-breakers, speaking lies; the GodMan, came forth obeying the law. God’s law said,

Exodus 13: Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: it *is* mine.

Numbers 3: 13: Because all the firstborn *are* mine; *for* on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I *am* the LORD.

Christ is the first firstborn who truly opened the womb! Every other firstborn was ceremonially sanctified and holy before God. But no other firstborn son fulfilled the law of the firstborn in perfect righteousness. It is because by every other child being conceived of man’s seed, the womb is opened at conception when the seed travels from one end of the womb to the other. But Christ, being conceived of the Holy Spirit, and Joseph not knowing her until he was born, Christ is the first firstborn son to truly open the womb.

THE TRUE FIRSTBORN SON

Christ is God’s true Firstborn Son. He is the only true Firstborn who perfectly fulfilled the law of the firstborn.

- Romans 8: 29 declares Christ is *the Firstborn among many brethren*.
- Colossians 1: 15 declares Christ is *the Firstborn of every creature*.
- Colossians 1: 18 declares Christ is *the Firstborn from the dead* (Col. 1:18).
- Hebrews 12: 23 declares all God’s elect redeemed by Christ are *the church of the Firstborn*
- And our text declares Christ is *God’s Firstborn Son!*

The significance for his people is that the firstborn was entrusted by the father of the house to glorify the father’s name as he saved all the rest of the father’s children in the house. That is what Christ the Firstborn did. He glorified God as he saved all God’s elect children. The firstborn was made the prophet, priest and king of the house. That is what God the Father has made his Firstborn Son and Christ was faithful to God his Father as such.

Hebrews 3: 1: Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; 2: Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house. 3: For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. 4: For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God. 5: And Moses verily *was faithful* in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6: But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

The purpose of God in electing and foreordaining whom he would to be his children is for the sake of Christ his Firstborn:

Romans 8: 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

So we see our Savior, the God-man, according to the law of God is the true Firstborn. He is God's firstborn. The one who sanctified and holy before God who was faithful to God in building his house by saving his people from our sins.

CHRIST FULFILLED ALL THE LAW

By Christ being the first to perfectly fulfill the law of the firstborn it foreshadows the truth that Christ is the only one who fulfilled all the law of God for his brethren in his house. Being the Firstborn he is holy and separate and consecrated to God, made under the law to serve God in perfect righteousness on behalf of his people.

Galatians 4: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

In our text, we see Christ serving the Father in perfect righteousness under the law, even giving us a double confirmation that Christ alone fulfilled the law for his people. Not only did Christ fulfill the law of the firstborn by his birth, he also fulfilled the next command of God by being circumcised at eight days old—*“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.” (Lu 2: 21)*

Circumcision was instituted by God as a symbol of the new birth. The cutting away the filth of the flesh which showed the necessity of God's elect being purified by his grace (Tit. 3:5-6). But Christ was born holy, without sin. What need did he have of being circumcised? He was circumcised for the same reason he was baptized, *“Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” (Mt 3: 15)* He was circumcised in the flesh declaring he was already pure in heart. He was circumcised committing himself as the Surety of God's elect, his brethren. Just as circumcision identified the children of Abraham as one, Christ's circumcision identified him as one with Abraham's spiritual seed, God's elect, whom he came to save.

Hebrews 2: 16: For verily he took not on *him the nature of angels*; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. 17: Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

By submitting to this ordinance our blessed Savior voluntarily made himself a debtor to do the whole law for us.

Galatians 5: 3: For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Whenever a child was circumcised he was brought under the law and legally required to keep the whole law—but none ever did! Yet, by this one act of circumcision, Christ came under the law and pledged himself to keep the law perfectly for his people, even to being made sin for his people and shedding his own blood on the cross!

But why was it necessary Christ lay down his life as the Substitute of his people? It was necessary because God cannot justify the guilty except his law be upheld in strict justice. Righteousness must be maintained, justice must be satisfied as God pours out mercy and grace upon his people. This is what is meant when God says he is *“a just God and a Savior”* (Isa. 45:20); *“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged”* (Pro. 16:6); *“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”* (Ps 85: 10); *“But thou,*

O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.” (Ps 86: 15)

So did Christ accomplish the work? Yes, indeed! His name was called JESUS, “*for he shall save his people from their sins.*”

Matthew 3:17: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

What pleased God? What well-satisfied God?

Isaiah 42: 21: The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make [it] honourable.

Isaiah 53: 10: it pleased the LORD to bruise him;

For all his people, Christ took our place as our substitute bearing our sin bearing our curse and made perfect satisfaction to justice for us. Therefore, for everyone who believes on Christ, scripture says:

Colossians 2: 10: ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Romans 7: 4: Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR BELIEVERS?

Seeing that Christ is the only one who fulfilled the law, what does this mean for sinners like us who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

One it means the only way we can establish the law is through faith in Christ.

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Romans 3: 28: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

I say to every unbelieving sinner and to every self-righteous religious sinner, the only way a sinner can fulfill the law of God is through faith in Christ who by himself fulfilled it for his people. So repent from your works and believe on him.

Two, knowing Christ fulfilled the law for his people, every believer is free from the law given at Mt. Sinai—that includes moral and ceremonial law.

Romans 7: 6: But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Galatians 2:19: For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Three, being made free from the law by the obedience of Christ, it means as believers we must never attempt to worship God from a legal spirit using the moral law nor carnal ordinances lest we be found like the Pharisees.

Romans 10: 2: For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Those who make it a necessity to keep God's law nullify the law and dishonor it. To attempt to establish righteousness by the law is to dishonor God and his Christ.

Galatians 6:13: For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

Romans 2:23: Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

Galatians 2: 21: I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Galatians 5: 4: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

But men will say, "You are antinomian! Lawless. Anti-law!" Not at all! Scripture says we are either the servants of sin or the servants of righteousness! Those born of the Spirit of Christ are under the gracious, loving, and merciful rule of Christ himself who rules effectually in the hearts of his people as Head of his church! Paul said the believer is,

1 Corinthians 9:21...not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.

Galatians 5:18: But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Led of the Spirit means we are led of Christ and obey the commandments of Christ, not Moses and the law of Sinai. As Christ power and grace makes us yield our members to the Lord our Righteousness, by his same power and grace Christ promises to never allow us to be turned away from faith in him.

Romans 6:14 sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

What is the commandment of Christ which believers obey? It is his light and easy yoke: faith and love.

1 John 3:23: This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

Galatians 5: 5: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

It was necessary that the Lord Jesus be conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of a virgin and be born of a virgin in order that he might fulfill, not only the prophets, but also the law, that he might bring in everlasting righteousness for his people while honoring God. Believe on Christ and do all that you do constrained by his love, not law!

Amen!