

Dreaming a Possible Dream
Christmas Eve 2008
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I.

Choices

The Christmas story tells us that God's *sovereign decision* to save us rides upon the *fragile choice* of a man named Joseph.

Don't you think God could have come up with a better plan than depending upon our choices?

Yet this is the way of God in the world

The Almighty, Creator God risks to give us the dignity to make significant choices.

III.

Four Characters with Choices to Make

Matthew has told the birth of Jesus with reference to three people who have to make a choice.

A. Joseph in Genesis (dreams in Matthew)

- Cocky young dreamer, brothers hated him
- Finally responded to the LORD in Egypt
 - “God meant it for good, you for evil” Gen 50:19
- Saved his family, and extended family by responding to God of his dreams

- *Cocky young person with a choice = family at stake
- *CHOOSES for God

B. Ahaz of Judah (quote in Matt 1:23)

- 8th century young man faced with crisis (Isaiah 7)
- Rezin and Pekah, e.g., John Kennedy in Cuban missile crisis
- LORD sends Isaiah “If don't *amen*, you won't be *amen-ed*.”
- Sign is child named Emmanuel = god with us

- *Fearful young man with a choice = nation at stake
- *CHOOSES against God

C. Joseph in Matthew

- Story told with Joseph in Egypt (dreams) and Ahaz (virgin)
- Engaged to a pregnant woman
- Righteous, wants to do the right thing
- Matt genealogy has a hole = no Son of David for Jesus, 1:16
- “Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born”

- *Fearful young man with a choice = world at stake
- Salvation (Jesus) = Joseph tradition
- Emmanuel (God with us) = Ahaz tradition

- *What will he do?

III.

The Fourth Character

Joseph in Egypt
 Ahaz in Israel
 Joseph in Matthew
Who's fourth? That's us

A. God gives us real choices with real consequences

HUGE RISK!

B. God works with our choice, even modifies his plans, suffers

HUGE RISK!

C. Our choice matters

HUGE RISK!

E.g. Parents and children: children must make choices
 -Pilgrim must walk through a gate in *Pilgrim's Progress*

-Pascal “God gives us enough evidence to convict but not to convince”

-Chambers “Obedience is the opener of eyes”

*Joseph made his choice,
which allowed God to work salvation in Jesus
which allowed for God to be Emmanuel, with us

What choice do you need to make tonight?

*God gives us a choice tonight. I pray we choose the LORD.