

For the Love of an Imperative Verb Matthew 1:18-25

The Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year A, RCL

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, [ἰδοὺ, **idou**; *not translated here*] an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³“**Look** [ἰδοὺ, **idou**], the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means “God is with us.” ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus. [NRSV89]

1:20

ἰδοὺ, **idou**; *vb*: 2nd aor mid **imperative** 2nd pers sg from ὁράω:

translations: **behold** [ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NKJV], also **suddenly** [NJB], **he aquí** [IAAdNT]; not translated in NIV11, NRSV89, or NRSVue

1:23

ἰδοὺ, **idou**; *vb*: 2nd aor mid **imperative** 2nd pers sg from ὁράω:

translations: **look** [NRSV89, NJB, NRSVue], also **behold** [ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NKJV], **he aquí** [IAAdNT]; not translated in NIV11

Crossett: The NRSV89 and NRSVue translators chose not to render the Greek ἰδοὺ, **idou** into English in vs. 20, yet did so in vs. 23 (and in many other places). Why do you suppose they made that decision? Is it important?

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Gene Crossett, Jr.
December 1, 2022