

Why the Virgin Birth

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[0 : 0 0] If you are unaware of the Christmas story, as in what is presented to us in our Bibles, there's two Gospels, two out of the four Gospels, those who testify to the life of Jesus Christ, tell us of his birth.

What you heard today, which was read to us, was the Gospel presentation from the Gospel of Luke. Luke was a man who lived several decades after Jesus, who decided to investigate the claims and truths of Christ.

What we heard today, we believe, were from the mouth of Mary, that he went and met with Mary and asked her to share with him her most precious memories about the birth of Jesus.

The other Gospel, Matthew, also contains the birth of Jesus Christ, but it's a lot shorter.

Let me read it to you. It said now that 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.

[1 : 1 7] 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. Matthew adds, all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken to by the prophet, which reads, behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, which means, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.

When Joseph woke from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded. He took his wife, but knew her not, until she had given birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus.

What's interesting from both of these testimonies is how uniquely God shaped these events. I think we can be honest and understand that the birth of the Son of God is a somewhat unique event in all of history, and required something special to make these events unfold.

These earthly parents who would care for the child, both Mary and Joseph, are told about this miraculous event through an angel. Mary is approached by an angel, which she converses with, and Adam is approached by an angel in a dream.

[3 : 1 4] And one of the things that is common to both of these testimonies is the emphasis on the virgin birth, on the virginity of Mary.

Mary, just as we read, behold, according to the prophets, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son. Luke's gospel raises the issue in an entirely personal way, as Mary just has to ask the question to the angel, how can I conceive?

How can I be pregnant? I am a virgin. This evening, I want to answer the question, why is this important? Why is it so important that Jesus be born of a virgin?

Why is it so important that the prophets prophesied over 700 years before the birth of Christ that this shall be a child be born of a virgin?

What's interesting is that even the Christian church came together about 400 years after the time of Christ, and they put together a document. It's called a creed.

[4 : 25] It's known as the Apostles' Creed. And I want to read it for you, but this creed contains kind of the necessary core beliefs of the Christian faith. It simply reads, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to hell. The third day, he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven. And is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From there, he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, which is the universal church. I believe in the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrections of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen. Even they knew, understood, how important it was to put at the central point of the Christian faith that Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

[5 : 52] It's easy to say, I believe in God. I believe in Jesus. I believe that Jesus suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. History tells us these things.

People attested these things. Even outside of our Bibles, we know and understand these events. We also know that Jesus Christ rose again and ascended to heaven.

But why? Why is it so important that Jesus be born of the Virgin Mary? Three reasons have been posited through history.

The first reason, they believe that the early church fathers had to make sure that Jesus wasn't seen as a ghost or an apparition, that he was in fact human being.

He was certainly God, but he had a flesh. The second reason that some believe that they qualified this is because in the Greek version, in the Greek understanding of life, was the dominant form of thought at that time.

[6 : 54] And if you know anything about your Greek history, you've heard of Zeus, the Greek god on high, who had a son named Hercules. But in their story, Zeus takes on the form of a man and visits Hercules' mother.

But the Bible is nothing like that. It simply says that the Holy Spirit came upon her that, no insult to us, no man was necessary.

Why? Well, this answer is found in this prophecy which I spoke of, which happened 700 years ago, written by the name Isaiah.

If you were with us last Sunday, we learned the story of Ahaz, who was a king, who was besieged by a foreign army and was about to be defeated.

And this prophet Isaiah came to him. And he simply told him, God can save you. In fact, in order to test God, just ask for anything to test him so you would know that my words would be true.

[8 : 08] Ahaz decided he didn't want to go God's way, but he went his own way. What he did is he paid off a foreign king with the treasures of the temple of God, and he invited their life and their culture into Israel.

This enraged God and thus left God's people to be destroyed. Not only their city and their temple, because the people followed Ahaz, who feared man more than God.

But Isaiah did not leave God's people hanging, so to speak. He offered them hope for the future.

And he simply said, therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign whether you ask for it or not. Behold, you will know, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall his name be called Emmanuel, which means God with us.

Unlike this Israelite king who was too proud to ask God for help when God offered help, God would send his son, Jesus Christ, the future king, to be born of a virgin so that he would not inherit the sins of King Ahaz.

[9 : 52] By being born of a virgin and the seed of sin, original sin, would not taint Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches us that Jesus was without sin, could not sin, could not even speak with sinful or have sinful thoughts.

You see, the Bible teaches us that because you and I are born of Adam and Eve, believe that it's impossible for us to be sinless. Not only are we born with the guilt and consequences of original sin, we have our own sin to contend with.

This sin infects every part of us. It affects our actions, our attitudes, our motives, and our desires. But Jesus, because he was not born of man, had no sin.

What's interesting is that so many people get this wrong about Christianity. It's that if someone could show us all the right rules to follow, we would be perfect before God.

[11 : 13] Every other religion over the world teaches that, that you can somehow find your own righteousness in yourself, in your actions, in your good works, in the money that you give, or the amount of time you come to church.

But Christianity has a completely different message. The fact of the matter is you cannot hold to the commandments to obey.

even though Jesus, the world, will tell us that Jesus is a great teacher, he was a great example, moral teacher for us to follow, Jesus Christ did not ask us to follow him because of these things.

You see, Jesus came to live the life that you and I cannot live. Jesus Christ came to walk the perfect life that you and I cannot.

And at that moment of salvation is the moment when we receive God's, Jesus' life as our own. What kind of cruel God would God be if he sent Jesus to this world and said, I want you to act like me.

[12 : 33] I'm just going to lead by example and do all the things that you're supposed to do. That would be a debilitating life.

You know that? You would follow all these legalistic ways and you try to follow these rules but you would only fail and fail again. But Jesus Christ doesn't do that.

Jesus Christ simply says, take my life. Take it. The book of Colossians tells us that Jesus Christ is almost like a jacket that we put on.

It's his righteousness. The perfect life that he lived because he had no sin from the time of Mary and he lived these 33 years without sin that we are to take his life and put it on so when God looks at us he sees his son Jesus Christ.

And what Jesus Christ did is he puts us on. Our brokenness our failures our sin our wrong motives our wrong attitudes and he wears that before God for us.

[13 : 49] And it's because of that God put Jesus on the cross and Jesus bore the wrath of our sins for us.

So when we put Jesus on it means we become his followers. We live for the king.

This is how God sees us. We have no more sin that condemns us. God sees us perfectly. 2 Corinthians 5.21 says for our sake God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

You see Christianity in this Christmas represents God giving us the sign that he can and will rescue us. this is the culmination of the promise that God gave to his people that there would be one who would come who would be without sin.

There would be one who will always trust God who will always obey God and will always do the will of God the one who is born of a virgin.

[15 : 14] but because Jesus was fully God yet born of Mary he's like us.

He is born of flesh and blood. He walked on this earth to experiences the hurts that we experience in this world.

Because of this God can empathize with our lives. Jesus knows our brokenness our failures and sins our pains our hurts.

Hebrews 4.15 says we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but we have one who in every respect has been tempted just as we are yet he was without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in times of need.

[16 : 24] This is ultimately why Jesus was born of a virgin to live the life we could not live but he lived a life that he can identify with us and understand our needs.

I'm going to close off with this quote and this explains how Jesus Christ is for us today. It says in his exalted state the risen Christ no longer suffers pain or distress immortal and impassable he dwells in heaven with perfected affections no longer burdened by the sorrows he felt as he walked among us.

Nevertheless as a faithful high priest he still feels deep compassion for his tempted and suffering people. This glorified compassion far from detracting from the good news of Christ high priesthood gives great hope to those who need his compassion most.

For though Christ is not distressed by his people's distresses he is moved by them and the compassion he offers is a powerful sympathy supplying all the grace his people lack in all their times of need until they finally dwell perfected with him.

When Jesus came and was born over 2,000 years ago his people were under duress by a foreign king and they had no hope but on that day on Christmas day true hope in the baby came to honor God's promises that he would rescue them and it's because of this we can be rescued as well.

[18 : 29] Let's pray. dear holy heavenly father sometimes there's these details in scriptures we don't understand but there's a far greater deeper theological meaning.

We give you thanks as we gather with friends and family this night let our minds be on the promises that you gave to your people.

And father if there's someone here who does not know you I pray that you will continue to draw them to you allow them to answer the questions they need to ask to seek the answers they need to hear to have the truth revealed to them about who they are and what they need God for those of us who are in Christ who have put on you we give you thanks that you gave us your life so that your father God becomes our father who promises to carry our burdens to cover our brokenness and to make us whole with him where we will one day reign supreme with the living God and with you Jesus sitting at the right hand of God as our king we ask these things in your most holy powerful name amen