

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST¹

Conceived by God and Born of A Woman... **Message 3 of 3**

In this 3-part series we are considering the Bible's teaching of the Virgin Birth as a foundational way to address human difficulties. It is a way in which the Holy Spirit can effectively lead us to a deeper faith and trust in Jesus. You and I struggling in the midst of life's pressures, illness, and difficult relationships... perhaps looking for meaning or purpose; discover in the reality of "Jesus' incarnation" the understanding that God is greater than life's problems.

God is faithful... a loving, caring Creator able to accomplish his purposes for his creation. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus revealed in the gospels brings comfort and hope to all those who receive him—who believe in his name! In the gospel of John we read, *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing ye might have life through his name.* (20:31)

Through the virgin birth of Jesus of Nazareth, God became human. This is the sensational and mysterious truth of the events of the Christmas Story—the nativity of the Lord. 2004 years ago God determined that it was time for the Savior to come to earth. Everyone needed him very much, though they didn't know it, for no one was pleasing God.

All the people in the world were sinners, just as Adam and Eve had been. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God promised them that a Savior would come someday to take away their sins. (See Genesis 3:15) His promise was to all humanity—to you and I!

In the first message we saw that the historical record of the Christian church is clear: The church has steadfastly maintained, from the apostles to the present day, that Jesus Christ is the God-man. He was born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit in a miraculous, divine-creative act. The Virgin Birth and the deity of Christ are two of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Jesus is "God with us (Immanuel)," born of a virgin, in order that God's salvation purposes would be fulfilled in him.

READ... Galatians 3:14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

The second message focused us on what the Scriptures say about the nature of Christ's birth. A broad overview of the Bible reveals that in the Old Testament Jesus is prophesied; in the gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John he is revealed; in the Book of Acts and the 24 epistles he is preached and explained.

Mathew's gospel is oriented so as to show that God is faithful and has sent the promised Messiah. He wrote to demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth is the One in whom all salvation hopes; and the promises of Old Testament Messianic prophecy scriptures were fulfilled. In other words, Jesus' birth, through a virgin, exactly fulfills the Old Testament prophecy. (Isaiah 7:14, 9:7)

In Luke's gospel we saw the masterfully woven truth of Jesus' virgin birth in such a way as to see God's great grace, displayed in his concern for even the lowliest members of society. In the

persons of Zacharias and Elizabeth—the parents of John the Baptist, and in Joseph and Mary we see God working through seemingly unfortunate circumstances to achieve his purposes.

Luke’s gospel account shows us that God was at work reclaiming these folk’s circumstances and bringing about his answer, not just to their “apparent” problems but to humanity’s greatest problem: **the need for redemption.**

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The impact of the virgin birth on the lives of believers like you and I

The theological truths of the Virgin Birth speak powerfully to our lives as God’s people. In many ways, these truths help us to strengthen our faith, encourage our hearts, and proclaim to others the hope of salvation in the person and the work of the Lord Jesus.

According to God’s Word there are three basic things wrong with mankind.ⁱⁱ

- First, we are “*slaves of sin*” (See Romans 6:17)
- Second, we engage in “*impurity and lawlessness*” (6:19)
- Third, we are heading for “*death*” (6:16) and “*eternal doom*” (6:21)

These things are all related... **Because we are what we are; we’ve done what we’ve done. Because we’ve done what we’ve done, we’re going where we’re going!!**

However, in the Virgin Birth we see that God is busy changing our destinies... forgiving what we’ve done, and changing us from the inside out. Evidence of God’s great grace in our own lives can be seen clearly for there is no mistaking the difference between our being a “*slave of righteousness*” and “*a slave of sin.*”

Romans 6:17-18 tells us, “*But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.*”

God’s great grace and humanity

The doctrine of the Virgin Birth speaks to humanity today of **assurance**... assurance of God’s commitment to his Creation and to those created in his image and likeness. God created us as persons in his own image for his own purposes. People were not created “for themselves,” or to be free from a relationship to God. We were to understand our value and our worth... finding our dignity in terms of being image-bearers of the one true, living God.

In all of this, we see the commitment of God to us as his special creation—his image-bearers. He himself entered into our existence so as to take upon himself the penalty for our sinfulness and to reclaim us for his holy purposes. This speaks powerfully to our value as people... we are the image bearers of God.

2 Cor. 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

God's great grace and humility

The doctrine of the Virgin Birth also teaches us that God is God and we are not. One component of our sinfulness is pride... we tend to think more of ourselves than we should or we fail to see our brokenness and our need for a Savior. We often underestimate the extent to which it has taken root in our own lives. Much of the Bible speaks to this condition of fallen humanity

We sometimes fail to understand or fully appreciate that we are completely dependent upon God's grace to rectify our fallen condition. We are not just sinners but, more importantly—helpless sinners! There is nothing we can do to change our status as sinners in God's holy presence. Nor can we do anything on our own to please him. In fact, we often fail to appreciate that we are completely dependent on God for every aspect of our existence.

Here again the doctrine of the Virgin Birth helps us to see that we are completely dependent creatures, looking to the gracious provision of our God for every need.

We are encouraged throughout the New Testament to become as little children. In Scripture we are compared to sheep in order to communicate the extent of our dependency. In the incarnation, Jesus took upon himself a human nature in order to identify with us in our vulnerability and to bring us out of our sinful self-reliance and self-centeredness. As his children, we are to accomplish his will through obedience and faith so that we, as the body of Jesus Christ can live powerfully in his strength and for his purposes.

God's great grace and obedience

The doctrine of the Virgin Birth also teaches us that it is not always necessary to understand how God intends to accomplish his purposes in and through each of us. As we saw in the gospel accounts of the Virgin Birth, the people God was using—Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zacharias, and the lowly shepherds were not fully aware of what God was doing when he dealt with them. But they were obedient to his commands.

God knew what he was doing in and through each of them, even when they themselves did not. Thus the Virgin Birth should encourage you and I to trust our gracious God to work his purposes in and through our lives even though we do not fully understand what he is doing.

John 14:23-24a Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.

Grace and suffering

In the doctrine of the Virgin Birth we can see that we can bear up under suffering. In bringing about the Virgin Birth, God invaded the lives of numerous people and allowed them to face hardship, disgrace, and shame in order to bring about his plans. The church—you and I, need to understand this reality today!

The New Testament teaches that our suffering has value, whether suffering for persecution because of our faith in Christ or suffering from the many things that can happen to us or around us. God tells us in Scripture and shows us in many ways that we are to, “*Endure hardship as discipline.*” We learn patience and perseverance, and gain victory through suffering. It is in suffering that we become more like Christ.

Through the Virgin Birth God entered human experience and suffered humiliation and rejection, misunderstanding and persecution, deprivation and grief, and was horribly and wickedly slaughtered for our sinfulness—for you and I! God uses suffering to conform us to the image of his Son.

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

In this message series we have seen that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is a precious, time-honored teaching of the church of Jesus Christ. Despite our sin, our weaknesses, our failures, our rejection of his grace and our rebellion the Lord’s commitment to humanity is evident through the Virgin Birth. God supernaturally invaded human history; accomplishing his purposes for our salvation.

In the Virgin Birth we see that God is busy changing our destinies... forgiving what we’ve done and changing us from the inside out—conforming us to his Son. Evidence of God’s great grace in our own lives can be seen clearly as expressed in the Book of Jude and known as The Doxology...

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

You and I can declare: “**I shall live until I die and when I die I shall live**”... rejoicing for all we cannot lose; giving thanks for all that we do not deserve.

ⁱ Based on Chapter 3 by Robert K. Rapa, from “Foundational Faith” Moody Bible Institute (This message by Dan Scheel)

ⁱⁱ From in text notes for Romans Chapter 6 by Stuart Briscoe in Men’s NLT Study Bible