

Christmas Promises

The Virgin Birth

When God promises He comes through!

The birth of Christ fulfilled many promises or prophecies.

This season is known as **Advent** - *[the coming]- or arrival of Christ.*

Matthew writes,

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying,

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, ²¹She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

²²Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Behold, the Virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His Name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.” (Matt. 1:18-23)

Christ’s birth according to this passage fulfills prophecies from Isaiah.

- A pregnant virgin.
- The birth of a baby who was God.

I. The Virgin Birth of Christ

Prophecy

Mary, a virgin, would bear the Messiah,

a son who would be a man and also ‘God with us’ – Deity. (Is. 7:14)

Pre-existence

John wrote,

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jesus) v. 14

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word.” v. 1

Matthew reiterates Mary’s virginity in the opening statement:

...when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

Joseph's and Mary's Story/struggle:

Joseph and Mary were betrothed when Mary became pregnant.

(They were engaged to be married according to the Jewish custom of the day- *kiddushin* – 12 month period in which they were legally married but with no physical relationship whatsoever; living in separate homes – a period of testing their fidelity)

(the betrothal would have to be dissolved much like a divorce).

Matt. 1:18-25 Struggle and Obedience of Joseph.

Joseph, because of his personal righteousness was going to quietly divorce her Joseph's angelic encounter in a dream.

Joseph was thus prevented from 'putting her away' by an angel's explanation that her child was by the Holy Spirit and that he could go ahead and marry Mary.

Joseph also kept her a virgin until after the birth of Jesus. (Matt. 1:25)

From this text and others, it can be concluded that the virgin birth of Christ is clearly the only biblical teaching; and we can trust that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virgin.

Luke records Mary's encounter with an angel

When the angel announced that Mary

“would conceive in her womb and bear a Son....”

Mary's only problem with the angelic announcement:

“How can this be since I am a virgin?”

The angel then proclaimed that the Child's conception would be supernatural, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.”

As a reinforcement the angel told Mary that her relative, Elizabeth, had also conceived a son in her old age (a miraculous pregnancy as well.)

Critics throughout the ages have struggled with the virgin birth,

as did Joseph and Mary. The other difficulty is with the nature of the Christ-child, who was born of a woman to be fully man and conceived by the Holy Spirit to be fully God – thus the deity and humanity of Christ.

Yet these truths have been two of the non-negotiable doctrines of the church.

Christmas as we know it was motivated by love.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...”

David Reagan comments,

To me, it is simply mind-boggling to think that **God loved Mankind enough, despite our sinful wretchedness, to send His precious Son to die for our sins**

so that we might be reconciled to our Creator.

What love! What amazing grace!¹

In His incarnation Christ demonstrated selfless humility and self-sacrificing love when He put others before Himself and died for our sins.

Paul summarized Jesus’ coming into the world as God’s gift,

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.” (2 Cor. 8:9).

II. The Virgin Birth is an Essential Belief

David Reagan writes,

The virgin birth of Jesus has to be considered one of the greatest miracles of history, together with the resurrection. Yet, philosophers and scientists scoff at the virgin birth as nothing but a "childish myth." Jewish leaders, from the earliest of times, have written it off as "a cruel hoax." Saddest of all, many modern day Christian theologians contend that it is "a non-essential legend."

Today, the virgin birth is flagrantly denied by professors at many Christian seminaries. In fact, I would venture to say that it is the most ridiculed doctrine in the Christian faith. It is usually dismissed as nothing but a "Johnny-come-lately myth" conjured up by a bunch of ignorant shepherds and fishermen in the First Century.

Why is the virgin-birth so essential?

¹ Recent Internet writing on the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ by Dr. David Reagan.

1. The Bible says that Mary was a virgin.

The Scripture is the word of God.

Even if it involves the miraculous we believe it is true and accurate!

- Gen. 3:15 Prophecy that a woman's seed would defeat Satan.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

“***Seed of the woman***” hints of a virgin-born redeemer,
[only used here in the Scripture].

This prophecy speaks of the promise of the coming Messiah from a woman,
His suffering “Bruised on the heel”,
and His ultimate triumph over the evil One. “bruise his head- destroy”

Hebrews 2:14 says,

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil...”

In Isaiah 7:14 it says, “...***a virgin shall be with child...***”

Virgin here means “young girl”

In Matthew the word is *parthenos*, translated ***virgin***,

Lit. “*one who has known only sexual abstinence.*”

2. The Integrity of Jesus as Messiah.

Because Jesus would be our Savior.

“You shall call His name Jesus...He will save His people from their sins.”

- Jesus had to be fully human so He could die for our sins.
- Jesus had to be Divine in order to pay the infinite price of the sins of mankind.
- Jesus had to be sinless; otherwise instead of dying for the sins of others, He would have to die for his own.

The concept of the virgin birth is not an afterthought.

It perfectly blends in with many other prophecies concerning the birth of Christ.

III. The Virgin Birth.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a child is given..

Who was the child?

1. The Child was God

²²Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Behold, the Virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His Name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.” (Matt. 1:18-23)

“Immanuel, infinitely rich, became poor. He assumed our nature, entered our sin-polluted world, took our guilt on Himself although He was sinless, bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, was wounded with our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. All of that is wrapped up in this phrase, “God with us.”²

Isaiah prophesied again of the birth of Messiah,

⁶For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷There will be no end to the increase of His government
or of peace;
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it
and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
from then on and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

Is. 9:6-7

2. The Child’s Beginning and Ending

– the birth of Messiah and the reign of Messiah.

The King who was born in a manger was...

² MacArthur, Pp. 61-62.

The Infant who is Infinite
From a Mother who is Miraculous
Who was the Revelation and fulfillment that is ultimate.

Prophecy begins from our perspective as a plan in the mind of God that He purposes to bring about.

Then in time He lets us know what He is going to do before He does it.
Like the table of contents in a book, He lets us in on what is coming.

Looking back at prophecies fulfilled, we understand that He is a faithful God –
He keeps His promises; He always has and always will.

Then like road-signs announcing coming sights, cities and places of interest
prophecy alerts us that fulfillment is near, until the full day when all is fulfilled and
we arrive at the promised destination.

One of the things we discover: God Himself.

We learn what God has always been like: He is good,
He is full of lovingkindness,
and He is faithfulness.

Prophecy prepares us for heaven.

Anticipation and longing for Christ's appearing.
Fills us with passion for all that is waiting for us in heaven.