

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

The Crucial Necessity of the Virgin Birth

By

Rev. Todd W. Allen

Villa Rica 12/7/03

Matthew 1:18-25

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. ²¹"She 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: ²³"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." ²⁴And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, ²⁵but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Isaiah prophesied that a sign would be given to the house of David. The sign was that a virgin would bear a son whose name would be called Immanuel. In the scripture we have read today Matthew informs us by the Word of the Lord that the prophecy of Isaiah was going to be fulfilled when Mary gave birth to the baby who was to be named Jesus.

I have heard people who claim to be Christian say that they do not believe in the virgin birth of Christ. They would say that the virgin birth is not necessary in order for them to be a Christian. Is that so? Is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ unimportant and nonessential to one's faith in Christ? Can you or I delete the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ? Is the virgin birth one of those things that you can say doesn't really have any bearing on one's faith one way or the other? Because, let's face it, the virgin birth has to be classified as a miracle. Virgins do not have babies. Surely we would have to say that apart from a supernatural act of God a virgin birth is a biological impossibility.

I believe the virgin birth is a vital truth, which needs to be a part of your faith and mine in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel is not truly the Gospel of God without the virgin pregnancy and birth of the baby Jesus.

I. Joseph Believed Mary Had Been Unfaithful The account we have read today about Joseph and the heavenly revelation by an angel of the Lord ought to be enough to convince any reasonable person that the conception of the baby in Mary's womb was brought about by a special act of God. We further have the account in Luke about the angel Gabriel visiting Mary and informing her that she had been chosen to conceive in her womb a son who would be called the Son of the Most High; and that God would give to Him the throne of His father David. When Mary asked how that could possibly be since she was a virgin, she was told by Gabriel that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and cause this to come about.

What we have here in Matthew would be at least three months later, for Mary had immediately gone after Gabriel's announcement to visit her relative Elizabeth: and Mary stayed with her three months

before returning home to Nazareth. When she gets back home she naturally sees Joseph. She is formally engaged to him, which incidentally was a much more binding contract than modern day engagements. Under Jewish Law she was already considered Joseph's wife even though they had not gone through the wedding ceremony, nor had they begun to live together as man and wife.

But Joseph cannot help but notice that Mary is pregnant. He can scarcely believe it. He knows that he could not be the father. Their marriage had not been consummated. So Joseph makes the normal assumption: Mary has been unfaithful. She must have been with another man while she was away at Elizabeth's.

Joseph is deeply distressed. He has love for Mary but he also has deeply held moral convictions. He had expected to marry a virgin but now he believes, mistakenly, that she is no longer a virgin. What to do? We are told of his decision in Matthew 1:19. He didn't want to make her infidelity public. Under Jewish law an adulteress could be stoned. It was a most shameful thing to be an adulteress. So Joseph didn't want to disgrace her but he knew he could not in good conscience marry her under these circumstances, so he was going to quietly and secretly divorce her.

But then Joseph has a dream in which an angel appears to him and tells him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And Mary will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.

So Joseph's mind is changed and he has peace about Mary's pregnancy. What had seemed so dark and awful was suddenly made bright and beautiful.

Isn't that true to the life of faith for all of us? We have those times when things look so bleak and desperate, but faith in God will turn something that seemed to be the end of the world into victory. Joseph must have been awfully low when he found out that Mary was pregnant and he knew he was not the father. But then he learns that Mary had not been untrue to him after all, and that the baby she was carrying was none other than the long-expected Messiah of Israel, the heir to the throne of David.

Let me say at this point that the virgin birth is necessary in our faith for several reasons. The first reason is simply that without the virgin birth we have Mary as an adulteress and Joseph as a condoner of her promiscuity. Joseph could not go thorough with his engagement to marry Mary if he knew that even before their nuptial vows had been spoken she had been an unfaithful wife.

Joseph is called a righteous man. He had a zeal for righteousness. I believe John Calvin's comments are very good at this point. ***"Joseph's righteousness which is commended consists in a hatred and detestation of wickedness. As he suspected his wife of adultery, indeed was persuaded of it, he did not wish to foster such a crime by leniency. To connive at a wife's misbehavior makes a man into a procurer. Not only do decent and honest minds abhor such a crime, but the law also treats this supine attitude, as I call it, as scandalous. So Joseph in his zeal for righteousness condemned what he took to be a crime in his wife; at the same time, his mind was disposed to humanity and restrained him from applying the full rigor of the law. The middle course, the more reasonable, was for her secretly to leave him for another."***

But not only would Mary and Joseph both be guilty of unrighteous conduct, what is far worse it would have the righteous, holy God of heaven naming the son of such unrighteous behavior the successor to the throne of David and to the highest office in all the world as Savior and Lord. Dare we use the word? Jesus Christ would in such a case be a bastard son, an illegitimate son. If we say that the virgin birth is unnecessary and non-essential what other conclusion can there be? Is that not unthinkable, that a son born of fornication would be the Savior of the world?

Beloved, we must have the virgin birth to maintain the righteousness of all parties involved. Without the virgin birth we would not even know who Jesus' real father was, because Joseph knew for certain that he was not his real father.

But there is yet another reason why the virgin birth is essential. Let us suppose that there was no virgin birth and that Jesus was born lawfully with Joseph as his father, though the scripture lets us know that he knew he was not. This may be the reasoning of some who deny the virgin birth. What about that? Would this be a problem? Yes, this would be a very serious problem for this reason. What we would have would be a baby born with the same Adamic and sinful nature as everyone else. This is not only a serious problem; it presents us with an impossible problem.

If Jesus is to be the Second Adam He must bypass the original sin of Adam that Paul speaks of in Romans 5. The Savior of men cannot be born with Adam's imputed guilt and sin for then He would be a sinner just like the rest of us and He would need a Savior too.

To save us from our sins Jesus had to be born of a virgin and live a totally sinless life. As the scripture says *When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal 4:4)*. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47, *The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit...The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.*

We don't only need a man to save us; we need a God Man to save us. This man must have the same righteousness that God has, the kind of righteousness Adam had before he sinned. No man since Adam has been born sinless and guiltless. All inherit his sin nature and have imputed to them the guilt of his original sin. So Jesus had to be born apart from the generations of Adam, innocent, sinless, undefiled. God had to prepare a body for Jesus that had none of that inherited sinfulness and guilt. The only way that could happen was by a virgin birth. It is not the woman who passes on the sin of Adam. Mary was a sinner but Jesus' Father was not of Adam's race. His Father was our heavenly Father. And therefore He qualifies as a sinless Second Adam. It is impossible for Jesus to have a human father and also be our sinless Substitute, our atoning sacrifice. Only with the virgin birth can He have a true manhood without the imputed sin of Adam. We must have the virgin birth. It is absolutely essential in order for anyone to be saved.

II. Practical Application Of The Virgin Birth

In both our theme verse and the scripture from Matthew 1 we have the truth of salvation presented. The virgin born Jesus will save His people **from their sins**. He came to redeem sinners from the curse of the Law and make it possible for us to be adopted into His family tree, into His heavenly family. God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, "Abba! Father!" God both gives the imputed righteousness of Christ to all who receive Him; God also gives the Holy Spirit to each of His adopted children so that they might live the righteous life God expects His children to live. We delight to do that. We are so filled with a love for God because of what He did in sending His Son and saving us by His substitutionary death for us that we desire to please Him. We want to live for Him. We want to serve Him. We want to have done with all sin. We find that we need His overcoming power to do this but now we can choose not to sin. We are able to be free from the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life. We experience a struggle with this but grace gives the power and strength to live as God intended for us to live, righteously and as imitators of our Savior. We are His disciples and we reflect His commandments and His love in our lives.

After speaking with a group of natives about Jesus, a missionary asked how many knew this Man. The missionary was surprised when many said they knew him. Upon investigation he learned that a doctor had lived among them at one time and that the doctor had ministered to them without thoughts of self and personal rewards. "Yes," they said, "we knew him well."

The most effective witness for Jesus Christ is the man or woman, boy or girl who is living out a life of true faith in Him.

A young woman in England many years ago always wore a golden locket that she would not allow anyone to open or look into, and everyone thought there must be some romance connected with that locket and that in that locket must be the picture of the one she loved. The young woman died at an early age, and after her death the locket was opened, everyone wondering whose face they would find within. And in the locket was found simply a little slip of paper with these words written upon it, "Whom having not seen, I love." Her Lord Jesus was the only lover she knew and the only lover she longed for.

Jesus came to found a new race of men and women, boys and girls. He included all who were waiting for His coming and who believed in His appearance in the days before His virgin birth at Bethlehem, and He includes all whom the Father draws who come to Him today; and when you do come you are adopted into His divine family. He wants you to be included. He invites you to come. When you have come you will know it by the love you have for Him, by your keen desire to live the righteous life for Him and by your cry of "ABBA! FATHER! This is an expression of filial affection, the love of a child for a father, the love of a forgiven sinner for the Savior sent by the Father. It is a genuine and sincere love. These are tokens of your adoption. Ask him to save you today. He knocks on the door of your heart. Ask him to come in. Don't delay. Do it today.

The paper and sermon manuscripts from **Pastor Todd W. Allen** are made freely available for review and distribution. We only request that proper web page attribution be provided if distributed for any reason. Please be gracious to forgive typos and errors of expression. These notes are faithful approximations of what has been preached. May God be glorified in the preaching of His Word.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA
519 MAIN STREET
VILLA RICA, GA. 30180
770-459-5276**

Developed and Maintained by: [eAirCommunications](#)

