

WHY I BELIEVE: GOD'S SON WAS VIRGIN-BORN

Mt 1:20-23

I. INTRODUCTION

A. TWO WEEKS AGO—"I BELIEVE GOD IS FATHER, ALMIGHTY, CREATOR"

1. HOW WE KNOW—GOD IS ALMIGHTY CREATOR

- Biblical Record
- Scientific Evidence
- Natural Revelation
- Human Logic
- Human Conscience
- Human Intuition—(God-shaped vacuum)

2. HOW WE KNOW—GOD IS FATHER

- a. New Testament Emphasis—on this identity
- b. We know Him as OUR Father
 1. He give us power to become Children of God—by receiving His Son—[Jn 1](#)
 2. We are adopted as His children—[Gal 4](#)
- c. God loves us—like a *true* Father
 - God IS love
 - Loves unconditionally
 - Loves sacrificially
 - Forgiving Loves—that restores
- d. Personal Experience
 1. His Spirit comes to us—and enables us to call Him “Abba, Father”—[Gal 4](#)
 2. His Spirit bears witness to our Spirit—we are His children—[Rom 8](#)

B. LAST WEEK—I BELIEVE JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD AND LORD

1. JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD

- a. Because the Father loves us—He gave us His Son to save us
- b. His identity
 1. Relation to Father = ‘Only begotten Son’
 - o Not created—eternal—co-equal with God the Father
 - o Pre-incarnate glory—and co-creator of the universe
 - o Poured Himself out—to become Son of Man
 2. His name—Jesus Christ

- a. Jesus = Savior—Jeshua/Joshua
 - b. Christ = Christos—deliverer—anoointed one
2. JESUS IS LORD—GOD MADE HIM BOTH LORD AND CHRIST
- a. God exalted Him as Lord
 - 1. For His obedience—to death on a cross
 - 2. Restored Son of Man to His pre-incarnate glory
 - b. We acknowledge Him as Lord—this is our key to salvation
3. I KNOW HE IS GOD’S SON AND LORD BECAUSE
- a. Secular historical sources—tell me He lived
 - b. Biblical Record—tells me
 - o He is the Son of God
 - o He is Lord
 - o He is the promised Messiah—fulfilling numerous OT prophesies
 - c. The logical choice—is ‘Lord’—not Lunatic or Liar
 - d. No human ‘lord’—king—or leader—has been able to save humanity
 - e. All other religious leaders and systems—have fallen short of salvation
 - f. Jesus is unique—as God’s Son and Lord
 - 1. Only He is the perfect Son of God—and Son of Man
 - 2. His teachings—unique and most influential globally
 - 3. His character—sinless
 - g. Testimony
 - 1. Martyrs—willing to die—in view of His resurrection
 - 2. Church—continuity and vast global witness
 - 3. Skeptics acknowledge Him as key to all history
 - 4. Personal—testimony of a changed life
 - **II Cor 5:17**—*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, his is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*
 - Irrefutable—no argument can disprove what a true believer experiences in Christ

C. THIS SERMON = “WHY I BELIEVE GOD’S SON WAS VIRGIN-BORN”

II. TEXTS

A. ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO JOSEPH—MT 1:18-25

18 Now 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. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20 But 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.” 22 Now 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.” 24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, 25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

B. ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY—LK 1:26-35

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” 29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” 34 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

III. DEBATE ABOUT VIRGIN BIRTH

A. THREE CHALLENGES AGAINST DOCTRINE

1. MIRACLES ARE NOT POSSIBLE
2. BIBLICAL ACCOUNT IS UNRELIABLE
3. VIRGIN BIRTH IS JUST A MYTH—NOT A HISTORICAL EVENT

B. RESPONSES TO THREE CHALLENGES

1. MIRACLES **ARE** POSSIBLE

- a. God is supernatural—Almighty Creator—Who does break into history/nature
- b. Biblical account—is full of miracles that demonstrate His power
- c. Acceptance of miracles—by nature—is a matter of faith
 1. Miracles defy human reason—which is limited to natural understanding of world
 2. Believing God’s word—Bible—God’s account of His supernatural action

2. BIBLICAL ACCOUNT **IS** AUTHENTIC AND RELIABLE

- a. The Bible is true in all it says
- b. Both Old and New Testament texts support virgin birth
- c. **Authenticity** of New Testament
 1. Number of surviving copies of ancient texts
 - o NT—5300 Greek manuscripts
 - o NT—9000+ Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Latin MSS—total pushed to 14,000+
 - o Homer’s *Iliad*—only 643 MSS
 - o Sophocles’s plays—193 MSS
 - o Aristotle’s works—49 MSS
 - o Caesar’s *Gallic Wars*—10 MSS
 - o Other ancient works—only 2-7 MSS
 2. Gap between original and first surviving copies
 - o NT—written within one generation of events
 - o NT—first copies of whole books—within 100 years of original
 - o NT—first copies of whole NT—within 250 years of original
 - o Homer’s *Iliad*—22 centuries
 - o Sophocles’s plays—14 centuries
 - o Aristotle’s works—14 centuries
 - o Caesar’s *Gallic Wars*—10 centuries
 3. Accuracy of copies
 - o NT—200,000 variant readings—but one in 2000 MSS counts as 2000 variants
 - o Only 400 are significant—only 50 change meaning of passage at all
 - o Not one variant affects a doctrinal matter
 - o Accuracy of Homer’s *Iliad* = 95%
 - o Accuracy of Indian *Mahabharata* = 90%
 - o Accuracy of NT = 99.5%
- d. **Reliability** of New Testament
 1. Eyewitness accounts—within one generation

2. Numerous historical and geographical references in Gospels are accurate
 3. Simple and honest accounts
 - a. Don't always flatter disciples
 - o Several times—Jesus said they had “little faith”
 - o “Hearts were hardened”—did not understand miracles or death predictions
 - o Mark: Jesus tells Peter—“get behind me Satan”
 - o Matthew: described his own dinner—with “sinners and tax-collectors”
 - o James and John vied for power—others ‘indignant’ [and jealous?]
 - o Disciples rebuked people who brought children to Jesus
 - b. Not embellished with fantastic stories—like later apocryphal works
 4. Confirmation by secular history
 - Numerous 1st and 2nd century author recorded Christ's death
 5. Archaeological evidence
 - Over 25,000 finds have confirmed biblical sites back to the OT
 - Not one discovery has ever contradicted biblical history
 - Hundreds of discoveries have substantiated Luke's facts—formerly disputed
 - o His correct use of ancient official titles
 - o His correct chronological references to rulers
 - o Numerous place names and personal names
3. VIRGIN BIRTH WAS HISTORICAL EVENT—NOT JUST A MYTH
- a. Charge made against several other Christian doctrines also
 - b. Response to ‘myth’ challenge
 1. **Three general arguments**
 - a. **Conditions** necessary to create a myth
 1. It takes time and remoteness from historical event to shroud it with myth
 2. Scholars say it takes *more* than two generations for myths to develop
 3. People with memory of event would discredit attempts to mythologize it
 - b. **Early dating** of New Testament
 1. Theories dating New Testament authorship in second century discredited
 2. Early authorship of New Testament
 - a. Records forming basis of Gospel accounts written 40-60 AD

- b. First epistles written about 52-53 AD
 - c. Most of New Testament written by 70 AD
 - d. Latest book—Revelation—written before 100
3. Too early for myths to influence these accounts
- NT written by those who witnessed events or who interviewed witnesses

- c. **New Testament** explicitly **repudiates** use of myths

II Pe 1:16—*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

2. **Specific argument**—myths did not influence account of Christ’s virgin birth

- a. NT nativity accounts do not read like literary myths—with fantastic imagery
 - o Also—Jesus did not posture as a super-man-god—rather a humble Servant
- b. Historical facts of nativity are precise—and historically validated
 - o Luke carefully notes many corroborating secular historical details
- c. There was no previous Greek myth with similar features—Gospel story is unique
 - o No other—birth of monotheistic God in human form
 - o No other—god-death and followed by physical resurrection
- d. Greek myths—of gods becoming human by virgin birth **postdated** Christ’s birth

IV. BIBLICAL EVIDENCE OF VIRGIN BIRTH

A. OLD TESTAMENT PREPARATION

1. **Gen 3:15**—*God said, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*
 - a. A messianic prophecy
 - b. Significance for virgin birth:
 1. Descendants in Jewish culture were usually traced through father’s line
 2. This passage speaks of the **woman’s** lineage—“*your offspring and hers*”
 3. Omission of any reference to a human father is highly important
 4. In virgin birth of Christ—no man was involved
2. **Is 7:14**—*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and you will call his name Immanuel.*

a. Three possible interpretations of passage

1. Refers only to birth of Isaiah's son—Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz ([Is 8:3](#))

a. Arguments supporting this interpretation—critics say:

1. Word translated 'virgin'—**alma**—really means 'young married woman'
2. If Isaiah had meant 'virgin'—he would have used '**bethulah**'
3. Another part of this prophecy was fulfilled soon by Assyrian invasion
4. Isaiah's wife conceived and gave birth soon after this prophecy
5. Sign for King Ahaz only—later fulfillment would have made no sense to him

b. Arguments against this interpretation

1. '**alma**' is used nowhere in the Bible for a married woman
 - But it is used five times elsewhere to mean 'virgin'
2. '**bethulah**' is used once in Bible to refer to a married woman
3. Passage should not be limited to birth of Isaiah's son
 - a. Prophesied name is different—'Immanuel'
 - b. Sign is also for whole 'house of David'—in addition to Ahaz

2. Double fulfillment—in Isaiah's son—and in Jesus Christ

- a. Double fulfillment of prophecy—is a valid Old Testament principle
- b. First fulfillment through Isaiah's young wife
 - o '**alma**' means—young woman who is a virgin at the time of conception
- c. Second fulfillment through Mary
 - o '**alma**' means—woman who remained a virgin from conception to birth

3. Refers only to the birth of Jesus Christ

- a. '**alma**' is used only to mean 'virgin' in Old Testament
- b. Virginity of mother applies to time of conception *and* birth
 - o So, this cannot refer to Isaiah's wife
- c. Sign is for 'whole house of Israel'—long past King Ahaz
- d. [Is 7:14](#) is beginning of a chain of messianic prophecies

[7:14](#) → [8:8](#) → [9:6](#) → [11:1-5](#)

e. **Mt 1:22-23** indicates Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophecy

1. Matthew says mother will be a virgin *with* child—already conceived
2. Name is reiterated—Immanuel (God with us)
 - a. This was *not* the name of Isaiah’s son
 - b. This name has only a messianic meaning

B. NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT AND CONFIRMATION

1. **Mt 1:18-23**—**four indicators**—the virgin birth was fulfilled in Jesus

- a. **v 18**—*before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit*
- b. **v19**—[Joseph] *had in mind to divorce her quietly*
- c. **v 20**—*what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit*
- d. **vv 22-23**—*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel.”*

2. **Lk 1:26-35**—**two indicators**—the virgin birth was fulfilled in Jesus

- a. **vv 26-27**—Gabriel announced the birth to Mary—a virgin pledged to be married
- b. **v35**—*“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”*

3. Further validation

- a. **Lk 2:5-7**—Mary was still *betrothed* to be married when she gave birth
 - If Joseph were the father, he would have already married her
- b. **Gal 4:4**—*But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law*
 - a. Again—no mention of an earthly father
 - b. His lineage is traced back through His mother—[implied a virgin]

V. WHY I BELIEVE THE VIRGIN BIRTH IS IMPORTANT

A. DEITY OF CHRIST

1. TRUTH OF HIS DEITY—HINGES ON THIS BIBLICAL CLAIM

He was supernaturally conceived by God—through the power of the Holy Spirit

- **Mt 1:20**—*for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit*

- **Lk 1:35**—*The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.”*
2. THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD—LOGOS –BECAME HUMAN
 - **Jn 1:14**—*The Word became flesh and dwelled among us, and we beheld His glory, even the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth.*
 3. UNLIKE PAGAN MYTHS—MORTAL MEN BECOME *LIKE* IMMORTAL GODS
 - Gospel—the Eternal Son of God—became a mortal man!
 4. SO CHRIST—SON OF MAN—WAS FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN
 - **Col 2:9**—*For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.*
 - NOT—**heresies** that threatened Early Church
 - a. Christ only divine—Father became Son—an apparition—‘seemed’ to be man
 - b. Christ only human—God adopted a good man—who obeyed perfectly

B. RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST—BASIS FOR HUMAN REDEMPTION

1. CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS—IS ROOTED IN THESE BIBLICAL CLAIMS
 - He was unique—perfect Man—by His divine nature
 - Unlike Adam and rest of human race—inherently sinless
2. OUR REDEMPTION—BASED ON CHRIST’S DIVINE AND PERFECT SACRIFICE
 - Perfect sacrifice—without blemish—offered for our sin
 - Infinite sacrifice—Son of God Himself—died to pay for *all* sin
3. OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS—IS BASED ON CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS
 - a. Christ—**doing** perfect righteousness—His **obedience**—makes us righteous
 - o **Rom 5:18-19**—*So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all persons, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all persons. For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*
 - b. But His **doing** right is based on—His **being** perfectly righteous—eternally
 1. He **never knew** sin—then He was ‘made’ to be the sin offering for us
 - o **II Cor 5:21**—*He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*
 2. He was **innocent**—sinless—‘forever’—**eternally**

- o **Heb 7:26,28**—*For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens. . . .For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.*

c. OUR **PARDON**—IS BASED ON CHRIST’S ETERNALLY RIGHTEOUS NATURE

VII. INVITATION

SOFTLY AND TENDERLLY

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
Calling for you and for me;
See, on the portals He’s waiting and watching,
Watching for you and for me.

Refrain:
Come home, come home,
You who are weary, come home;
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home!

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
Pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not His mercies,
Mercies for you and for me?

Time is now fleeting, the moments are passing,
Passing from you and from me;
Shadows are gathering, deathbeds are coming,
Coming for you and for me.

Oh, for the wonderful love He has promised,
Promised for you and for me!
**Though we have sinned, He has mercy and pardon,
Pardon for you and for me.**