

Why Should We Believe in the Virgin Birth?

In Oswald Chambers' devotional Classic, "My Utmost for His Highest," he wrote the following words in his December 25th entry. **"Jesus Christ was born into this world; not from it. He did not emerge out of history; He came into history from the outside. Jesus Christ is not the best human being the human race can boast of – He is a Being for whom the human race can take no credit at all. He is not man becoming God, but God Incarnate –God coming into human flesh from outside it. His life is the highest and the holiest entering through the most humble of doors."**

Now notice that last line I read to you and take careful notice of it. And what did it say? **"His life (in other words Christ's life) is the highest and the holiest entering through the most humble of doors."** So what was Oswald Chambers referring to when he referred to the **"most humble of doors?"**

There should be no doubt to what he was referring to based on the historical teachings of the church. It was an allusion to the fact that Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God, entered this world through the womb of a young Jewish woman, a young Jewish virgin, named Mary.

So now let me ask you. Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus Christ entered this world through the most humble of doors, or in other words through the womb of a young Jewish woman, a young Jewish virgin, named Mary? Do you believe that?

Hopefully your answer would be, "Yes! I absolutely believe it!" And certainly that would be my answer. Hopefully all of us here this evening have in fact chosen to believe this.

But why would we choose to believe such a thing? Why would we choose to believe that Jesus, the Son of God, God the Son laid aside His power and glory, left heaven, invaded time and history, and in some miraculous way, that we cannot fathom, became a human fetus in the womb of a young Jewish girl who was not officially married and had never had sexual relations with a man? It all seems rather absurd.

Is it any wonder that the liberals and the skeptics have a hard time with Christian beliefs? For them virgin birth would be viewed as fantasy, a fairy tale for adults!

Sadly, such criticisms have taken their toll. Even among certain preachers of our day are willing to say, “It doesn’t really matter whether or not you believe that Jesus was born to a virgin. The important thing is just to believe in Him. Let’s not make a big deal out of the virgin birth. At best, it is a minor issue and a secondary doctrine.” So now let me say this to you clearly as possible. These so-called preachers are wrong.

The virgin birth of Christ is not a minor issue or a secondary doctrine. Not only is it a major issue but it is also a foundational doctrine that should not in any way undermine our faith but strengthen it. And hopefully this will come alive for us this evening, in this Christmas Eve service, as we prepare ourselves for tomorrow’s celebration of Christ’s birth with our families.

And this leads us to the question that we will be seeking to answer tonight. Why should we believe in the virgin birth? So, what is the first reason?

We should believe in the virgin birth because the Scriptures demand it (Matthew 1:18, 24-25; Luke 1:24-27, 34). It demands it because the scriptures clearly teach that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived. So now let us take a look at a few New Testament verses and see if this is not so.

And we will begin with **Matthew 1:18**. And what does **Matthew 1:18** tell us? “**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 [Joseph? No! rather by] the Holy Spirit.**” Obviously this text found in Matthew clearly teaches the virgin birth of Christ. But let us keep going.

Let us now go to **Matthew 1:24-25** and what does it say? “**And Joseph awoke from his sleep [this was after a dream in which an angel spoke to him and then it says] and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, (25) but kept her a [What?] virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.**” So once again

Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, makes it clear to his readers that Jesus was virgin born.

But it was not just Matthew that communicated this truth. It was also Luke. So let me now read for you **Luke 1:26-27**. And what do these verses say? **“Now in the sixth month [not referring to Mary’s pregnancy but rather referring to the sixth month of her cousin’s pregnancy, or in other words Elizabeth’s pregnancy] 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.”** And what did he tell her? He told her that she was about to become pregnant.

So again we see another text that clearly teaches the virgin birth of Christ but this time from Luke. And this is not the only text in Luke that refers to the virgin birth.

Let us now go to **Luke 1:34**. And what does this verse say? **“Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’”**

Now I would hope that quoting these passages from **Matthew** and **Luke** would be enough evidence for you, as well as for me, to agree that the Scriptures demand that we believe in the virgin birth. But sadly for some professing believers it is not enough evidence. Consider the following example.

Harold Rimmer, a fundamentalist Presbyterian Minister of his day, once found himself in a sad situation as he served as a member of an ordination council that was examining a certain young man. To Rimmer’s astonishment, during this ordination council, the young man boldly stated that he did not believe in the virgin birth of Christ. But even more astonishing to him as various members of this ordination council began to ask this young man certain very pointed questions another member of the council spoke up and said, “I don’t believe that we should be making a big point of this for I do not believe in the virgin birth either.”

At that point one of the other ministers in the council asked him, “Why not?” And this is what he said. “Because it is only found on two pages of the New

Testament. Matthew and Luke are the only ones to mention it. And in all the writings of Paul he never introduces the question of the virgin birth.”

It was at the point Harold Rimmer could not longer keep quite. He stood up and asked to minister, “Then what do you teach and preach?” The man answered, “The Sermon on the Mount that is enough for anyone.”

After hearing this, Rimmer sarcastically responded, “Well, it is not enough for me. I don’t believe in the Sermon on the Mount,” to which the other minister, the dissident minister responded, “Why not?”

So now can you guess how Harold Rimmer responded? He responded, “Because it only occurs on 2 pages of the New Testament, and only Matthew and Luke mention it.” Now obviously the Sermon on the Mount covers more than a couple of pages. It is more like 5 pages in my NAS Bible. But still Rimmer’s point should be obvious.

The argument that this minister put forth in order to support his rejection of the virgin birth was absurd. Yes, it is true that the Gospel of Mark never mentions the virgin birth of Christ, but the Gospel of Mark never mentions the birth of Christ at all! Therefore can we assume that because Mark does not mention Christ’s actual birth that Jesus was never born? Of course not, that would be absurd!

It is not how many times a particular doctrine is taught in the Scriptures or how many pages are devoted to that doctrine within the Scriptures. The question is: do the Scriptures teach that particular doctrine? And in the case of the virgin birth of Christ our conclusion, based on **Matthew 1:18; Matthew 1:24-25; Luke 1:26-27 and Luke 1:34** is that the Scriptures do in fact teach this doctrine.

So going back to our original question. Why should we believe in the virgin birth of Christ? The Scriptures demand it. But this is not the only reason why we should believe in the virgin birth. There is still another reason.

We should believe in the virgin birth because prophecy demands it (Matthew 1:22-23 cf. Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14).

In seeking to establish this point it would be important for us to once again return to **Matthew 1** where the fact of the impending virgin birth of Christ was recorded for us in **verse 18** and amplified upon in **verses 19-21**. But we will not be looking again at **verse 18** nor will be looking at **verses 19-21** as we now we return to **Matthew 1**. Rather we will be looking at **Matthew 1:22-23** which explains to us why everything that Matthew had recorded for us about the virgin birth in **Matthew 1:18-21** had happened in the way that it happened.

And what was Matthew's explanation? We find Matthew's explanation in **Matthew 1:22-23**. So now let me read these verses for you. And what do they say? **"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.'" All that Matthew recorded as having happened in Matthew 1:18-21 happened the way it happened in order to fulfill an Old Testament prophecy. And what was the Old Testament prophecy. It was Isaiah 7:14.**

And when was this prophecy given? Isaiah gave this prophecy to Judah some 700 years before Jesus was born. But this was not all that God said to Judah through Isaiah in Isaiah 7. He also told them other things about this child.

Isaiah told them that the child would eat curds and honey. He told them that before the child would be old enough to know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the kings of Israel would meet their doom and the king of Assyria would invade the land of Judah.

There is much debate as to how God's sign actually played out in the life of King Ahaz. It seems clear though that if the sign was only fulfilled in Christ's birth that wouldn't have been any sign to Ahaz. After all Ahaz lived centuries before Jesus was born.

Therefore, the sign surely had some kind of partial fulfillment in Ahaz's time. Perhaps a virgin that Ahaz knew got married shortly after God gave this sign. Perhaps then the newly married virgin got pregnant by her husband and gave birth to a son in less than a year. Some even contend that the woman was Isaiah's second wife, his first wife having died.

Frankly, we just don't know the exact details of how God's sign played out to King Ahaz. What we do know is how the sign was ultimately and perfectly fulfilled. Matthew leaves no doubt about that. That final fulfillment came when Jesus was born to the virgin Mary.

But before we move on though let me tell you about another prophecy that Christ's birth fulfilled. This one goes all the way back to the garden of Eden. According to **Genesis 3:15**, after Adam and Even had sinned in the garden, God said to Satan (who was inside a serpent at the time), **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He [her seed] shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.”**

What jumps out at us as we read this prophecy is the strange idea of a woman having reproductive seed. That isn't the way the human reproductive system works, is it. So why did God prophesy to Satan about the seed of the woman?

He apparently did it as a way of telling Satan about the virgin birth, and his coming destruction, by means of the one that would be born of a virgin.

So why should we believe in the virgin birth of Christ? We should believe in the virgin birth because the Scripture demands it. We should believe in the virgin birth because prophecy demands it. But that is not all; there is still another reason.

We should believe in the virgin birth because logic demands it (Romans 5:12). Let me ask you this question. Can any father ever have the hope of fathering a child that will not be born a sinner and will therefore ultimately and invariably commit sin? And the answer is no.

And when did this tragic cycle begin? It began the moment Adam ate the forbidden fruit and became a sinner. After that point in time, any child that he fathered would be born a sinner and would ultimately and invariably commit sin.

What does Romans 5:12 tell us? **“Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”** And this is extremely significant.

For if Christ was going to be the Savior of this world, or in other words on our behalf a perfect atoning offering for sin then He had to be virgin born for if he were not virgin born, the stain of Adam's sin would have been upon Him and He would not have been an acceptable atoning sacrifice. For us to be saved He had to be virgin born.

Now for some people this particular teaching might serve to weaken their so-called faith. But for a true born-again believer this should not be the case at all. In fact, this doctrine should only strengthen our faith and cause us to love Him more.

May God use the foundational doctrine of the virgin birth to humble us before Him in worship to the praise of His glory.