

Part 3 The Doctrine of Christ – The Virgin Birth of Christ

A. Introduction the Virgin Birth of Christ

- Christ came in the form and likeness of a man:

Philippians 2:5-8

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

- As we all know, according to the Bible, God is a Spirit: **John 4:24** *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*
- The Bible also says that no man has seen God: **John 1:18** *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*
- I'm sure everyone has heard the Paul Harvey story, "The Man and the Birds." If you haven't let me read it to you:

The Man and the Birds

by Paul Harvey

The man to whom I'm going to introduce you was not a scrooge, he was a kind decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn't believe all that incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas Time. It just didn't make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn't swallow the Jesus Story, about God coming to Earth as a man.

"I'm truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, *"but I'm not going with you to church this Christmas Eve."* He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. That he'd much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. And so he stayed and they went to the midnight service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound...Then another, and then another. Sort of a thump or a thud...At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window. But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window.

Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it.

Quickly he put on a coat, galoshes, tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in. So he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs, and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them...He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms...Instead, they scattered in every direction, except into the warm, lighted barn.

And then, he realized that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me...That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Because any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him.

"If only I could be a bird," he thought to himself, *"and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to safe, warm...to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see, and hear and understand."*

At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And he stood there listening to the bells – Adeste Fidelis – listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas.

And he sank to his knees in the snow.

- I think that little story explains quite well the reason God came in the likeness of man.
- Not only did Jesus come in the form of a man, but he was also born without a sin nature, that's how both John and Paul can state that Jesus had no sin:

1 John 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

- Some may have a problem understanding how Jesus was born without a sin nature. Especially when we read such passages of Scripture as these:

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

- You see, while Jesus was born in the “*likeness of sinful flesh*,” he did not possess the inner sin nature that you and I have. That is why the Hebrew writer can also declare the following:

Hebrews 7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

- Was it possible for Jesus to be tempted? Yes, as we see demonstrated when he was led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil. Satan tempted him with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life:

Matthew 4:1-11 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

- Naturally the next question is, was it possible for Jesus to sin?
 - Immediately our gut reaction to this would be NO WAY! But, think about this. What purpose did Satan have in tempting Jesus if he did not have the ability to sin? What purpose are we told that he was “tempted like as we are,” if he had no ability to sin? This is one of the questions that has always nagged at me and I’ll be completely honest and tell you that I am not smart enough to give you an appropriate answer. So, I referred to other men who are much smarter than I am for some kind of reasonable explanation. Let me read you an **excerpt from R.C. Sproul’s book; Truths We Confess**. He was a Presbyterian pastor and the founder of Ligonier Ministries, he passed away this past December.
The best theologians, past and present, have been divided on the question of whether Jesus could have sinned. I believe that since Jesus was fully human, it was possible for him to sin. Obviously, the divine nature cannot sin. But if Christ’s divine nature prevented him from sinning, in what sense did he obey the law of God as the second Adam? At his birth, Jesus’ human nature was exactly the same as Adam’s before the fall, with respect to his moral capabilities. Jesus had what Augustine called the posse peccare and the posse non peccare, that is, the ability to sin and the ability not to sin. Adam sinned; Jesus did not. Satan did everything in his power to corrupt Jesus and tempt him to sin. That would have been an exercise in futility had he been trying to tempt a divine person to sin. Satan was not trying to get God to sin. He was trying to get the human nature of Christ to sin, so that he would not be qualified to be the Savior.
At the same time, Christ was uniquely sanctified and ministered to by the Holy Spirit. In order to sin, a person must have a desire for sin. But Jesus’ human nature throughout his life was marked by a zeal for righteousness. “My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (John 4:34), he said. As long as Jesus had no desire to sin, he would not sin. I may be wrong, but I think it is wrong to believe that Christ’s divine nature made it impossible for his human nature to sin. If that were the case, the temptation, the tests, and his assuming of the responsibility of the first Adam would have all been charades. This position protects the integrity of the authenticity of the human nature because it was the human nature that carried out the mission of the second Adam on our behalf. It was the human nature uniquely anointed beyond measure by the Holy Spirit.¹

¹ <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/could-jesus-have-sinned/>

B. The virgin birth foretold in the Old Testament

- The redeemer was foretold to come from the Tribe of Judah: Genesis 49:10.
Genesis 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.
 - The word **sceptre** as used here comes from the Hebrew word **shēbet**, pronounced: *shay'-bet*. According to the Strong Hebrew Dictionary, it comes from an unused root probably meaning to *branch* off; a *scion*, that is, (literally) a *stick* (for punishing, writing, fighting, ruling, walking, etc.) or (figuratively) a *clan*: - correction, dart, rod, sceptre, staff, tribe.
 - It is used 190 times in the Old Testament but only 9 of those times it is translated as “**sceptre**.” The biggest majority of the time it is translated as “tribe, tribes, or rod.”
 - One of the other times that it is translated as sceptre and used as an indicator of the Messiah are:
 - **Numbers 24:17** I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.
 - It is interesting to note that this verse is a double prophecy, one indicating David as being the Star and Sceptre (David is a type of Christ) and the other being the Messiah, as in Jesus. Also, the word “**Star**” that is used here, comes from the Hebrew word, “*ko-kab*” and it means “*a blazing or a prince*.” In the New Testament it would be the equivalent to “*dayspring, day star, and morning star*,” all names for the Messiah, Jesus.
- Speaking of David, the Redeemer (Messiah) was to be a son of David:
2 Samuel 7:8-16 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the shepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: 9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, 11 And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. 12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.
 - Again, we are dealing with double prophesy. The words spoken to David by Nathan the Prophet were first fulfilled in David’s son, Solomon, which David lived to see, but this prophecy was ultimately fulfilled through the Lord Jesus Christ, also referred to as “**Son of David**.”
- Old Testament prophecy of the virgin birth:
Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.
 - Prophecy fulfilled in the New Testament:
Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.
- Jesus the human was to be born but Jesus the divine God was to be given:
Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
 - Proof of this in the New Testament from the words spoken by Jesus about Himself:
John 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

C. The historic fulfillment of the prophecy

Matthew 1:18-25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Luke 2:4-7 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

D. The virgin birth is taught in the Scripture

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

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Luke 1:26-35 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

E. The purpose of the virgin birth

- To reveal God:

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

- Bridge the gulf between God and man:

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

- To save sinful men:

Hebrews 2:14-16 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

- Rescue the whole creation:

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Romans 8:19-22 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

F. The importance of the doctrine of the virgin birth

- It is essential to the plan of salvation.
- It is an unconditional truth.
- If Jesus was not virgin born then he could not be our Savior.

G. The significance of the virgin birth

1. Jesus was sinless because he did not inherit the sin nature from a father.
2. The rest of the human race inherited the sin nature from Adam.

***Romans 5:12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

***Romans 5:19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

***1 Corinthians 15:45-49** And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

H. Objections to this doctrine

- Jesus did not claim to be virgin born: **John 6:51** *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*
- Scientist do not accept it because it does not make biological sense – however Jesus came from a supernatural means and not a biological means.
- Many modern theologians do not accept the doctrine – however it is taught in the Holy Scriptures.