

WAS THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST REALLY NECESSARY?

Scripture reading: Matthew 1:18-25.

Intro: I am turning aside from our study of the the Gospel of John for the Christmas season, but will get back to it afterwards.

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This past week as I was reading 1, 2, and 3 John, I came upon these words in 2 John (vv. 7-11), written toward the end of the first century A.D.:

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

"For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Just before that I had read in 1 John 4:1-3 these similar words, written about the same time:

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

If we had no more about the virgin birth in the New Testament (by way of defense) than these words, we would have to give a very strong affirmative answer to our subject-question: YES, THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST WAS REALLY NECESSARY!

In fact, when the "false prophets," the "deceivers," those who have "that spirit of antichrist, go out to do their work, this is where they begin -- by denying that Jesus Christ was virgin-born, that He was really the Son of God, the eternal Son of God, in human flesh. This is where the false teachers begin to depart from "the doctrine of Christ," which, in turn, proves that they do not have God!

Such teaching is an evil deed -- and the true Christian is not

to give any encouragement or support at all to such a teacher! In fact, John makes it clear that, though such a teacher may claim to be a Christian, he is not a Christian!

From this you certainly ought to be able to see how important it is to pay attention to the doctrine that people teach.

So -- the virgin birth of Christ was really necessary. But WHY? Someone might say that the verses which I have read have nothing to say about the virgin Mary, nor about the birth of Christ. Such a person might say that John is just talking about believing that there was a Person in history by the name of Jesus Christ.

Such reasoning shows the subtlety of the false teacher -- and it seeks to get us to overlook the clear statements of Scripture.

The important statement that John gives us is in 2 John 7 -- the false teacher does not teach that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." This is far more than believing in a Person in history by the Name of Jesus Christ. When you take the meaning of the Name, "Jesus Christ," John means that, if our teaching is to accord with Scripture, we must teach that the "Jesus Christ" of history was none other than the Son of God incarnate, a Person Who was both God and man -- genuinely both!

But the Scriptures do not leave us there.

As we read through the Scriptures, we find that we are given certain reasons as to why Jesus Christ had to be virgin-born. Let us consider some of these this morning.

I. THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS REALLY NECESSARY BECAUSE THE OLD TESTAMENT PREDICTED THAT IT WOULD BE.

Cf. Isa. 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."

This is the verse which Matthew quotes in our Scripture reading of the morning. After telling us Joseph had discovered that Mary was "with child of the Holy Spirit" (although he did not know that that was the case), and after "the angel of the Lord" had told him that "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit," Matthew adds these words:

"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "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."

Do you see what an important point this is?

If Jesus Christ were not virgin-born, then to this extent the Word of God is not true! And since, according to what we have read in 1 and 2 John, this is the foundational teaching of "the doctrine of Christ," IF THIS IS NOT TRUE, THEN HOW DO WE KNOW THAT ANY OF IT IS TRUE. If such a vital part is proven false, the entire teaching about Christ is then doubtful.

But He was born of the virgin Mary -- thus we have one of the strongest evidences that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.

A second reason:

II. THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS REALLY NECESSARY BECAUSE HIS DEITY NECESSITATED IT.

While Jesus Christ was a real human being, He was not just a human being. The teaching of Scripture is that He is the eternal Son of God -- that He lived before He became a man, that He has always been the Son of God, and that, as the Son of God, His Deity is identical to that of God, the Father, Who sent Him into the world!

In Luke's account, when Luke tells us how "the angel Gabriel" came to Mary and told her that she was going to have a Son Who would "be called the Son of the Highest," she obviously did not know how this could be, and so even she put it on a human level when she said in Luke 1:34, "How can this be, seeing I know not a man?"

To this question we have Gabriel's answer in the next verse:

"The Holy Spirit 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."

Or, as the margin gives it,

"that which is to be born of thee shall be called holy, Son of God."

If Jesus Christ had been born with a human father as well as a human mother, then He would have been only human. And, if He were only a man, then He could not be both God and man -- and consequently He would have been a sinner just like every other person who has had two human parents.

So, the fact that Jesus Christ was born of Mary while she was a virgin, and that He was conceived in her by the Holy Spirit, confirms this great truth which is so much a part

of Scripture, and so essential for our salvation!

He is "Jesus," but He is also "Emmanuel" -- "God with us"!

A third reason:

III. THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS REALLY NECESSARY BECAUSE WITHOUT IT THE REVELATION OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE WOULD BE UTTERLY INCOMPLETE.

If the Lord Jesus Christ had been only a man, with a human father as well as a human mother, He could never have said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9m).

Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, John, Peter, Paul, and many others have taught us many things about God, things which we cannot fully understand nor exhaust, BUT NONE OF THEM EVER DARED TO SAY ANYTHING LIKE OUR LORD SAID -- "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

And the Lord could not have said it if He had been a man, and only a man, just like Moses and David and Isaiah, etc.

As I have said many times before, the Bible is not only a revelation from God, but it is a revelation of God. That revelation could not possibly be complete apart from the virgin-born Son of Mary, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God!

IV. Finally, THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS REALLY NECESSARY BECAUSE HIS WORK REQUIRED IT.

What did "the angel of the Lord" tell Joseph was the reason for the birth of Mary's child? Look at Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

How would He do this? By dying.

But, in order to die, He had to become a like those for whom He was going to die:-- except for the fact that He could not be a sinner like they were.

The writer of Hebrews expresses it this way:

"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;

"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15).

Christ is our "mediator" with God as "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

He has not only "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26b), but He has conquered:

- 1) The Devil (Heb. 2:14).
- 2) The grave and
- 3) Death (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

In addition to this, by His resurrection He has "become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20b). In our resurrection, "we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). Our Lord is now "bringing man sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10).

And when the Lord returns, the promise is that the One Who comes will be, "this same Jesus" (Acts 1:11m) -- the resurrected Saviour, both God and man, our Lord Jesus Christ.

ALL OF THESE GREAT TRUTHS ARE INSEPARABLY LINKED WITH THE GREAT DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. The eternal Son of God became a man through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary -- born true man and absolutely perfect because He was also the Son of God -- God manifest in human flesh.

But closely related to this, and a part of His work as our Saviour, is another great truth -- which is dependent upon the virgin birth of our Lord, that He was both God and man.

It is this: the present, priestly ministry of Christ for us in heaven -- because He is a man,

and because He suffered as a man upon the earth --

He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" because He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And so we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15, 16).

Those verses could not have been written if our Lord had not been born of a virgin so as to become a man while at the same time relinquishing none of His Deity!

Do you wonder why we as Christians get very upset when we hear anything that even seems to deny the virgin birth of Christ? If we do not have that, we have nothing!

Concl: If you are here this morning and not a Christian, possibly never having realized all that was involved in the miraculous nature of Christ's birth, I trust that your eyes have been opened, and that your heart is receptive, and that you will receive Christ as your Saviour today!