

The Greatest Evidence Of The Virgin Birth!

Our Text: **Matthew 1:18-25** *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."*

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Biblical history records some amazing and spectacular births:

- **The birth of Isaac to a previously barren woman nearly one hundred years old**
- **The womb of Manoah's barren wife was opened and she gave birth to Samson**
- **The birth of Samuel, the prophet and anointer of kings, to the barren Hannah**
- **Elizabeth was barren, but through the power of God she gave birth to John the Baptist, of whom Jesus Himself said there had yet been no one greater "among those born of women" (Matt. 11:11)**
- **But the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus surpasses all of those!**

There have been many religions that have claimed this as well:

- The Romans believed that Zeus impregnated Semele without contact and that she conceived Dionysus, lord of the earth.
- The Babylonians believed that Tammuz (*see Ezekiel 8:14*) was conceived in the priestess Semiramis by a sunbeam.
- At the conception of Buddha, his mother supposedly saw a great white elephant enter her belly.
- Hinduism has claimed that the divine Vishnu, after incarnations as a fish, tortoise, boar, and lion, descended into the womb of Devaki and was born as her son Krishna.
- There is even a legend that Alexander the Great was virgin born by the power of Zeus through a snake that impregnated his mother, Olympias.

Bottom line . . . Satan has tried to take imitate stories of the virgin birth:

"Jesus was neither merely the son of a previously barren woman nor a freak of nature. By the clear testimony of Scripture, He was conceived by God and born of a virgin and the only One to ever be so at that!" John Macarthur Jr.

- All four gospels explicitly teach that Jesus considered Himself to be more than a man
- Jesus, His disciples, and all of the early church held Him to be none other than the divine Son of God.
- Even His enemies knew He claimed such identity:

John 5:18–23 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, **but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.** Then Jesus answered and said to them, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.**

(the rest of the chapter is applicable as well)

But what does God have to say about this? Let’s dive in . . .

The Fact Of The Virgin Birth!

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Think about this . . . When most people lie or embellish a story, they usually are very wordy to try to explain it thoroughly so that it can make sense to the hearer. Our inclination would be to expand, elaborate, and try to give every detail possible. The very fact that the account of Jesus’ divine conception is given in but one single verse strongly suggests that the story was not man-made. It is simply not characteristic of human nature to try to describe something so absolutely momentous and marvelous in such a brief space.

Think about it . . . Seventeen verses are given to listing Jesus’ human genealogy, but only part of one verse to His divine genealogy. In His divinity He “descended” from God by a miraculous and never-repeated act of the Holy Spirit; yet the Holy Spirit does nothing more than authoritatively state this fact.

Birth = βοτάνη *botanē* = *To produce.*

We don’t know a whole lot about Jesus parents:

- Mary probably was a native of Nazareth and that she came from a relatively poor family
- She had a sister named Salome who was the mother of James and John (*who therefore were Jesus’ cousins*)
- We know that Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, was Mary’s “relative” (*Luke 1:36*), probably her cousin.
- Joseph’s father’s name was Jacob (*Matthew 1:16*) and he was a craftsman, a construction worker (*tektōn*), probably a carpenter (*Matthew 13:55*).
- Joseph and Mary were probably quite young when they were betrothed. (*girls were often betrothed as young as twelve or thirteen, and boys when they were several years older than that*)

Betrothed = **μνηστεύω** *mnēsteuō* = *To be asked for in marriage and therefore engaged.*

A Hebrew marriage involved two stages, the *kiddushin* (*betrothal*) and the *huppah* (*marriage ceremony*). The marriage was almost always arranged by the families of the bride and groom, often without consulting them. A contract was made and was sealed by payment of the *mohar*, the dowry or bride price, which was paid by the groom or his family to the bride's father. The contract was considered binding as soon as it was made, and the man and woman were considered legally married, even though the marriage ceremony (*huppah*) and consummation often did not occur until as much as a year later.

The reason for outlining this is that the Bible clearly states, **“before they came together, she was found with child by the Holy Spirit.”**

Came Together = **συνέρχομαι** *synerchomai* = *To cohabit matrimonially.*

In other words, Joseph and Mary had experienced no sexual contact with each other, as the phrase **“before they came together”** indicates.

Sexual purity is highly regarded in Scripture, in both testaments. God places great value on sexual abstinence outside of marriage and sexual fidelity within marriage:

1 Corinthians 7:2 ***But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.***

Hebrews 13:4 ***Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.***

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 ***Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.***

Mary's virginity was an important evidence of her godliness . . . But that wasn't all that was at stake.

Mary's virginity also protected the nature of the divine Son of God. The child is never called the son of Joseph; Joseph is never called Jesus' father, and Joseph is not mentioned in Mary's song of praise (*The Magnificat* Luke 1:46–55). Had Jesus been conceived by the act of a man, whether Joseph or anyone else, He could not have been divine and could not have been the Savior! His own claims about Himself would have been lies, and His resurrection and ascension would have been hoaxes, and mankind would forever remain lost and damned!

Scripture is very clear when It tells us:

Galatians 4:4-5 ***But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.***

There is no human father in that verse. Jesus had to have one human parent or He could not have been human, and thereby a partaker of our flesh. **But He also had to have divine parentage or He could not have made a sinless and perfect sacrifice on our behalf and we would never have been set free from the law!**

Let's continue . . .

Doubt Of The Virgin Birth Confronted!

Matthew 1:19-20 *Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*

Let's put ourselves in Joseph's shoes:

- Because of his righteous moral standards, he knew that he should not go through with the marriage because of Mary's pregnancy.
- He knew that he was not the father and assumed, quite naturally, that Mary had had relations with another man.
- But second, because of his righteous love and kindness, he could not bear the thought of shaming her publicly (*a common practice of his day in regard to such an offense*), much less of demanding her death, as provided by the law:

Deuteronomy 22:23-24 *"If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he humbled his neighbor's wife; so you shall put away the evil from among you.*

Let me emphasize . . . There is no evidence that Joseph felt any anger, resentment, or bitterness . . . but doubt due to a trouble heart . . . that is clearly seen. He had been shamed (*if what he assumed had been true*), but his concern was not for his own shame but for Mary's. He was not wanting to disgrace her by public exposure of her supposed sin. Because he loved her so deeply he determined simply to put her away secretly. (*this way he could still protect her and keep himself pure*)

So what does God do? He sends an angel to speak to the first doubter of the virgin birth . . . **JOSEPH!**

The holy angel told Joseph what the Holy God told him to say as to what happened by the Holy Spirit!

And that was enough for Joseph, and it should be enough for us!

The Virgin Birth Clarified!

Matthew 1:21 *And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."*

First of all, note again that, “she will bear a Son”. Once again the emphasis on Jesu humanity is through Mary, and Jesus divinity through the Holy Spirit! This was known throughout His life. Look at how Luke put it:

Luke 3:23 *Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (**as was supposed**) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli,*

Joseph would only act as Jesus’ “earthly” father, kind of like a foster father.

Joseph was also told what to name Him . . . **JESUS!** This is a form of the Hebrew Joshua, Jeshua, or Jehoshua, the basic meaning of which is “***Jehovah will save.***”
Philippians 2:5-11 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. **Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

All other men who had those names testified by their names to the Lord’s salvation. But, this One who would be born to Mary not only would testify of God’s salvation, but would Himself be that salvation. **By His own work He would save His people from their sins!**

The Connection Of The Virgin Birth!

Matthew 1:22-23 *So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”*

Here, the Lord, through Matthew, clearly identifies the birth of Christ as a fulfillment of prophecy. **All this** refers to the facts about the divine birth of Jesus Christ as spoken through the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah.

The scene in Isaiah 7 is the reign of **King Ahaz** in Judah. Though he was the son of the great Uzziah, he was a wicked king. He filled Jerusalem with idols, reinstated the worship of Molech, and burned his own son as a sacrifice to that god. Rezin, king of Syria (Aram), and Pekah, king of Israel (also called Samaria at that time), decided to remove Ahaz and replace him with a king who would do their bidding. In the face of such a threat to the people of Israel and to the royal line of David, Ahaz, instead of turning to God for help, sought the help of Tiglath-pileser, the evil king of the Assyrians. He even plundered and sent to Tiglath-pileser the gold and silver from the Temple.

This is where God stepped in and where we will pick it up:

Isaiah 7:10-16 Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.”

But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!”

Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? **Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.**

Isaiah responded with the remarkable messianic prophecy of 7:14 that we often quote at Christmas time, but may not totally understand.

How did a prediction of the virgin birth of Messiah fit that ancient scene?

- Isaiah was telling the wicked king that no one would destroy the people of God or the royal line of David.
- When the prophet said, “The Lord shall give you a sign,” he used a plural *you*, indicating that Isaiah was also speaking to the entire nation, telling them that God would not allow Rezin and Pekah, or anyone else, to destroy them and the line of David (Genesis 49:10; 2 Samuel 7:13).
- Even though the people came into the hands of Tiglath-pileser, who destroyed the northern kingdom and overran Judah on four occasions, God would (and did) preserve them just as He promised.
- Isaiah also refers to another child who would be born; and before that child (Mahershalal-hash-baz) would be old enough to “eat curds and honey” or “know enough to refuse evil and choose good,” the lands of Rezin and Pekah would be forsaken (Isaiah 7:15–16).
- Sure enough, before the child born to Isaiah’s wife was three years old those two kings were dead. Just as that ancient prophecy of a child came to pass, so did the prophecy of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Both were signs that God would not ultimately forsake His people.
- However, the greatest sign was that **Immanuel, which translated means, “God with us,”** would come.

The Old Testament repeatedly promises that God is present with His people, to secure their destiny in His covenant. The Tabernacle and Temple were intended to be symbols of that divine presence. The term for tabernacle is *mishkān*, which comes from *shākan*, meaning to dwell, rest, or abide. From that root the term *shekinah* has also come, referring to the presence of God’s glory. The child born was to be the Shekinah, the true Tabernacle of God:

John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Jesus was going to “dwell” (or tabernacle) among us!

The Virgin Birth Happens!

Matthew 1:24-25 *Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.*

Joseph immediately obeyed, doing as the angel of the Lord commanded him. We can probably imagine how great his feelings of amazement, relief, and gratitude must have been, especially because he loved Mary!

- **What a godly man!**
- **And this is partially why he was entrusted with God's Son on earth!**

Matthew makes it clear that she remained a virgin until she gave birth, implying that normal marital relations began after that time. The fact that Jesus' brothers and sisters are spoken of numerous times in the gospels (*Matthew 12:46; Matthew 13:55–56; Mark 6:3; etc.*) prove that Mary did not remain a virgin perpetually.

And, out of his obedience to God's instruction through the angel, Joseph called His name Jesus!

The supernatural birth of Jesus is the only way to account for the life that He lived!

A skeptic who denied the virgin birth once asked a Christian, ***"If I told you that child over there was born without a human father, would you believe me?"*** The believer replied, ***"Yes, if he lived as Jesus lived."***

The greatest outward evidence of Jesus' supernatural birth and deity **IS HIS LIFE!!!**

I woulda argue that our lives either attract or distract others to the gospel as well . . .
. How is our testimony?

Let's pray . . .