

## **The Virgin Birth**

Merry Christmas. On December 25 we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The reason for the season is the birth of our redeemer. He was able to be our redeemer because He was born without a sin nature. That was accomplished by God through the “virgin birth.”

The term “virgin birth” is a misnomer. What we are really talking about is the “virgin conception.” However, the term used by most people is “virgin birth.” And please do not get “virgin conception” mixed up with “immaculate conception.” The latter is a Roman Catholic Church doctrine that says Mary herself was free from original sin. I will continue to use the term “virgin birth.”

A common teaching is that the Old Sin Nature is inherited through the father. As far as I can find, there is no single Bible verse that specifically says that. This teaching is derived logically from the Bible. That is like the term “trinity.” There is no single Bible verse that uses that term. Yet, it is obvious from studying the Bible that the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit are three persons in one God.

The virgin birth is a very important doctrine for Christianity. Without the virgin birth, there is no Messiah that has no sin nature and hence would not be qualified to go to the cross and be our redeemer. This is the beginning of our Savior’s human life. The other important doctrine we studied was the resurrection. It occurred at the end of our Savior’s life. They are like bookends to His life.

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This lesson explores the virgin birth Biblically.

There are several important aspects to the virgin birth: 1) The prophecy of the virgin conception/pregnancy/birth and fulfillment 2) the uniqueness of the virgin birth that was one of the credentials of the Messiah Redeemer 3) the Messiah was not in Adam 4) all others in Adam “die” 5) hence the Messiah is sinless and 6) is therefore qualified to be the redeemer. These points are not meant as a rigorous proof of the doctrine. They are logical and an attempt to explain the importance of the virgin birth.

1. **Prophecy.** There had to be a virgin birth because the Old Testament Scripture says there would be one: Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 7:14. Matthew points to the Isaiah verse as prophecy that is fulfilled by Jesus.

Genesis 3:15 is called the protoevangelium or first gospel message. It is God’s first promise of a savior. It contains the curse against the “Serpent” who is Satan.

Note: Not included in this discussion are the implications from the Angelic Conflict.

**Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”**

Bruce Waltke has this to say: “Here the serpent is a symbol of antigod. Although not named here, he is the adversary of God and humanity, called the Satan (Hebrew satan [“adversary, persecutor, or accuser”]) in the Old Testament and the devil (diabolos, the Greek equivalent) in the New Testament. He originates in heaven, standing outside earth’s natural order. He is malevolent and wiser than

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humans, bringing them under his rule. He knows divine matters (3:5) and uses speech to introduce confusion.<sup>1</sup>”

Bruce Waltke will explain the Devil’s seed later on.

Isaiah 7:14 specifically prophecies that there will be a virgin birth. This prophecy was given by Isaiah to King Ahaz.

King Ahaz was an evil king in Judah, 732-715 B.C. (Mattox) Without going into the political background, Isaiah had an encounter with King Ahaz. At one point God tells Ahaz to ask for a sign. Ahaz was a bad king and had rejected God for his own Baal worship. He refused to ask for a sign. But at this point, Isaiah is ready to give a sign. It is the sign of the virgin.

**Isaiah 7:10 Then the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying,**

**Isaiah 7:11 “Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven.”**

In the new testament, a sign was often a credential of a man sent by God.

**Isaiah 7:12 But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!”**

**Isaiah 7:13 Then he said, “Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?”**

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<sup>1</sup> Waltke, B.K. and Fredricks, C.J. (2001). *Genesis: a Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. Page 90

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**Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel (God with us).**

We know this is a prophecy and that it was fulfilled by Jesus from Matthew:

**Matthew 1:18 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.**

**Matthew 1:19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.**

**Matthew 1:20 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.**

**Matthew 1:21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”**

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**Matthew 1:22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:**

**Matthew 1:23 “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.”**

**Virgin.** The Hebrew word is not the word for a virgin. It means a woman of marriageable age. It was never used of a non-virgin woman. However, the Septuagint (LXX) translated the word into the Greek word for virgin. The Jewish translators understood that the Hebrew word was meant to be understood as “virgin.” And in Matthew 1:23, the LXX Greek word for virgin is used.

2. **Unique Birth/Credentials.** The prophecy of the virgin birth is applied to the Messiah. Only the Messiah would be born from a virgin conception. Hence, it is a credential of the Messiah. Isaiah 7:14 is quoted in Matthew 1:23 as documentation.
3. **Not in Adam.** The key issue is that Jesus Christ had no sin nature. He was free from Adam’s imputed sin, He had no sin nature inherited through DNA and He had no personal sins. He was not in Adam. He is contrasted against Adam:

**1 Corinthians 15:21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.**

**1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.**

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In Adam all are spiritually dead. Jesus is life.

**John 14:6 Jesus \*said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.**

4. **Sinless.**

Only a sin-free human could be the redeemer. The Doctrine of Redemption.

**2 Corinthians 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.**

Gospel Coalition writer Justin Taylor gives us some insight: “The sinlessness of Christ. If he were born of two human parents, it is very difficult to conceive how he could have been exempted from the guilt of Adam’s sin and become a new head to the human race. And it would seem only an arbitrary act of God that Jesus could be born without a sinful nature. Yet Jesus’ sinlessness as the new head of the human race and as the atoning lamb of God is absolutely vital to our salvation (II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:22-24; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; Rom. 5:18-19).<sup>2</sup>”

5. **Deity.** Salvation had to be provided by God. You have seen the illustration from Herman that identifies the problem of righteousness in the book of Job, the promise of salvation in the Old Testament Scriptures, the work to provide salvation in Jesus’ life in the Gospels and the declaration that God did it in the Epistles. God the Holy Spirit provided the needed DNA to complete a sinless human being and Son of God. Luke 1:35

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2 <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/5-reasons-the-virgin-birth-of-jesus-is-so-important/>

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**Luke 1:31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.**

**Luke 1:32 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;**

**Luke 1:33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”**

**Luke 1:34 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”**

**Luke 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.**

6. **Humanity.** Jesus, as mediator between God and man had to be both God and man. Physically He had a human body. But He also was deity.

**Luke 2:8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.**

**Luke 2:9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord**

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**shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.**

**Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;**

**Luke 2:11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

**Luke 2:12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”**

7. **Qualified.** As the God-man without a sin nature, prophesied in the Old Testament and documented in the New Testament, Jesus was qualified to be the sinless redeemer.

GotQuestions.org sums this up for us: “The virgin birth is important in that it preserves the truth that Jesus is fully God and fully man at the same time. His physical body that He received from Mary as her biological child. But His eternal, holy nature was His from all eternity past (see John 6:69). Jesus had no sin nature (Hebrews 7:26) and therefore was able to be our perfect substitute (1 Peter 1:19), conquering sin and death once for all (Hebrews 10:10). Not only was He able to take away our sin, but He was tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin. Therefore, He is our perfect sacrifice and also able to empathize with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15). Our God miraculously became man to save us and graciously reveal His love for us.<sup>3</sup>”

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3 <https://www.gotquestions.org/virgin-birth.html>



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If Jesus had been born of a man and a woman, then He would have been in Adam and inherited a sin nature.

**Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—**

**Romans 5:13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.**

**Romans 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.**

**1 Corinthians 15:20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.**

**1 Corinthians 15:21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.**

**1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.**

Genesis 3:15 is called the “Proto-Evangelium” which is Latin for the first gospel.

I end this lesson with a short study on Genesis 3 the “protoevangelium.” The more I study this passage of Scripture, the more I realize how

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difficult a passage this is to completely understand. Several English translations miss the mark of literalness. This is included in the curse on the “serpent” who as we have seen, Bruce Waltke identified as Satan.

**Genesis 3:14 The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;**

Just because you read Genesis 3 many times doesn't mean you understand the spiritual aspects of this verse. The focus of this study is on the gospel message and the virgin birth.

**Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”**

I have not addressed what the enmity between Satan and the woman is.

**Her seed.** This is usually identified as the line of the Messiah.

**Your seed.** Again, let Bruce Waltke illuminate this term.

“The seed of the serpent is not literal, as in little snakes, for it has already been established that the serpent is only a masquerade for a heavenly spirit. Neither is the seed demons, for such an interpretation does not fit the context and Satan does not father demons. Rather, the seed of the serpent refers to natural humanity whom he has led into rebellion against God. Humanity is now divided into two communities: the elect, who love God, and the reprobate, who loves self (John 8:31-32, 44: 1 John 3:8).

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Each of the characters of Genesis will be either of the seed of the woman that reproduces her spiritual propensity, or of the seed of the Serpent that reproduces his unbelief. The unspoken question to the reader is, “Whose seed are you?<sup>4</sup>”

**John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

**1 John 3:7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;**

**1 John 3:8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**

**Genesis 3:16 To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.”**

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4 Waltke, B.K. and Fredricks, C.J. (2001). *Genesis: a Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. Page 94

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**Greatly multiply.** In the Hebrew, this is what is known as an “infinitive absolute.” It is a technique for intensifying the action of the verb. In this case, the infinitive absolute is followed by another form of the verb to “increase” or to “multiply.”

**Pain.** According to the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT) which has a whole paragraph discussing this word as it is used in Genesis 3:16, this does not refer to pain as in childbirth. This word deals more with mental pain instead of physical pain<sup>5</sup>.

**Childbirth.** The Hebrew is not the normal word for “childbirth.” It is a word that means conception or pregnancy. The meaning of this word is tied to the meaning of “pain.”

**Luke 1:26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,**

**Luke 1:27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.**

**Luke 1:28 And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”**

**Luke 1:29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.**

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<sup>5</sup> G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Fabry, H.-J. (1974). Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, Volume XI. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. Page 280

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**Luke 1:30 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.**

**Luke 1:31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.**

**Luke 1:32 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;**

**Luke 1:33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”**

**Luke 1:34 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”**

**Luke 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.**

What follows is a short doctrine of the virgin birth found on Robby Dean’s website but is from Disciple Makers Multiplied (DM2)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.deanbible.org/file-downloads/download-file?path=Resources%2FMiscellaneous%2Fdm2\\_life\\_of\\_christ\\_3rd\\_Edition\\_teacher.pdf](https://www.deanbible.org/file-downloads/download-file?path=Resources%2FMiscellaneous%2Fdm2_life_of_christ_3rd_Edition_teacher.pdf)

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**F. A SHORT DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH**

Matthew 1:23 – The Greek word PARTHENOS means virgin.

- a) Matthew 1:23 quoted Isaiah 7:14, which used the Hebrew word ALMAH, meaning young woman.
- b) Although not the precise Hebrew word for virgin, ALMAH describes a woman whose characteristics include virginity.
- c) Not one of ALMAH's seven uses in the Old Testament refers to a woman who has lost her virginity.
- d) The Hebrew scholars who translated the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language for the Hellenistic Jews in 285 BC (the Septuagint) used PARTHENOS, which means virgin, to translate ALMAH.

The virgin birth of Messiah was a miracle of equal magnitude with the atonement, Jesus' resurrection, and the regeneration of those who believe in Christ.

- a) In his genealogy, Matthew used the feminine singular for the pronoun whom (Greek: EXHES, of whom) to show that Jesus came from Mary, not from Joseph (Matthew 1:16b), thus indicating the miracle of His virgin birth.
- b) A plural pronoun would have shown that both Mary and Joseph were His parents.
- c) Matthew's purposeful use of the feminine singular proves that Mary alone was the human parent of Jesus.

Christ's virgin birth is an inseparable part of His deity and sinlessness.

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a) To deny the virgin birth is to deny that Jesus is God and existed forever from eternity past.

b) You can say that you do not believe in the virgin birth, but you cannot say that the Scriptures do not teach it.

4.5. Only through the virgin birth could Jesus be both man and God at the same time.

Six reasons Jesus had to be born of a virgin

a) Jesus had to be a true human to be the sin-bearer for humanity. 2 Corinthians 5:21

b) Jesus had to be virgin-born to be sinless. Hebrews 4:15

c) Jesus had to be sinless to be judged for our sins. Hebrews 10:5-7, 1 Peter 2:24

d) Through the virgin birth, Jesus was qualified to be the promised eternal heir to the throne of David according to the Davidic Covenant. 2 Samuel 7:16

e) Jesus had to be virgin-born to be our Mediator. Hebrews 9:14-15, 1 Timothy 2:5-6

f) By being born of Mary only, Jesus was not under the Coniah curse. Jeremiah 22:28-30

6.7. Scripture progressively revealed the impact of the virgin birth.

a) Genesis 3:15-16 gave the first prophecy of the virgin birth.

b) Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 gave the Jewish prophecy of the virgin birth.

c) Matthew 1:19-25 recounted the historical fulfillment of the virgin birth.

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d) John 1:14, Romans 1:3, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Timothy 3:16, and Hebrews 2:14 among many others showed that the results of the virgin birth continue forever.

The virgin conception and birth made salvation possible.

a) The virgin birth allowed the pre-existent Son of God to become man without ceasing to be God.

b) Without the virgin birth, we would have a sinful savior unqualified to provide salvation.

c) If the biblical doctrine of the virgin birth is not historically true, we can believe no other doctrine in the Bible, including salvation.