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B1022 – May 30, 2010 – The Prophetic Necessity Of The Virgin Birth

We've been dealing with Jesus' question in the Gospels, "Who do you say I am?" And we've spent four weeks saying basically how men answer that question says more about the men than it does about Jesus. A skeptic will frequently say the revelation isn't clear, I see this problem, I see that problem, and I can't believe the Scripture. All the skeptics in the world are basically saying two things out of both sides of their mouth. On the one hand they say we don't know everything, but on the other hand they're saying we definitely know that the Jesus of the NT is not the historical Jesus, the historical Jesus is definitely someone other than the depiction we read in the NT. That's the typical kind of response you get to the authority of the NT.

It really boils down to nothing more than what we studied in the first part of the framework series, which was the Creation and the Fall. Men are fallen. We just don't like God's authority and we're going to invent all kinds of excuses to reject His authority. Yet God has been gracious anyway and God prepared the world for the coming of His Son. That's why in Galatians Paul says "in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son."

We're going to emphasize those doctrines that are revealed through the Creation and the Fall. Both those events teach us the doctrine of God, the doctrine of man and the doctrine of nature, because if we don't understand those, we cannot understand Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God; Jesus Christ is man, and He was not sent until century upon century of revelation was given. God spoke for centuries to clarify certain issues, to craft certain categories so that when His Son walked on this earth, we would understand who He is. You cannot study the Bible backwards. Everybody does this; we all start with the NT and think we're going to understand something. We're

not going to understand anything starting with the NT, because the NT is the last section of a massive volume. If you want to study the Bible, you have to start at the beginning, Genesis. Then you can understand the NT. And we emphasized that God had prepared the Jewish and the pagan world.

The pagan world was prepared through the period of history from the Flood when Noah re-started civilization, down through the Call of Abraham. There are 4-500 years between those events. During those centuries man had the opportunity to visit all of the continents, map them, go out into a new world, rebuild it however they wanted to rebuild it, great architecture, great technical achievements. They built boats and ships in Noah's day, obviously bigger than anything that we have ever been able to build until the middle of the 19th century. Our technology in the last 200 years is just now getting back to where it was when Noah and his sons stepped off that ark. We studied their technology. They had completely mapped the world, and Antarctica before the ice cap covered the underlying topography. We can compare their maps with radar surveillance now under the polar ice cap and see that somebody mapped Antarctica long before the ice. Noah and his sons were brilliant, they were very talented, and they were the architects of the ancient world. They moved blocks around in perfect geometry, and we're still sitting here scratching our heads wondering how they built the pyramids. This is the quality of person, these aren't some apes that fell out of a tree some place and dropped their bananas. These were intelligent people who had great physical and intellectual abilities.

But the Bible's argument was that by the time Abraham lived, which is 2000BC, that Noah's civilization had once again become corrupted. Romans 1 is a commentary on that corruption. The fall of man, the depravity of man worked its way out in all branches of the human race so that the very survival of the word of God was threatened. That's why God called out Abraham and He called Abraham to create in history a counterculture. The rest of the OT is a narration of the development and God working with that counterculture. Why? Because He's gracious, because He wanted to preserve life.

We have studied the series of events in the counterculture called Israel, and we got down to the end of the OT where the counterculture didn't look too counter, which demonstrated that the Jews, just as much as the pagans, were

depraved. As far as history is concerned the human race does not have a very good record. If Israel could screw up the greatest Constitution ever known to man, what do you think we pagans can do to ours? It doesn't take too many generations to erode what the Puritan ethic put in place in our Constitution 230 years ago.

So is it any surprise that when the Lord Jesus Christ came He was rejected? That response itself is an indictment of the human race, a major indictment. This is why in the Gospel of John, right after that verse that everybody knows, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." what does it say? "Whosoever believes on him is not condemned but whoever does not believe is condemned already," Why? "because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." It's very clear. Very clear! There are no ifs, ands or buts; a child can read that text and understand it quite clearly. The picture is that the "light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," and they scatter, they rebel, they reject, they go away. In west Texas we used to walk into the kitchen at night and turn the light on, you'd have these big roaches, about two inches long and you'd open a door and out comes a roach, these things are awful looking creatures. I don't know if God loves them or not. They really are very discomfoting at night, when you think you have a nice clean house and these things come out. They always flee the light, anytime there is light on the cockroaches take off. That's a picture of humans, in God's eyes we're the cockroaches. The Lord Jesus Christ came as the great light, and we, the cockroaches, run when the light turns on. That's what John 3 is saying.

We're going to start with the first of four events in the coming of Christ. We're going to divide His life into four parts, and each of these four parts will be a study of how the cockroaches flee the light and come up with all kinds of excuses why they don't believe in Jesus Christ. The first is going to be the Birth of Christ, then the Life of Christ, then the Death of Christ and then the Resurrection of Christ. We're going to start with His birth. Next week we'll continue that and then study the reaction of ancient and modern paganism and Judaism to the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. We're going to take a cycle of three on the Birth of Christ, a cycle of three on the Life of Christ, same cycle of three on the Death of Christ and the same cycle of three on the

Resurrection of Christ. In each case we'll study the event, as it is pictured in Scripture. Then we're going to study the response of men to that event, because Christ said, "Who do you say I am?" He was pressing men for a decision as to who He is. Then we're going to study the proper response to the Lord Jesus Christ, and how the Church down through the centuries has distilled the truths associated with each of these four events, and built a doctrinal framework within which we are supposed to walk and think God's thoughts after Him.

These doctrines that flow out of the life of Christ are very, very critical, because they shape the gospel, they shape sanctification, and they are the capstone of everything we've learned in the OT. As we approach the Life of Christ I hope it will become increasingly obvious, starting today, that there's not much new in the NT. The NT puts together all the pieces of the OT, but the pieces aren't really new. There are only a few things that are really new-new in the NT. I'll demonstrate that.

Now there are three reasons for the unique Birth of Christ which was a virgin birth. All the great creeds hold to the virgin birth, until you get down to the 20th century and then all of a sudden the liberal clergymen arrive; the first people to have an intellect and they say it's not important to the gospel. If you don't believe me, just go listen to some of them. The idea is that the virgin birth is a peripheral thing, just like the "days" in Genesis; you don't have to really believe that to be orthodox. And now we're not sure; it's highly doubtful that such a thing ever occurred, everybody is apologizing for the virgin birth and it's marginalized as a thing that maybe one or two isolated NT passages talk about, but it's unclear. We want to show that it is clear and that it is absolutely necessary to God's plan. That Matthew and Luke are just connecting the OT dots and showing how it all comes together.

The first reason for the unique birth of Christ is **The Prophetic Necessity**. We'll show two verses. Isa 41:22 is the principle. My point in showing this verse in Isaiah is the principle that if God says something is going to happen and it doesn't happen, it's reflects on Him. So if He said there's got to be a virgin birth and there isn't a virgin birth, then we have a critical problem with God. It would undermine His faithfulness. In Isa 41 God challenges the pagan gods and goddesses. This is a very offensive passage to a modern relativist. The classrooms are full of these people; faculties are full of them.

Vv 22-23, shows and claims the exclusivity of Biblical truth. It's that offensive thing, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father but by Me." It's that offensive thing that only one group of people has the truth and everyone else doesn't. Try dropping that on CNN. Isa 41:22, "Let them bring forth and declare to us what is going to take place; As for the former *events*, declare what they *were*, That we may consider them and know their outcome. Or announce to us what is coming; ²³Declare the things that are going to come afterward, That we may know that you are gods;" look at that phrase, "Declare the things that are going to come afterward," that's prophecy. Why, "that we may know that you are gods," it's a challenge to all the other deities, all the other religions, if you really are gods, predict the future, go ahead, "that we may know that you are gods; Indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together. ²⁴Behold, you are of no account, And your work amounts to nothing; He who chooses you is an abomination." In other words, no one knows the future except the God of the Scripture.

With that established we want to go through the two OT prophecies of the virgin birth. The first one is Isa 7. This is the one Matthew and Luke quote that we use in the Christmas story. Matthew and Luke got it from Isaiah. Here's the context. Let's pick up in Isa 7:1, "Now it came about in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to *wage* war against it," See the northern king of Israel, Pekah has come into an alliance with Rezin, the king of Aram, or the Syrians, and they're putting military pressure on Ahaz, the king of Judah because Ahaz won't join them in an alliance against Assyria. Assyria was the growing boy on the block and so they're trying to get a tri-partite alliance here, but Ahaz doesn't want to be part of the alliance so Pekah and Rezin decide they're going to knock him off the throne and put in a guy who will make the alliance. It's all political gimmicks and so the Lord sends Isaiah to Ahaz to tell him not to worry, these two kings and their armies aren't going to do a thing. Why aren't they going to do a thing, as an aside? Because Ahaz is in who's lineage? David's lineage. So Ahaz has the Davidic promises of 2 Sam 7 of an eternal dynasty, so there's no wiping out the house of David. God is going to watch over this dynasty, if He doesn't we've got a breach of contract and God's not faithful.ⁱ So Isaiah tells him this, now come to verse 10, "Then the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord

your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” Can you imagine if someone came to you and said that? Here you are, the enemy is closing in and God wants to encourage you, so He says, you name it and I’ll do it, anything you want. I could think up a lot of stuff. But instead of doing it, listen to this pious answer: ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!” Isn’t that cute, actually what has Ahaz done. Actually He has tested the Lord. The Lord told him to do something and he said, no. So Isaiah at this point gets irritated, and there’s emotion in this next verse because he spots the hypocrisy of that phony religious answer. ¹³Then 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? ¹⁴“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign:” now this interesting. The sign that is now being given wasn’t asked for. It is a sign of God’s grace to the nation. God didn’t have to give them this sign. He says but God is going to give you this sign, “Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. ¹⁵“He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows *enough* to refuse evil and choose good. ¹⁶“For before the boy will know *enough* to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken.” The idea is that there are two prophecies in this passage. It’s not an easy passage to work with, but remember you have the generation hearing it and you have future generations—the near future and the far future. Let me work through this quickly so we get the point to apply to the NT.

In verse 14 it’s the force of the expression, “Behold, a virgin,” forget the virgin for a moment. The word “behold,” when it’s used with a participle in the Hebrew refers to a future event, not a near one. “Behold” is the idea, pay attention. The interesting thing is the “virgin.” Who is the virgin? There’s no explanation of this virgin. So we have “Behold” a serious word of prophetic intent, a virgin “will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” That’s a title. That’s not like Dick or Jane.

Another example in Isaiah 9: remember the phrase where it says “He shall be called ‘Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father,’” those are called titularies, a title list, and all those words depict the essence of Jesus Christ. So when you see the word “Immanuel” here, that’s not going to be His personal name, you know, Jack or John. That’s not what he means. He means the essence of the virgin’s son is that He will be God with us.

So Isaiah 7:14, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign; Behold, a virgin will be with child,” and we already know this is a distant future prophecy from the word “Behold.” So who is the sign for? Ahaz doesn’t live in the distant future, Ahaz lives in the time of Isaiah. So who is the virgin birth prophecy for? Look at Verse 13, “Listen now, O house of David!” So this prophecy is for the whole house of David. That’s confirmed in verse 14 because the “you” is plural, you can’t see that in the English, but in the Hebrew it says, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you,” plural, “a sign.” And then he goes into the virgin birth. So what does that have to do with Ahaz? Nothing, Ahaz is going to be dead by the time of the virgin birth. So that sign doesn’t help Ahaz. What prophecy does help Ahaz? There’s another prophecy going on here. This is what they call double reference and what double reference means is you have two prophecies butted up against one another without any indication of a gap of time in between.

And this other prophecy is in verses 15-16 where he shifts back to the singular “you,” it’s used only in v 16 but you can tell from the context this is addressed directly to Ahaz. So vv 15-16 is the second prophecy and this one is a near prophecy. What’s this prophecy? “He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. ¹⁶For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken.” So obviously it’s a near prophecy and it can’t refer to the virgin born son. So who does it refer to? Isaiah’s son from v 3. “Then the Lord said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub...” Why did God tell Isaiah to take his son out to meet Ahaz? Because this son was going to be involved in the prophecy to Ahaz in vv 15-16. And he’s obviously saying that Isaiah’s child, before he knows right from wrong, before he’s 6-10 years old, by that time your problem, Ahaz, will be solved.

So there are two prophecies going on here. One is to Ahaz that in a short time you will have military relief, before the son of Isaiah knows right from wrong your military problems are going to be gone away. But the second prophecy of the virgin birth, why is that brought in here? Because who’s house is Ahaz a part of? The house of David, verse 13, “O house of David!” The Messiah is going to come out of the house of David, so the point is that if a virgin from the house of David is going to conceive and bring forth a son in the distant future, what does that guarantee the house of David down through history? It

will never be destroyed, eternal security. What's the covenant that guarantees eternal security to the David dynasty? The Davidic Covenant. So all this is an outgrowth of the original Davidic Covenant, 2 Sam 7, Ps 89, nothing new, yet.

The something new is this "virgin" in v 14. The last ten centuries of church history have made an issue of this. In the Hebrew the word is *almah*; in the Greek LXX and in the NT when Matthew and Luke quote it, they use *parthenos*. So we have *almah* and *parthenos*. What's the issue?

You often will hear skeptics, even evangelical skeptics, say that the meaning of the Hebrew word *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 isn't 'virgin' but simply 'young woman.' It was the Christian church, they say, that added the specialized meaning of virgin to the Hebrew word *almah*." In other words, we Christians wanted to see the prophecy fulfilled in Jesus, so the Christian church changed the meaning of the original Hebrew word from young woman to virgin. Whereas Isaiah wasn't talking about a virgin birth, Isaiah was talking about a young pregnant woman that was about to give birth to a child, and there is only one prophecy going on back in Isaiah, there aren't two prophecies. That's their interpretation of the passage, there is only one issue in their interpretation, a young pregnant girl would give birth very soon and Ahaz would get relief from the military pressure. The virgin birth in the house of David isn't in the context, that's what they say. How do we respond?

The traditional Jewish view, they claim, is that *almah* means 'young woman.' However," and here's our answer, "the fact that the translators of the Septuagint," notice the dates, "(ca. 250-150 BC) deliberately translated the Hebrew word *almah* by the Greek word for virgin, *parthenos*. *Parthenos* always means "a girl who has never engaged in sexual intercourse." Always. And that indicates that the virgin birth interpretation of Isa 7 was the traditional Jewish interpretation." Why would Jews 250 years before Christ have translated it *parthenos*? They don't have an axe to grind. They're not Christians. These were Jews in Alexandria translating the Hebrew into the Greek so that they'd have a contemporary translation. The Septuagint, (called Septuagint, seventy, because theory says there were seventy translators and they worked hard on this thing, and they cranked out this new translation. It was sort of like the Living Bible or something, they wanted a contemporary translation; a lot of the Jews had forgotten their

Hebrew so they wanted something to read. So they translated from the Hebrew into the Greek is used by us, by Christian scholars so that we understand how the Jews thought in 250BC. How they're translating the Hebrew tells us how they understood it. That's the important point.

"Consequently, when Matthew cites Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew 1:23, he was not inventing the interpretation; he was merely applying the traditional Jewish interpretation to Jesus."

"Later, when Christianity flourished," here's another thing that happened - the Jews today deny the virgin birth interpretation of Isa 7:14, so here's how it got started - and I'm using a Jew here who happens to be Arnold Fruchtenbaum, a Hebrew Christian: "Jewish authorities in their own interests attacked this interpretation of Isa 7:14. One of these Jewish authorities Rashi (ca. 1040-1105), denied the traditional interpretation and made the text refer to a young woman," . Notice Rashi's date; he's in the Middle Ages. In other words, what happened was orthodox Jews got fed up with Christian apologists using Isa 7:14 to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and so after 900 years they said that's it, our answer is *almah* which just refers to a young girl and that's the way we'll answer the Christians. As Fruchtenbaum notes, however: 'It is true that Rashi interpreted Isaiah 7:14 to mean a young woman...But this is not enough to prove Rashi always made *almah* to mean a young woman. This Hebrew word is also found in the Song of Solomon 1:3 and 6:8. In these passages Rashi admitted that many Jewish scholars of his day made Isaiah 7:14 to refer to a virgin...' so Rashi was admitting that he was coming up with something unusual. "It can be easily seen that Rashi was trying to counteract Christian polemics with his interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 rather than being honest with the text itself."

There is a second passage in the OT that implies the virgin birth. This is the passage we studied last year. This requires a little more understanding of the OT than even Isaiah 7. But it answers a problem in the NT. Jer 22:30. Here's the deal. At the end of the kingdom, going back to the period just prior to the Exile, when God was disciplining the nation, He was shortly to send them into Exile. At the point He was sending them into exile, He brought discipline upon not only the nation but on the house of David itself, and the last of the line of David is mentioned here. David dates about 1000 BC, Jeremiah 22, just prior to the invasions, we'll say 625BC. So we have 375 years of the Davidic monarchy.

In Jer. 22:28, it's talking about one of the last kings, Coniah, also known as Jeconiah and it says in verse 29, "O land, land, land, Hear the word of the LORD! ³⁰"Thus says the LORD, 'Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.'" At this point, the prophecy says, according to Jeremiah, God's discipline on the house of David terminates this line. So the Messiah cannot come through the line of David that went through Solomon. That line is X-ed out so far as their right to reign again in Judah. That is it, right there, that's God's discipline. Now that sets up another necessity for the virgin birth.

Turn to Matt 1. Remember who Matthew is; Matthew is a tax collector. Matthew is sensitive to government records. Matthew has political understanding that the other apostles probably didn't have. Matthew was a bureaucrat by profession. He worked in the government circles; he worked as a Jew in a Roman situation. So he knew the Roman government processes and he knew the Jewish processes. He was very intimate to those processes.

In Matt 1 he starts his Gospel with a genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matt 1:1, with "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:" What's he doing right there? What's he setting up? He's tracing the seed promise, it involves these people, Abraham, David, come on down to verse 6, "Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon was the father of...etc."ⁱⁱ So we're tracing Solomon. Then he comes down to the end, verse 16, "Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born," that is by Mary, "Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. Then he starts in verse 18 immediately talking about how the birth came about, and in the first verse of that next section what is he talking about? The virgin birth. He goes on, verse 19 and 20, and then in verse 23 he refers to the Isaiah prophecy of 7:14. So it's quite clear that Matthew, early in his gospel, is introducing us to this prophecy. But just prior to doing that, he has talked endlessly about this genealogy of Jesus that has Solomon in it and who is in verse 11 of the genealogy? Jeconiah or Coniah, same guy, Jeconiah or Coniah, it's the same king that Jeremiah says the line stops here. So what do we say about this problem?

What Matthew has evidently done, (and the critics have missed this by a mile in history) being sensitive as he was to the government, to bureaucracy, and therefore to what? What had he seen in his life of government bureaucracy? Corruption, corruption, corruption. What then when he sets up the genealogy of Jesus Christ is he saying? This Messianic Jewish line of which Israel is proud, this house of David, its got corruption, it's got corruption, it's got corruption. It's got a king in it that's been damned, a king who has been judged as unworthy to have any lineage. And then after he gets done with this genealogy, what is his first thought? There's got to be a virgin birth. Let's connect those two. Verses 1-17 can't be disconnected from verses 18ff. This man, Matthew, argues in a logical straight forward fashion. It appears that his logic is that it's precisely because of the corruption and discipline in this Davidic line, that far from establishing the legitimacy of Jesus credentials it disestablishes it on any other basis than the virgin birth. Here's why. Joseph, who is the husband of Mary, is a member of the corrupt line of Jeconiah. He can't be the father of Jesus. He suffers under the Coniah curse of Jer 22:30. So rather than hide it, Matthew amplifies it in this genealogy.

It's a set up because Matthew is so impressed with how God solved this problem of the Coniah curse, apparently this was Matthew's problem with accepting Jesus as the Messiah, He's in this line of Coniah, but then he learned how God solved that through the virgin birth which he shares in vv 18ff. So Matthew takes us through, probably, exactly what he went through so we would be as impressed with God's solution to Jer 22 as he was. He says it is all solved by Isa 7:14. And therefore Joseph, if he was the real father of Jesus, would have disqualified Jesus. Matthew shows he was not, there was a virgin birth

We want to turn to the other genealogy in the NT, Luke 3. Usually what happens is some professor gets hold of this in some Bible class at college, and because he has a PhD he thinks he can bully all the students in the classroom, while he lives off the tuition of their hard working parents. In Luke 3 we have the genealogy that begins in verse 23. Notice how he starts his genealogy. Luke is a medical doctor. Luke shows his medical interest because in Luke's Gospel is the only place you will find the inner thoughts of Mary when she's pregnant. Church history says that Luke went back before Mary died and he asked her, and that's where on the human level, led by the Holy Spirit of course, the medical doctor (Luke) was interested in the

pregnancy. From a doctor's point of view he was interested in claims of a virgin birth, so he interviewed her. See for yourself, read the other Gospels. Luke obviously has a doctor's heart, he's talked to her, and he's recorded her most intimate thoughts.

Luke 3:23 he starts his genealogy with an interesting grammatical construction. He says, "And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being supposedly the son of Joseph." So he's adhering to the virgin birth also, and he's doing it in many ways, but he says "supposedly the son of Joseph, the son of Eli," and the critics in the college classroom say aha, see students, look, we've got two genealogies in the NT and they conflict, so your Bible isn't inerrant, it's got errors in it, it's written by people, people make mistakes. I'm sorry about your faith as a young Christian but you just have to get mature and give up what your parents have taught you because now you're coming of age and you can think on your own feet. So he goes down through all this and he says see, verse 31 talks about David, etc. and he whips by it 35 miles an hour, not noticing something about verse 31.

If you look carefully at verse 31, which son of David occurs there? Do you see Solomon listed anywhere in verse 31? No. You see Nathan. It's a different line than Matthew records. See Solomon's line got X-ed out, that is Matthew. Jeremiah 22 ends Solomon's line as rightful heir. So if Jesus Christ is Davidic He's got to be Davidic by some other means than through Solomon. And sure enough, Luke provides the answer. David had another son named Nathan. Nathan had a son, and so on and so on, and it comes down to...who in verse 23? It says Joseph. Now we've got another problem. Is this saying that this is the genealogy of Joseph, so that we have a Joseph genealogy in Matthew 1 and a Joseph genealogy in Luke 3 and they conflict? Is that what this is saying? Over the years Christians have looked at this, some college professor isn't the first person to think about this. There have been one or two other intelligent people down through church history that have seen this problem. It's not new, and the consensus is that this is a genealogy that is actually Mary's, but if you're going to say that, you have to explain verse 23. Why is Joseph's name at the head of it and not Mary's name?

Fruchtenbaum has an excellent explanation for this. He tells us the Jewish background of using a husband's name in his wife's genealogy: 'If, by Jewish

law, you could not mention the name of a woman but you wished to trace a woman's line, how would you go about doing so? The answer is that you would use the name of her husband. That raises a second question. If you were to use the husband's name...how would [you] know whether the genealogy is that of the husband or that of the wife...? In the Greek text of Luke's genealogy, every single name mentioned has the Greek article the, with one exception, and that is the name of Joseph" in verse 23. So when you start reading the original you observe article name, article name, article name, article name and then no article name. What would that mean to a Greek speaker reading this? "When he saw the definite article missing from Joseph's name, while it was present in all the other names, it would then mean that this was not really Joseph's genealogy, but rather it is Mary's genealogy. But in keeping with Jewish law, it was the husband's name that was used. We have two examples of this in the OT: Ezra 2:61 and Nehemiah 7:63."

So to conclude what we're saying today: the virgin birth is a Prophetic necessity. God has a plan for history just as He has a plan for our life. And when He says He will do something He does it perfectly to the T, to the nth degree, to the tiniest detail in a perfect way.

Next week we're going to deal with the second reason for the virgin birth, the Legal Necessity and the Spiritual Necessity; there's more to this virgin thing. But I want us to appreciate that the virgin birth is not a theological option, a peripheral item. The Apostle's Creed talks about Jesus Christ who was born of a virgin, and the reason it does so is because the men who wrote that understood that Jesus Christ could not be who He claimed to be unless He was virgin born. We'll continue that study and we're going to work, obviously in the birth of Christ, to the heart of who He is. We will identify, as specifically as the Church has been able to do down through the centuries that Jesus Christ is God. There's a phrase that we are going to repeat over and over. Here it is: it's from the Council of Chalcedon; 500 years of discussion went into this sentence. Jesus Christ is undiminished deity united with true humanity in one person without confusion or mixture forever.

Four things are stated about Christ and every one of those four statements has been fought, opposed, attacked, and argued about. Jehovah's witnesses and Mormons are still fighting about it. Was Jesus really God when He

walked the earth? Did Jesus give up His divine attributes when he came to earth? Is He diminished deity? Is He undiminished deity? Was He really a true human? Like my son said in a prayer, Jesus is God and man, hey Dad, what does that mean? How could God come as a true human and not screw up His deity? How could Jesus have a human spirit? How could Jesus have a human soul? How could Jesus have a true human body? How could Jesus walk around with the mind of a man and yet also be the omniscient deity? He was undiminished deity, He was true humanity, but if He is both of those, then how do you deal with the Creator-creature distinction, which must be existing forever and ever. That's why the Church added "He is undiminished deity, He is true humanity, united without mixture or confusion. No confusion. No blurring of the Creator/creature distinction. How long? For ever and ever. Will there ever be a time when we will know Jesus Christ not as a human being? Never. For billions of years into eternity He will always be a man, and that makes Him our high priest. There are a lot of exciting things that happen to us because of His humanity.

There's a principle in court, in jurisprudence, we flippantly refer to: trial by jury, and trial by a jury of peers. What does a trial by a jury of peers do? Why do we have trial by jury of peers? Because they can identify with you. They know what it's like to walk around down here. How can you judge a person's behavior if you haven't walked around down here? That's the power in the book of Hebrews when it says "we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with our infirmities." What does that mean? It means Jesus is our peer. That's why those church father's labored so many centuries to protect us, and to argue for the true humanity of Jesus Christ.

If He isn't true humanity, then when He judges us we don't really have a fair trial. But you see Jesus can give a fair trial. That's why God the Father has turned over to God the Son all judgment; Jesus says so, all judgment has been turned over to Me. Why is that? The Father can't be a peer judge. Only God the Son can be a peer judge. Only God the Son can blow away all the smoke, He can blow away all the excuses, and we can't come to Him and say this, that and something else. He says I walked in your life, I walked on planet earth, I faced the temptations of Satan just like you faced it. We're going to also deal with the excuse a lot of people give, well Jesus didn't have a sin nature, He didn't have flesh. We'll get to that. That's called the doctrine of the impeccability of Christ. The Church thought about these things; we guys

in the 20th century aren't the first guys to think about these things. The Church already thought about these, already gave an answer to it, and already studied the Scriptures, nothing new here. All we have to do is get smart and read, and listen to what the Holy Spirit has taught the saints that have gone before us.

ⁱ There's prophecy upon prophecy, I call it multi-layered prophecy.

ⁱⁱ By the way, this is not a classic Jewish genealogy. Do you know why? Women are mentioned in it. Notice which women are mentioned. Look carefully, verse 3, Tamar. Then you have Ruth; then you have "her who had been the wife of Uriah." All of these women are Gentiles. It's unusual why (in the lineage of the Holy Messiah) would Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit bring these girls in. Obviously there are a number of sexual sins involved. And in that sense this is not some holier-than-thou genealogy. Obviously they're Gentile and that shows you that Jewishness is carried through the father, exclusively, it doesn't matter what the woman was, Jesus was a Jew.

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