

Does the Virgin Birth Really Matter?

Matthew 1:18-25

BI: Our unshakable hope in the gospel is grounded in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ just as it is portrayed in Scripture.

Turn with me in your Bible to Matthew 1. Since this is Christmas morning it seems that this might be the most appropriate text to consider and, as far as I can tell, it is the only Christmas passage in the gospels that I have yet to preach.

Matthew 1 is an important text for at least a couple of reasons. First, what we find in Matthew 1 is the beginning of N.T. As the first chapter it holds a place of special significance because one might assume that of all things the biblical authors might have chosen to say (under the inspiration of the H.S.) the first things would be of the utmost significance. Indeed, that is exactly what we discover in this chapter because it is all about the primary character of the N.T.; namely, Jesus Christ.

Second, Matthew 1 is significant not only because it's subject is Jesus Christ, but also because this is where one of the most important revelations about Jesus Christ is made. In fact, I want to suggest to you that the topic of this chapter is the bedrock upon which the rest of the N.T. either stands or falls. Why? Because in this chapter Matthew reveals the true identity of Jesus Christ.

What is the true identity of Jesus Christ? He is the God-man. He is "The Word made flesh" (Jn. 1:14). He is the very incarnation of Deity. He is the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (Col. 2:9). He is Immanuel - God with us.

This is what the first chapter of the first book of the N.T. reveals to us. Notice with me that in verses 1-17 we have the genealogical record of Jesus. This is one of those passages that so many of you really look forward to in your Bible reading plan, right? You just can't wait to read the "begats." In fact, how many of you spent time meditating these verses this week?

Actually, I suspect more of us have wondered why this passage is included in the N.T. at all. I mean, what's the point, right? Who cares whose father was who in the O.T.? We should care. We should care, because you see, if Jesus was going to be the Savior, He couldn't just be anybody. He had to be a man who was born as a son of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, a direct descendant of king David.

So the point of these first 17 verses is that Jesus was a man. But he wasn't just any man. He was a man who came into the world exactly the way the O.T. said the Messiah would come. And this is why verse 1 begins the N.T. by saying "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. So chapter one is significant because it reveals that Jesus was a real man.

Second, Matthew 1 is important because it establishes that Jesus is not just a man. He is also God. Matthew reveals that to us by telling about the unique manner in which Jesus was born.

Let's read it together

(Read Mat. 1:18-25)

Notice two key phrases in this passage. In v. 18, "... she was found to be with Child *by the H.S.*" Then in v. 20, "For the child who was conceived in her is *of the H.S.*" The question is, Who was Jesus' father? The Bible answers, Mary was His mother and God is His Father.

Luke's gospel bears this out as well. Hold your place here in Matt 1, and turn with me to Luke 1. Once again, the gospel writer begins by establishing the unique identity of Jesus. Let's pick up in v. 26.

(Read 1:26-38)

Once again, let's be careful to notice the key phrases. In v. 32 we read, "He will be great and will be called the *Son of the Most High.*" Then, when Mary asks how this is possible since she is a virgin, the angel says (v. 35), "*The H.S.* will come upon you and the power of *the Most High* will overshadow you; and for this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God.

There are some in our day who will tell us that doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is not important. Can you be a Christian and not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin. All I can say to that is if you believe Jesus was not born of a virgin, your belief is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture and the faith of the apostles.

Just briefly this morning, let's consider some of the reasons the Virgin Birth is important.

I. It Shows that Salvation Ultimately Comes from God:

1. The virgin birth show us that salvation can never come through human effort. It has to be a work of God Himself. This was evident at the very beginning of Jesus' life.
2. As the Birth of the Savior was accomplished by miracle, so the salvation of every child of God is a supernatural miracle. None of us becomes a child of God as an act of human will alone. As Jesus said "You must be born again" (Jn. 3:3). That just cannot happen apart from the initiating power of God.

II. It United Deity and Humanity in One Person:

1. I suppose it would have been possible for God to have sent Jesus through the agency of two human parents, but then it would have been difficult for us to comprehend that Jesus was not just a man but fully God.
2. On the other hand, God could have created a human body for Jesus in heaven and sent him to earth as a fully grown man. But then he would not have come to us as a true human being descended from Adam.
3. Have you ever wondered why Jesus had to be born as a baby? Why not just come down as a full-grown adult, have himself executed in Jerusalem and then rise again and return to heaven? The answer is that it is not just the blood of Jesus that saves us. We not only needed someone to pay the penalty for our sins, we also needed someone to provide real righteousness that could be

credited to our account. In order for that to happen, Jesus had to be a real human being who lived a truly human life, yet without any sin.

4. This is what Jesus did. Paul explains this in Romans 1-5, and he sums it up by saying “For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

5. As a man Jesus could represent humanity to God. As God, Jesus could fulfill the demands of God’s righteous law and pay the penalty for every human being who has broken that law. Only God could do both. So the virgin birth unites deity and humanity in one Person.

III. It Made Jesus a Sympathetic High Priest:

1. The author of Hebrews writes, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet without sin*” (Heb. 4:15).

2. The fact that Jesus was fully God and fully man made it possible for Him to experience exactly what we experience. As a result, He is not an unsympathetic High Priest. He does not stand aloof to our predicament. He knows exactly what it is like to live in a sinful world and be tempted every day of His life. So when he stands before the Father making intercession for us, he does so as One who really knows what we feel. He cares about us. He loves us. And He always lives to make intercession for us before the throne of God.

3. So you see, the story of Jesus’ birth is one of the most significant elements of the gospel, because it assures us that Jesus is both God and man. And as such, He is uniquely qualified to accomplish everything necessary for our salvation.

4. Today is more than Jesus’ birth day. It is about more than manger scenes, shepherds, wise men, and angels. It is about the incarnation of God. It’s about the miracle of God becoming man. It was the only way He could save us. And He did it because He loves us more than we will ever be able to comprehend. Isn’t that amazing? Isn’t that glorious?

5. It’s a wonderful thing to be in the house of the Lord on Christmas day. Let’s pray.