

Why I Believe in the Virgin Birth: A Study on Romans 1:3b and Luke 1:26-35

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We have already seen that Paul proclaimed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. He was true deity, coequal and coeternal with the Father. It is clear that Christ himself and the writers of the New Testament claimed that Jesus Christ was God.

We will now look at the last part of Romans 1:3, concentrating our attention on the words “which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” This verse states that Jesus Christ was also a man. He is both God and man — perfect humanity and undiminished deity united in one person forever. He is unique in all the universe!

You may ask, “How can God become man? How can the infinite become finite? How can the eternal be limited to time?” We will look at these questions and others as we study the implications of Jesus Christ’s supernatural virgin birth.

First, it is important to acknowledge that many people today reject the notion of a miraculous virgin birth. There are many reasons, however, why such a wonderful miracle is completely reasonable and believable. One does not have to be a fool or an exegetical incompetent, nor does he have to commit intellectual suicide to believe in the virgin birth. It is grounded on the solid reality of historical fact, and it is very logical when viewed from a Christian context.

The virgin birth has been an essential teaching throughout the history of the Church. One of the earliest creeds we have is the Apostles’ Creed which states:

“I believe . . . in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.”

THE BIBLE TEACHES THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Luke 1:26-35 clearly states that Jesus was to be born of the virgin Mary. The Greek word *parthenos* that is used here means “a woman who never new a man sexually.” The word used in Isaiah 7:14 is *alma*, which may be translated “maiden” or “virgin.” Matthew 1:18-25 also makes it clear that the Holy Spirit conceived Jesus in Mary’s virgin womb. Human reason says this conception by the Holy Spirit is a biological impossibility, but such reason fails to account for the supernatural and the power of God. The one born would be a holy thing (Luke 1:35) — sinless.

The Bible teaches the virgin birth. It is understandable for a person to deny the virgin birth of Jesus, but for him to claim that the Bible does not teach the virgin birth is sheer foolishness. Because the Bible teaches the virgin birth, I believe it. It is revealed truth from God.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

From all eternity Christ was God. He is a supernatural being. It is not incredible to believe that a supernatural being came into the world in a supernatural manner. The deity of Christ expects and demands the virgin birth.

THE POSSIBILITY OF MIRACLES EXISTS

To accept the virgin birth means that one must accept the concept of a miracle. Belief in the possibility of miracles rests in one's view of God and the world.

During the 1920's the Church in America experienced a terrible rift in the Liberal-Fundamentalist Controversy. Liberalism had infiltrated every major denomination. The fundamentalists, who believed in an inspired and infallible Bible, attempted to ward off the liberals. They centered their arguments around five points of doctrine, five "fundamentals" essential to the preservation of biblical and historical Christianity. These points were: (1) an inerrant Bible; (2) the virgin birth; (3) the deity of Christ; (4) substitutionary atonement; and (5) the physical resurrection and the physical second coming of Christ. The virgin birth, then as well as now, was a key issue — for if Christ was not born of a virgin, then he was not God, and if he was not God, then he could not grant men eternal life. Furthermore, to deny the virgin birth was to deny the supernatural, and if one denied this miracle, he could deny them all.

No Christian is against science, for the true facts of science and the Bible will never conflict. However, when a scientist leaves the realm of true fact and begins to speculate as to the meaning of certain data, this is where the Christian might take issue. There are many fine scientists who are Christians. Nevertheless, atheistic science states that the world is operating according to certain fixed or regular laws of nature. This is called "uniformitarianism," the belief that all things exist as they always have existed, and that all physical phenomena continue according to inviolable natural laws. They reject the supernatural, faithfully adhering to a closed system with no possibility of miracles.

The Christian believes that God is the Creator and Sustainer of this universe, and that he is sovereign over his creation. He who created the apparently fixed laws of nature can intervene into his creation whenever and however he pleases — even if such intervention appears to “violate” the “laws” of nature. A recognition of God admits the possibility of miracles.

Science is not in a position to judge a miracle. It deals with the regular and normal laws of nature such as gravity. Scientific knowledge advances through observation and experiment, working with data supplied by the five physical senses. But a miracle involves the spiritual realm, not the physical, and cannot be dealt with on a scientific basis.

A miracle cannot possibly conform to any known law, or it would not be a miracle. The Christian who argues for a miracle is not against the regularity of nature as a general principle, but is against the necessary regularity of nature in every instance. God can change or suspend natural law if he chooses to do so. All laws are God’s laws, and he is free to change these laws at any time.

The issue then is God. If God exists, then the possibility of miracles exists. The virgin birth is just one of the hundreds of miracles God has done!

FULFILLED PROPHECY

In Isaiah 7:14, which was written in 700 B.C., the prophet predicted the virgin birth, and it came about just as predicted (cf. Matt. 1:22,23). Liberals who have denied the virgin birth have tried to change the date of the writing of Isaiah to make it just a little before the time of Christ. This theory was soundly disproved by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These scrolls were written at least two hundred years before Christ.

Over three hundred prophecies about the first coming of Christ were literally fulfilled; the mathematical possibility of their being fulfilled in one person by sheer chance or accident is 1 in $84 \cdot 10^{97}$ — that’s 84 with 97 zeros after it!

A SUPERNATURAL SIGN

The virgin birth was to be a sign to Israel and to the world that Jesus Christ was the God-man. “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). The Jews require signs to

believe(1 Cor. 1:22), and a sign must be extraordinary if it is to have much impact. What is more extraordinary than a virgin birth?

CHRIST WAS SINLESS

Many theologians believe that the immaterial part of man (the soul, the sin nature, etc.) is passed on through natural generation. If one adopts this perspective, then every person born into this world has received a sin nature from Adam through his parents. Had Christ had a normal birth, he would have inherited a sin nature like all other children born into the world. In this view, Christ's virgin birth prevented his inheritance of a sin nature.

While this is not the only (or even the best) explanation of how the sin nature is inherited, the fact that Jesus actually was sinless from the time of his birth indicates that his birth and his person were absolutely supernatural. By whatever means sin is communicated from Adam to his posterity (natural generation, direct imputation, etc.), the fact that this sin did not infect Jesus demonstrates his supernatural birth.

THE CURSE ON THE ROYAL LINE WAS REMOVED

When David was king of Israel, God promised that his seed and his kingdom would be established forever:

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever” (2 Sam. 7:12-14,16).

Later Isaiah prophesied that this seed would be the Messiah:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:6-7).

The one qualified to occupy the throne of David would have to be a person who had the blood and royal right to be king. He had to be able to trace his lineage through his fathers (male ancestors) directly to David. Jesus' genealogy, especially as outlined in Matthew 1:1-17, makes Jesus' claim to David's throne clear. There were many potential rulers before Jesus who might have reigned on the throne of Israel, but they could not reign because the nation was in bondage because of its sin. Joseph was in the royal line, one of these potential rulers.

Jehoiakim (sometimes called Jechonias or Coniah) was a king in the royal line of David. Because of Jehoiakim's sin, God put a curse on him and his children stating that none of his seed would ever sit on the throne of David (Jer. 36:30-31).

How could the problem be solved? One way that theologians have answered the question is by arguing that the curse on the royal lineage did not apply to Jesus because he was the adopted son of Joseph rather than the natural son of Joseph. Because the curse applied to Jehoiakim's natural bloodline, it did not affect Jesus who was not Joseph's natural son. By marrying Mary and taking the unborn Jesus under his protecting care, Joseph became Jesus' legal father, thereby enabling Christ's claim to David's throne. Christ became the legal Messiah, the royal Messiah, the uncursed Messiah, and the true Messiah.

CONCLUSION

Christianity is not worshiping the babe, born of a virgin, but the God-man who came to be the perfect sacrifice for the sins of men. If you will believe that Christ is your personal Lord and Savior, you will come to understand that Christ died for you. Then you will receive eternal life, Christ's righteousness, and the forgiveness of sins.