

The Significance of the Virgin Birth

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What I wanted to do today was to kind of inform your understanding about the nature of the virgin birth. You know, we talk about the virgin birth and we kind of take it for granted in our circles and yet I think that there might be some benefit to us to look at it closely and understand it from a biblical perspective and understand the theological significance of it. What we need to do today and what I think will help us in the coming week, is to move beyond those good sentiments about the season and to understand from a biblical and a theological perspective why the virgin birth is so significant and not simply to assume it. I think that that's where we often get into trouble over time in the Christian life, in the Christian church, in Christian circles, is that we just start to assume things without really studying them, without understanding them, and just a general superficial knowledge of an echo of truth that others have defined in the past ultimately isn't enough to carry us. We need to know this and to understand it for ourselves and what you find when you study the virgin birth is that it is right at the center of the nature of your redemption; that it is essential for true salvation; that our hope, not only in a general sense for the weak and good will among men, but our hope of the forgiveness of our sins, our hope of the realization of eternal life, our hope that Christ has thoroughly dealt with our sin is bound up in the virgin birth in a way that you may not fully appreciate.

So we want to look at this today in a couple of simple ways and almost in an introductory sense but in a way that I'm confident is going to advance your appreciation of why we celebrate it. When you strip away all of the earthly, secular things that have grown up and have obscured it, at the core of it, at the core what was the inception of all of it was a recognition and a remembrance of the virgin birth and it's not surprising that things have risen up to cloud that over because it is so central to redemption. It's not surprising that Satan and false teachers would do things which would deny it or cover it up and make it seem less important than it is. Today we have the privilege from God's word in a peaceful comfortable setting to be able to look and see what it is that our Lord did on our behalf when he came in human flesh.

So we're going to study the virgin birth as we enter Christmas week and let's just start with a simple definition. It's always good to define your terms. One of the best things that ever happened to me in the terms of my teaching was very, very early on in my preaching, I had only preached maybe a half dozen or ten times and somebody came alongside, an older saint who's now in heaven and he said, "What you need to do is you

need to define your terms when you teach so that it's clear what you're talking about." And that advice from somebody who was not a preacher at all, was very helpful and shaped my preaching going forward and so I'm grateful for Harry Lowe's influence on me in days gone by.

So what we want to do is we want to define our term, the virgin birth, and here's what we're saying. When we're talking about the virgin birth, here's what we're saying: the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of his virgin mother, Mary, by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. His conception occurred without the contribution of a human father. Simply stated: Jesus was conceived in the womb of his mother, Mary, by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit apart from the contribution of a human father. There was never a birth like that of Jesus. God created Adam directly. Eve was a woman taken from man. Since then, every human birth has been the coming together of a man and a woman, or at least in modern days, a male seed with a female contribution, but in Jesus Christ we see a man being born from a woman alone. There was no male contribution to his conception.

So we want to understand why that is and, beloved, you will honor Christ more, you will revere him more deeply, you will honor him more fully when you understand his birth and why it is so important. How does it relate to salvation? That's the thing is that this is related to your salvation. You should not think about the virgin birth as an isolated event that occurred in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. This was the outworking of God's eternal plan for the fulfillment and the accomplishment of an eternal purpose and so this is part of an overall plan of God and one writer puts its significance this way, stating it in a negative way, "If Jesus was simply the illegitimate child of Mary's infidelity or even if he is the child of Joseph's natural marital union with Mary, he is not God. And if he is not God, his claims to be God are lies. And if his claims are lies, his salvation is a hoax. And if his salvation is a hoax, we are all doomed." To take that one step further in a parallel to the way that Paul spoke about the resurrection, if the virgin birth is not true, we are wasting our time here. There is nothing supernatural about Christ at all if he was simply the product of natural human conception because natural human conception leads to a natural human child born in sin with no deity attached to it whatsoever.

So there are massive consequences at stake when we talk about the virgin birth because, beloved, your eternal salvation hinges on this being true. If Christ is not God in human flesh, if Christ was not born to a virgin, if Christ was simply a mere human through natural conception, he has absolutely no power to save us. He has no position to save us and so this is crucial to understanding our salvation and its truth is vital to Christian redemption.

So what we want to do today is we just want to look at two basic approaches to the virgin birth. We're going to look at the biblical statements on the virgin birth and see that this is what the Bible teaches, that Christ was born of a virgin, and then we're going to take a little bit of time to briefly discuss the significance of the virgin birth. Why was it that Christ had to be born of a virgin? Why was it? What did that accomplish? What did it do

that is directly tied for the salvation that you enjoy to be brought into reality? That's what we're going to see. The statements and then the significance.

Let's start with the statements of the virgin birth. Open to the book of Matthew. We'll start there, starting with the Gospel of Matthew 1, beginning in verse 18 where it says, "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." Notice, before they came together. Before their marital union had been consummated, she was already with child by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 19, "And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly." Why? He didn't understand. He didn't know. His wife was pregnant, how was he supposed to understand what had happened? And there was angelic intervention in verse 20.

"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.'" He came from the Holy Spirit, not through a sinful act by your betrothed.

Verse 21, "'She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." Verse 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.' And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."

So here in Matthew you see a clear assertion that before Mary and her husband had come together, she was already with child. She was a virgin, it says in verse 23, quoting from a prophecy from Isaiah 7:14. She was a virgin and was with child. And in verse 25, Joseph kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son. So Scripture makes this abundantly clear. Here in Matthew, building on the famous prophecy from Isaiah that said in 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." Seven hundred years later, that birth took place and Matthew connects it as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

Now, a little brief technical word here that won't detain us. In Isaiah, scholars quibble over the technical meaning of the Hebrew word that is translated as "virgin" there. They say that it's really more a word that's a general reference to a young woman, not a technical term for a virgin. Well, we won't let that distract us here. We don't need to answer all of those technical scholarly issues because we can understand them in light of the way that Scripture interprets that prophecy when Jesus is born. Scripture in the unfolding and the progress of revelation, leaves no doubt and, frankly, I don't think there's any doubt about what Isaiah intended, but we're just addressing the brief things that come up in these discussions. We ask the question: what are the biblical statements

about Jesus' birth? What does Scripture say about his birth regardless of scholarly discussions about one word in the book of Isaiah?

Well, Matthew here in verse 18 describes Mary with the Greek word "parthenos," and one Bible dictionary, every Bible lexicon that I looked at it says "virgin, virgin, virgin" in defining that and one dictionary gives it this little bit of an expansion, it says that parthenos stresses the fact that the one described has never engaged in sexual intercourse. In other words, what's significant about this is that the New Testament Greek word that is used does not carry any ambiguity about it. This is the word that is used in Matthew 25 to describe the ten virgins. It's the word that's used in 1 Corinthians 7 in Paul's teaching on marriage when he's talking about virgins as opposed to widows, for example. So Matthew takes this precise word and says, "The mother of Jesus was a virgin at the time of his conception and was until the time of his birth." There was no question to be had about it.

Now, in the Gospel of Luke, turn over to Luke 1, we see further clarification, further biblical statements about this. And it's important as we're talking about important theological issues like the virgin birth, to understand where it is in Scripture that these things come from; that this isn't something that's just dogmatically asserted based on the authority of a preacher or based on the authority of church tradition. No, we go to our authority, the Scripture, and see what Scripture says about it. Is Scripture clear on such a vital matter? And the answer is: yes, Scripture is absolutely clear.

Look at Luke 1, beginning in verse 26. Luke uses that same Greek word "parthenos" in his description that we're going to see over the next few minutes. Verse 26, "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary." He says it twice in this introductory overview statement of it. It says twice she's a virgin so that you can't miss it. There is no quibbling. There is no qualification about it. Scripture states it dogmatically: she was a virgin who had not known a man at the time that Jesus was conceived.

And what does the virgin hear from the angel that comes? Verse 30, as the angel comes to her and speaks, Luke 1:30, "The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 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; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.'" Stunning pronouncement that comes to Mary. "Mary, fear not. Mary, congratulations. Mary, favored one, you have been chosen by God to give birth to Messiah. The Promised One that the nation of Israel has been awaiting for centuries, you will give birth to him."

Mary is astonished. This had to be overwhelming and, you know, look, you and I in her shoes would have been in awe also. An angel comes, makes an announcement like this and then you're left to respond to it. It's a stunning moment in redemptive history and Mary is astonished. She responds to it in a very appropriate way that vindicates the

testimony about her virginity. This is an idea that's outside the realm of nature what he had just said to her.

Look at verse 34. She says it simply and profoundly, "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'" Here not using the word "parthenos," rather using a statement that literally means, "I do not know a man. I have not known a man sexually and I will not know a man sexually. I do not engage in sexual relations and I have not engaged. How is it that I am going to give birth to anything, let alone to the Messiah?"

The angel responds to her and this is very crucial for pivoting into the significance of the virgin birth in just a moment. Verse 35, the angel answers her question, "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.'" Or the child to be born will be called holy, is another way to understand the grammatical structure there that is reflected in your ESV for those of you that use that. "The child will be holy. He will be sanctified. He will be set apart because of the work of the Holy Spirit on you."

Verse 36, "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God." There are the biblical statements. Galatians 4:4 is sometimes cited as well that Christ was born of a woman, perhaps that more a statement of his humanity than of the virgin birth but the biblical statements in two of the four Gospels are clear. John and Mark don't cover this aspect of Christ's life because it had already been covered elsewhere in the Scriptures. So we have independent witnesses from Matthew and Luke, both testifying to the reality of the virgin birth. Scripture says on the basis of two or three witnesses a fact is established. That's what we have here. Scripture has spoken and describes Mary as one who had not engaged in sexual relations and yet she was found to be with child.

Now, what are we to make of that? Having considered the statements of the virgin birth, what's the significance of the virgin birth? Why does this matter? And that brings it into the realm of our understanding of spiritual truth, our understanding of salvation. It brings us into the understanding of how you can be reconciled to a holy God. You who were born into sin. You who are guilty by being a descendant of Adam. You who are guilty of sin in your own conduct, your words, your thoughts, utterly ruined before a holy God. How is it that you can be reconciled to him? How is it that you can know that your eternal life is real and that Christ truly has the power to save you that he says that he does? Stated differently: what is it that distinguishes true biblical salvation from a mere system of ethics of trying to work your way to God and just from human power obeying human rules and hoping to present God something that is acceptable to him at the end and hoping with your fingers crossed that you've been good enough? What distinguishes the certainty of our eternal hope, the certainty of Christian salvation from that? What is it that makes us different? What distinguishes true Christianity from a natural impostor?

Well, the significance of the virgin birth helps us to understand that, that's point 2. We've seen the statements from Matthew 1, Isaiah 7, and Luke 1, that give us the basis for

understanding the reality of the virgin birth, now we want to look at the significance of the virgin birth and here we're going to highlight three aspects of it. And some of this is just so essential for some of you in particular, I know, to understand because Christianity isn't clear in your mind and you're just trying hard to be a good person and you know that Jesus fits in there somewhere and the cross fits in somewhere, but somehow it is still anchored in your mind that your salvation depends on your efforts and you're finding that you fall a little bit short and you say, "I'm just going to try harder then." Well, understanding the virgin birth gives you a way out of that mistaken notion of what it means to be a Christian.

What's the significance of the virgin birth? First of all, let's put it in this statement: Christianity is supernatural. Christianity is supernatural, but not in the way of the impostors that display it here today where they pretend to conduct miracles on stage controlled platforms in order to impress people with, "Wow! I've never seen that happen before!" Not in that false way. Jesus warned us about false prophets who would do false signs and if possible to lead astray even the elect. Not supernatural in that way at all, rather what we're talking about is the supernatural nature of spiritual salvation. Christianity does not offer to men a system of human ethics by which they may be saved, a system of ethics that can be achieved through human power, and the virgin birth illustrates that and makes that plain. Scripture says in Romans 3:12, that there is no one who does good, and so that immediately means that if there's to be salvation, that it cannot be accomplished through anything that you can do on your own. That's impossible. God is holy. God is majestic. You're a creature and you're sinful besides. You can't through your own human actions jump up to the mountaintop of his great existence. You can't jump the gulf of the Grand Canyon from your sinful created nature. Your sinful created nature can't jump in your human power to the other side of the Grand Canyon to get to God. That's not possible.

So we have to abandon any hope in our own righteousness; any thought that somehow we can do this on our own. If you are going to be saved, and if you are saved, it is only because of the power of God at work in your soul. You cannot do anything to save yourself and it's not until you reach that confession, that heart-felt recognition that, "There is nothing good in me, I am spiritually bankrupt. I cannot save myself. I am guilty before a holy God." Only then can you enter into the realm of the supernatural nature of Christianity.

Well, why does the virgin birth point us to this? Let's put it this way and back up just a moment: when the Bible offers salvation to you, it is not commending your ability to save yourself. That's the last thing that it's doing, saying, "Hey, I think..." It doesn't come and present a list of laws and says, "You know, if you go out and keep these you can save yourself." It's the exact reversal of that. The law comes and condemns you in your sin and says you are guilty before a holy God; you cannot save yourself; you are spiritually ruined and can do nothing to save yourself. There is a complete pivot. It's a complete contrast to what is sometimes thought.

When true salvation takes place, when God saved you in times past, my Christian brother or sister, God exercised a supernatural act of power on your heart to turn you to Christ so that you would willingly come to Christ in repentance and faith. God supernaturally by the power of his Holy Spirit, caused you to be born again. You no more caused yourself to be born again spiritually than you caused yourself to be born again physically and the virgin birth helps us to understand that because in the virgin birth, what you have is God coming upon Mary in a powerful way to accomplish that which was beyond human means; which was beyond human capacity. A virgin woman on her own cannot generate a child. It's impossible. Mary recognized that and said, "This is impossible! How can this be?" And in like manner, what we say to a sinner is, "It is impossible for you to be saved through your own efforts." The virgin birth helps us to see that if there is to be salvation at all, it must begin with an act of God on someone rather than that person working his way to God.

So in the virgin birth, in God coming upon Mary, we see an illustration of the fact that sinners must look to God for salvation and not to their own ability, works or self-righteousness. The virgin birth was supernatural. True Christianity, true conversion, is supernatural as well. It is outside the realm of human ability to accomplish on its own. The virgin birth points us in that direction. Now secondly, what else can we say about the virgin birth? It teaches us that Christ is sinless. Christ is sinless and we need to delve into a little bit of theology here to help you understand exactly why this is so important. One of the sad realities of human birth is this: it's that every child that is born into the world is, in one sense, doomed from the start. Doomed in the sense that they are born into sin and they inherit a sinful nature from their parents.

Now, no one, I realize that this isn't the way that we always think about babies: they're cute and they're little and they seem so sweet and innocent. But there is a sinful nature that is resident even in the most newborn child that he has received from his parents and no one who observes children, no parent certainly, would ever deny that because those little reprobates know how to sin without even being taught to do so, don't they? They know somehow how to throw a tantrum when they don't get their way. They know instinctively how to lie when they think that they're in trouble. They know how to selfishly grab after their little toys when someone else wants them. The selfishness and the deceit and the anger is inbred in them and no parent has to teach them to do it. In fact, Scripture tells them to do the exact opposite: discipline that out of them. Train them in the way that they should go.

So we see children being born with a sinful nature that they receive from their parents. Furthermore, Scripture teaches us that Adam's guilt is a sign to all of his descendants; that Adam's guilt from the garden is a sign to every member of the human race because he was acting as our representative head in that place, in that time, and he failed. He sinned; he disobeyed God; and cast the whole human race into ruin as a result. And so by mere participation in humanity and by the nature that is inbred in us from our birth that we then act upon as we develop, we are hopelessly and miserably lost just by being members of the human race.

Now, beloved, this isn't a message about original sin, but that does help us to see the dilemma. It helps us to see a really great problem in terms of our salvation. We need a human sacrifice to turn away the wrath of God. Human guilt must be punished in human form for God's justice to be satisfied for the violations of his law. How is it that Christ could become a man and escape our shared sinful nature and condemnation? How is it that Christ could enter into humanity after the fall of Adam, how is it that he could fully identify with the human race and be completely identified with our humanity and yet escape the corruption in nature and the assignment of guilt from being a child of Adam? How can that happen? Well, beloved, even if you're not theologically wired, you need to understand that this is a vital question to be answered if your soul is to be saved. If you are to escape the condemnation that your sins deserve, there must be an answer to this dilemma because otherwise we're lost and we're still in our sins because God requires a perfect sacrifice to deliver us.

With that in mind, look again at Luke 1:35. "The angel answered and said to Mary, '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.'" Beloved, watch this. This is really wonderful truth. That verse says that the child that Mary would give birth to would be holy. He would be sanctified. He would be set apart. Holy from what? Set apart from what? Set apart from the sinful corruption of man. And here's what I want you to see, follow me here. The Holy Spirit and as we remember the virgin birth, we understand Scripture teaches us that the Holy Spirit not only performed a physical miracle in the womb of Mary. It's not just that a baby was formed without the contribution of a human father. Now that's a great miracle. That's more than we can do by human means and that's a wonderful reason to celebrate the goodness and the power of God that he did that, but Christ came to be a Savior of sinners. He said, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost." Therefore somehow the manner of his entrance into the world must somehow be tied to his saving mission. It's not just that God did a cool miracle and gave conception to Mary apart from a human father as if this was just something cool to do. There was a spiritual reason why it happened in this manner.

The Holy Spirit not only did a physical miracle in Mary's womb, he also did a spiritual miracle and in his work in the virgin conception, the Holy Spirit, watch this, preserved the spiritual nature of that baby from inheriting the guilt that belongs to the human race. He gave conception to Mary apart from normal human means and then in that conception, the Spirit of God, the virgin conception was the means by which Jesus was spared from inherited corruption that otherwise transmits through human generation. As one writer says and I quote, "The Holy Spirit sanctified the human nature of Christ from its very inception and thus kept it free from the pollution of sin."

Beloved, here's the thing. I realize this is we're swimming in some deep waters here, but the supernatural birth, the supernatural conception, more precisely, of Christ bypassed the natural transmission of sin. Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary in a way that bypassed the normal means of human reproduction and somehow in that, spared him the reception of inherited guilt and the transmission of a sinful nature. You say, "How did that happen?" Well, go back to verse 35. Scripture leads us up to a point and then leaves

us behind the veil and does not allow us to look in. Verse 35, "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." Somehow in a way that Scripture doesn't fully identify for us, this creative act, this creative energy by the Holy Spirit, spared the conception of Christ from the ordinary transmission of human sin. That is why he is sinless. His sinlessness was then what qualified him to be a perfect sacrifice on the cross.

Now, Scripture doesn't get into the details of what happened in the womb and we don't need to speculate on that, but there are a couple of things that I wanted to say to you about it. Go over to the Gospel of John 3. This is not a text on the virgin birth but I think it helps us understand what we're discussing here. There is an element of unrevealed mystery about this that we simply accept based on the fact that Scripture has informed us enough to believe what is true.

John 3:8, when Jesus is talking about the new birth for the children of men, he says this, he says, "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Now, here's my point: we don't understand the miracle of regeneration in the heart of a sinner. We don't understand how God works and produces new life in a sinful heart and yet we know that it has happened because we see the effects of it. We don't know where the wind comes from but we see the effects of it as it blows through our hair and rustles the leaves in the tree and we say, "This is undeniable even though I can't explain its origin in precise detail." We see that in the natural realm. We see it in the spiritual realm. I know that I've been born again because things came out of my life after my conversion that were utterly foreign to my experience. Same thing for you when you were converted. Well, in like manner, when we look at the effects of the fruit of Mary's womb, we see a sinless man walking on the face of the earth. We see enough from Scripture saying that that is attributed to a work of the Holy Spirit. We see the effects of it. We feel the wind blowing of his sinlessness, even though I don't know exactly how the Holy Spirit did that biologically.

And so the virgin birth, the virgin conception, gives us a sinless Savior who God by a supernatural act that he in his wisdom has chosen not to fully explain to us, has produced in Mary's womb a child who was spared the normal transmission of human sin. If, and this isn't even a problem for those of us that believe in the power of God to believe, if God can speak creation by the spoken word without physical material, we accept that supernatural power; if God can cause a man to be born again and we don't understand, we accept that, that's the nature of biblical...the supernatural is woven throughout all of Scripture. So we see in what happens here that not only a physical birth has taken place, but there is a spiritual preservation from inherited sin that is attributed to the Spirit of God as well. The supernatural is woven through and through and by a supernatural birth, Jesus was preserved from the transmission of sin from the bloodline of his mother. So Christ is sinless and the virgin birth teaches us that, and because he was sinless, he was therefore in a position to be a sinless sacrifice for you and me. A baby born by normal human means of transmission could never have done that.

Now, thirdly, we've said that Christianity is supernatural, that Christ is sinless, what is the other significance that we would consider today of the virgin birth? It is this: it's that Christ is the Savior. Christ is the Savior and what I mean by that is this: that through the virgin birth God used that means to establish two natures in the one person of Jesus Christ. He is fully God and he is fully man, two complete undivided, undiminished natures residing fully in one person. Mary provided a blood connection to humanity. Not only that, a blood connection to the royal line of David. The Holy Spirit established the sinless essence of God in her womb and from the very moment of his conception, Jesus developed with those two natures.

So in the virgin birth, God provided a Savior for us who was free from guilt and yet carried the essence of God at the same time. Beloved, in thinking about the condescension of Christ, I love to come back and to remind you of this, that Christ who was with God before time began, who was God before time began, who dwelt in eternal glory, stepped down from that glory to enter into the world in this means. He fully identified with our humanity, watch this, he fully identified with our humanity down to going through the complete gestation cycle in Mary's womb. That's how complete it was. God did not send down a human being from heaven and he arrived in adult form. No, his identity with you and me is absolutely complete and just as you and I started in our mother's womb and went nine months, give or take, so also Christ was in his mother's womb from the very beginning. That is how completely he has identified with our humanity. That is how he is able to completely redeem us from our sin. He can even redeem us from the original corruption that was communicated at our conception. David said, "In sin my mother conceived me," because at that very point even at conception, Christ was sinless and therefore able to redeem us from it all. It's incredible.

So what we see is that Christ is a Savior in the fullest absolute sense. That our complete humanity has been redeemed by his incarnation, by his death, by his resurrection. And you know, when I started I talked about jumping the gulf of the Grand Canyon, whatever else the other spontaneous illustrations were that I used at the time, beloved, what I want you to see is as we contemplate the virgin birth, that Mary gave birth to God in human flesh, is that this means that Christ alone fully bridges the gulf between God and man. 1 Timothy speaks about how he is a Mediator between God and man and he can mediate for us because he is fully man, fully identified with our humanity without a moment of exception and yet he is also fully God. And those two nature resident in one person mean that God and man can be joined together. You as a sinner can be reconciled to a holy God when you put your faith in Christ. The virgin birth is central to making that happen. A full redemption of your sinful humanity. The virgin birth uniquely established Christ to be the only Savior of the world. The Apostle Paul said that God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Christ identified with us. Christ identified with the Father, therefore fit to bring us into the presence of a holy God.

Have you received Christ? There is no salvation apart from him. If you have received Christ, then understand that he is fully a Savior. That he is completely able to save you to the uttermost because he has identified himself with our humanity so completely through

a virgin birth, through a completely sinless nature, that he offered up and sacrificed to God and said, "On behalf of my people, I offer my sinless life as a sacrifice on their behalf. I take their sins." Christ took our sins into his sinless body, as it were, and suffered the strokes of divine justice on our behalf so that a great exchange could take place. Your guilt placed on Christ and punished there completely forever. His sinless righteousness then credited to your account so that you are acceptable under the demands of God's law to be received into God's presence. None of that happens apart from the virgin birth.

So I invited you if you don't know Christ to come to this sinless Savior, to this supernatural Savior. And those of you that know him, to rest in him. To realize that Christ has done it all for your salvation. He truly paid it all. He had the essence that enabled him to do that and therefore he is a trustworthy Savior for you from your sins. John 1:12-13 says, "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

Let's pray together.

Our gracious Lord, we honor you and we believe the testimony of Scripture about the supernatural nature of your birth. We acknowledge and confess that we are not able to save ourselves, indeed, Lord, that we abhor ourselves for our own sins, for our own guilt, and that apart from a God sent Savior we would be righteously ruined and subject to eternal judgment in hell forever. That's our lot. That's what we deserve and yet, Lord, as we contemplate the testimony of Scripture and the testimony of the virgin birth, we realize that you in grace have acted on our behalf to provide a Savior who can fully redeem us from every aspect of our sinful humanity.

We thank you for Christ. We thank you for sending him. We thank you for the wisdom that appointed this means of bringing a Savior to the world. We thank you for the divine wisdom that transcends our understanding in such a way that though we can't fully understand how you did this, we know that you did based on the infallible testimony of your word, based on what we see in the product of the sinless life of Jesus, he who no one could bring a successful accusation of sin against. Our Lord, we thank you for identifying with our humanity. We thank you for your perfect obedience to the law throughout your earthly life. We thank you for going to the cross and offering yourself, offering that perfect life as a sacrifice on our behalf, that your blood was truly shed for sinners just like us. We thank you that you went through the darkness of death. We thank you that you are raised from the dead, that you are ascended on high, that you are coming again to bring us to yourself and that in the meantime you are preparing for us a place where you will receive us unto yourself. How great is this salvation that you have provided to us. How undeserving we are. How superlative is your nature and grace.

So, Father, as believers in Christ, we rejoice, we thank you, we humbly acknowledge the truth of Scripture. For those who are here and will one day hear, we ask for your mercy upon them that you would open their eyes to the truth of Christ that they would repent

and come to him in saving faith. Father, we're grateful for all that you've done on our behalf. You alone are gracious and we see this reflected in our Savior's birth. In his great and glorious name we pray. Amen.

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