

**THE VIRGIN BIRTH
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

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Chapter Five -

THE REAL MEANING OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH FOR YOU AND ME

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INTRODUCTORY

In the preceding pages of this book we have contended strongly for the belief in the validity of

the Virgin Birth of JESUS CHRIST.

Some who discuss this topic are content to lay it aside unsolved, with the comment, "Well, it doesn't make a lot of difference. If it happened, it happened, if it didn't, it didn't. In either case, it doesn't affect us individually or personally in any way."

The purpose of this chapter is to show that it does make a difference and it makes a very big difference. The difference will be very clearly seen as we review GOD's plan of redemption for the world.

When man of his own free will and accord chose to sin, he came under the condemnation of GOD. Divine righteousness could not tolerate sin. But GOD was not content to leave man in his sin and guilt. As a righteous judge, GOD must allow the condemnation because of sin to remain, yet GOD so loved man and longed so much to save him. As a true mother loves her wayward son and longs to see him come home, she abhors his evil ways and will not allow him to bring his sin into her home, just so GOD longs for man to come back to Him, yet he must come without his sin.

While GOD was yearning and longing for man to come back, man, too, was discontent in his sinful estate. There was something in man that caused him to long for GOD. While he struggled in darkness, he longed for deliverance. The tragedy is that though man did long and crave for GOD, his ever-present sin kept him in darkness and bondage. Man could never by searching find GOD. If reconciliation is to be accomplished, GOD must take the initiative and search and find man.

This brings us to the need of a plan which would accomplish the deliverance of man from sin and restore him to divine fellowship with GOD and this plan immediately demanded a mediator. GOD and man were estranged by sin. GOD's holiness and righteousness must be preserved and man's weakness and failure must be turned into victory over sin. GOD's love must have an avenue by which it can reach man to reclaim him. At the same time, man's freedom must not be violated. GOD created man free. GOD has always respected man's freedom and in all of GOD's approaches toward man, He has always made His approaches upon the principle that man is a free moral agent, capable of his own decisions and responsible for his own decisions.

CHRIST is the only mediator who could mediate between GOD and man and, at the same time, preserve GOD's righteousness inviolate and respect man's freedom.

Man has failed utterly in his efforts to overcome sin and some power greater outside of man must be available if man is to be lifted from the horrible pit and miry clay of sin. Hence, this needed mediator must be more than man. He, must be God-Man. CHRIST meets all the requirements and fills all the needs and accomplishes all the necessities of divine-human power. CHRIST was qualified to be this mediator between GOD and man because He was the Eternal Son of GOD. Before He came in the flesh, He existed as GOD. CHRIST speaks of his existence with the Father before the creation (John 17:5). John begins his Gospel by stating his existence with the Father and that CHRIST was GOD (John 1:1-14).

CHRIST was also qualified to be the mediator between GOD and man in that while He was yet GOD, He became man. The only way GOD could enter into saving relations with man was to

come and dwell in the race and get under the load of sin with man. It could not be done by an arbitrary decree from a sovereign ruler.

I. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

This brings us face to face with the question, how did GOD become flesh? **"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law"** (Galatians 4:4).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What avenue did GOD use to present His Son to the world?

The skeptics, doubters and critics have invented a lot of so-called answers, but none of them have ever satisfied like the simple answer given by Matthew and Luke.

1. A Denial is Not the Answer

Those who would deny the simple age-long account of the Virgin Birth should realize that when they deny this doctrine, instead of answering the question, they have merely created a greater problem. After all, the skeptics have denied the historical account of the life of JESUS, and they still have the man on their hands to explain. CHRIST does not bow out of history at the scoffing of the critics, but He still persists and His influence cannot be hushed away by all the howling winds of the critics.

2. We Start with a Person

In dealing with the Virgin Birth of CHRIST, we should remember that we do not start with a theory.

We do not start with an idea.

We do not start with a book.

We do not start with a doctrine.

We do not start with a creed.

We do not start with a hypothesis.

We do not start with our favorite hero upon whom we wish to bestow the mantle of Deity.

But rather, we start with a historical person who has invaded history and cannot be ignored.

The Virgin Birth story was not invented as an attempt to "sell JESUS to the world." CHRIST had lived His life, died, arose from the grave and was back with the Father for at least fifty years before the first word of the New Testament was ever written.

The New Testament did not produce CHRIST. He produced the New Testament. The New Testament writers did not invent the Virgin Birth story. It was their divinely inspired answer as to how GOD became flesh.

The New Testament did not produce Christianity. Christianity produced the New Testament. The New Testament was written as an inspired explanation of what had already happened.

3. Other Miracles

The Virgin Birth is not the only miracle associated with the life of JESUS. We have many, namely,

His birth
His sinless life
His miracles
His power
His death
His resurrection
His second coming

All these involve the element of the supernatural. To deny the Virgin Birth because it is supernatural is to lay the foundation to drop all these supernatural elements from His life.

The story of the Virgin Birth simply brings us face to face with our attitude toward the supernatural. Here we must decide whether in CHRIST we merely have a good man pointing us the way toward GOD, or whether we have GOD making a direct approach to man in the person of His only Begotten Son. Here we must decide if CHRIST is a mere product of humanity or if He is GOD invading history.

4. Biological Impossibility

Some disbelieve the Virgin Birth because they say it is a biological impossibility. A biologist is a scientist who studies life. His field is to study how life behaves under various conditions. No true biologist has ever told us how or where life began. All the biologist knows is a little about how life behaves once it gets started.

It should be stated here that the Virgin Birth stands in the same category with GOD creating the world and life in the beginning. Life and man began with GOD creating him from the dust of the earth, and the Virgin Birth is nothing more or less than GOD creating in the womb of a virgin the first member of a new race.

5. The Virgin Birth and the Plan of Salvation

Apart from GOD's Plan of Redemption for the world, the Virgin Birth has no meaning. The Virgin Birth has significance only as it is related to GOD's Plan of Redemption.

As we review the drama of GOD's Plan of Redemption for the ages, then and then only, do we see the real meaning and real significance of the New Testament doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

II. THE PLAN OF SALVATION

We here attempt to set forth the ABC method and plan which GOD uses to lure a lost world back home.

1. It All Begins with GOD

Here we must face an age-old problem, namely, "Is salvation accomplished by man seeking GOD or by GOD seeking man?" The one story that is woven through the Bible like a golden fiber is the story of GOD seeking man.

(1) GOD Provides

Before the mountains were brought forth or before the stars sang together, GOD provided salvation for this world. CHRIST stood as a LAMB slain from before the foundation of the world. Salvation is not an afterthought of GOD, but a forethought of GOD.

This plan GOD provided with the atoning death of His only Son. The saving work of CHRIST is accomplished through His death. What He actually was in being the true Son of GOD and a true Son of Man and the perfect life He lived on earth enabled Him to offer Himself in death as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world.

In His death, He broke the power of sin and death and that could be done only by one who could endure sin without sinning and die without remaining dead. This could only be done by a God-Man.

His death was a substitutionary atonement for the sins of man. He did not die for His own sins. He had none. JESUS, Himself, declared in many places of the New Testament that He came to give His life a ransom for many. When He came to the end of His earthly career, He said in Matthew 26:28 that His blood was shed for the remission of sin. We must endure the natural consequences of sin in this life, but the sin-death which marks the full operation of sin has been destroyed for us forever.

The death of CHRIST was a vicarious atonement. By this we mean, we benefit here and now by His suffering. Through His shed blood we have the forgiveness of sins. The HOLY SPIRIT makes the transfusion and we gain strength over sin and death through the life of CHRIST that is mediated to us.

The death of CHRIST was a propitiation. By this we mean, it shows GOD favorable to man in spite of sin. GOD needed an adequate expression of His love to man and a medium through which His saving Grace could be made available.

Let it be forever remembered that GOD is not a tyrant whose wrath had to be appeased before man could be saved, but He is a holy, loving Father whose love for man called forth this supreme effort to save man. He does not love us because CHRIST died, but CHRIST died because He loved us first. The death of CHRIST removed sin as an obstacle between GOD and man, thus, met the need in GOD's holy nature.

With the provisions thus made, GOD's call to the world today is, "**Come unto me, all ye that**

labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28).

Nothing short of the Virgin Born CHRIST could provide this.

2. Man Must Now Act

Since GOD has done as we have suggested above, He now waits for man to respond. We sometimes hear it said, and I have been one who has said it, "Man can do nothing, absolutely nothing, in any way to help save himself." In one sense this is true, but I have found it can be misleading. I remember preaching one time for forty-five minutes on the Plan of Salvation before a large congregation. At the close of the message, one man in all sincerity said to me, "I didn't know whether to accept the first forty minutes of your sermon or the last five." When I inquired for further explanation, he reminded me that I spoke forty minutes claiming that man can do absolutely nothing and in my last five minutes, I told them he must repent, believe and confess CHRIST. I saw his sincere misunderstanding and I have tried to evade that from then until now.

It is eternally true that man can do absolutely nothing, so far as meritorious deeds and acts are concerned, to gain favor with GOD. But it is equally true that man must respond to GOD's provision and accept the grace and forgiveness which GOD has prepared by the sacrificial offering of His Virgin Born Son. Man responds by repentance and faith.

(1) Repentance

Repentance is a big word and we cannot exhaust its treatment here. Repentance is a change of attitude and mind toward sin and a deep sense of sorrow over sin and the more thoroughly we understand our sin, the deeper is our sorrow. This is the way repentance works. But it is not enough to change our attitude toward sin and become sorry over it. We must turn from our sin and turn to CHRIST as Saviour. True repentance never stops short of repudiation of sin. This is the real acid test of repentance.

(2) Faith

Faith is also hard to understand. There is an inseparable tie between repentance and faith. One is the counterpart of the other. There is no priority of one over the other. They go together and are essential to each other. Neither means anything apart from the other. I think we help explain faith when we define it as trust.

Nothing short of the Virgin Born CHRIST could provide this.

3. GOD Moves Again

After GOD has provided and invited man to salvation, and after man responds and accepts this Grace from GOD, then GOD moves in to accomplish those phases of Christian experience - the words which we have heard many times, but the meaning we may have missed.

(1) Forgiveness

Forgiveness must be a personal response from GOD. If sin were simply a mistake or an error in the progress of human development, then forgiveness would be a light matter. GOD could forgive in a gesture and wait for man to outgrow his sin. But sin is such a voluntary breach of personal relationships that forgiveness means much more.

Forgiveness of sin is based upon the death of JESUS CHRIST. This is the meaning of the words of CHRIST when He said, "**This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**" The death of CHRIST has a two-fold bearing upon forgiveness. One, it reveals GOD's love and the length to which love will go for GOD to save, and two, it reveals GOD's power to be greater than the power of sin. CHRIST revealed the love of GOD in His willingness to die for our sins and in His ability to rise from the dead and break the power of sin.

Only a Virgin Born God-Man could do this.

(2) Conversion

By conversion we mean to describe that act of GOD whereby He creates us anew in CHRIST through the power of the blood of CHRIST.

(3) Regeneration

We use this term to express the experience when the soul is recreated in the image of CHRIST. Man was created in the image of GOD. That is, he was created for GOD and given a capacity for GOD. Sin did violence to that image but did not completely destroy it. It distorted, perverted and defiled, but there was left in man the possibility of coming back to GOD if only the sin problem could be solved. This was accomplished through the mediator, JESUS CHRIST.

Only the Virgin Born God-Man could do this.

(4) Justification

Justification is the judicial act of GOD by which He declares man free from the condemnation and guilt of sin. It takes place when the sinner trusts in the merits of CHRIST for salvation. In this act, GOD imputes the righteousness of CHRIST to the one who believes in Him. This gives the believer a new and permanent status before GOD - a new relation which is never revoked. This is true because it is the work of GOD based upon the atonement of His only Son and it is the death of CHRIST which preserves the justice of GOD in justifying sinners.

(5) Adoption

By adoption we mean that act of GOD whereby He makes a believer His son. It is the outward expression of the inward act of conversion and regeneration. It is the climax of GOD's saving act. Here we see the purpose of all GOD's saving effort. It is to bring man into fellowship with Himself. By means of the death of CHRIST, the witness of the HOLY SPIRIT, forgiveness, conversion, regeneration, and justification lead to the adoption of many sons into the family of GOD the Father.

Again, only the Virgin Born God-Man could mediate this.

I cannot feel satisfied to close this discussion with what some might term printed arguments. All the truths which I have suggested in these previous printed pages have been realized in my own personal experience and also, I have seen them demonstrated in the lives of many, many others as I have performed my pleasant duty of witnessing to them concerning these truths.

I was once invited to the home of a man eighty years old who had never been saved. Upon reaching the home, I was ushered through the front, down a long hallway and into a room where sat an old man in a rocking chair, thoughtlessly peering out through a window. After making his acquaintance and with the passing of some conversation, I brought him face to face with the question, "Have you ever been saved?"

He shook his head and said, "No, that is too deep a subject for me. I have thought about it, read about it, talked about it and heard a lot about it, but I just don't seem to be able to understand." At that point, he turned his face and eyes toward the window again. While breathing a silent prayer for the HOLY SPIRIT to help me, I, too, turned my face toward the window and there staring before my eyes were five doorsteps leading up to the house across the yard. There I saw my answer.

I said to the old man, "Do you see that house across the yard? It has only one door." He replied, "Yes." Then I said, "Will you give me your hand and let me help you as we walk up five doorsteps to the one door that leads into the Kingdom of Heaven?" His face brightened a bit and he extended his hand. Then I began,

"Our first doorstep is a conviction in your heart that you need help from Almighty GOD. Do you realize that?"

With a voice that cracked, he managed to say, "Yes."

"Doorstep number two," I continued, "is Godly sorrow. Deep down in your heart, is there a heart felt godly sorrow because of the sins you have committed?"

Again with a broken voice and trembling chin, he replied, "Yes, GOD knows I have committed a lot of sins."

"Very well," I replied, "that is doorstep number two. Now let's step up on step number three, which we will label 'prayer'." I bowed my head and pressed his hand on my knee and prayed the best I could. When I had finished praying, I asked him if he could pray. His first reply was, "Preacher, I can't word a prayer like you." "I don't mean that," I suggested. "You, in your own way, ask GOD for forgiveness." Then he started praying. His voice was so broken that I couldn't understand all of his words, but GOD did.

When he had finished praying, he looked at me through tear-dimmed eyes and I said, "We are on doorstep number three now. Let's try for number four. Are you ready to renounce, turn from and forsake every known sin of your life?" As quickly as he could speak the words, he replied, "Oh, yes, every one of them!"

Then I said, "Let's go on to number five. Will you stand, take me by the hand and right here in this room openly accept, profess and confess CHRIST JESUS as your Saviour?"

With one hand on the arm of the chair and the other reaching for me, his tottering body began to rise. As he gripped my hand, I saw something like an electrical flash spread over his countenance and I said, "How do you feel now?" With tear-stained cheeks, quivering lips and trembling chin, he said in a broken voice, "Wonderful!" I said, "Do you feel that you are a child of GOD now?" He replied, "I certainly do!" I said, "When we got on that fifth doorstep, we just fell right on through the door, didn't we?" He said, "Yes, I never had it explained to me that way before."

Sinner friend, it is no secret what GOD can do. What He did for that dear old man, He can do for you.

Only the Virgin Born God-Man could do this.

~ end of book ~
