

The Virgin Birth of Christ

By Dr. Dan W. Cozart

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Bible Text: Matthew 1:18-25

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Grace Baptist Church

5512 Old Jacksonville HWY

Tyler, TX 75703

Website: www.gracebaptisttyler.com

Online Sermons: <http://www.sermonaudio.com/gracebaptisttyler>

I invite you to turn with me to the book of Matthew, the gospel according to Matthew 1. We are in the midst of Christmas month and there is one month during the year when it seems more emphasis is placed on this person, Jesus Christ, than any other month. Regardless of your take on Christmas and your definition of Christmas whether a holiday, whether a religious observance, or whether just a secular festivity, we thank God that many, many people are viewing and observing this man, Christ Jesus, this month. We felt it would be in keeping with that thought to preach a series of messages on the Doctrine of Christ. That is those doctrines that pertain to Jesus Christ. This morning we come to the Virgin Birth of Christ in Matthew 1:18-25:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise," in other words, this is the way it occurred, this is the way it happened, "When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus."

One of the main features of the Bible is its authority. The education, logic and opinions of man do not determine truth. The word of God is the final authority and determination. Many things in the Bible do not square with human intelligence. Some men read the Bible and scratch their heads and laugh it off and say it cannot be. Some events in the Bible are humanly impossible. When you read them you say, "Humanly this could never be. This could not be done." Yet, dear ones, if it is in the Bible, they are true. By the way,

I hope you've settled that once and for all in your heart of hearts. If you read it in the Bible, it is so. You may not think it is so, you may have questions about it, you may not have a proper understanding of it, but if you read it in the Bible, it is so because the Bible is a book of authority. The authority of truth rests with God, not with man. What you read in the Bible is absolute truth whether man believes it or not. It may appear sometimes a little far-fetched or stretched but if God says it, it is always there and always truth.

Now, I want to give you some examples of that. God led or arranged for the leadership of the children of Israel to get out of Egyptian bondage. They had been there for 400 years and, my, how their hearts must have rejoiced as the last one left Egypt but it wasn't long until they faced their first obstacle and that was the Red Sea. How in this world will two million Jews, including women and children and babies, get across the Red Sea? And yet the Bible says that Moses lifted up his rod and the waters of the sea parted and all two million of them went safely across to the other side without one single casualty. Now, that's the craziest thing I've ever heard in my life. How in the world can that many people cross the Red Sea and at least not have a few of them drown? "Well, I don't know about that." You'd better know this: if God said that's the way it happened, that's exactly the way it happened. It wasn't The Reed Sea; it was the Red Sea.

Balaam was persuaded that he would make a little money on the side by prophesying for one of the wicked kings and yet God wouldn't let him do it. He had a donkey and he liked to ride on that donkey and he's going down the road to curse the children of God and the donkey saw the angel of the Lord and when the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, he started wandering away from the path he was going and Balaam smote that ass, smote that donkey. It happened three times and then the donkey began to talk to Balaam and Balaam began to talk to the donkey. You can't do that, but he did because God plainly says it in his word.

Jonah was swallowed alive by a big fish. I do not believe he lived in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, I believe he died and the belly of that fish was as a grave, a type of the grave of the Lord Jesus Christ that held his body three days and three nights but Jonah was raised from the esophagus and stomach of that fish and began to preach in Nineveh. It just cannot happen. One individual said that if you ever noticed a whale's throat, the esophagus area of the throat of a whale, that part down at the bottom is only about the size of an orange. First of all, the Bible doesn't say that a whale swallowed Jonah, it said it was a big fish. But, my dear friends, even if it was a little minnow, you'd better believe it because God's word is always true, it speaks with authority.

Three Hebrew children were cast into the burning furnace and they were not burned up. They didn't even smell like smoke. Well, my friends, you look at that and say, "That's impossible." The Bible is a book of impossibilities made possible by the power of God. It speaks with authority.

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is a sustainable and undeniable fact because God's word says it. Let God be true and every man a liar. While you have Matthew marked there, go over to II John, Verse 9. We used this verse last week but I refer you to it again today.

II John, verse 9, *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.* He may be very religious, he may be very moral, he may do a lot of good deeds, he may be a philanthropist, he may help people along the way but if he doesn't abide in the doctrine of Christ, he doesn't know God. *He hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.* I explained last Sunday that there are some who do believe that this refers to the teachings of Jesus Christ, it could mean that but I think the primary understanding of that verse of Scripture is it refers about Jesus Christ, who he is, and he's everything he claimed to be. That is the doctrine that refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, if a man does not esteem Christ like that and does not believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ, it matters not what "church" he may attend, he doesn't know the Lord. Salvation is in his Son and his Son is the virgin born Son of God.

So, let's look at the virgin birth of Christ. Last week we talked about his pre-Incarnation. Jesus did not become the Son of God when he was born, he has always been the Son of God; the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ is a cardinal doctrine in the word of God. Now, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ has been a doctrine that's been under attack down through the years. The Revised Standard Version took Isaiah 7:14 and tried to retranslate a word that's used there. In Isaiah 7:14, (700 years before Christ was born), *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* When the Revised Standard Version was published, people were alarmed when they looked at that same verse and it read this way, *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold, a young woman shall conceive.* Need I remind you, there is a little bit of difference between a young woman and a virgin. The word "almah" in the Hebrew is used there and the translators of the Revised Standard Version stressed this point: that word means "young woman." What they did not tell the public was: it was "a veiled, private, secluded woman," and from that we would get our meaning of "virgin." Had God wanted us to look at that just as she was another woman, he would have used a different Hebrew word to be sure. You see, the Bible says what it means. It means what it says. A virgin shall conceive.

Thomas Paine, the noted atheist, said the angel Gabriel cohabited with Mary and produced Jesus. Take a moment to turn to Luke chapter 1 and this is how Mr. Paine tried to teach this passage of Scripture. In verse 26 of Luke 1, *And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.* In our modern day vernacular we would say that the angel Gabriel was hitting on the virgin Mary and finally she succumbed to the temptation, they had an unholy union and a baby was born and that baby's name was Jesus. That is Mr. Thomas Paine. I won't tell you where he is today.

Modern skeptics say, many join that group who believe that the birth of Jesus Christ was caused by a Roman soldier. May I say unto you, unless you believe that Jesus Christ is the virgin born Son of God, you cannot be saved. You cannot be saved if you do not believe that Jesus Christ is the virgin born Son of God. A miracle without a doubt, took place at Bethlehem. Physical birth in itself is a miracle but God baffled the world of science when Jesus was born of a virgin. "This baby was no ordinary baby for this baby whose every muscle was a pulley divinely swung, was the light God sent. This baby with no language but a cry was the Word God heard. This baby whose life incarnated God's heart was the life God felt. As deity, he was God having all the attributes of God." My friends, that is a tremendous statement and it is a very true statement that Jesus Christ possessed all of the attributes of God. Now he did not exercise all of those attributes but he possessed all of those attributes during his earthly ministry on this earth. It is an astounding thing to think about. Whenever Jesus walked; his were the footprints of God. When he spoke; his voice was the voice of God. When his hand touched the loathsome leper or blinded eyes or deaf eardrums or when he touched the crippled limbs or the brow hot with fever fires; the touch of his hand was the touch of God. He was God in the flesh. God robed in the flesh.

I'd like to give you seven reasons why I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. 1) The Scriptures affirm it and as I have already stated, if the Bible teaches it, it is so and it is true. In Matthew 1:16, notice that *Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ*. Preceding this verse are several verses of genealogy telling us who begat who. Notice carefully it is never the woman begetting the child; in genealogy it is the man begetting the child. For instance, verse 2, Chapter 1, *Abraham begat Isaac*. Well, didn't he have a wife? He did but the Scripture uses the format *the man begets the child*. *Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren*. Verse 3, *And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; And Aram begat Aminadab*, and on and on it goes but notice it takes a break from that system in verse 16, *And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus Christ*. Joseph is not spoken of as begetting Jesus Christ, it is Mary who brought him forth and Joseph was the husband of Mary.

There is also a verse in Luke 3:23. Even the parenthetical clauses in the Bible are inspired by God. Verse 23, *And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being, (and here is the parenthetical clause,) as was supposed*. I'm glad that is in there, *as was supposed*. You see, if you take that out, it says that "Jesus himself being about thirty years of age, the son of Joseph." It doesn't say that, it says *as was supposed, the son of Joseph which was the son of Heli*. The Scriptures affirm the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

In John's gospel, chapter 1, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made*. You follow those verses and you come to verse 14, "And the Word," which was God, *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten, (not of Joseph, the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth*.

I suppose John 3:16 is one of the favorite verses of people all over the world, "For God so loved the world, that he gave Joseph's son." It doesn't say that, does it? *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ because the Scriptures teach it.

Now, I'm not really too fond nor am I too impressed with what "Dr. Smell Fungus" has to say. Some of these commentaries, my dear friends, will throw you a curve ball. I think you need to read, but I think you need to evaluate what you read by the Bible, by the teaching of the Scripture. Someone has correctly said that the Bible throws a whole lot of light on the commentaries. It is not the commentaries throwing light on the Bible, the Bible throws light on the commentaries.

Second of all, Mary the virgin was found with child before she and Joseph came together. Verse 18 of Matthew 1, "*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together.* Marvelous preposition there and be sure you get the right preposition. Not "when" they came together, not "as" they came together, not "after" they came together, but "before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Verse 25, "And knew her not," Joseph knew her not, *till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.* Before they came together.

Now, when Joseph was made aware that Mary, his espousal and his wife, is going to have a baby, he knew he wasn't the daddy and, therefore, from a natural standpoint he began to have some natural reactions to that. Look at verse 19, "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privately." Joseph and Mary are engaged and Mary turns up expecting a baby. Joseph no doubt is shamed because he knows he's not the daddy, therefore, by the Scriptures, he has the option of doing two things: 1. he could have Mary stoned. Isn't that what John 8 is all about? When the Lord Jesus was teaching in the temple there was an interruption when some Pharisees brought a woman into the presence of the Lord and said, "We caught her in the very act of adultery. Moses said she ought to be stoned, what do you say about it?" Well, they got that from the book of Leviticus 20:10, *And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife,* notice, *"the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.* He had Scriptural grounds to put her to death based on the fact that he thought she had been unfaithful unto him.

He could have her stoned or he could divorce her. He could put her away. In Matthew 5:31 there in the New Testament, *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.* He could have divorced her. In Deuteronomy 24:1, the Bible says, *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some*

uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. You see, the Scripture says that Joseph began to think on these things. Joseph, her husband, being a just man, not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

But what did he do? What did he do? Again, verse 18, *before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.* Verse 24, *“Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife. Don't stop there, the next verse says, And knew her not.* She was his wife, he had a right to know her but could not because it was forbidden by God Almighty. *And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.*

A third reason why I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is that Jesus was born of Mary and Mary was a virgin at that time. Once again, in Matthew 1:23-25, *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.* Also the other two verses I read a moment ago. She was simultaneously a virgin and bearing a child. It all happened at the same time. When she bore the child, she was a virgin at that time. We've established that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, but in this we see no other human being was the father of Jesus. She was a virgin when he was born.

Fourthly, Jesus never called Joseph or anybody else his father. My dad has been dead for many, many years and many, many, many times, of course, I never called him “father,” I called him “daddy,” but it's the same thing, he was my father. Jesus Christ never had an earthly father and he never called any man “daddy” and he never called any man “father.” In Luke 2:49 the family of Joseph with Mary and the Lord Jesus (when he was about 12 years of age) came down to Jerusalem to observe one of the very important feasts. The Lord Jesus went into the temple and began to converse with the doctors and with the lawyers and when Mary and Joseph found him they looked like they were chiding him a little bit, “We were worried about you,” and he said, *Know you not that I must be about my Father's business?* His Father's business. Joseph was a carpenter, Jesus was a carpenter and he wasn't out building a house when he said this. He was inside the house of God and he said, *I must be about my Father's business.* Not about Joseph's business but about, “My Father who is in heaven.”

So, Jesus Christ never called Joseph or anybody else his father. Let me call to your attention in John 8:18-19, *I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where is your Father? Where is your Father? Some thought that Joseph was; some thought that a Roman soldier was; some thought that some scallywag was. So, “Who's your Daddy? Where is your Father?” Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.* Precious passage. Verses 41-42 of that same 8th of John, *Ye do the deeds of your father.* Christ is speaking to the Pharisees. They claimed Abraham was their father and Christ said in response to that, *You do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication.* Get that: we be not born of fornication. They were implying that Jesus Christ had been born of fornication. In other words, and please

let me be plain, I think many times people understand plain language: they were accusing him of being a bastard when they said that. *Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* So Jesus never called Joseph or anybody else his father.

A fifth reason why I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is the silence of Mary proves it. Now, do you believe that Mary, as a mother, loved this only begotten Son of God? I believe she did. It doesn't tell us a whole lot of what went on in that Bethlehem manger scene but I can tell you one thing, my dear friends, I believe the eyes of the virgin Mary were sparkling like the stars in heaven the night Jesus Christ was born. She loved him so much and she raised him and she was with him so much of the time before he went into the ministry. Everything that he did, she rejoiced over it, *My soul doth magnify the Lord*, she told Elizabeth about this baby. And now, my dear friends, they're going to crucify him. Why? Because he said he was the Son of God. If there was anybody on the face of this earth who knew who the Father was, Mary did. And if there had been a human father, all she had to do was to say, "Don't believe a word he says. He's my son but he lies once in a while. Let me tell you who his Daddy was," and they never would have crucified him. But she never opened her mouth. She stood there and watched them nail her son to the cross of Calvary and never objected one time. Why? Because she knew who his Father was, his Father was God. That's why I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

The sixth reason I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ is because prophesy foretold it. It is quoted here in Matthew but the verse is referring to Isaiah 7:14, *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* And in Matthew 1:23 which is simply in the New Testament the same thing we've just read from Isaiah. Then in the book of Genesis 3:15, the first prophecy I believe in the Bible, has to do with the coming of the Messiah, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 3, verse 15 of Genesis, after the fall, God has addressed Adam, he has addressed Eve and now he is addressing the devil. He says in verse 15, *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* My friend, it is not the woman who has the seed, it is the man who has the seed and the woman has no seed. The virgin Mary received her seed, it was not hers by origination, she had no seed, the seed was deposited in her womb by the Holy Spirit of God. That's why it is referred to as "her" seed. Prophecy foretold it.

Finally, medical science (this does have a bearing on it) proves it a fact. There are only three means of human reproduction. Somebody says, "Well, let's have a baby." How do you have a baby? Three means of human reproduction. 1. There is natural insemination. This is biological reproduction. The union of a male and a female. The Bible says it did not happen that way. There was no earthly father. Second of all, there is artificial insemination. This is known as test-tube babies. This was unknown at the time. You can rule that one out. The only other way, my dear friends, you can have human reproduction is through supernatural insemination, borne and planted by the Holy Spirit. Only the Lord Jesus was born this way and this is the only way a true virgin could have a baby.

Take a moment to look at Luke 1:34-35. When the angel told her that she was going to have a baby, it puzzled her because she knew she was a virgin and that's the reason she raises the question to the angel Gabriel in verse 34, chapter 1 of Luke, *Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* How can I, a young virgin, have a baby and I don't know a man? How can I do that? And he tells her. What you are reading in the next verse is what the angel told her in response to the question: how can a woman have a baby without natural insemination? How can that happen? Verse 35, *“And the angel answered and said unto her,”* watch it carefully. (I never read this verse but what I think of Moses when he approached the burning bush and God said, *Remove the shoes from your feet for the ground whereupon thou standest is holy ground*). *The angel said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

Overshadow is a Greek word meaning “to cast a shadow upon.” Please note the absolute reverence for this whole situation. It was shadowed. You couldn't see it. It was a private matter between Almighty God and the virgin Mary and she was overshadowed by it. It was done in secret. Another word is used, “canopy,” a Shekinah canopy was used in this union. Now, give me a moment: in Matthew 17:5, don't leave this, but in Matthew 17:5, that same word is used at the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you remember Peter, James and John went with Christ up to the top of the Mount of Transfiguration. There appeared unto Christ Moses and Elijah and before their eyes, he was transfigured. It says in verse 5, *While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed,* there's your word, covered them over and prevented them from understanding and seeing what was transpiring before their very eyes. The deity of the Lord Jesus Christ began to emit itself from the very pores of his skin and he was glorified. And my dear friends, when the virgin Mary had the divine seed deposited in her womb, she was overshadowed by *the Shekinah cloud of God's glory* and a holy thing was placed in her womb that became the nature, the human nature of the Son of God. All man, all God in one divine transaction. You say, “Well, I don't know whether I believe that or not.” You are not near as ready to die as you think you are. You don't want to go out into eternity putting a doubt on the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

Now, the significance of it and I close with this. If the virgin birth is not true, God is a liar. If the virgin birth is not true, the Bible is a falsehood. If the virgin birth is not true, the church is a monstrosity and all preachers are fools for preaching a lie. Every man with a human father has a fallen nature. But Christ has no fallen nature because he had no human father. He is Perfect. We will get into the Sinless life of Christ, Lord willing, next week.