

Amazing Stories of Christmas:  
**The Significance of the Virgin Birth**

Text: Luke 1:26-38

**Introduction:**

How important is the doctrine of the virgin birth in the church?

- I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. (The Apostles' Creed)
- He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human. (Nicene Creed)
- being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures. (Second London Baptist Confession)
- In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. (Baptist Faith and Message 2000)
- We believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, and that He is true God and man. (UCBC Statement of Faith, upd. 2011).

**Background:**

Problem of exalting Mary than God's work, the Immaculate Conception. The thought that Mary was born without sin, which makes her sinless human being. If that is the case, Jesus is not the only One who was sinless.

Another challenge happened in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, describing about the evolution/ secularism/ science (liberals). That it is incomprehensible for someone to be born without physical intercourse—rejecting the virgin birth.

Our goal today is to restore and be reminded of the significance of the wonderful story of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

**Main Idea:**

The transforming story of the virgin birth actually starts way behind the New Testament. It started from a prophecy stated by the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah 7:14, *"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin (young woman) will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."* In this passage, God promised the liberation or the victory of the impending battle of the kingdom of Judah against the Northern Kingdoms. Note that the Israel during this time was already a divided kingdom, one is the Northern Israel which was by the Assyrians, and Judah the Southern part of Israel which was conquered later on by the Babylonians. So, King Ahaz here, he requested for a sign that God will give him and the nation of Judah an assurance that He will fulfill His promise to protect them and made them victorious.

However, this is where many preachers would cite this verse without doing a good exegesis or study of the passage. Others would stop there and say that the prophecy was fulfilled in Christ. Christ was born out of a virgin and made the entire Israel and even the whole world victorious against the real enemies, evil, sin, and fleshly desires. Yet, remember that the prophecy was about a virgin birth however, in Isaiah 7, the birth of the maiden here that Isaiah prophesied was not an actual virgin birth. Read Isaiah 8:1-4.

So, pastor, that does mean that Christ birth is also not a virgin birth? Wait. Let us follow the proper logic here. So, Isaiah prophesied that Judah will be saved, sustained, and preserved because of the child "Immanuel" but named "Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz". And yes, God was faithful to His word that all these things were fulfilled.

But at the same time, in order for us to understand the nature of a prophecy, because for many of us we would always like to try to comprehend a prophecy literally, like the mark of the beasts of the last days, the rapture, the tribulation, the millennium and so on. Anyway, going back, we need to see first that the prophecy of Isaiah, has been fulfilled in the next verse, but it also alludes to a greater and ultimate fulfillment. Just as how God promised to Abraham that His Son will fulfill the greatest redemption of humanity, we thought it was Isaac, the Israel though it was Moses, they thought it was David; yet even at David's time, the prophecy continued until the miraculous, transforming, amazing narrative of the birth of Christ.

What makes the story of the nativity, the birth of Christ sooooo wonderful, is because, it goes beyond the expected fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah. The actual Virgin Birth happened at the birth of Christ. Isaiah 7 alludes to the Greater fulfillment of the prophecy which is Jesus' birth. That makes the Christmas story not just amazing, but powerful, captivating, and worth celebrating.

Because, the Good News, the Gospel of Christ, finally dawned during the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Godhead. Jesus ultimately fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. So in our passage in Luke 1:26-38, the main character there is not Mary, not Elizabeth, nor the angel. It was the promised Child who will be born, hovered and conceived by the Holy Spirit, and will be named Immanuel—meaning God With Us. Matthew 1:23 *"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us")*. Again, this points to the prophecy of Isaiah in 7:14.

### **Implications:**

Wow! I can actually stop here. Every time I am reminded of this amazing reality of Christ's mysterious birth. I cannot keep myself pausing for a moment and ponder upon how the people during that time think about this one.

Remember, the nation of Judah was hopeless; their defeat is near, they will be conquered, slaughtered, and killed by the Northern Kingdoms. Yet, God intervened and promised that they will be saved. Same way, in the time of Mary, the Israel was at the hands of Rome, they were hopeless, they needed true liberation. God intervened and sent forth Jesus Christ to finally be the ultimate hope of all humanity—not just the Israelites nor the Jewish people, but also you, me, and other believers.

Implication no. 1, Truly Man. “Forasmuch as he is no half-savior, but redeemer both of body and soul.” - Thomas Monck. Indeed, Christ can only be the worthy sacrificial lamb if He can represent humanity. But he cannot if He is not man. Therefore, the birth of Christ through Mary was a reminder that He is Truly Man.

Implication no. 2, Truly God. Likewise, the mystery of conception that Jesus cannot at the same way represent God if He is not God. Therefore, Jesus was conceived by the Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit—who is the Third Person of the Godhead. This reality shows that Jesus is God.

I think our dear friends, the RC, misplaced the centrality of the story here. They exalted Mary as how they exalt Christ in this narrative. A proper exploration of the passage not only taking it literal but also making sure that all points of the passage had been studied.

### **Conclusion:**

A final point here. This may not be an implication but let us dwell in this promise. In verse 37 of Luke 1, “*For no word from God will ever fail.*” The book of Isaiah was written in 800 BC, while the gospel of Luke was in the range of 80-90 AD. The ultimate fulfillment of the promise of the prophecy took place after 800 years.

What can we learn from this? Somehow, for Christians, we thought God does not work because we do not feel Him, we do not encounter him. Yet the verse reminds us that God’s Word will never fail. As humans, we fail, but God’s Word last forever. Trust God’s Word. Read it.

Isaiah 40:8, “*The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.*”

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