

GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE

(Special English Edition)

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THE VIRGIN BIRTH

INTRODUCTION

Many believers do not think that Jesus was born of a virgin. Some people have spoken against it ever since the church began. Some of the Jews, called Ebionites, said there was no virgin birth. They said that a person could believe that Christ was God without believing in the virgin birth. The Gnostics, who were the followers of Cerinthus, said that Christ came into the man Jesus when He was baptized. Christ left Jesus again when He was put on the cross. Again other people deny that Jesus ever lived. Some people believe that it is just a story. Many people today deny the virgin birth. Every Christian should defend this important doctrine of the Christian faith.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS LESSON

- ❑ The virgin birth is part of all the things about God that we do not completely understand.
- ❑ It is part of the doctrine that Christ is God, that the Bible is breathed out by God, that the Bible is true and shows the plan of salvation. Mary, a woman who had never known a man, gave birth to Christ by a miracle of the Holy Spirit. If Jesus were born of a man and a woman, He would also be a child of Adam. If that is true He did not exist before He was born.
- ❑ If the virgin birth is not true, He was not God in a human body. He was not the Lamb without sin and He could not be our Savior.
- ❑ The virgin birth is an important part of the Gospel of Christ.
- ❑ Our salvation rests on the truth of the virgin birth.
- ❑ It is very important to the believer to know about this doctrine.

THE LESSON

I. REASONS WHY SOME PEOPLE DO NOT BELIEVE IT

- A. Mark, John and Paul do not mention the virgin birth of Christ in the letters they wrote.
1. The matter was NOT kept a secret.
 - a) Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, knew about it and called Mary, "The mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43).
 - b) The shepherds knew that the baby was "Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11, 20).
 - c) Simeon and Anna called him "The Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:25-28).
 - d) John 8:14, 23,58 show us that Christ knew where He came from and the way He was born.
 - e) Mary and Joseph were responsible before God and man to tell the truth about His birth. They certainly did so to their friends, such as Simeon, Anna, Zachariah, Elizabeth and others.
 2. Answer to the fact that Mark did not talk about the virgin birth:
 - a) Mark wrote his Gospel to talk about the work of Christ.
 - b) He started with the baptism of John.
 - c) Mark began his Gospel by calling Jesus the "Son of God" (Mark 1:1).
 - d) He was not writing about Jesus' life before the baptism.
 - e) Mark wrote his Gospel after Matthew and Luke. He probably knew what they wrote. He saw no reason to repeat the story, but he does not deny it.
 3. Answer to the fact that John did not talk about the virgin birth:
 - a) The writings of John were the last ones put into the Bible.
 - b) When he wrote he could also read Matthew and Luke.
 - c) By the time John wrote, the virgin birth was already a doctrine of the church.
 - d) He did not speak against it.

- e) Remember that Mary lived in John's house until she died (John 19:26-27). Surely she told him about this wonderful news of the birth of Christ.
 - f) The Gnostics preached against the virgin birth. John defended the doctrine against one of them by the name of Cerinthus. Cerinthus believed that Jesus was born just like every other human being.
 - 1) In John 3:5-6 John said what Christ told the people. Jesus said, "that which is born of a human parents – must be born again."
 - 2) If Christ was born of two human beings, he was a sinner too. Then he needed to be born again
 - 4. The church, right after the time of Paul and Peter and John, accepted the virgin birth. Paul did not tell them it was a false doctrine.
Luke traveled with Paul for several years and learned much from Paul. They certainly must have talked about this doctrine too. Paul did not use the exact words, "virgin birth," but he said some other things about Christ that show he believed in it.
 - a) He said Christ was the second man from heaven (1 Corinthians 15:47).
 - b) He said Christ looked like a normal person. He did this of his own free will (Philippians 2:5-8).
 - c) Paul said that God sent Christ to this earth with the same human life that other people use for sin (Romans 8:3).
 - d) Paul also wrote that Christ was born from a woman (Galatians 4:4-5).
 - B. Some people who do not believe the Bible say something like this:
 - 1. The virgin birth was a teaching made up by the followers of Jesus.
 - 2. The story of the virgin birth came from stories of heathen people. People made these heathen stories to look like real stories from the Bible.
 - 3. The doctrine of the virgin birth comes when people do not correctly interpret Isaiah 7:14.
 - 4. The answer to those who think that it comes from the wrong interpretation of Isaiah 7:14:
 - a) In Isaiah 7:14 the word "almah" is translated as "virgin."
 - b) The word "almah" means a young woman who never married. The word almost always means that the woman does not know a man. So she is a "virgin." Six of the times the word "almah" is used in the Old Testament, it means "virgin." The writers of the Bible never use the word "almah" for a woman who is married.
 - c) In the time of Christ, the Jews and their teachers did not know that this verse talked about the Messiah. Matthew did not use this verse to prove the virgin birth. If he had tried to use it as proof, the Jews would have rejected it.
 - d) This prophecy about Christ did not prove the virgin birth. The virgin birth itself showed that this prophecy was true (Matthew 1:22-23).
 - 5. The story of the virgin birth comes from folk stories. The answer to these people is:
 - a) The people in the countries of Rome, Greece and Babylonia had many stories. Some of these stories were about babies who were born through some miracle.
 - b) The early church fathers said that the heathen should not question the doctrine of the virgin birth. They knew many stories about women gods who gave birth to children. The church fathers said that the stories of the heathen people were not true since they were about false gods.
 - 1) Caesar Augustus told people that the false god Apollo was his father. Caesar said that Apollo made his mother pregnant. Apollo came to her as a snake.
 - 2) Alexander the Great also said that he was the son of a god. He also said that a serpent lived with his mother and made her pregnant.
- ◆ *Both of these women had been with a man before.*

II. REASONS TO BELIEVE THE VIRGIN BIRTH

- A. The stories of the heathen could not be proved by history. The story of Jesus in the Gospels is proved by history. We know the people who were involved, the time it happened, and where it happened. Heathen stories do not have specific facts like that.
- B. There is no story like the virgin birth in any of the heathen stories. The story of the virgin birth is the story of how God Himself came down to this earth. How He used a woman who had never been with a man. He did it to make a way of salvation for all people.

The Virgin Birth

- C. Some people call attention to some of the stories about the gods of the Greeks and Romans. These stories were so dirty and sinful that many people did not even want to write them down. The famous philosopher, Plato, was ashamed of them and wanted the government to ban them. There is NO WAY we can compare these stories with the virgin birth in the Bible. The Bible story is a beautiful story of a woman who was pure.
- D. Buddhists have a story about an elephant that caused Buddha's mother to get pregnant. Buddha lived hundreds of years after Christ, so the followers of Jesus did not get the story of the virgin birth from Buddhism.
- E. None of the stories of the heathen are like the story of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. None of them are based on facts. None of them actually happened in history.
- F. The early Christians hated all the heathen stories about their false gods. It is foolish to say that the followers of Jesus took the heathen stories and made the story of the virgin birth out of them.

III. PROHECIES CONCERNING THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The early church fathers and other writers based their stories about the virgin birth of Christ on the prophecies of the Old Testament. We also depend on prophecy for the proof of the virgin birth of Christ. Some people say that the story of the virgin birth was added to the Bible many years later but this is not true.

- A. Genesis 3:15 says that the SEED OF THE WOMAN would crush Satan's power and prepare a way of salvation for us.
- B. Isaiah 7:14 says that a virgin will get pregnant and give birth to a son. This prophecy was given to the whole "house of David" (verse 13). The Messiah had to come from the family of David (2 Samuel 7:12-13; Romans 1:3).
- C. Isaiah 9:6-7 is very careful in using certain words. It says that a CHILD was born and that God GAVE a SON to us. Mary gave birth to the baby Jesus, but the SON came from heaven. Luke 2:11 says something almost like it. It also talks about Mary giving birth to the Savior. Then it also says that this Savior is CHRIST THE LORD. Jesus the Savior was born, but Christ the Lord CAME.
- D. Isaiah 49:1,5 says, "The Lord called Me from the womb" (verse 1). Then it says "Who formed Me from the womb" (verse 5).
- E. In Matthew 1:16 it says that Jacob gave birth to Joseph, the husband of Mary who gave birth to Jesus. We do not read anywhere in the Bible that Joseph gave birth to Jesus or that Joseph was the father of Jesus.
- F. Matthew 1:22-23 tells us that all of this was done to fulfill the prophecies in the Old Testament.
- G. Luke 1:35 says that the holy thing that Mary will give birth to will be called the Son of God.
- H. Some people say that somebody added these prophecies to the Bible much later. Somebody did this to have proof for the virgin birth of Christ. Here follows the answer to those people.
 1. Before the year 100 AD the church had a statement of faith that was called "The Roman Creed." One sentence in this Roman Creed says that the virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.
 2. The early church also had a book called "The Rules of Faith." The statements of faith in that book also talked about the virgin birth.
 3. The year AD 100 was only 70 years after the death of Christ.
 - a) The church possessed the written Gospels for 30 years by that time.
 - b) The churches all kept in contact with each other.
 - c) All the churches wanted to stay pure in doctrine. They believed and did what the apostles told them. The apostle John was with them all these years.
 - d) It was not possible for somebody to pass off a story about the church that was not true. The church would not accept a story that was without a foundation.
 - e) The church accepted the story about the virgin birth of Christ from the beginning.
 - f) The churches all over the world accepted it.
 - g) The Ebionites and Gnostics did not accept it. Christians always said that both groups taught false doctrine and did not agree that they were true churches.

IV. CHRIST LIVED IN HEAVEN BEFORE HE WAS BORN – THIS PROVES THE VIRGIN BIRTH

One of the best proofs of the virgin birth is that Christ lived in heaven before He was born. This is great proof is that He is God.

The Virgin Birth

- A. Micah 5:2 says that Jesus was there since the beginning. He is eternal.
- B. Hebrews 10:5-9 tells us that God prepared a body for Him and that Jesus came to do the will of God.
- C. John 17:5 talks about the splendor Jesus had before the world was created.
- D. John 1:1,14 show us that the Word (Jesus Christ) existed before the time of creation. It also says that the Word became a human being.
- E. In John 8:57-59 we read that Jesus said, "Before Abraham lived, I AM." This means that He lived before Abraham.
- F. Colossians 1:17 tells us that Jesus lived before all things were made.
- G. Philippians 2:5-8 tells us that Jesus was God, but came down to earth like a human being.
- H. **HE CAME.** Among all the religious leaders of the past, Christ is the only one who showed that He had the power of God. He came to earth to save us from our sin.
 - 1. Hebrews 10:7,9 – Behold I come.
 - 2. John 1:11 – He came to His own.
 - 3. Mark 10:45 – the Son of Man came.
 - 4. 1 Timothy 1:15 – Christ Jesus came to save sinners.
 - 5. John 18:37 – for this reason I came into the world.
 - 6. John 6:38,51 – I came down from heaven. Christ came of His own free will. He came to save us from our sin. His birth was by His own choice.
- I. **HE WAS SENT.** Christ came of His own choice and at the same time the Father sent him.
 - 1. Galatians 4:4-5 – God sent His Son at the right time.
 - 2. John 3:17 – God did not send His son to condemn the world, but to save it.
 - 3. 1 John 4:14 – The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.
 - 4. John 20:21 – Jesus sent His followers into the world the same way the Father sent Him.
- ◆ *Christ is God now, just as He always was. God cannot become a non-God. Christ did not become a person when He was born into this world. At His birth the person of Christ took on Himself a human body and limited Himself as a human being.*
- ◆ *For Christ to be God in a human body a miracle birth was necessary. If He had a human body He would be a sinner and a human being just as we are. He could not be God and be a sinful person.*

V. MORE PROOFS OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

- A. If Mary did some sexual sin before she belonged to Joseph, Joseph would put her away. He would not marry her (Matthew 1:19).
- B. Both Mary and Joseph were in the family of David. If Christ had been born of Joseph He would be under the curse that God put on Coniah. (Coniah is a short form of the name Jeoniah or Jeconiah.) There would be no way for Him to come as the Messiah. See Matthew 1:11 and Jeremiah 22:24-30.
- C. The writers of the New Testament believed Christ was God. They believed:
 - 1. He had no sin. 2. He died on a cross. 3. He rose from the dead. 4. The Holy Spirit came upon Him when He was baptized. 5. He is coming back again.
- D. Ignatius was one of the early defenders of the Christian faith. He and other writers, who lived at the same time, all believed in the virgin birth. They all said that it was an important part of the Christian faith.
- E. We know that the ones who wrote about the birth of Christ, Mathew and Luke, wrote their gospels. There is no doubt about that. These gospels came to us through the early church. They were written without mistakes.

CONCLUSION

There are two questions that the people who do not believe in the virgin birth cannot answer:

- 1. How did the idea of a virgin birth arise so soon after the death of Christ if it were not really true?
- 2. Why did the church everywhere accept this doctrine if it were not a fact?

Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas said something like this: "If there is such a thing as sin in this world then we need a Savior who is God. This explains that the Savior came through the power of the Holy Spirit who came to Mary and caused her to become pregnant through a miracle."

HALLELUJAH! WHAT A GREAT SAVIOR WE HAVE!!

**GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE EXAM
LESSON 11**

Questions to be answered by every student enrolled in the Rogma International Free Bible Study Course

Register No _____

Name _____

Address _____

Choose and Round O the correct answer in the following: -

1. If Jesus were born of Mary and another man: (Value 10 points)
 - a. He would still be God.
 - b. He would be a sinner like every other person.
 - c. He would not have been born in a stable.

2. If Jesus were not born of a virgin: (Value 10 points)
 - a. He could not be our Savior.
 - b. He could still be our Savior.
 - c. He would not have been born in a stable.

3. Mark did not mention the virgin birth because: (Value 10 points)
 - a. he did not believe it was true.
 - b. it was a secret matter and nobody talked about it.
 - c. he saw no reason to repeat what Matthew and Luke had already written.

4. Which verse shows that Paul believed in the virgin birth? (Value 10 points)
 - a. Romans 12: 1-2
 - b. Galatians 6:1
 - c. Galatians 4:4-5

5. Why do some people not believe in the virgin birth? (Value 10 points)
 - a. They say it is impossible for a person to be born of a woman alone.
 - b. They say it is a fable of the people of Rome and Greece who lived at that time.
 - c. They say nobody has ever been born that way.

6. What other people said that a god impregnated their mothers? (Value 10 points)
 - a. Some of the Jews
 - b. Some of the kings of Rome and Greece
 - c. Buddha

7. What doctrinal statement of 100 AD states that Jesus was born of a virgin? (Value 10 points)
 - a. The Roman Creed
 - b. The Greek Creed
 - c. The Rules of Faith

8. What baptismal confession did the early church have that talked about the virgin birth? (Value 10 points)
 - a. The Roman Creed
 - b. The Pauline Creed
 - c. The Rules of Faith

9. How do we know from the Jewish marriage customs that Jesus was born of a virgin? (Value 10 points)
 - a. An unmarried woman who got pregnant always killed herself.
 - b. If Mary had become pregnant sinfully, Joseph would have forced her to marry the man who impregnated her.
 - c. If Mary had committed some sexual sin, Joseph would have put her away. He would not have married her.

10. People who do not believe in the virgin birth cannot answer what question? (Value 10 points)
 - a. How can you prove that it did not happen?
 - b. How can you doubt the writer of the Bible?
 - c. How did the idea of a virgin birth arise so soon after the death of Christ if it was not true?