

Sermon Notes

"Virgin Birth"

Matthew 1:18-25

December 6, 2020

b. The belief that Jesus was born of a virgin was included in early Christian confessions. What does this tell you about its importance?

c. Consider Matthew and Luke's prior employment professions. Given what they did in the past, and the requisite education, are you surprised by their clear insistence on a divine conception? Luke seems to have interviewed Mary herself (Luke 2:19, 51) and others (Luke 1:1-4) as a part of his own investigation. How does this bolster your own confidence in these accounts?

4. "Only as [divine] did Christ have the power to bear our sins and conquer them, but only as [human] was he qualified to do so." (William Hamel, Evangelical Convictions, Free Church Publications, Minneapolis, MN, 2011, p. 99)

How do the following verses relate to this statement?

Heb. 1:1-4

Heb. 2:14, 17

5. How would you explain why the virgin birth was necessary for Jesus to be our savior?

Let's Pray:

Growth Group Homework

For the week of 12-06-2020

Questions adapted from James Galvin, ed., et al., New Testament Lesson Maker, NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO, 1992, pp. 9.

Getting Started:

1. What do you think most Americans would list as the top 3 things from which we most need rescued? What do you think God would list as the number one thing from which we need rescued? Why do you say that? Are the lists different?

Digging Deeper:

2. Read Matthew 1:18-25.
 - a. What happened to Mary while she and Joseph were betrothed to one another (1:18)? How might you have responded in Mary's situation?
 - b. What do you think Joseph initially thought upon hearing this news about his bride-to-be (Matt. 1:18-19)? What would have been your reaction had you been in Joseph's situation?
 - c. What did the angel command Joseph to name the child and why (1:21)? In a culture that thought the Messiah would rescue them from the occupying Roman forces, how do you think most responded to this? Would you have listed this as your number one need?

- d. What does "Immanuel" mean (1:23)? Why is it significant for understanding who Jesus is? Consider the following texts:

Matthew 28:20

Isaiah 7:14, 8:8, 10

Isaiah 9:6

Col 1:15-20

3. To many in our day, such a miracle of conception is too difficult to accept, but it was scandalous even in the first century, particularly in its Jewish context. The Jews had no sympathy for the myths of the Greeks, nor for the immoral sexual activity of their gods. Moreover, in a culture extremely sensitive to sexual propriety, the virgin birth of Jesus as it is portrayed in the gospels is simply not the kind of story that the early Christians would have made up. From the earliest days stories were circulating about the illegitimacy of the birth of Jesus, and the Christians would have been foolish to throw fuel on the fire by preserving a story such as this. It was undoubtedly considered true and important in understanding who **Jesus was**. (William Hamel, Evangelical Convictions, Free Church Publications, Minneapolis, MN, 2011, p. 100)
 - a. Paraphrase the most significant insights from this quote.