

Christmas Special 2019

For our short time this morning, I want us to consider two prophecies from Isaiah that look forward almost 600 years to the birth of the Saviour.

Isa. 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians this defense of christianity;

1 Cor. 15:12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Now, if you're listening at all, and I hope you are, you might be thinking, why is Jim beginning with belief in the resurrection. That's an Easter topic and this is Christmas. Right?

What I want to do is a bit of plagiarism. I want to plagiarize Paul and I want to build a similar argument, that's what this is, it's an argument, I want to build an argument just like Paul does here that says, And if Christ has not been born of a virgin, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

So, bear with me for just a few minutes this morning. I originally thought I would give this little encouragement on the morning of our Cantata, and then I thought, no, I don't want to detract from the enjoyment of the glory of the songs, so I switched it up until this morning when Christmas and New Year is still on our minds.

The truths of the gospel are otherworldly treasure. Jude tells us to earnestly contend for the once for all delivered to the saints faith. We are to fight for the purity of the treasure. We argue for the truth. This morning, we will argue for the truth of the virgin birth. Our foundation for our argument goes all the way back to the garden of Eden. On the sixth day of creation we read this;

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, land crawlers, and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. 25 God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that crawls upon the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

*26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, to **rule over** the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, and over all the earth itself and every creature that crawls upon it."*

*27 So God created man in His own image;
in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.*

*28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and **subdue it; rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that crawls upon the earth.**"*

God made Adam and he gave Adam dominion over the earth and everything in it. Adam ruled the earth, the creation. God made Adam a wife. Eve. And God told them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:17

but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die."

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom, she took the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

And by that single act of rebellion, sin entered into the world, and the government of the world, the dominion that Adam had over the world, was over. The government of the world was lost by Adam and gained by Satan.

Then in Genesis 3:15 we have the first prophecy in the entire Bible. The first foretelling by God that the dominion of Satan would be crushed under foot.

Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

The seed of the woman crushes the head of the serpent. What does it mean. There's no man's seed in this prophecy of doom for Satan. Only the seed of the woman. And yet the prophecy is about someone that the scripture calls only by the pronoun **He**. *He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel*

Paul spells it out for us in Romans 5. We learn that sin travels from person to person, we all inherit it, from our fathers. And since 100% of humans have fathers, 100% are born in sin. Listen to Paul explain this;

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Death spread to all men. Death is inherited from our parents, and their parents

and their parents, all the way back to Adam. We're born into sin. Born sinners. Every one.

But then Paul explains that death came to all through one person, and righteousness can come to all . . . through one person, the Lord, Christ Jesus.

15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. 16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. 17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Ro. 5

Those are the cold hard facts. In our modern times we understand a little bit about genetics. How our parents genes combine in sperm and egg to form us. But what science doesn't show us is the genetics of sin. How sin is also passed along from generation to generation by our parents. And likewise, Pam and I created a bunch of little sinners. Cute, but definitely sinners. And now we're grandparents to 8 beautiful little sinners. Stinkers, all.

How is it then, that Jesus, the Messiah, can be righteous. Why didn't He inherit sin. How is it that He has a righteousness, a perfect sinless life, that He can impute to me, as He takes my sin upon Himself, in my place, at the cross.

How is that possible? It's only possible if Jesus didn't inherit the sin disease from His parents like we all did. If Joseph is Jesus Father, He isn't righteous. He's just like you and just like me.

And so, we come logically, to Isaiah's prophecy.

7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

In order for Jesus to live a perfect sinless life that He can offer to us, He had to be born outside of the normal passing along of sin from generation to generation. He had to be born without an earthly father. He had to be the seed of the woman who is enemy to Satan and crushes Satan's head. Gen. 3:15

A virgin . . . will be with child, a virgin will become pregnant, and she will bear a son, and she will call His name, Immanuel. Immanuel means God With Us. Jesus is physically, the Son of God. God placed that embryo in Mary's womb.

That stunning miracle like no other miracle is a sign. Only one time in all the history of the world has a virgin been pregnant. It's impossible. We all understand that. It's physically impossible for virgins to be pregnant. Therefore, when one is, the impossible has happened.

I have a quote from someone named Malcomb Muggeridge. He was an English journalist and philosopher. He lived until 1990. He had something to say about the virgin birth. Here's what he said, which was simply the common belief of the day that drove modernism in the church.

The dogmatism of science has become a new orthodoxy, disseminated by the Media and a State educational system with a thoroughness and subtlety far exceeding anything of the kind achieved by the Inquisition; to the point that to believe today in a miraculous happening like the Virgin Birth is to appear a kind of imbecile.

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Science has taught us exactly why virgin birth's are impossible. And we are such slaves to science that what we could almost imagine in our ignorance and innocence is now only to be imagined by imbeciles. Imbecilic.

In the years of modernism from the mid 19th century forward when science

was taking hold, and theologians wanted to keep their credibility with all of the emerging science that seemed to disprove the miracles in the Bible, it was common for the liberal theologians to say, that word in Isaiah simply means a young woman.

The rebuttal is easy. In Israel when that was written, all "young" women were virgins or they were stoned. Of course it means a virgin. A young woman is a virgin in that society at that time. That's all it can mean.

Plus there's an equal rebuttal that if a young woman gives birth to a son, the normal way, it's not a sign at all. Israel was full of young married women who were giving birth. Normal as normal. That is NOT a sign.

The prophet is clear. It took 19 centuries for liberal modernist theologians who were embarrassed to seem like imbeciles to dismantle what Isaiah had said, and meant, accepted by the church without question for the miracle sign that it was.

*7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a **virgin will be with child** and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*

That virgin birth is necessary for the other scripture from the prophet to make any sense at all.

Isa. 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

In order for any of those names to have meaning, His Father must be God Himself. Every one of the names given by Isaiah is impossible for anyone born into the curse of Adam's race. Born in sin. But they all make perfect sense if the heavenly Father, God, miraculously placed the Godly seed inside the virgin. Jesus is the Son of God.

But look again at the first part of Isaiah 9:6 that we just quoted. *For unto us a*

child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders... Did you catch that. The government will be upon His shoulders.

Jesus, Son of God, born of a virgin, will be the One who will depose Satan and take back the authority to reign of this world. Jesus is the King of kings, Lord of Lord's. The government, of this world, this earth, will be upon His shoulders. Satan is already put on notice. His time is short. When Jesus returns in His second coming, Satan will be crushed, locked up, and all evil will be judged and eradicated. Government includes judgement of all sinners. Every rebellious knee will bow down to King Jesus.

Remember in the garden, that the government of this world was given to Adam, and Adam failed and the authority to reign over this world was lost. That government is the same one that will be restored and given to Jesus. The government will be upon His shoulders, so the verse prophecies.

I have another quote. Rob Bell, who once claimed to be an evangelical, wrote these words in one of his books;

What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archeologists find Larry's tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births? Could you still be a Christian? Is the way of Jesus still the best possible way to live? Rob Bell

Let's answer Mr. Bell by plagiarizing Paul's argument to the Corinthians and instead of arguing for resurrection, we'll insert the virgin birth and try as best we can, we're no Paul, we'll try our best to create a parallel argument that is Paul like but with the virgin birth.

1 Cor. 15:12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Now if Christ is preached, that He was born of a virgin, how do some among you say that there was no virgin birth.

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;

But if there is no virgin birth, Christ is not God's own Son. There is no possibility of a sinless life. He is born in sin, even as the rest of Adam's seed.

14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

And if Christ has not been born of a virgin, then our preaching is useless, and your faith in his substitutionary death for your sins is also useless.

15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.

Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He is the Father of Jesus, whom He is not the father of, if in fact, Christ was not born of the virgin Mary.

16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;

For if Christ is not born of a virgin, He has no claim of living without sin, and if He did not live a sinless life, there is no righteous life for Him to impute to me. I must appear before God condemned. My sin remains.

17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

and if Christ was not the virgin born Son of God and sinless in all His ways, your faith is worthless; your faith in the imputation of His sinless life to your account is empty. You are still in your sins.

18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

Then those also who have believed and fallen asleep in Christ have perished. There is no payment for sin. All have perished in their own sin and stand before God, condemned.

19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Here then, is the completed argument, ripped off from Paul, somehow I don't think he would mind, but we've used the same logical flow and style as Paul and inserted the argument for a virgin birth instead of resurrection from the dead.

Now if Christ is preached, that He was born of a virgin, how do some among you say that there was no virgin birth. And if Christ has not been born of a virgin, then our preaching is useless, and your faith in his substitutionary death for your sins is also useless. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we witnessed against God that He is the Father of Jesus, whom He is not the father of, if in fact, Christ was not born of the virgin Mary. For if Christ is not born of a virgin, He has no claim of living without sin, and if He did not live a sinless life, there is no righteous life for Him to impute to me. I must appear before God condemned. My sin remains. And if Christ was not the virgin born Son of God and sinless in all His ways, your faith is worthless; your faith in the imputation of His sinless life to your account is empty. You are still in your sins. Then those also who have believed and fallen asleep in Christ have perished. There is no payment for sin. All have perished in their own sin and stand before God, condemned. If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

The argument is the same. The virgin birth is a critical element in the formula that leads to our sin being removed from us as far as the east is from the west.

Our faith is in the imputation of Christ's perfect sinless life to our account, and reciprocally, our sin is imputed to Him as He dies on the cross to pay our penalty for us.

He gives us His righteousness. We cast on Him our sin.

If He was not born of a virgin, born the Son of God, and not a son of Adam, He could not live a sinless life, He could not possess a perfect righteousness, and if He is not righteous, He dies for His own sin, not mine.

The virgin birth is critical to the imputation that our faith is counting on.

Listen again to Rob Bell's ridiculous quote; imbecillic.

What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archeologists find Larry's tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births? Could you still be a Christian? Is the way of Jesus still the best possible way to live? Rob Bell

The virgin birth is a myth. It was added by crafty gospel writers in order to have the same kind of appeal as Mithra and Dionysian cults. It was nothing more than current popular idea at the time. It is imbecillic and detracts from so-called christianity because we have science now and we know it's totally ridiculous to believe a virgin was impregnated by God.

Then he says; *Could you still be a Christian? Is the way of Jesus still the best possible way to live?*

The answer is no. And whatever he is referring to as "the way of Jesus", whatever that means, is something sub christian. Rob Bell has no opportunity to stand before God sinless, with a righteousness not his own, a righteousness

through imputation, a righteousness lived by Christ, and given to me, free of cost, that was un-obtainable any other way.

People who do not believe in the miracle of the virgin birth, are not christians. They can call themselves whatever they please, but on that day when they stand before God and He says, why should I let you into my heaven, whatever the "way of Jesus" is, isn't going to cut it.

God in order to be a righteous judge, must judge sin. Our only hope in this life and the next, is to be able to say, I put my faith in Your Only Son, born of a virgin, born without sin, who lived in perfect righteousness, and who died on the cross in my place. He took my sin. He gave me His righteousness. He clothed me with garments white and clean.

Mr. Bells "way of Jesus", a way to live, he claims the best "way to live" is actually what Paul spoke of when he in his argument says; *19 If we have hoped in Christ **in this life only**, we are of all men most to be pitied.*

The Christmas cards with the images of baby Jesus laying in the manger with the halo indicating His holiness, having been born of the virgin, those images are not just Hallmark hype. They end up in the trash can with no one ever thinking twice about what the original artists who created them were trying to convey.

The apostles creed is ancient in origin. It was created as a statement of the essential beliefs of the faith. Each item included has been fought for by the true church through the centuries as heresies appeared to dis-credit them. Including the heresy of Jesus not born of a virgin. Listen, as we close this morning, to the words of that ancient creed. Elegant in it's simplicity;

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,*

*And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,*

*born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God
the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Each of the statements in that creed is what we like to call non-negotiables. These are essential truths, and when any support stone in that house is removed, the whole house comes down. But if there is no virgin birth, Christ is not God's own Son. There is no possibility of a sinless life. He is born in sin, even as the rest of Adam's seed.