

For Christmas 2017, I want to take one Biblical text and unpack what are called the glories of Christmas. As we unpack these glories of Christmas, they will become reasons to worship our Lord at Christmas time.

The text we will use is Luke 1:26-38. This is the account of Gabriel's announcement to Mary that she has been chosen to give birth to a son who will be Jesus Christ. Turn with me to Luke 1:26-38.

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth.
27 to a virgin engaged or betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.

31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and **you shall name Him Jesus.**

32 **He will be great** and will be called the Son of the Most High; and **the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;**

33 **and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and His kingdom will have no end."**

34 Mary said to the angel, "**How will this be, since I am a virgin?"**

35 **The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.**

36 And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

37 For nothing will be impossible with God"

38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

The first glory of Christmas that is found in this passage is in verses 34-35.

34 Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

The question of verse 34 was not how can this be. That would be a statement of doubt of God's ability and power to do what He has said. The question is how will this be. I know it can happen. I just don't know how it will happen.

This is the glory of the virgin birth.

Jesus was born of a virgin, one who knew no man. This fact of Christmas is often overlooked or quickly passed over. It is even often attacked as a truth. So, the question I want to pose to you is this. Why is the virgin birth necessary?

The Virgin Birth is necessary for its fulfillment of Prophecy

The first prophecy that probably comes to your mind is Isaiah 7:14 – Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Let me share with you another prophecy that may have the virgin birth in mind. It is Genesis 3:15.

And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

One Bible scholar says that the Bible never references seed with women, but men. Think about that enough and you can figure it out. But this passage, the scholar goes on to say, is the only passage where we see any mention of the seed of a woman. It very well could be referring to the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.

Is this important that Bible prophecies are fulfilled? Yes. If the prophecy concerning virgin birth was not fulfilled in Jesus, He could not be the Messiah as promised. I understand that there are some 300 prophecies fulfilled in regard to Christ that stretch hundreds and thousand years in time. I like what one person said. The chances of a person fulfilling 8 prophecies regarding Jesus is 1 in 10 raised to the 17 power. The chances of a person fulfilling all 300 can only be Jesus.

So, if you hear someone trying to diminish the importance of the virgin birth, don't buy into it. It is necessary for it is the fulfillment of prophecy.

The Virgin Birth is Necessary for Through it Jesus takes on humanity.

The virgin birth is the means through which Jesus takes on flesh. John 1:14 – And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. To dwell means to pitch a tent and stay a while. Jesus moved into the neighborhood of humanity. He took on the same flesh as you and I.

Why is this important?

First, it is important, for in His flesh, He kept all of the law. He was sinless. He knew no sin. Because of this fact, Jesus alone was qualified to take on all the sins of us and die in our place. Christ died for us. Christ died once for all, the just or the righteous for the unjust or the unrighteous.

There is a second reason that I can think of. Because He took on flesh, He knows the experience of being human.

He was born. He grew up. He grew tired. He was tempted. He became hungry and thirsty. He became physically weak. He marveled and was surprised. He knew sadness and disappointment. He experienced death of family and friends. He became troubled in His spirit. He feared the pain of death. He died.

Hebrews 4 ¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Virgin Birth is Necessary for Through it Jesus Has Divine Nature

This is declared in the rest of John 1:14. I only read to you a portion of the verse. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father,

full of grace and truth. We beheld His glory. We saw His glory. We saw the divine come out that was shrouded in human flesh.

Jesus became human, yet was also fully God. He was so that we can behold God. When John and others saw the miracles, they saw God act. When they heard Jesus spoke, they heard God speak. Jesus is the revelation of God to us. He is the exact representation of God.

³ *[d]And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature,*

There is a heresy that runs around, and I have heard it in the past years in our area. The heresy goes like this. Jesus took on the nature of Christ at His baptism when the Holy Spirit descended on him. The Christ left Jesus just as He was about to be crucified. Folks, it was not only Jesus the man who died. Jesus, Son of God, died.

The Virgin Birth is Necessary for it Reveals the Glory of God.

1. The glory of God is revealed in that the virgin birth is the initiative of God. God took the first step in our redemption by sending His Son into the World to die for the sins of the world. That is what John 3:16 is all about. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

As He makes the initiative toward the redemption of man, he also makes the initiative towards us individually. He chooses us before we choose Him. He may be chasing you now. He pursues a relationship with us through Jesus Christ. It is not that we deserve it. We do not earn it. We are not some noble person of birth. It is through His grace.

2. The Glory of God is revealed in that He redeems us through Christ. The virgin birth emphasizes the human need for redemption. We cannot save ourselves. God gave the Mosaic Law as a way to be right before Him. We cannot keep it. No one is able to keep it.

Galatians 4:4 - But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under ⁴the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under ⁴the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

3. The Glory of God is revealed in us as Immanuel, God with us. The virgin will conceive and his name will be called Immanuel.

Roy spent 15 years in prison, 15 Christmases behind razor wire. He became a believer while there. One Christmas in prison had the beginnings of being the most gloomy. Roy was put in solitary confinement. Not sure what he did, but he said just look at the person wrong and you find yourself confined. Christmas came. Roy had his Bible reading about Paul and Silas as they were in prison and sang joyfully. Then Andrew from another cell began talking to Roy. Merry Christmas Roy. Merry Christmas, Andrew. Do you know any carols, Roy? Sure. Let's sing some. The last carol was O Holy Night. Silence filled the quad as everyone listened. It was a moment I'll never forget. It not only reminded me of Paul and Silas, but it made me realize every day is Christmas when God has arrived.

It wasn't just another day, and I wasn't alone. Emmanuel was in confinement with me, in my cell, blessing me.

The Virgin Birth – God revealing His glory in His initiative to save us. That is reason to worship this Christmas.