

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

by Braxton B. Sawyer

Sawyer's apologetic defense of the virgin birth doctrine, demonstrating that opposition to this teaching is part of a broader rejection of all supernatural elements in Christ's person and work, and presenting the biblical and theological case for this foundational Christian belief.

5 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 01 - The Importance of the Biblical Doctrine
2. 02 - The Facts of this Great Doctrine
3. 03 - Various Attempts to Explain These Facts
4. 04 - The Explanation as Set Forth in the Scriptures
5. 05 - The Real Meaning of the Virgin Birth For You and Me

01 - The Importance of the Biblical Doctrine

Chapter One THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE

OUTLINE 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT 2. A DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED 3. BELIEVING IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH ESSENTIAL 4. THE OBJECTIONS GIVEN TO BELIEVING IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

It is impossible to overstate the importance of this subject. We're not dealing with "much ado about nothing," but we are dealing with the very tap-root of the Christian faith.

Today, theology is alive more than ever before in the history of Christianity.

There are 'three subjects which stand out foremost' in the theological laboratories of the world with which men are wrestling and trying to comprehend and explain.

These three subjects are, 1. The authority of the Bible.

2. The meaning of JESUS CHRIST.

3. The nature of the Church. When we come to discuss the life of CHRIST, we find it begins with the miracle of the Virgin Birth and ends with the miracle of the Resurrection. No true study of His life is complete without a clear understanding of the Virgin Birth; 1. Not Elective, but Essential. This doctrine is not elective, but is essential. There are those who would tell us today that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is not the only way that JESUS could be the real, true Son of GOD. The Virgin, Birth, they tell us, is only one way and we can elect either to believe in the Virgin Birth or other ways that have been suggested.

It is reasonable to think, we are told, that JESUS grew in Godliness. Born into a pious home in the midst of a God-revering people, schooled in the Old Testament, seeing GOD everywhere - in the lilies of the field, in the blind beggar by the roadside, turning often to Him in prayer, living in constant fellowship with Him, JESUS might conceivably, we are told, have become steadily more Godlike until He and GOD were one in spirit. If, therefore, we can believe in the Virgin Birth, well and good. But, if we have firm basis for our conviction that JESUS came from GOD in another way and we cannot believe in the Virgin Birth, we are told not to worry about it; but in our own way, hold fast to that same conviction. In either case, try to view with understanding those who differ from us. This sounds like broadmindedness to many people. But I remind you that we are not dealing with an isolated theory that we may believe or not believe without any spiritual benefits or ill effects.

We are dealing with the cornerstone in the whole framework of New Testament faith.

2. Not an Isolated Theory, but the Cornerstone in the Whole Framework of New Testament Faith.

II. A DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

1. The Virgin Birth By “Virgin Birth” we mean that doctrine founded on the Gospel of Matthew, “And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus” (Matthew 1:25).

“And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

These teach that JESUS was miraculously begotten of GOD and born of a virgin without an earthly father.

While His birth was supernatural, it is not enough to just say “supernatural” or “miraculous” birth, because there are other evidences of supernatural births in the Bible.

2. The Miraculous Conception.

Another term that we will be using quite frequently will be the term “Miraculous Conception.” It is not enough to just say Virgin Birth. It is entirely biologically possible for a virgin to conceive in various ways, but by “Miraculous Conception,” we mean a direct miracle of GOD, operating upon the virgin Mary and she is conceived and with child, not by any natural biological means, but by a miraculous conception of the HOLY SPIRIT.

3. The Incarnation. The word “Incarnation” will be used frequently also throughout this message, and by “Incarnation,” we mean a clothing with flesh, hanging on, or being made manifest in bodily form or in fleshly form. Thus, by “Incarnation,” we mean the union of the divine with the human, that is, GOD, Deity, takes on the form of flesh. Therefore, Deity becomes incarnated in human form or human flesh. It shall be my contention that JESUS became incarnate by no means other than the Miraculous Conception and the Virgin Birth.

4. The Deity or Divinity of CHRIST. The words “Deity” of CHRIST and “Divinity” of CHRIST shall be used. By “Deity,” we mean the essential nature of GOD. The Deity of the CREATOR is seen in His works. Thus, “Deity” means like GOD. The word “Divinity” refers also to GOD, but it is a much lighter word than the word “Deity.” We speak of other people as being divine - He is a divine being. We have a man in the United States who calls himself “Father Divine.” He takes on the divine nature, but no man of recent history has called himself a “Deity.” We find in the theological works, the older the work is, the more frequently the word “Deity” is used because it is a stronger word in referring to CHRIST than the word “Divinity.” Our more modern, liberal scholars speak more frequently of the “Divinity” of JESUS than they do the “Deity” of JESUS, because He could be divine and yet not be very GOD. But, He could not be “Deity” without being as much GOD as though He were never man. Therefore, I shall use the word “Deity” of JESUS instead of His “Divinity,” because it is a stronger and more expressive word.

III. BELIEVING IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH ESSENTIAL

And, now, with the importance of this subject upon our minds, and a definition of the terms we shall use, let us state just what believing in the Virgin Birth of JESUS really means. Believing in the Virgin Birth is essential to believing in all the other great fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

1. Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to Believing in the Divine Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures. There are two camps of so-called Bible believers today.

One thinks that the Bible is merely a pre-historic and pre-scientific man, trying to set down his best impressions of GOD and of the world. The other theory is that the Bible was written by men who were supernaturally and spiritually inspired to write an authoritative record under the dynamic inspiration of the power of the Spirit of GOD. Those who reject the teachings of the Virgin Birth do so, first of all, by excluding all the supernatural accounts from the Gospels which includes the Virgin Birth. They then claim that the Bible, as we have it, is not an inspired, authentic account of things and facts as actually happened.

But, they claim, the Bible as we have it, is a book partly true, and partly a book of folklore, myths, allegories and superstitions, and unfounded rumors. They are very bold to claim that the first chapters of Matthew and Luke are stories, myths and legends that were added to the original writings and not part of divine revelation. It is sufficient to say here that this is a blatant and bold denial of the authority, inspiration and authenticity of the inspired scriptures. Those who wish to give this critical study further attention will do so by studying the treatment as given by Dr. J. Gresham Machen in his book, THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST, published by Harper. This is the greatest one volume ever written on the subject of the Virgin Birth of CHRIST.

2. Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to believing in the Real Pre-existence of CHRIST, the first written record of the outright denial of The Virgin Birth appears in the writings of Justin Martyr.

Martyr is not objecting to the Virgin Birth, himself, but is recording the fact that some of his contemporaries do object and he states that they are objecting to the Virgin Birth and the Preexistence of CHRIST.

Therefore it is very significant that the first denial of the Virgin Birth included a denial in His Pre-existence.

What do we mean by His Pre-existence? We mean that CHRIST did not begin to live when He was born and became a baby. He had existed from before the foundation of the world. John tells us, "In the 'beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD. The same was in the beginning with GOD. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

He goes further to tell us that "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14 a).

John is here stating that CHRIST existed before He appeared in the form of human flesh. Again, when we turn to the seventeenth chapter of John, the record of the great intercessory prayer which JESUS prayed alone on his knees there in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Here, JESUS CHRIST is stating the fact of His own Pre-existence. Those who deny the Virgin Birth claim that JESUS was born as other men are born into the world, but later, He was either adopted as GOD's Son or became GOD's Son through a process of Godconsciousness and the dedication of His life; or they refer to Him as a religious genius or in some other manner. I submit to you that of all the denials that I have ever heard men make, the worst is to deny the words of the Virgin Born, Incarnate Son of GOD as He knelt alone on His knees, facing the cross

and saying, "Glorify thou me... with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

All four of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul, the general Epistles and the book of Revelation, all affirm unmistakably the Preexistence of JESUS CHRIST.

3. Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to Believing in the Real Incarnation of CHRIST. By "Incarnation" we have already noted that it means appearing in the form of human flesh. That is, CHRIST was GOD in the flesh. There is a revival in preaching and writing on this subject of the Incarnation of CHRIST. In fact, this word "Incarnation" is being used almost universally here of late when referring to the earthly life of JESUS. The phrase "The Virgin Birth" is dropping from the printed pages of theological journals and theological books. The "Miraculous Conception" is being eliminated. The "Deity" and "Divinity" of CHRIST are being dropped. But the "Incarnation" is the general term that most writers are using when they talk about the earthly life of JESUS. Now, let us come to grips with the question. Is the "Incarnation" a figure of speech? Is it a theory? Is it a reality? Every page of the New Testament declares the Incarnation of CHRIST to be a real fact. It cannot be too emphatically stated that if our contemporary evangelism is to trace its full impact upon a secular age such as ours, we must go back and search again, humbly at the fountainhead of the New Testament for the message that once turned the world upside down. The message of the New Testament is characterized by its insistence upon historic facts. By historic facts, we mean facts as distinct from facts of nature or facts of intuition, rational deduction or mystical experience. It is a pathetic spectacle today to see preachers and churches trying to eliminate the controversial part of the Gospel, and by so doing, they are losing the living CHRIST in the process.

He was not a theory, He was not an idea.

He was a reality, and no full real, true Incarnation is possible except by means of the Virgin Birth.

4. Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to Believing in the Real Deity of CHRIST.

We said a few minutes ago that by the "Deity" of CHRIST, we were ascribing to Him the nature of GOD.

He is Divine or He is Deity because He is GOD. He could not be fully Deity without being as much GOD as though He were never man. The Deity and the Atonement of CHRIST must always stand or fall together because the value of the Atonement arises not from suffering, but from the character of Him who suffered. The true Deity of JESUS CHRIST is emphasized by three great facts of the New Testament.

One is calling upon the name of the Lord JESUS CHRIST. The second is trusting Him for our salvation. The third is His paying the sin debt with His suffering and death on the cross.

These three great facts of the New Testament are a mockery and a sham if CHRIST were not truly GOD, and He could not be truly GOD except for the Virgin Birth, 5. Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to Believing in the Doctrine of the Trinity.

One of the self-evident facts of all the New Testament is the well known doctrine of the Trinity GOD the Father, GOD the Son and GOD the HOLY SPIRIT.

One time in the New Testament we have all three persons of the Triune Godhead active at the same time, that is, acting simultaneously. They do this in the account of the baptism of JESUS.

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16-17).

Again, the doctrine of the Trinity is affirmed by Paul at the end of his second letter to the Corinthians when he said, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

6. Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to Believing in the New Testament Doctrine of the Atonement.

Regardless of which theory we might hold as to the doctrine of the Atonement, the fact still remains that it was substitutionary and that CHRIST did something for us that we could not do for ourselves. The New Testament doctrine of the Atonement simply states that on the account of our sin, the sentence of death came upon us. JESUS had no sin. Yet death came to Him, and it came upon Him because of our sins and on our behalf.

He took upon Himself the sentence of death that was due us, and by bearing that sentence, He sets us free. That is what is meant when it is said we are redeemed with the blood of JESUS.

“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter 1:19). The blood stands for the life which He freely gave for us. No human blood could pay that price. The doctrine of the Atonement stands or falls upon the fact of the Virgin Birth.

7. Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to Believing in the New Testament Plan of Salvation.

Please notice that we said the New Testament plan of salvation. By salvation, we mean the deliverance from sin unto forgiveness and salvation and being made a child of the Kingdom of GOD.

Some have argued that salvation is dependent upon what the church does for the individual.

Others have argued that salvation is dependent upon what the individual does for himself. But the New Testament teaches neither of these to be true. It emphatically declares that salvation is dependent upon our accepting what CHRIST has already done for us. By means of His atoning death, we have just stated above, He made possible our salvation. Our salvation is dependent upon the real Atonement. The real Atonement is dependent upon the real GOD. And the real true Deity is dependent upon the Virgin Birth.

8. Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to Believing in the Lordship of CHRIST. By virtue of the fact that CHRIST is our Saviour, He then becomes our Lord. The Gospels report CHRIST making claims that no other man has ever made.

He said to His disciples that if men are to be His followers, they must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Him.

He told the rich young ruler that he must sell all that he had and give to the poor and follow Him.

He said that one must hate father, mother, brother and sister, houses and land, yea his own life, if he is to be a true disciple of JESUS.

One must take his yoke and learn of Him.

JESUS claimed to be the arbiter of the destinies of men. He is to return in glory and power and judge the nations, separating the righteous from the wicked.

These claims would be preposterous on the part of any man, however great the man unless he were more than a man. He demands that man put Him first - ahead of father, friends and worldly prosperity, or life itself. These claims make Him our master and demand that He be more than a man. The Acts of the Apostles acclaim Him to be both Lord and CHRIST. He is at the right hand of GOD and Stephen prays to Him. The Gospel of John pictures Him as being the only begotten Son of GOD and all judgments are committed unto Him. He is the resurrection and the life. Faith in Him brings eternal life. All should honor the Son as they honor the Father.

Paul regards Him as Lord in the absolute sense of the word.

He is the one and only Lord. In His Resurrection, He is instated in a position of power corresponding with His divine nature.

He is the last Adam.

He is the head of a new spiritual humanity.

He is given a name which is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess that JESUS is Lord to the glory of the Father. This is the attitude of all the New Testament writers toward CHRIST, and it comes out especially in the book of Revelation. When John sees Him in His glory in the first chapter, he falls at His feet as one dead and recognizes Him as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

If JESUS were not truly GOD, such statements would be futile and absurd.⁹ Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to the Spiritual Growth of the Individual.

Science justifies its claim today upon the basis of what they call the pragmatic test. The scientific pragmatic simply stated is that it works.

Science discovers a hypothesis. They test it out.

They test it again. They prove it again, and they find it works. Therefore, it has passed the pragmatic test. It is a self-evident fact, and therefore, it is given to us as true.

We can also apply the pragmatic test of the belief in the Deity and the Virgin Birth of JESUS to the spiritual life, growth and development of an individual.

Every individual in this world, minister and clergy alike, who have believed implicitly in the divine authority of the Scriptures, in the Virgin Birth of JESUS, in the Deity of JESUS, in the vicarious Atonement of JESUS, in the New Testament plan of Salvation and in the Lordship of JESUS - that person has been able to grow spiritually and be a blessing to humanity.

Every individual who claims to be a follower of the Lord whose faith is not firmly grounded in all these great truths always becomes a spiritual dwarf - full of questions and doubts, has no life, no thrust, no lifting up of the eagle's wings.

10. Believing in the Virgin Birth is Essential to the Missionary Spirit of the Church. The one scholar in the world today who has denounced belief in the Virgin Birth more than any other man to my knowledge is Dr. Nels F. S. Ferre, professor of Philosophical Theology, Vanderbilt University School of Religion, Nashville, Tennessee. Dr. Ferre, in a recent book entitled "The Sun and the Umbrella," has scoffed at the idea of the Virgin Birth of JESUS. In this book, Dr. Ferre discredits the authority of the Bible and claims it is just another book written by pre-scientific men with all their superstitions, legends, fairy tales and folklore. He discredits the missionary spirit of the church. His closing three chapters in this book are devoted to the Christian missionary attitude toward the Jews, Communists, and other religions of the pagan world.

He concludes that if we as Christians hold to the Deity of JESUS, the miracles of JESUS, the resurrection of JESUS and the spiritual new birth taught by JESUS, that we have no hope of any basis of cooperation or unification with Communism, the Jewish and the other nature religions of the world.

He argues that we should divest our thinking of all the supernatural and superiority in CHRIST and Christianity and realize that we have not the religion of the world, but a religion, and therefore, proceed upon the assumption that one is as valid as the other.

That, my friends, is a death blow to the missionary spirit of the church which CHRIST uttered as He stood on the mountainside and was received up into Heaven and gave to His church the Great Commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20).

IV. THE OBJECTIONS GIVEN TO BELIEVING IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH The reasons the skeptics give for not believing in the Virgin Birth are now presented.

1. It is Claimed that ONLY Matthew and Luke Refer to it. The first and foremost argument they give is, they say that the Virgin Birth is mentioned in only two of the writers of the Gospels, namely, Matthew and Luke.

They go on to suggest that since only two of the four Gospel writers mention the story of the Virgin Birth, it must not be so, else the two others, Mark and John, would have also included it in their writings. May I answer this argument by first saying that assertion is not true. As we shall see later on, Matthew and Luke are the only two who actually spell out the Virgin Birth to the very letter and describe it in detail, but the whole burden of all the writers of all the New Testament is based upon the assumption of the Virgin Birth.

So, to say that Matthew and Luke are the only two writers of the New Testament who teach the Virgin Birth is not stating the facts. To say that they are the only two who describe it in detail would be stating the facts. In the second place, just for the sake of argument, let us suppose that Matthew and Luke were the only two writers of the Bible who even alluded to it or referred to it or

suggested it in any way, shape, form or fashion. Suppose that were true, would it make the doctrine null and void?

How many times does GOD have to say a thing before it becomes an established truth?

We shall make a third remark and say that there are other important events recorded in the Scriptures that only one or two of the Gospel writers record. For example, only Matthew and Luke give the account of the genealogies of Mary and Joseph. Again, only Matthew and Luke give a detailed account of the temptations of JESUS. Only Matthew and Luke give an account of the Sermon on the Mount.

Only Luke mentions the story of the Prodigal Son.

Only Luke mentions the story of the Good Samaritan, and only Luke tells us of the birth of John the Baptist.

John, and John alone, tells us the story of the first miracle of JESUS. John, and only John, tells the story of JESUS' interview with Nicodemus and His explicit teachings as to the New Birth. It is John alone who records the great Intercessory Prayer of JESUS in the seventeenth chapter of John. Are we to conclude now that none of these accounts can be authentic and none of them are true just because they are not mentioned by all four of the Gospel writers?

Then why discredit and disbelieve the Virgin Birth on the assumption that only two of the four Gospel writers give an account of it?

2. It is Argued that the Virgin Birth is not Essential to the New Testament Faith. The next big argument that is set forth for not believing in the Virgin Birth is they claim that belief in the Virgin Birth is not essential to New Testament faith. The world renowned scholar, Dr. H. R. McIntosh, Professor of Theology, Edinburgh, takes the position that belief in the Virgin Birth is not essential to the faith of the New Testament.

Dr. McIntosh has written his immortal volume on the Doctrine of the Person of JESUS CHRIST, which is a volume of 550 pages. He has discussed CHRIST from every possible angle, and that volume has found its place into the volumes that comprise the International Theological Library. The Virgin Birth of JESUS is ignored throughout the book and after he has closed the book, he has tacked on an appendix of nine pages in which he has discussed the Virgin Birth of JESUS CHRIST.

While Dr. McIntosh has discussed the Virgin Birth in just an appendix tacked on to his book, he has one short paragraph that is well worth the price of the book.

I give it to you now, "Whether we are to call the birth narrative, only a childish attempt to utter JESUS' greatness or valid testimony to a historical fact, will much depend upon the spiritual impression he has made upon us."

Thus, Dr. McIntosh has left a door open to one of the main principles of New Testament faith, that of experience. The New Testament faith was based upon facts and experience, not cold isolated mathematics alone.

3. It is said to be A Myth Added to the Gospel Story It is true that around many famous men in ancient history there are woven legends about their birth or in some manner their miraculous descent into the world. For example, one of the most illustrious Greek warriors of all time was Alexander the Great. He was very anxious that he be known not as an ordinary man, but as a superman. And he did not want it to be known that he was the son of Philip. So, in later years, his biographers claimed that he, Alexander the Great, was begotten by a serpent cohabitating with his mother.

Another of the great Roman conquerors was Caesar Augustus. One story current about his life was that while his mother lay asleep in the temple of Apollo, she was visited by a god in the form of a serpent, and months later, Caesar Augustus was born.

Another fabulous, mythical story of one of the heroes of storybook was named Hercules. The mythical storybook narrative of him is simply this, His mother was a beautiful and lovely woman and the god, Jupiter, fell in love with her and assumed the likeness of her husband while he was gone. After this unusual relationship between the god and the beautiful woman, Hercules was born. Juno, the wife of Jupiter, was said not to be so pleased with this, her god husband's act, so she sent two serpents to destroy the baby. The little fellow, however, in his great strength, strangled and killed both the snakes.

Let us take one other, that of a story relative to Buddha, the founder of the great religion, Buddhism. For the first two or three hundred years, no miraculous story was told about the life of Buddah, but then there one day developed one. The story is that the mother of Buddha is said to have had a vision in her sleep. She dreamed that she saw a white elephant with six tusks. The elephant forcibly entered her side and months later, Gautama Buddha was born.

Now, as you have already observed, none of these legends and none of these myths have any parallel, whatsoever, with the beautiful, moral and ethical story of the Incarnation of JESUS. In these myths and legends, there is no moral, there is no reason, there is no cause, there is no end, it is just snakes, elephants and gods assuming human lust and committing immoralities, and begetting monstrosities. To read these sordid tales makes the simple story of the Virgin Birth of JESUS all the more impressive. There is nothing in all the annals of time or history that can be compared to the heavenly visit of the angel to Mary. No other person on earth has ever laid claim, nor have the disciples of any other person ever laid claim to anything like the beautiful story of the Virgin Birth.

4. It is Argued that Similar Stories Are Found in Ancient Folklore and Greek Mythology The answer to that is that sordid immoral stories are found in ancient folklore and Greek mythology, but no moral, ethical and spiritual story is to be found that in any way compares with or parallels the story of the Virgin Birth. The story of the Virgin Birth does not happen without reason. It does not happen without cause.

It does not happen without significance.

There is moral purpose behind every move of JESUS becoming incarnate. There is no such purpose behind these mythological and legendary stories found elsewhere. Therefore, no comparison can be claimed.

5. It is Said to be Contrary to the Laws of Science Again, it is said that the story of the Virgin Birth is contrary to the laws of science. What are the laws of science?

Simply stated, they are the facts as man has been able to observe and test them and demonstrate them and prove them. The laws of science have changed so much till no true science would dare set down a set of laws and claim that they are infallible and must be true throughout all the centuries. The so-called laws of science of even ten years ago, most of them are now denied.

Even the long accepted theory of Sir Isaac Newton's Law of Gravitation has of recent years been challenged by the great scientist and physicist, Albert Einstein. It is also true that science has not discovered a law whereby a woman can biologically conceive and be with child apart from the union of the female and male sperm. But that does not mean that GOD cannot bring a special decreed miracle of history and act according to His own plan and cause Mary to conceive.

GOD is simply moving into His own laws in this case.

Science can find no law for any of the miracles of JESUS.

It finds no law for the Resurrection of JESUS.

It finds no scientific facts to substantiate the doctrine of the New Birth.

It has no laws regarding the Second Coming or the Resurrection. There are no real spiritual New Testament truths that science can pour into its test tubes or put on its smears and observe through its microscopes. But that does not mean that they do not exist.

6. It is Argued that CHRIST was Adopted as the Son of GOD Again, it is argued that CHRIST was not the Virgin Born Son of GOD, but that He was an adopted Son. That theory, simply stated says that CHRIST was the natural son of Mary and Joseph and that He grew and developed as a natural, normal human being; but in His religious devotion and in His GOD consciousness and in His dedication, He managed to give Himself so completely to GOD that GOD adopted Him as His Son. The baptism is the adoption initiation when CHRIST was adopted into His priestly office and became the Son of GOD, only as GOD's presence was revealed to Him in a special way that He has never revealed His presence in another being. The best answer to this is, if it were true, it would create a larger and more complicated miracle than the simple story of the Miraculous Conception and the Virgin Birth.

Furthermore, if JESUS were a member of the human race and merely adopted as the Son of GOD, then that would be a direct violation of the scriptural teachings of the Pre-existence of CHRIST. As we have already learned they teach emphatically that He existed from before the foundation of the world.

It would do away with the doctrine of the Deity and the Trinity, and would make null and void the New Testament doctrine of the Atonement and the Lordship of CHRIST and would also nullify the New Testament plan of Redemption.

7. It is Argued that He Became the Son of GOD by Means of His God-consciousness and His dependence upon GOD

It is argued that He became the Son of GOD by means of His God-consciousness and that His dependence upon GOD was responsible for His unique relation to GOD. This is probably the most universally and widely accepted theory among the liberals and moderns of our day.

Now let us suppose that it is true that one natural member of the human race has managed to find the secret, to find the door and the key that could unlock it and has worked his way into son-ship and into union with GOD.

Let us just suppose this to be true. Would that make the man a divine redeemer who could make atonement for other human beings?

If He were a mere human who found His way into a unique relation with GOD, that, too, nullifies the doctrine of His Pre-existence, of His real Deity, of the true Trinity, of the Atonement, and of the true New Testament Plan of Salvation.

~ end of chapter 1 ~

02 - The Facts of this Great Doctrine

Chapter Two THE FACTS OF THIS GREAT DOCTRINE

OUTLINE 1. THE REAL REASON FOR NOT BELIEVING IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH 2. THE TRAGIC RESULTS WHEN THE SUPERNATURAL IS ELIMINATED 3. THE PROPER APPROACH FOR OUR INVESTIGATION 4. THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS 5. THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE OF JESUS 6. HOW SHALL THESE FACTS BE ANSWERED?

I. THE REAL REASON FOR NOT BELIEVING IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH

1. Those Who Reject Belief in the Virgin Birth are Disciples of a Natural Theology Which has Eliminated All the Supernatural in the Christian Religion The Virgin Birth is not just one isolated theoretical miracle that they hang up and disbelieve, and then go on believing in all the other supernatural miraculous elements in the Christian faith. That is not the story. The Virgin Birth is merely a wedge they used to drive division and to push from the New Testament record every hint of any kind of supernaturalism.

We are discussing the Virgin Birth here, it is true. But it is also necessary to point out that this is only a fragment of a much larger controversy and a much larger question. The great bulk of opposition to the Virgin Birth comes from those who do not recognize a supernatural element in CHRIST's life at all.

It is not a question of the Virgin Birth alone, but a question of the whole view we are to take of JESUS in his person and work.

It is not a question of a single miracle, but a question of all of his miracles, including his miraculous life.

We are sometimes told that even if belief and faith in the Virgin Birth is given up, there is still enough evidence left in the Gospels to furnish hope and faith in his Divinity. But the point simply is that these other evidences are not allowed to stand.

They proceed directly from throwing out the Virgin Birth to the next logical point of attacking every supernatural element connected with his life throughout the Gospels.

2. The Same Teachers and Preachers Who Reject the Doctrine of the Virgin Birth also Reject All Other Supernatural Teachings The same teachers and preachers who reject the Virgin Birth also reject all the other supernatural teachings of the New Testament, such as: (1) The Inspiration of the Scriptures (2) The Miracles of JESUS (3) The Vicarious Blood Atonement (4) The Reality of the New Birth (5) The Resurrection of CHRIST (6) The Second Coming of CHRIST (7) The Resurrection of the Believers (8) The Judgment (9) Heaven and Hell You are beginning to ask now, "What do we have left as we follow these liberals in throwing out the supernatural?" No better answer could be given than to let one of the foremost of their company speak for himself.

One American preacher who denies the Deity of JESUS, the Virgin Birth of JESUS and all the miraculous elements connected with his life is Dr. Karl M. Chworosky, pastor of the First Unitarian Church, Westport, Connecticut. Dr. Chworosky is a graduate of Wartburg Theological Seminary of Iowa and of the University of Wisconsin. In his own words, I quote, "If by Heaven you mean an abode of eternal light where the saved and redeemed enjoy everlasting bliss, and if by hell you mean the devil's eternal darkness where the wicked suffer unending torment and punishment, then Unitarians emphatically repudiate such beliefs."

"Unitarians believe that evil defeats itself and that virtue is the reward of those who obey the laws of man and GOD."

"The idea that a GOD of love and mercy would want to consign a human being because of wrongdoing during a relatively brief spell of moral existence to eternal damnation or that GOD will reward the mortal doers of good with everlasting happiness, appears to most Unitarians absurd, entirely inconsistent with any moral concept of Deity." The minister continues, "Hell is man's failure to be and live up to his best."

"Hell is injustice, violence, tyranny, hatred, war and everything that fits these satanic categories. Let us fight these evil forces here and now to help create that paradise of which the poet speaks."

II. THE TRAGIC RESULTS WHEN THE SUPERNATURAL IS ELIMINATED

Historic New Testament Christianity has believed through the ages that the Bible was a supernatural book written by men laboring under supernatural inspiration.

They have believed that CHRIST was the result of a miraculous, supernatural conception on the part of the HOLY SPIRIT in the womb of Mary.

They have believed that CHRIST was a supernatural man being GOD and man at the same time, that He lived a supernatural life, performed supernatural miracles, and brought to us a supernatural salvation that can save us in a supernatural manner.

They have believed that He died a supernatural death, rose from the grave supernaturally and ascended in a supernatural way back to the right hand of the Father to be the Advocate for the sins of the world, and that one day, He is coming in a supernatural manner to take over the reins of the earth and rule as a supernatural King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Those who reject this supernatural concept become disciples of a "Natural Theology."

1. A Natural Theology By a "Natural Theology," we mean a natural philosophical concept of man that tries to weave some vague belief of GOD into a natural theology and philosophy that eliminates all of the eminent present workings of GOD, such as miracles or supernatural evidences in the natural course of the affairs of the world today.

2. Christianity is Robbed of its Distinctiveness and its Vitality When This Course of Natural Theology is Pursued and Accepted.

One of the chief characteristics of the Christian life is that it gives its followers an incentive and a joy that is not found in any other philosophical concept of natural science or religion anywhere in the world. The story we have just been relating begins with joy. "Fear not... I bring you good tidings

of great joy,” is the very opening of the Gospel story, and it closes with a great joyful note, “Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!” To study the beliefs, dogmas, rituals and ceremonies of the followers of all other great religions, is to see them toil in the darkness, and hope, wait and wish; and then to turn to that body of Christians who had a joy, joy, joy that was indescribable and to see their joyous certainty and faith as they are evidenced, is to witness something which takes more than modern man to explain.

3. A Religion Which Does Not Lift the Morals of the People A natural theology or Christianity that does not lift the morals of the people is not the true religion of GOD as revealed by the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

We are witnessing in our present day evidences of just what I am talking about. From my sermon “IS THE WORLD GETTING BETTER OR WORSE?” under the point, The Report From Religion, you will find the following, The total membership in all U. S. churches as of September, 1955, is 97,482,611. This figures six out of every ten or sixty percent of the population. One hundred years ago, only sixteen percent of the population were church members. Church membership in various bodies is as follows, Protestant - 57,124,144 in 273,508 churches Roman Catholic - 32,403,333 in 20,794 churches Jews - 5,500,000 in 400,079 temples Eastern Orthodox - 2,024,219 in 13,041 churches Buddhist - 63,000 in 49 organizations There are about 250 different protestant denominations in the United States; but eightypercentof all church members belong to one of the five larger groups, namely, Baptist, 18,488,821; Methodist, 11,688,002; Lutheran, 6,818,283; Presbyterian, 3,703,021; Protestant Episcopal, 2,600,699.

There is, at present, a great boom in religion. The President opens his cabinet with prayer.

Special prayer rooms are set aside in the Capitol. Religious books are our best sellers. Drive-in theaters are being turned into churches. Churches are burning mortgages. New church buildings are going up like mushrooms. Church pews are packed on Sunday morning. Sunday School attendance is at an-all time high. Regardless of the denomination or the report, they all point upward. Going to church has become the thing to do. Religion has become a juke box hit. The words “under GOD” have been added to the pledge to our flag. The post office has just issued a stamp carrying the words, “In GOD we trust.” Revivals are sweeping the world.

III. THE PROPER APPROACH FOR OUR INVESTIGATION A good start and a proper start is necessary to any true conclusions we might reach in any investigation, and so, we begin with a proper place.

1. We Begin With a Historical Personality, Not an Isolated Theoretical Miracle (1) We are not beginning with scientific findings, theories and hypotheses.

(2) We are not beginning with the philosophical concept of Jewish Monotheism.

(3) We are not beginning with the theology of Unitarianism. But we are beginning with a man, a historical man, an actual man who lived on the plane of history.

2. This Is Where the Early Followers Began The early followers of JESUS did not begin their study and investigation by reading an isolated account of a man who had a birth as a result of a miraculous conception and born of a virgin without a human father. That is not where they began. They began by being introduced to the man.

They met the man.

They saw the man.

They heard the man.

They observed the man.

They talked to the man.

They followed the man.

He did something to their lives that no other being could do.

They saw His miracles.

They saw His mighty deeds.

They saw His signs and wonders and they forsook all and followed Him, not because of an emotional false rumor, not because of mob psychology; but because their hands had handled and their eyes had seen the things whereof they believed and testified.

3. The Written Records of the Miracles of JESUS Came Much Later CHRIST had already lived His life, done His work, died, was buried, was resurrected and ascended back to the Father, and had been back with the Father for at least twenty-five to thirty years before one line of any book of the New Testament was ever written.

We must keep in mind that GOD works according to the fulness of time. Each book of the New Testament has a definite aim.

Each book grew out of a historical circumstance, and each book has a distinctive message for its own time and people.

If we can keep this message clearly in mind, we shall be able to grasp the clear meaning of GOD's Word much better for our time. In all the revelation of the Bible, there is an absolute element. GOD speaks. That is absolute.

Only thus is there real, true revelation. While there is this absolute element, there is also a relative element. The relative element is, GOD speaks through men.

If it were not related to some specific need or opportunity, there would be no hearing for divine message.

GOD creates history. He also works within the history He is making. The HOLY SPIRIT, through chosen men, interpreted GOD at work in history, and especially GOD at work in history to redeem the human race. Every revelation, therefore has a historical context which is its occasion and which it interprets in terms of GOD's purpose.

4. Why Did They Write the New Testament?

Why was the New Testament written at the time it was written?

Why was the New Testament written at the place it was written?

Why was the New Testament written about the subjects of which it speaks?

Let us approach these questions from the standpoint of human consciousness as these men who discovered themselves caught up in the current of GOD's revelation of history and spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Just how did they write? Did the Spirit one day call Peter aside and say, "Now, Peter, it is important that all generations shall have such a record of your Master's doings and sayings as only you can give." Did He say to Mark, "Mark, you are a good writer. Go off in a private and destitute place as I shall call you and guide you. I want you to write a Gospel which shall be for all time, the authentic introduction to GOD's good news as it is embodied in JESUS." Was this the way the writers were summoned to write the New Testament? Did the HOLY SPIRIT come to Paul in Corinth and command him to turn over to his helpers for a month his missionary work while he took Silas or Timothy to some secluded room and give himself to writing the Epistle to the Romans?

Most of us will have to confess that at least there was a time in our lives when we thought just about that way as to how the Scriptures were written. But that is only to confess that we had really not thought at all.

Now let us see the real background as to when and why the New Testament was written.

Without the Old Testament, the New Testament could never have been.

Given the Old Testament, if its apparent source and claim is true and genuine, then the New Testament had to be. They supplement each other. The Old Testament anticipates the New, and the New pre-supposes the Old. Each part explains and interprets the other. So far as the records go, JESUS never wrote anything and He never commanded any of His disciples to write anything.

It is doubtful whether the disciples, while JESUS was with them, ever dreamed that they would be the instruments through which GOD would use to write an addition to the Holy Scriptures. None of the Holy Scriptures were ever written as a primary and direct creation of GOD. They are always an interpretation of some activity of GOD that has eternal significance. When JESUS left His followers in the world, He gave them what we call the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach His message to every nation and every creature.

They took that commission seriously and went out and did just that. In obedience to the spirit and commission of JESUS and the power of the HOLY SPIRIT, these men soon became an amazing new factor in the life of the world which required an explanation. In their rapid growth, they met and created problems which required solution by more than human wisdom.

It was out of such situations of progress and problems that the need for writing an addition to the Holy Scriptures came. As these early disciples went into the world discharging their divine obligation, they soon created a demand for a literature of this extended Gospel.

Thus, their preaching the Gospel produced an occasion and a situation that demanded Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to be an authoritative source of their new message to the world. The extended preaching of the Gospel which brought forth Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts - we pass from that stage then into a growing and thriving church.

It wasn't long until this growing church demanded a literature of explanation and guidance. That brought the Epistles of Paul and others written to the churches.

Soon following that, the church produced a theology. Therefore, it was necessary for some of our great doctrinal books, such as Romans, to be the answer to the new theology.

Following the extended Gospel and the growing church and the new theology, next in order would be a controverted faith. Thus, we have the writings of a controverted faith, such as the Epistles of John and Hebrews. That finally led to the persecution of the people, and we have the writing of a persecuted people which is the book of Revelation.

Consequently, every book of the New Testament was written out of a specific need and a need at that particular time.

It is well to emphasize here that the writings of the New Testament did not produce JESUS. It is the other way around. The life and teachings of JESUS produced the New Testament. May we repeat that the Gospels were written at a time when there was a specific historical need for a factual interpretation of the life and teachings of JESUS. IV. THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS We call attention here to the fact that there existed in the New Testament times a being known as JESUS CHRIST. This has never been questioned with sufficient seriousness to justify our devoting any space to answer the question. The New Testament tells the story of the earthly life of JESUS, how He was born, that He had family connections, lived in His home at Nazareth, was subject to His parents, rejoiced, was tempted, craved human sympathy, prayed, was obedient to GOD, had a body, mind and soul. He suffered, died and arose again.

1. The World Into Which JESUS Came (Quoted from THE NEW TESTAMENT WORLD, by Dana.)
"The three greatest historical movements of the past centuries converged in New Testament life.

"The most sublime spectacle which human annals present is the way which GOD converged these three currents of history at the immortal manger of Bethlehem, where a Jewish maiden, who was there under the requirements of Roman law, gave birth to a babe, the wonderful story of whose life was to be told in the Greek language.

"Ere those sages of the distant Orient had come from afar to render their homage to the new-born king, a scene far more entrancing had transpired when Jew, Greek, and Roman stood unseen about that little Bethlehem home, gathered there by the silent urge of an irresistible providence, that each might contribute from his own resplendent heritage to the preparation of the historical stage of action for the ministry of the world's redeemer. That group who first assembled at the holy house brought not their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, but laid at the feet of the Bethlehem babe offerings far richer and more enduring than the glittering material wealth of the Orient could ever hope to provide. The Jew laid out gifts from the wealth of his religious history and consciousness, the Greek brought an expressive language and a trained intellect, and the Roman presented an organized world."

2. His Influence Upon the World "Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village, and that a despised one. He worked in a carpenter shop for thirty years, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to

college. He never put His foot inside a really big city. He never travelled, except in His infancy, more than two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He had no credentials but Himself.

“While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away.

One of them betrayed Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. His executors gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth, His seamless robe. When He was dead, He was taken down from the cross and laid in a borrowed grave through the courtesy of a friend. Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today JESUS is the centerpiece of the human race, and the leader of all human progress.

“I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that have ever sat, and all the kings that have ever ruled put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth like this one solitary personality.

“All time dates from His birth, and it is impossible to understand or interpret the progress of human civilization in any nation on earth apart from His influence. Slowly through the ages man is coming to realize that the greatest necessity in the world is not water, iron, gold, food and clothing, or even nitrate in the soil: but rather CHRIST enshrined in human hearts, thoughts and motives.”

- Author unknown V. THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE OF JESUS

1. The Supernatural is the Occasion for Controversy The supernatural life of JESUS is the occasion for all the controversy around the person, CHRIST.

Quoted from “A READER’S NOTEBOOK, by Kennedy.

“Dr. H. H. Farmer of Cambridge says that in Britain the three most serious charges entered against the Christian religion are first, that it seems irrelevant; second, that it seems inconceivable; and third, that it calls no longer for any costly, heroic devotion. What if it should turn out that man himself is irrelevant apart from the Christian faith; that apart from the Christian faith, it is life that verges steadily toward the inconceivable; and that apart from our heroic surrender to that faith, the surrender of what we have and what we are, there will be no world we want!”

2. His Sinless Life The entire body of New Testament writings present JESUS as a man who never knew sin. He challenged His enemies to convict Him of sin (John 8:46). He forgave sins (Mark 2:5; Luke 7:48).

He said that His blood was shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28).

He had a consciousness of undimmed fellowship with GOD (Matthew 11:27; John 11:42; John 14:6-11).

JESUS taught that all men should confess their sins and pray for forgiveness (Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4).

He denounces those who claimed to be more righteous than others, yet He, Himself, never confessed a sin, never prayed for forgiveness, never manifested the least consciousness of sin.

Paul, Peter, the book of Hebrews and John all manifest a belief in the sinless life of JESUS.

Paul says that GOD made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Peter says that He died the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Peter 3:18). The book of Hebrews says that He was tempted in all points like as we yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

John says that when the Christian sins, he has an Advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous (1 John 2:1).

3. His Miracles The water made wine The Courtier's son The first draught of fishes The Capernaum demoniac Simon's mother-in-law A leper The paralytic The impotent man The man with a withered hand The woman with an issue of blood Jairus' daughter Two blind men A dumb demoniac The Centurion's servant The widow's son A blind and dumb man The stilling of the storm The Gadarene demoniacs The five thousand fed JESUS walking on the water The Phoenician woman's daughter The deaf and dumb man The four thousand fed The blind man healed The demoniac boy The shekel in the fish's mouth The man born blind The woman with an infirmity The man with the dropsy The raising of Lazarus The ten lepers Blind Bartimaeus and his companion The fig tree cursed Malchus' ear The second draught of fishes If we take the miraculous element out of the Gospel records, the records will be so torn to shreds that we will have little or nothing reliable left. The miraculous element is so deeply embedded in the Gospel narrative that it is impossible to remove this element and leave anything of value. The effort to get back to a miraculous CHRIST has signally failed. The shadow of the old German radical school has fallen across the New Testament scholarship in the shape or form of criticism and claims that the miraculous JESUS of the Gospels must be surrendered.

We must wonder if any of these critics have ever sat down and attempted to try to form a concept and write a life of JESUS after he has taken the miraculous element out of the New Testament. The fact that JESUS had refused to withdraw from the stage of history in spite of the influence of this rationalism, humanism, and scientific thought is one of the comforting and reassuring facts of our troubled times. The fact that the story of the JESUS of the Gospels has not died and will not die is evidence of the validity of His claim to be Lord of life.

4. His Death The life and death of JESUS are inseparable. What ever theory of the Atonement we might hold, the fact remains that CHRIST did something upon which our salvation depended. Our salvation was His achievement in His death. CHRIST's death was a redemptive act.

One of the great facts in the preaching of Paul was that CHRIST died for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3).

Paul was determined to know nothing among the Christians but JESUS and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2).

CHRIST did not die to win for men the love of GOD, but as an expression of that love. The love of CHRIST for sinners was the love of GOD. The death of CHRIST was the love of GOD in action seeking to redeem men from sin.

It was love going to the limits of suffering and agony to redeem the lost from the ruins of their own sin. The cross of CHRIST is the pledge of GOD's love for a sinful and ruined race. As such, the

cross represents an act of grace. It stands for God's gracious love going out to redeem man as sinful and unworthy.

5. His Resurrection The Gospel accounts tell us that on the morning of the third day some women went to the tomb and found it empty. An angel announced to them that JESUS was risen (Matthew 28:1-8).

JESUS Himself, appeared to them (Matthew 28:9-10).

He appeared to Peter (1 Corinthians 15:5).

He also appeared to the two on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:14).

He appeared to the eleven except Thomas (Luke 24:1-53; John 20:19).

He appeared to the eleven, Thomas being present (John 20:26).

He appeared to the eleven in Galilee (Matthew 28:16).

Paul tells us that JESUS appeared to James, to Peter and to himself and to more than 500 at one time (1 Corinthians 15:5).

It is evident from the Gospel accounts that the disciples did not even expect JESUS to rise from the dead (Luke 24:11; John 20:24; Matthew 28:17). When JESUS was crucified, all their hopes were gone and they gave up in despair. They would not believe again until they had overwhelming evidence. The fact and the evidence of the Resurrection transformed them from a band of discouraged, downcast men into a company of joyous, militant, aggressive preachers. And when they went forth to preach, they preached that JESUS had risen from the dead.

VI. HOW SHALL THESE FACTS BE ANSWERED?

1. To Deny the Virgin Birth Is Not Giving the Answer 2. To Deny the Virgin Birth Is To Create a Larger Problem 3. When the Virgin Birth Is Denied, Another Answer Must Be Given.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

03 - Various Attempts to Explain These Facts

Chapter Three VARIOUS ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN THESE FACTS

OUTLINE I. THE EXPLANATION OF THE EARLY CHURCH 1. The Early Debate of the "Two Nature Theory"

2. The Early Attempts to Explain CHRIST 3. The Council of Chalcedon 4. The Apostles' Creed II. PERIOD OF THE DARK AGES

1. Rise of Roman Catholicism 2. Corruption of Religion 3. Superstition of the Established Church 4. Mandates of the Established Church 5. Disgust, Tension and Unrest of the People 6. Rebellion Beneath the Surface 7. The Attitude of the Church Toward Science and Learning III. THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION 1. A New Science 2. A New Philosophy 3. A New Theology IV. THE PRESENT AGE OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

1. Aftermath of German Rationalism 2. The European Scene at the Turn of the Century 3. The American Scene at the Turn of the Century 4. The Trend From World War I Until World War II 5. The Trend Since World War II 6. The Trend of Our Post-Atomic AgeV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 1. Some Do Not Believe 2. Some Believe I. THE EXPLANATION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The controversy over the person of the Lord JESUS CHRIST is nothing new. It began soon after the writings of the New Testament. In the writings of Justin Martyr, we have our first account of the group which denied the Virgin Birth of JESUS. "For indeed, my friends, there are some of your own race who confess that He is CHRIST with whom I do not agree, nor would the majority but maintain that He was born a man from men; of those who have come to the same way of thinking as I, since we have been commanded by CHRIST Himself to obey not human teachings, but the things that were proclaimed through the blessed prophets and taught by Him."

1. The Early Debate of the Two Nature Theory The controversy began to rage. Two schools of thought developed. One denied the humanity of JESUS, the other denied the Deity of JESUS.

2. The Early Attempts to Explain CHRIST

First, we look briefly at the early attempts to state the doctrine of CHRIST's person. (1) The Ebionites (A. D. 107)) held that CHRIST was merely a man. He did not possess a divine nature. As man He was in peculiar and special relations with GOD, and from His baptism onward enjoyed the unmeasured fulness of the presence and power of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Ebionism shared the intense monotheistic belief of the Jews, and on this account recoiled from attributing divine qualities to CHRIST. (2) The Docetans (A. D. 70-170) denied the reality of CHRIST's human body. They embraced the philosophic view current among the Gnostics and Manicheans in the early Christian centuries, that matter is inherently evil. Their view of CHRIST was the result of an effort to reconcile the purity and glory of CHRIST's person with their philosophy. Thoroughly false as it is, the Docetic view is one of the landmarks in the early history of doctrine, showing the exalted place CHRIST held in the estimation of men. (3) The Arians (A. D.

325) held that CHRIST was more than man, but less than GOD. He was the first and greatest of created beings. The Arians thought that the Sonship of CHRIST involved subordination and origin in time. The Logos united humanity to himself in the person of CHRIST. But the Logos was not a being equal with GOD, but derived and dependent. The Arians were condemned at the Council of Nicea in A. D. 325, and the view has never had wide acceptance in the succeeding centuries.(4) The Appolinarians (A. D. 381) denied that CHRIST had a human mind or spirit. He possessed a soul or vital, animating principle of the body. The divine Logos took the place of the human mind or spirit. This involves a trichotomous view of human nature which is unwarranted, and it denies an essential element of human nature itself. (5) The Nestorians (A. D. 431) denied the union of the human and divine natures in CHRIST's person. There was simply a close and intimate connection between the human JESUS and GOD.

It was GOD and man thus morally related to each other, but not united in an incarnate life. It was an alliance between GOD and man rather than GOD becoming man. (6) The Eutychians (A. D. 451) held that the human and divine natures of CHRIST mingled into one. The inevitable result of this was that the human was overpowered by the divine and absorbed into it. The Eutychians were known also as Monophysites, because they virtually denied the human nature of CHRIST and reduced the two natures to one. The definition of CHRIST's person which has been most generally accepted was that of the Council at Chalcedon (A. D. 451).

3. The Council of Chalcedon (A. D. 451) The Council of Chalcedon holds that in CHRIST's person there are two natures. A complete human and a complete divine nature are united in the one person. The requirement has ever been that we must not "divide the person or confound the natures." From the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A. D, "We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach the men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood: truly GOD and truly man, of a rational soul and body, coessential with the Father according to the Godhead, and coessential with us according to the manhood,... to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without mutation, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but, rather, the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person and one hypostasis."

4. The Apostles' Creed While the Apostles' Creed in an older form dates back into the second century, the Apostles'

Creed as we have it today in many of the Protestant Church hymnals, was formulated soon after the Council of Chalcedon.

"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 GHOST; born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of GOD the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

"I believe in the HOLY GHOST; the holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body; and the Life everlasting. Amen."5. The Affirmation of Faith "We believe in GOD the Father, infinite in wisdom, power, and love, whose

mercy is over all His works, and whose will is ever directed to His children's good.

"We believe in JESUS CHRIST, Son of GOD and Son of man, the gift of the Father's unfailing grace, the ground of our hope, and the promise of our deliverance from sin and death.

"We believe in the HOLY SPIRIT as the divine presence in our lives, whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance of the truth of CHRIST, and find strength and help in time of need.

"We believe that this faith should manifest itself in the service of love as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord, to the end that the Kingdom of GOD may come upon the earth."

II. PERIOD OF THE DARK AGES By the period of the Dark Ages, we mean that period that falls in between the fall of the Roman Empire and the revival of Learning. This period is sometimes given from 400 A. D. to 1400 A. D, but we usually think of it as about 500 A. D. until 1500 A. D. It is referred to as the Dark Ages because it is the period of intellectual stagnation. The six centuries following the collapse of the Roman Empire are especially dark in the sense that there is an insufficiency of historical evidence to construct any definite history of the world at that time. However, there are some generalizations that can be accurately made.

1. Rise of Roman Catholicism The rise and development of what we now know as the Roman Catholic church occurred during this period.

It is sometimes stated that all Christians belonged to the one church during this period.

There is one sense in which that could be counted true, but another sense, in which it is far from true.

It is true that since Constantine had united the church and state, the church was dominant at this time and throughout the known civilization, the church ruled and coerced and forced everyone, to a certain extent, to acquiesce to her demands. In that sense, all people had to obey the church since it was a coercive institution, but the sense in which it is not true to say that it was all of one faith is the fact that there were groups living under that ecclesiastical suppression that never for one minute subscribed to any of her teachings.2. Corruption of Religion It was during this period that the church and religion sank to the bottom in her sordid, sinful corruption. Catholic scholars today blush, but admit the truth of the corruption of her priests and popes.

3. Superstition of the Established Church It was during this time that the church developed such a superstitious theology. They began to put spiritual significance in ceremonies, in rituals, in creeds, in relics, in places, in buildings and the whole framework of the church dissolved into a coercion in observing superstitions.

4. Mandates of the Established Church The church issued such edicts and mandates that regulated and subjugated people's lives that it was unbearable.

5. Disgust, Tension and Unrest of the People While nothing big happened during the period known as the Dark Ages, the significant thing is that all the foundations for the Renaissance, Reformation and the Revival of Learning were all laid in the hearts of the people during this period of coercion and suppression.

6. Rebellion Beneath the Surface While they acquiesced and obeyed eternally for awhile, in their hearts, they were purposing and preparing for a new day.

7. The Attitude of the Church Toward Science and Learning Man was beginning to discover himself and his world. The Church was reluctant to accept any kind of learning. None was allowed to think or write outside the church.

We recall the persecution of Sir Isaac Newton when he discovered the Law of Gravity. The established corrupt church must always hang its head and blush at this historical fact.

III. THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION

You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time. The Renaissance and the Reformation is a proof of that statement. For our convenience here, we shall classify the beginning of the Renaissance and the Reformation and the Revival of Learning with the beginning of the 15th Century A. D.

1. A New Science Here we have bursting forth on the world a new science.

We mention three developments that appeared during the first part of the 15th century that are very significant for our purpose: (1) A new geography This new geography revealed to the man of the 15th century a new earth and a new world.

Prior to this time, Europeans had generally believed that the earth occupied the center of the universe and that it was flat and had corners and sides, but the voyage of Columbus revealed the fact that wrecked Medieval man's smug little concept of an earth-centered universe. A precious child called "science" was born here and by experiment and logic, this child was destined to explore every accessible area of the earth and heavens. (2) A new astronomy This new astronomy overthrew the theory and forced man to reconsider himself in relation to time and space.

One paragraph from astronomy will illustrate what I mean here.

"Our galaxy, of which of course the sun is a member, resembles a watch or a grindstone in shape. It consists of at least two billion suns, many of which are much larger than ours. This swarm of stars is about 300,000 light years in diameter. Work it out yourself in miles. Multiply the number of seconds in 300,000 years by the velocity of lightpersecond, 186,300; you will find the distance about one and three-fourths quintillion miles. Then, too, the sun moves through space about 400 million miles a year, and our galaxy itself is going somewhere. Our galaxy has been coming from somewhere for millions of years; it will be going somewhere for millions of years." "MAN AND GOD" by Duke. (3) A new anatomy Right along with the discovery of this new world and a new universe led man to inquire into the anatomy of himself.

It made man question his claim to uniqueness, even among the organisms on the earth.

Man had not only believed that the earth was the center of the universe, he felt that he was a special superior creation essentially different from all other creatures. He, thus, believed himself to be unique in his nature from the point of view of divine concern.

Biological science gained in scope and in momentum. It came to include the vegetable kingdom and the animal kingdom.

It explored the cell, complex organisms and read the massive, well-filled pages of geology.

These studies caused men to ask questions. In view of these facts, they began to ask questions concerning their most cherished concepts. Did life originate in a chemical reaction? If so, is life basically chemical? Did the original unit of protoplasm, whatever the nature and cause of its origin, develop progressively into more and more complex and advanced forms until all modes and variations of man was achieved? Do all organisms, then, have a common, chemical or protoplasmic ancestor who lived about 15 thousand million years ago?

These three movements, that is, the new earth, the new universe and the new biology represent man's expanding knowledge of himself and the impact of this knowledge upon the religious concepts and devotions was tremendous. This brought forth another step, namely, 2. A New Philosophy Here the systems and schools of rationalism, materialism and idealism were crystallized. By materialism, we mean that theory which considers the facts of the universe to be sufficiently explained by the existence and nature of matter.

Some materialists have considered the soul to be a fine material substance, but most explain the phenomena of mind as a product of a vastly complex motion of atoms composing the brain. The materialist would accept the theory that all facts of the universe could be explained in terms of matter and motion. The business of the materialist is to explain everything by physical causes which are comparatively well-defined and which excludes any interference of spiritual causes. The significance which I am trying to point out here is simply this - This new philosophy taking on the names of rationalism, materialism and idealism was crystallized here in the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation and began to cause men to question every previous concept they had had, whether it be in social science, natural science, philosophy or theology. The materialistic philosophy began to gain momentum and continue to gain for the next 200 years.

During this period of the rise and development of rationalism, materialism and idealism, every false system of philosophy, sociology, government, education and religion of the 19th century was formed. Carl Marx (a German, born 1818, died 1883), Engels and Lenin (apostles of communism) were merely scientific materialists of this period.

During this period we have the French sceptics, Voltaire and Rosseau, and the English atheist, Tom Paine.

Charles Darwin lived and wrote his "Origin of the Species" during this period. Carl Marx was only nine years younger than Charles Darwin and lived and studied with him. The great German philosopher, Ritzel, was only four years younger than Carl Marx and the great French liberal theologian, Renan, was only seven years younger than Carl Marx.

Another contemporary was the German theologian, Harnack, and still another was Slymarcher. When we go back and study the new science and new philosophy of this period, we can see that all these men were, shall we say, victims of their particular turn of the century. They were living in an age when extreme reactionism was the course to pursue.

Communism is nothing more or less than materialism carried to its logical conclusion.

Modern liberalism in theology is a modified phase of materialism.

It is safe to say that all of our screwball ideologies in religion or government can date back to this period of men who breathed the air of Reaction.

You are beginning to ask by now, what has all this to do with the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of JESUS CHRIST? This brings us to the very crux of the whole matter in a new theology.

3. A New Theology We have spoken of a new science and a new philosophy, now there must be a new theology.

Coercion and superstition had to go. (1) A Natural Theology When we consider the after effects of the Renaissance and Reformation, we would expect a natural theology to have developed; and there did come into existence a natural theology. By natural theology, we mean a theology that leaves out the "Supernatural" altogether and is just a philosophical framework.

Harnack, Ritzel and Slymarcher must certainly be classed along with Renan as being the founders of this new theology.

Every phase of modern liberalism today is merely an echo of something these men thought or did or said during this period. A great number of these so-called modernists today should be charged with plagiarism instead of modernism. (2) Calvinism Another reaction against this suppression of the church, a new science, a new philosophy and a new theology came John Calvin who lived from 1509-1664. He developed a system of theology known as Calvinism. (3) Arminianism Over against that came a man known as James Arminius, and Arminianism was born. Arminius lived from 1560-1609. The far-reaching effects of this new thinking cannot be overstated. Extreme reaction was in the air.

Theories developed concerning the personal CHRIST. (4) Old age-long theories were restudied and restated (5) New theories were proposed a. Adoptionism b. Religious genius c. His progressive God-consciousness IV. THE PRESENT AGE OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Christian theologians are carrying on a work today that is of vast importance to the Christian church and to all those who believe in the Christian faith.

There is a theological renaissance on the move in the world today. The most serious and sober thinking is not being done in the biological laboratory. It is not being done in the laboratories studying electronics or the atom and hydrogen bombs. The most serious and sober thinkers of the world today are those who are thinking in terms of the Christian religion and Christian theology.

What is happening is a new determination to find out what it is that makes Christianity different. The question is being asked, what is it that gives Christianity its own integrity, its independence and its standards of judgments over against all other philosophies and causes which bid for the allegiance of men. This rebirth of interest in theology means a renewal of the efforts to discover the foundations of the Christian life. It was begun in 1918 when an unknown theologian named Karl Barth published a commentary on the book of Romans. That event set the theological world afire with a determination to rethink and reconstruct all of her theology. To get a perspective of our present scene, we must begin with the turn of the century, and that brings us up to about 1900 when in America and England we face the, 1. Aftermath of German Rationalism We stated above that all the theories of a natural theology and all of this rank, liberal modern heresy actually began with the German theologians and German philosophers two centuries before it began to beat upon

the shores of English theology.

2. The European scene at the Turn of the Century As we approach the European scene at the turn of the century, we are faced with the battle and the struggle of conservative scholars as they are beginning to do battle with the theories of Ritzel, Harnack, and Slymarcher whom we have already discussed. The European scene, then, was a struggle and a battle with conservatism and liberalism or modernism and fundamentalism.

3. The American Scene at the Turn of the Century The American scene at the turn of the century was similar to that in Europe.

American theology was largely an echo of the conservatives of the English and European theologians. The extreme left-wing theories of Ritzelism and the thinking of what has been called higher Unitarianism, put both English and American theologians in deep water. The American scene from 1900-1925 could hardly be said to have a systemized theory of theology.

4. The Trend From World War I until World II The trend from World War I until World War II in America gave us what can be rightly called an American theology.

We are sorry to say that this American theology which was formed between World War I and World War II was largely a liberal, modernistic theology which was merely an echo of the schools of German Rationalism and an echo from Ritzel, Slymarcher and Harnack of the 19th century. We will now mention a few names in American theology who helped shape the modern trend in this period we are now discussing.

Among them we mention Dr. Edwin Lewis, professor of theology at Drew University. Dr. Lewis was the brain trust for all the liberals and moderns in the American schools and pulpits.

During this period, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, an ultra liberal and modernist, did much to disturb the fundamental thinking in American theology.

During this period, another theologian was in the making - and began to be heard along - about the time of World War II. He is Dr. Nels S. F. Ferre, who is now professor of Philosophical Theology, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

We are safe in saying that the majority of the American theologians whose books were published and who shaped the thinking of our large schools and universities were left-wing liberals. That brings us to, 5. The Trend Since World War II A ray of hope begins to emerge in America and in England since World War II.

One big ray of hope is the attitude of the scientists toward GOD and the Bible.

Some of the greatest and foremost scientists of our day are beginning to believe now in the simple miracles recorded in the Bible. Our greatest and foremost modern philosophers are beginning to realize that Christianity and GOD are not just parentheses in the philosophy of life, but the whole sentence.

Another great encouraging note is that a great number of our modern liberal scholars have begun to swing from liberalism back to conservatism. In this connection, we mention again the name of Dr. Edwin Lewis. Dr. Lewis is now known in theological circles as the ex-liberal. In his latest book,

he confesses to the error of much of his liberalism of twenty-five years ago and expresses his conservative faith in the old time fashion. The majority of the religious thinking - that has been done since World War II is toward the conservative viewpoint.

We might call this 6. The Trend of Our Post-Atomic Age It seems that the coming of the atomic age with World War II has been a complete right-aboutface in the philosophical, scientific and theological thinking of the world. The effects of the atomic bomb was not reserved for Nagasaki and Hiroshima. The effect of those bombs have been felt in every classroom around the world.

It has made the teacher, preacher, philosopher and scientist think more seriously than anything that has ever happened prior. (1) Liberalism still alive Liberalism is still alive in the world and always will be.

Probably the two most influential liberals in America today (1956) are Dr. Nels S. F. Ferre and Dr. Paul Tillich. (2) Conservatism is Gaining Ground It is refreshing to note that the theologian we mentioned before, Karl Barth, who stirred up all this theological renaissance in 1918 with his work on Romans, still believes in the Virgin Birth of the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

I sincerely feel that this modern shake-up which happened largely between World War I and World War II is in the long run going to be good for Christianity. Modernism has had its day. It has been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

It appears self-evident that the modernists and modernistic schools have already confessed their error in their recent attitude toward fundamental Evangelism. This is evidenced in their response to the evangelistic theology and message of Billy Graham.

BBB Note: In hindsight, we now understand that these modernistic forces only "used"

Billy Graham as a dupe in order to fill their own churches with the fruits of his labor. The only good thing that may have come out of that is that many of those that made professions during his Crusades may have truly been saved and have a home in Heaven. But looking at the Billy Graham Crusades from the perspective of 2005 we see that it was more a case of situation ethics for the modernist, in which the means justified their own nefarious ends. And as to Billy Graham, he was perhaps a good man that was overcome by prestige and human praise - although a reading of his autobiography even calls this into question. By no way is this an endorsement of Barth - he was still a heretic, and as such we should separate from him and his teachings.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS Our conclusion after this survey is very simple.

1. Some Do Not Believe Some do not believe and some do believe is the only conclusion we can reach. The important thing is to note the effects of those who do not believe over against those who do believe. (1) Roll Call of Some Who Do Not Believe We have mentioned those who do not believe such as Voltaire, Rosseau, Thomas Paine, Slymarcher, Darwin, Marx, Ritzel, Renan, Harnack and Ferre.

What has been the effects of their doubt and disbelief as it has been cast upon humanity? No great good has come to humanity as a result of their philosophical doubt.

They have built no schools.

They have erected no orphanages.

They have held no revivals.

They have done nothing that has lifted humanity from her sin and need.

2. Some Believe (1) Roll Call of Some Who Do Believe We begin with Patrick, the apostle to Ireland, who was born in Scotland in 372 A.D. He established missions and with his fervent preaching of the Gospel of CHRIST, exerted a circle of influence and did a lasting and constructive work.

We mention John Hus, born in Bohemia in 1373. He was a scholarly preacher and theologian, one of the greatest of the reformers.

John Knox, born in Scotland in 1505, educated at Glasgow University, and was pastor in Edinburgh. He hit heavy blows on the heads of the Senate, kings and queens; and before councils, he spoke fearlessly for GOD. He won thousands to CHRIST and from error.

John Wesley, born in 1703, was the founder of Methodism, and one of the greatest evangelists of all time. He was educated at Oxford.

George Whitfield was a contemporary companion of John Wesley.

Charles G. Finney, born in Connecticut in 1792, raised by unsaved parents, converted at the age of twenty-nine, was a lawyer when he was called to preach, began his ministry in a Presbyterian church, was an evangelist of wide fame and became president of Oberlion College.

Dwight L. Moody, born in Northfield, Massachusetts, 1837, stands out as America's greatest evangelist.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, born in Essex, 1834, was a great pastor-evangelist.

Billy Sunday, born in Iowa, 1862, led to CHRIST by the street preaching of the Salvation Army, exchanged his ball bat for a Bible, and will always be remembered as one of America's most dynamic evangelists.

Today, Fundamental preachers and missionaries, GOD's men for the hour, are leading countless thousands throughout the world to a saving knowledge of JESUS CHRIST and to a fuller and more dedicated life of service.

Yes, there are still those who do believe, and "By their fruits ye shall know them."

~ end of chapter 3 ~

04 - The Explanation as Set Forth in the Scriptures

Chapter Four THE EXPLANATION AS SET FORTH IN THE SCRIPTURES

OUTLINE I. THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The Creation of Man 2. The Fall of Man 3. The Promised Messiah 4. The Messianic Concept of Israel 5. The Voice of the Prophets II. THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Introductory 2. The Gospels 3. The Acts of the Apostles 4. The Epistles of Paul 5. The General Epistles 6. The Book of Revelation III. SUMMARY OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES

1. The Son of Man 2. The Eternal Son of GOD Becomes the Son of Man by Means of the Virgin Birth We should make the general statement and say that there is not one single, direct or indirect, suggestion anywhere in the Bible that can be used as a contradiction to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

Both Testaments, the Old and the New, and every book in the Old and the New, are written upon the assumption that GOD would come or had come in the person of His only Son, JESUS

CHRIST.

Every doctrine, reference and allusion in the Bible confirm and reaffirm the doctrine as set forth by Matthew and Luke that JESUS was conceived by the HOLY SPIRIT and born of a virgin. No other suggestion is made in the Bible other than the Virgin Birth.

J. THE OLD TESTAMENT The Virgin Birth did not happen just incidentally as a parenthesis in the whole sentence of revelation. It is the whole reason for revelation. We can see the foundation and the roots of the matter by a few brief observations from the Old Testament.

1. The Creation of Man Man is creation's crown and goal. Looking forward from the last stage prior to man, we should expect man to appear. Science and Scripture agree in placing man at the end of the series of gradations in nature. All the lower stages precede man in the account of Genesis. Man was not an afterthought, but a forethought of GOD. In man creation attains a moral and spiritual level.

Thus, we are warranted in making the following assertions about man: (1) Man consists of a physical and spiritual part, body and soul (2) Man is the connecting link between the physical and the spiritual universe (3) The spiritual nature of man is sometimes referred to in the Scriptures as both "soul" and "spirit" (4) The biblical account makes it entirely clear that man was created by GOD in the divine image a. Man resembles GOD in his possession of a rational nature b. Man is like GOD in that he has a moral nature c. Man resembles GOD also in the possession of an emotional nature d. Man is made in GOD's image in his possession of will e. The divine image in man appears in his original freedom from sin and inclination to righteousness f. Another mark of the divine image in man is the dominion over the lower orders of creation, given him by GOD g. Immortality is a further mark of the divine image in Man 2. The Fall of Man "And when the woman

saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6) Sin here was the perversion of the good: the desire for food, the craving for knowledge, and the love of the beautiful. As we have seen, GOD created man in His image as a free, moral, and intelligent being. He had capacity for independent action in the exercise of his freedom. The capacity for sinning was an element in his freedom. The actual commission of sin was not necessary to freedom, but the ability to make an evil choice was necessary. The alternatives were:(1) To create man without the capacity for discerning good and evil, which would have left him on the level of the lower animals, with instinct merely as his guide. (2) To create him with capacity for moral and spiritual discernment, but with no capacity for evil choices, which would have been enforced righteousness. This would have left him without real freedom and responsibility.

Moral freedom is the mark of man's elevation in the scale of being. Sin and the fall were not made necessary, but they were made possible. A universe in which they were possible was better than a merely mechanical universe in which free action of the creature had no place. Only in such a universe could a moral kingdom arise, possessing the highest manifestations of GOD's grace and human attainment.

Sin and the fall afforded an opportunity for GOD and for man. For GOD in that His grace alone could meet the situation. Through sin and the fall the depth of the riches and glory of the divine nature became manifest. The fall afforded man an opportunity to respond freely to the call of GOD, and to yield to His grace. It is now possible for him to choose freely the divine righteousness which would entitle him to an eternal reward.

3. The Promised Messiah As soon as man sinned, there was a gleam of light that broke through the clouds in the form of a promise to the woman - a promise that has its fulfillment only in CHRIST. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

Notice here that Satan was cursed, but not Adam and Eve; for they were candidates for restoration - restoration to be effected through a Mediator who should unite in Himself both the human nature and the divine in order that He might reconcile GOD to man and man to GOD.

Three things are here given concerning CHRIST: (1) His Incarnation (2) His sufferings and death (3) His victory over death 4. The Messianic Concept of Israel A fact of history that will forever challenge the student of ancient religion is the Messianic expectation of the Jewish people just prior to the first century of our era. The Jewish concept of the Messiah was one who would come as a deliverer to free the nation from the yoke of foreign domination, establish a universal kingdom with the throne of David as the seat of government.

5. The Voice of the ProphetsThe prophetic stream that carried this expectation throughout the Old Testament must be reckoned with in any intelligent study of the history of religion or of the history of Israel.

Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel."

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Introductory We can never understand the book called the New Testament until we appreciate a few common facts which serve as principles of interpretation. Some of the facts are: (1) GOD SPEAKS. In the New Testament, GOD is revealing Himself, His plan, and His program. To do this, GOD must speak. (2) GOD SPEAKS THROUGH MEN. Every revelation from GOD found in the New Testament has an actual historical context growing out of a historical occasion. GOD speaks only through life. (3) GOD NEVER ACTS WITHOUT A REASON, WITHOUT A CAUSE OR WITHOUT AN OCCASION. "In the fulness of time" GOD sent forth His Son. Likewise, in the fulness of time, came the New Testament. (4) THE MESSAGE OF THE LIVING CHRIST CREATED THE OCCASION AND DEMAND FOR THE WRITING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. CHRIST had fulfilled His earthly mission and had been back in Heaven for twenty years before the first line of the New Testament was ever written. When the proper circumstances arose in life which could be used to illustrate and interpret the plan of GOD for the ages, the HOLY SPIRIT capitalized upon these events and miraculously inspired men to record and preserve them. Thus, the Bible is not a dead book written in a mechanical vacuum, but a book of life from life and for life. This makes divine inspiration mean something. It means that GOD was working behind, in and through history to make Himself known. But GOD can make Himself known only as a man responds and receives. Therefore, when GOD received the proper response from the stream of history He was working upon, it was then and there recorded and preserved and given to the world. A brief outline and arrangement of the New Testament is here given to illustrate the WHY of the writing of the various books of the New Testament. (1) The Writings of an Expanding Gospel What was done during the ministry of CHRIST on the earth was a matter of oral repetition until the necessity came for an accurate record of the life and teachings of this man that had extended throughout the known world. Therefore, we have such books as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John written to meet this demand. It appears that several uninspired written accounts were being circulated at this time. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:1-4). (2) The Writings of a Growing and Thriving Church The story of the Gospel referred to above resulted in the establishment of various churches over the country. The experiences of these churches soon demanded divine orders as to why, where, when and what with their affairs. Therefore, we have such books as I and II Thessalonians, I and II Corinthians to the churches and the books of Timothy and Titus to the ministers of the churches.

GOD, sin, temptation and the devil never change. Christian churches face the same problems today as the churches at Thessalonica and Corinth faced. GOD's ministers face the same problems as Timothy and Titus faced. The Christian message has the same opposition today as that faced in Hebrews and Colossians. (3) The Writings of Theology As we noted above, the oral teachings demanded the Gospels. The Gospels produced churches. The churches produced a theology. Therefore, such books as Romans, Galatians and Ephesians were produced to explain the theology of the church. (4) The Writings of Controversial Teachings As to be expected, this new message from the churches as mentioned above produced a controversy when it clashed

with opposing systems such as Mysticism, Gnosticism and Judaism.

Therefore, a need for teachings to help the Christian believers in this controversy arose. We have Hebrews, Colossians, I, II and III John. (5) The Writings of the Persecutions It will be noted that we have now passed from oral speaking to the recorded Gospels, to the instruction to the churches, to the expression of their theology and their writings on the controversial systems, and this leads inevitably to outward clash and open persecution. Thus, we have the writings of Jude, I and II Peter, and the book of Revelation all written about, for and to the persecuted follower of CHRIST. In the book of Revelation, we have the beast which is false government and the false prophet which is false religion, and Satan which is the devil. The devil, false religion and false government constituted the opposition in John's day, and these three factors constitute the opposition in our day. The New Testament is the result of the divine Spirit of GOD recording actual history as He revealed His will and way. Under the above five headings every book of the New Testament falls. When they are read and studied in the light of this background and development, immediately the New Testament becomes alive. The situations and experiences of the New Testament were actual and historical events as recorded, but they can also represent the universal experiences of the human race around the world.

Therefore, as we read the sacred pages of the New Testament, let us not assume that we are reading fiction which was recorded in a mechanical vacuum centuries ago, but let us realize that its messages are alive and as fresh as the morning dew and we can find our own selves in every page.

2. The Gospels GOD inspired each of the Gospel writers to record for a specific need. Therefore, we have the Roman Mark, the Jewish Matthew and the Greek Luke viewing the same truths from different angles and recording them according to the needs of their subjects. (1) Matthew Matthew, or Levi, left his office of publican, or tax collector (Matthew 9:9), and became the disciple of JESUS. The material of his Gospel is put down in a very systematic way, but there is no attempt to arrange it in chronological order. He lays great stress on the Kingdom of CHRIST, and gives us much that is official and organic in connection with it. It is clear from the sixty-five Old Testament prophecies quoted by him, and by his constant use of terms appreciated by them (such as "Holy City," "Son of David" and "City of the Great King"), that he wrote especially for the Jewish readers. In addressing himself primarily to the Jews, Matthew's purpose is to prove to the unbelieving Jews that JESUS was the MESSIAH long foretold in Hebrew prophecy. Matthew is more Jewish than any of the Gospel writers. He writes a source book of recorded promises which have been brought to pass in the life of JESUS. Twelve times he cites proof from the Scriptures with the same explanation, "That it might be fulfilled" as it was spoken through the prophets. Therefore, when Matthew mentions the Virgin Birth, he not only emphasizes the miracle of Mary being conceived of the HOLY GHOST, but his main emphasis is to trace JESUS back to David and Abraham through whom the Jews expected the Messiah to come. (2) Mark The author was not one of the apostles of JESUS, but was probably a convert of Peter (1 Peter 5:13) and a companion of Paul (Acts 13:5; Acts 13:12; Acts 13:25; 2 Timothy 4:11), and was with Peter when he wrote his first Epistle (1 Peter 5:13). He wrote a Gospel of great vividness and detail and gave special emphasis to the activity and energy of JESUS. He magnifies CHRIST's power over devils and sees Him as the one who works wonders. He evidently wrote to non-Jewish readers and seems to have made a special appeal to the Romans.

Mark does not directly spell out the method of the Incarnation of JESUS, but on every page he pictures JESUS as being the supernatural Son of GOD. Mark's Gospel is all focused on the needs of the Romans to whom he evidently addresses himself. (3) Luke Luke was not a personal disciple of JESUS while he was on earth. He was a physician (Colossians 4:14) and first appears as a companion of Paul in Acts 16:10 and other "We" sections of Acts. His Gospel is filled with much that has to do with prayer and song and praise. It gives a prominent place to woman, and shows special attention to the poor and outcast. It is clearly intended for the Gentiles, and more particularly, for the Greeks who would be attracted by both its beauty and its universality.

Luke has not only written the longest Gospel, but he also wrote the book of Acts which means he wrote two-sevenths of all the New Testament. His purposes, sources, methods and characteristics are all clear. His purposes are multiple. In his preface he states that he is writing in order that the truth concerning JESUS might be confirmed. He is our greatest Christian historian. The infancy stories of Luke stand out because of their unusual insight and written style. Luke has written the most complete Gospel about both the life and the teachings of CHRIST - THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD. Every generation throughout the ages must always accredit Luke with the greatest story ever told, and I can do no better than let him speak here.

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (Luke 2:1-20).(4) John John was one of the first five disciples of JESUS (John 1:35-51). He became an apostle (Matthew 10:2) and was called the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23). His writing is characterized by parallelisms, repetition, sameness and simplicity. He made much of the Jewish feasts and the events connected with JESUS' visits to them. His purpose was to prove the deity of JESUS and to lead men to salvation

by faith in Him. His method was to introduce worthy testimony concerning CHRIST and to show the blessings of belief in Him. He wrote a spiritual Gospel for all.

John was the last of the four Gospel writers to record his material and his is the most universal Gospel. He does not address himself primarily to the Romans, Jews or Greeks, but to the whole world. He says, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). Again, he said in John 1:14, "We beheld his glory." The burden of John's message is that the Son of GOD had become flesh. Therefore, He could actually be seen, heard and touched by men who lived with Him upon the earth. No book in the Bible lays greater stress upon the plain testimony of the senses than does John. He claims to be an eyewitness of the incarnate Word and upon that claim he bases his faith.

John's Gospel does not begin with details as does Luke's, but begins with a summary of the facts which are necessary to the incarnate life of the Eternal Son of GOD. It would seem that since Luke and Matthew's writings have already been read before John speaks. Instead of rehashing what they have already said, he goes beyond and gives supplementary information which has always satisfied every man of faith. John's Gospel certainly repudiates any theory of "Adoptionism" or "Progressive Incarnation."

3. The Acts of the Apostles As we mentioned above, Luke who told the "greatest story ever told" concerning the Virgin Birth in his Gospel also wrote the book of Acts. Therefore, the detailed account of the Virgin Birth is not mentioned in Acts. Why should it be? After all, people do not like to hear a preacher preach the same sermon all the time, even if it is on the Virgin Birth. The burden of the book of Acts is to present JESUS to a heathen world as the only Saviour of mankind.

4. The Epistles of Paul The critics of the Virgin Birth continue to remind us that Paul never spelled out the details and methods of the Virgin Birth. But they usually omit what he did say, such as, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Galatians 4:4-5 a); and "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power" (Romans 1:4-5 a). When we compare these scriptures with the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke, we see how they supplement and harmonize with each other. While we concede that Paul did not spell out the methods of the Incarnation or the Virgin Birth, it is clear throughout his teachings that he regarded CHRIST as no mere product of what had gone before Him. But rather, Paul regarded CHRIST as an entirely new beginning in humanity, the second Adam, the founder of a new race. Could such a person have been produced by mere human beings who had gone before? Certainly not. Every page of Paul's writings reflect the fact that Paul believed implicitly and profoundly in the Virgin Birth of JESUS CHRIST. The fact is that the Virgin Birth was so universally accepted that Paul felt it needed no defense.

5. The General Epistles "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11).

"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20). The question of the Deity of CHRIST in the New Testament does not depend upon the meaning of one particular word or passage in the text as much as it does the

whole spiritual attitude that the New Testament takes toward JESUS.

We must remember that the writers of the New Testament were strictly Jews. Uncompromising monotheism had been taught and ground into their thinking from their earliest days. It was part of their national and religious atmosphere in which they were born and bred.

Yet, their whole attitude toward CHRIST is one that could not be described by any other term than "CHRIST is divine."

They worshiped, trusted and served Him as men can only worship, trust and serve a GOD. And what is true of them is true of thousands of men and women in every generation, from the New Testament age down to the present age. Millions will continue going on doing so.

CHRIST is the object of faith in the New Testament. This is true in every one of the books from the synoptic Gospels on to the book of Revelation.

6. The Book of Revelation The critics keep yelling at us that the Virgin Birth is not mentioned in the Book of Revelation, but they fail to remember that the Book of Revelation is not written to establish any new truths, but rather is a source of encouragement and comfort to those who believe in JESUS with all their hearts, including belief in the Virgin Birth. The Book of Revelation is a great drama giving the story of the conflict between the sovereignty of GOD and the sovereignty of Satan. The thoughts of the birth and infancy of JESUS are all absorbed in Revelation with the vision of His heavenly glory. Praises concerning CHRIST pass upward from point to point until He is identified with the Godhead and fills a divine place. His power is far superior to angels. Omnipotence and omniscience and eternity are ascribed to Him. He is the "Divine One" whose conquest of the grave gave Him the "keys of death and hell. He is the source and end of all existing things. He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Praises of His divine Sonship and personality echo throughout the book. The Virgin Birth is not the topic in the Book of Revelation. In the book of Revelation John records his vision of the glorified CHRIST in the first chapter (Revelation 1:10-20). He appears in His majesty and power. His feet that had been pierced are now feet of burnished brass. The strength of the sun is in His countenance. He holds the messengers of the churches in His hands and walks in majesty among the churches. A sharp, two-edged sword proceeds out of His mouth. The Son of GOD goes forth to war. The Book of Revelation gives us a view of the war that He conducts against darkness and sin. That war never ceases until sin is vanquished and righteousness and truth rule in GOD's world.

It would be interesting to notice how this thought of the exalted CHRIST is treated in the book of Hebrews and other places in the New Testament. But these passages are sufficient to show that the thought is fundamental in the thought of the New Testament writers. Christianity is not a religion that looks back simply to the historical CHRIST. It looks up to the glorified CHRIST and worships Him. In His glorification He rose above the limitations of time and space. He came back into the state of glory that He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5). His limitations of knowledge and power were removed. He is now spiritually omnipresent (Matthew 18:20; Matthew 28:20), His spiritual power and omnipresence can be tested out in experience, and have been myriads of times. Every time a sinner turns to Him in penitence and finds in Him the forgiveness of sins, moral transformation, victory over the power of sin, he realizes the moral omnipotence of JESUS. There is done for him only that which GOD can do. Again, He is the

unseen but universal Companion of His people. As they go out to extend His kingdom in the world, they realize His presence with them in fulfillment of His promise; and in that presence they find their joy and inspiration in His service.

III. SUMMARY OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES

1. Son of Man It seems strange that anyone would have ever questioned the humanity of JESUS. This was done, however, by the Docetics who held that the body of JESUS was not real - that He was not real man, but only GOD appearing in human form.

Many preachers have emphasized the Deity of CHRIST to the extent of creating a chasm between GOD and man and therefore, practically nullifying the human life of JESUS. We should not begin with the abstract question of how we get Deity and humanity both together in the person of CHRIST. To begin with the abstract and deductive method, we will never solve the question. The New Testament tells us how JESUS was born and had family connections, lived in His home at Nazareth, was subject to His parents, rejoiced, was tempted, craved human sympathy, prayed, was obedient to GOD, had a body, mind, soul, suffered, died and arose again. The Gospel tells us He became flesh and dwelt among us.

2. The Eternal Son of GOD Becomes the Son of Man by Means of the Virgin Birth Matthew and Luke represent that JESUS was born of Mary without a human father. According to their account, He was begotten by the HOLY SPIRIT. There seems to be enough difference between these two records to show that they are independent accounts; neither writer has borrowed from the other. The fact that the other New Testament writers do not mention the Virgin Birth is no proof that it did not take place. Possibly the other writers did not know about it, or if they did know about it, did not see fit to mention it. We can understand that such a topic would naturally be handled with great reserve among the early disciples. Hence it may not have been known outside a small circle of friends of the family, and if the other New Testament writers did know about it, naturally such a topic would not be a matter of common conversation and men would not write about it unnecessarily. Mark begins his account of the life of JESUS with the public ministry.

What John says about the eternal Logos as becoming flesh would fit in with such an idea. So would Paul's doctrine of the pre-existent CHRIST as coming in human form (Philippians 2:510).

It is not a sufficient explanation of these accounts to say that they are due to the influence of certain Old Testament passages which seem to expect a virgin birth, such as Isaiah 7:14. These prophetic passages are not clear enough in predicting the Virgin Birth to account for the New Testament passages unless the New Testament passages had a basis in fact. On the other hand, we can see how with knowledge of the actual Virgin Birth of JESUS before them the New Testament writers would interpret the Old Testament passages in that sense. To explain those accounts on the ground that they are due to the influence of certain stories of Gentile women who gave birth to heroes or gods without human father is greatly to exaggerate the influence of non-Jewish religious beliefs on the New Testament account.

If JESUS was sinless, then we have already a supernatural element in His life. In the moral realm He has already transcended the limits of ordinary human life. A moral miracle is the greatest of all miracles. As the sinless One, GOD must have been present in His life in a unique way. Here is surely a new order of humanity - one that is above any ever known before on earth.

If it is true (as usually held in Christian theology) that man inherits an entail of moral disability from his progenitors, then there needs to be some explanation of the fact that JESUS transcends that condition. He was without sin, yet He came into a sinful race. We do not mean to say that the Virgin Birth explains, on the basis of the laws of heredity, the sinlessness of JESUS. On the basis of such laws there is no explanation of His sinlessness. What we are saying is rather that the Virgin Birth was GOD's method of transcending the law of heredity. The Virgin Birth was a miracle. To assert a miracle is to say that something takes place in a manner that is above and beyond natural law.

It is frequently asserted that the Virgin Birth is a matter of no religious significance. Some deny it, while others say that it is a matter of indifference whether we believe it or not. It certainly is not a matter of indifference whether or not we believe in the sinlessness of JESUS. If He was a sinner like the rest of us, then He can do nothing to save the rest of us from sin. But if He was without sin, then the Virgin Birth fits in with His sinless life. Luke 1:35 indicates that there was a connection between the holiness of JESUS and the fact that Mary was overshadowed by the power of the Most High. And it is easier to believe that one who lived a supernatural life in the moral realm had a supernatural origin. The supernatural origin helps to explain the sinless life, and the sinless life makes it easier to believe in the supernatural birth.

One need not assert that it was necessary in the sense that GOD could have become incarnated in a human life in no other way. But one is safe in saying that, if GOD was to become incarnated in a human life, it is difficult, if not impossible, to think of a more appropriate way. The writer is inclined to believe that ultimately the ideas of the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth will stand or fall together. The CHRIST of the New Testament came to identify Himself with a sinful race for its salvation.

He must become one with that race. This He did by being born of a woman. But to be a Saviour He must also transcend the race. This He did by being the supernaturally begotten Son of GOD. His supernatural birth made it possible for Him to transcend the life of the race in a sinless life.

Thus He was one with man, but also above man. His coming into the world was essentially a creative act on the part of GOD. With Him GOD began the recreation of Adam's fallen race. He became the head of a new race. To do this He must reach down and lay hold on the sinful race, but He must not become sinful with the race.

How one views the Virgin Birth will likely depend, to some extent at least, on how he views the saving work of CHRIST and how he thinks of the Virgin Birth in relation to His saving work. If one regards JESUS as a divine Saviour, as the Son of GOD in a peculiar and exclusive sense, as Son of GOD in a sense that no other has been or ever will be, then he will likely regard the Virgin Birth as the fitting manner in which this supernatural Saviour came into the world. But if one regards Him as being the Son of GOD in a sense only in which others are, then he will doubtless deny the Virgin Birth. We are not asked to believe in the Virgin Birth of JESUS as a bare and unrelated marvel; we are rather asked to believe in it as one item in a program of redemptive activity on GOD's part on behalf of a sinful race. As such, it fits in with the whole New Testament picture of CHRIST, and to take it out mars the picture.

“One day when Heaven was filled with His praises, One day when sin was as black as could be,
JESUS came forth to be born of a virgin Dwelt amongst men, my example is He!

“Living, He loved me; Dying, He saved me; Buried, He carried my sins far away; Rising, He
justified freely forever, One day He’s coming O glorious day!

“One day they led Him up Calvary’s mountain One day they nailed Him to die on the tree; Suffering
anguish, despised and rejected Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He!

“One day the trumpet will sound for His coming One day the skies with His glories will shine;
Wonderful day, my beloved ones bringing Glorious Saviour, this JESUS is mine!”

~ end of chapter 4 ~

05 - The Real Meaning of the Virgin Birth For You and Me

Chapter Five THE REAL MEANING OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH FOR YOU AND ME

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTORY I. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

1. A Denial is Not the Answer 2. We Start With a Person 3. Other Miracles 4. Biological Impossibility 5. The Virgin Birth and the Plan of Salvation II. THE PLAN OF SALVATION 1. It All Begins with GOD

(1) GOD Provides 2. Man Must Now Act (1) Repentance (2) Faith 3. GOD Moves Again (1) Forgiveness (2) Conversion (3) Regeneration (4) Justification (5) Adoption INTRODUCTORY In the preceding pages of this book we have contended strongly for the belief in the validity of the Virgin Birth of JESUS CHRIST.

Some who discuss this topic are content to lay it aside unsolved, with the comment, "Well, it doesn't make a lot of difference. If it happened, it happened, if it didn't, it didn't. In either case, it doesn't affect us individually or personally in any way." The purpose of this chapter is to show that it does make a difference and it makes a very big difference. The difference will be very clearly seen as we review GOD's plan of redemption for the world. When man of his own free will and accord chose to sin, he came under the condemnation of GOD. Divine righteousness could not tolerate sin. But GOD was not content to leave man in his sin and guilt. As a righteous judge, GOD must allow the condemnation because of sin to remain, yet GOD so loved man and longed so much to save him. As a true mother loves her wayward son and longs to see him come home, she abhors his evil ways and will not allow him to bring his sin into her home, just so GOD longs for man to come back to Him, yet he must come without his sin.

While GOD was yearning and longing for man to come back, man, too, was discontent in his sinful estate. There was something in man that caused him to long for GOD. While he struggled in darkness, he longed for deliverance. The tragedy is that though man did long and crave for GOD, his ever-present sin kept him in darkness and bondage. Man could never by searching find GOD. If reconciliation is to be accomplished, GOD must take the initiative and search and find man. This brings us to the need of a plan which would accomplish the deliverance of man from sin and restore him to divine fellowship with GOD and this plan immediately demanded a mediator.

GOD and man were estranged by sin. GOD's holiness and righteousness must be preserved and man's weakness and failure must be turned into victory over sin. GOD's love must have an avenue by which it can reach man to reclaim him. At the same time, man's freedom must not be violated. GOD created man free. GOD has always respected man's freedom and in all of GOD's approaches toward man, He has always made His approaches upon the principle that man is a free moral agent, capable of his own decisions and responsible for his own decisions.

CHRIST is the only mediator who could mediate between GOD and man and, at the same time, preserve GOD's righteousness inviolate and respect man's freedom.

Man has failed utterly in his efforts to overcome sin and some power greater outside of man must be available if man is to be lifted from the horrible pit and miry clay of sin. Hence, this needed mediator must be more than man. He, must be God-Man. CHRIST meets all the requirements and fills all the needs and accomplishes all the necessities of divine-human power. CHRIST was qualified to be this mediator between GOD and man because He was the Eternal Son of GOD.

Before He came in the flesh, He existed as GOD. CHRIST speaks of his existence with the Father before the creation (John 17:5). John begins his Gospel by stating his existence with the Father and that CHRIST was GOD (John 1:1-14).

CHRIST was also qualified to be the mediator between GOD and man in that while He was yet GOD, He became man. The only way GOD could enter into saving relations with man was to come and dwell in the race and get under the load of sin with man. It could not be done by an arbitrary decree from a sovereign ruler.

I. THE VIRGIN BIRTH This brings us face to face with the question, how did GOD become flesh? "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What avenue did GOD use to present His Son to the world? The skeptics, doubters and critics have invented a lot of so-called answers, but none of them have ever satisfied like the simple answer given by Matthew and Luke.

1. A Denial is Not the Answer Those who would deny the simple age-long account of the Virgin Birth should realize that when they deny this doctrine, instead of answering the question, they have merely created a greater problem. After all, the skeptics have denied the historical account of the life of JESUS, and they still have the man on their hands to explain. CHRIST does not bow out of history at the scoffing of the critics, but He still persists and His influence cannot be hushed away by all the howling winds of the critics.

2. We Start with a Person In dealing with the Virgin Birth of CHRIST, we should remember that we do not start with a theory.

We do not start with an idea.

We do not start with a book.

We do not start with a doctrine.

We do not start with a creed.

We do not start with a hypothesis.

We do not start with our favorite hero upon whom we wish to bestow the mantle of Deity. But rather, we start with a historical person who has invaded history and cannot be ignored. The Virgin Birth story was not invented as an attempt to "sell JESUS to the world." CHRIST had lived His life,

died, arose from the grave and was back with the Father for at least fifty years before the first word of the New Testament was ever written. The New Testament did not produce CHRIST. He produced the New Testament. The New Testament writers did not invent the Virgin Birth story. It was their divinely inspired answer as to how GOD became flesh. The New Testament did not produce Christianity. Christianity produced the New Testament. The New Testament was written as an inspired explanation of what had already happened.

3. Other Miracles The Virgin Birth is not the only miracle associated with the life of JESUS. We have many, namely, His birth His sinless life His miracles His power His death His resurrection His second coming All these involve the element of the supernatural. To deny the Virgin Birth because it is supernatural is to lay the foundation to drop all these supernatural elements from His life. The story of the Virgin Birth simply brings us face to face with our attitude toward the supernatural. Here we must decide whether in CHRIST we merely have a good man pointing us the way toward GOD, or whether we have GOD making a direct approach to man in the person of His only Begotten Son. Here we must decide if CHRIST is a mere product of humanity or if He is GOD invading history.

4. Biological Impossibility Some disbelieve the Virgin Birth because they say it is a biological impossibility. A biologist is a scientist who studies life. His field is to study how life behaves under various conditions. No true biologist has ever told us how or where life began. All the biologist knows is a little about how life behaves once it gets started.

It should be stated here that the Virgin Birth stands in the same category with GOD creating the world and life in the beginning. Life and man began with GOD creating him from the dust of the earth, and the Virgin Birth is nothing more or less than GOD creating in the womb of a virgin the first member of a new race.

5. The Virgin Birth and the Plan of Salvation Apart from GOD's Plan of Redemption for the world, the Virgin Birth has no meaning. The Virgin Birth has significance only as it is related to GOD's Plan of Redemption. As we review the drama of GOD's Plan of Redemption for the ages, then and then only, do we see the real meaning and real significance of the New Testament doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

II. THE PLAN OF SALVATION We here attempt to set forth the ABC method and plan which GOD uses to lure a lost world back home.

1. It All Begins with GOD

Here we must face an age-old problem, namely, "Is salvation accomplished by man seeking GOD or by GOD seeking man?" The one story that is woven through the Bible like a golden fiber is the story of GOD seeking man. (1) GOD Provides Before the mountains were brought forth or before the stars sang together, GOD provided salvation for this world. CHRIST stood as a LAMB slain from before the foundation of the world. Salvation is not an afterthought of GOD, but a forethought of GOD. This plan GOD provided with the atoning death of His only Son. The saving work of CHRIST is accomplished through His death. What He actually was in being the true Son of GOD and a true Son of Man and the perfect life He lived on earth enabled Him to offer Himself in death as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. In His death, He broke the power of sin and death and that could be done only by one who could endure sin without sinning and die without

remaining dead. This could only be done by a GodMan. His death was a substitutionary atonement for the sins of man. He did not die for His own sins.

He had none. JESUS, Himself, declared in many places of the New Testament that He came to give His life a ransom for many. When He came to the end of His earthly career, He said in Matthew 26:28 that His blood was shed for the remission of sin. We must endure the natural consequences of sin in this life, but the sin-death which marks the full operation of sin has been destroyed for us forever. The death of CHRIST was a vicarious atonement. By this we mean, we benefit here and now by His suffering. Through His shed blood we have the forgiveness of sins. The HOLY SPIRIT makes the transfusion and we gain strength over sin and death through the life of CHRIST that is mediated to us. The death of CHRIST was a propitiation. By this we mean, it shows GOD favorable to man in spite of sin. GOD needed an adequate expression of His love to man and a medium through which His saving Grace could be made available.

Let it be forever remembered that GOD is not a tyrant whose wrath had to be appeased before man could be saved, but He is a holy, loving Father whose love for man called forth this supreme effort to save man. He does not love us because CHRIST died, but CHRIST died because He loved us first. The death of CHRIST removed sin as an obstacle between GOD and man, thus, met the need in GOD's holy nature. With the provisions thus made, GOD's call to the world today is, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28).

Nothing short of the Virgin Born CHRIST could provide this.

2. Man Must Now Act Since GOD has done as we have suggested above, He now waits for man to respond. We sometimes hear it said, and I have been one who has said it, "Man can do nothing, absolutely nothing, in any way to help save himself." In one sense this is true, but I have found it can be misleading. I remember preaching one time for forty-five minutes on the Plan of Salvation before a large congregation. At the close of the message, one man in all sincerity said to me, "I didn't know whether to accept the first forty minutes of your sermon or the last five." When I inquired for further explanation, he reminded me that I spoke forty minutes claiming that man can do absolutely nothing and in my last five minutes, I told them he must repent, believe and confess CHRIST. I saw his sincere misunderstanding and I have tried to evade that from then until now.

It is eternally true that man can do absolutely nothing, so far as meritorious deeds and acts are concerned, to gain favor with GOD. But it is equally true that man must respond to GOD's provision and accept the grace and forgiveness which GOD has prepared by the sacrificial offering of His Virgin Born Son. Man responds by repentance and faith. (1) Repentance Repentance is a big word and we cannot exhaust its treatment here. Repentance is a change of attitude and mind toward sin and a deep sense of sorrow over sin and the more thoroughly we understand our sin, the deeper is our sorrow. This is the way repentance works. But it is not enough to change our attitude toward sin and become sorry over it. We must turn from our sin and turn to CHRIST as Saviour. True repentance never stops short of repudiation of sin. This is the real acid test of repentance. (2) Faith Faith is also hard to understand. There is an inseparable tie between repentance and faith. One is the counterpart of the other. There is no priority of one over the other. They go together and are essential to each other. Neither means anything apart from the other. I think we help explain faith when we define it as trust.

Nothing short of the Virgin Born CHRIST could provide this.

3. GOD Moves Again After GOD has provided and invited man to salvation, and after man responds and accepts this Grace from GOD, then GOD moves in to accomplish those phases of Christian experience - the words which we have heard many times, but the meaning we may have missed. (1) Forgiveness Forgiveness must be a personal response from GOD. If sin were simply a mistake or an error in the progress of human development, then forgiveness would be a light matter. GOD could forgive in a gesture and wait for man to outgrow his sin. But sin is such a voluntary breach of personal relationships that forgiveness means much more.

Forgiveness of sin is based upon the death of JESUS CHRIST. This is the meaning of the words of CHRIST when He said, "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The death of CHRIST has a two-fold bearing upon forgiveness. One, it reveals GOD's love and the length to which love will go for GOD to save, and two, it reveals GOD's power to be greater than the power of sin. CHRIST revealed the love of GOD in His willingness to die for our sins and in His ability to rise from the dead and break the power of sin.

Only a Virgin Born God-Man could do this. (2) Conversion By conversion we mean to describe that act of GOD whereby He creates us anew in CHRIST through the power of the blood of CHRIST. (3) Regeneration We use this term to express the experience when the soul is recreated in the image of CHRIST.

Man was created in the image of GOD. That is, he was created for GOD and given a capacity for GOD. Sin did violence to that image but did not completely destroy it. It distorted, perverted and defiled, but there was left in man the possibility of coming back to GOD if only the sin problem could be solved. This was accomplished through the mediator, JESUS CHRIST.

Only the Virgin Born God-Man could do this. (4) Justification Justification is the judicial act of GOD by which He declares man free from the condemnation and guilt of sin. It takes place when the sinner trusts in the merits of CHRIST for salvation. In this act, GOD imputes the righteousness of CHRIST to the one who believes in Him. This gives the believer a new and permanent status before GOD - a new relation which is never revoked. This is true because it is the work of GOD based upon the atonement of His only Son and it is the death of CHRIST which preserves the justice of GOD in justifying sinners. (5) Adoption By adoption we mean that act of GOD whereby He makes a believer His son. It is the outward expression of the inward act of conversion and regeneration. It is the climax of GOD's saving act. Here we see the purpose of all GOD's saving effort. It is to bring man into fellowship with Himself. By means of the death of CHRIST, the witness of the HOLY SPIRIT, forgiveness, conversion, regeneration, and justification lead to the adoption of many sons into the family of GOD the Father. Again, only the Virgin Born God-Man could mediate this.

I cannot feel satisfied to close this discussion with what some might term printed arguments. All the truths which I have suggested in these previous printed pages have been realized in my own personal experience and also, I have seen them demonstrated in the lives of many, many others as I have performed my pleasant duty of witnessing to them concerning these truths.

I was once invited to the home of a man eighty years old who had never been saved. Upon reaching the home, I was ushered through the front, down a long hallway and into a room where

sat an old man in a rocking chair, thoughtlessly peering out through a window. After making his acquaintance and with the passing of some conversation, I brought him face to face with the question, "Have you ever been saved?"

He shook his head and said, "No, that is too deep a subject for me. I have thought about it, read about it, talked about it and heard a lot about it, but I just don't seem to be able to understand." At that point, he turned his face and eyes toward the window again. While breathing a silent prayer for the HOLY SPIRIT to help me, I, too, turned my face toward the window and there staring before my eyes were five doorsteps leading up to the house across the yard. There I saw my answer.

I said to the old man, "Do you see that house across the yard? It has only one door." He replied, "Yes." Then I said, "Will you give me your hand and let me help you as we walk up five doorsteps to the one door that leads into the Kingdom of Heaven?" His face brightened a bit and he extended his hand. Then I began, "Our first doorstep is a conviction in your heart that you need help from Almighty GOD. Do you realize that?" With a voice that cracked, he managed to say, "Yes."

"Doorstep number two," I continued, "is Godly sorrow. Deep down in your heart, is there a heart felt godly sorrow because of the sins you have committed?"

Again with a broken voice and trembling chin, he replied, "Yes, GOD knows I have committed a lot of sins."

"Very well," I replied, "that is doorstep number two. Now let's step up on step number three, which we will label 'prayer'." I bowed my head and pressed his hand on my knee and prayed the best I could. When I had finished praying, I asked him if he could pray. His first reply was, "Preacher, I can't word a prayer like you." "I don't mean that," I suggested. "You, in your own way, ask GOD for forgiveness." Then he started praying. His voice was so broken that I couldn't understand all of his words, but GOD did. When he had finished praying, he looked at me through tear-dimmed eyes and I said, "We are on doorstep number three now. Let's try for number four. Are you ready to renounce, turn from and forsake every known sin of your life?" As quickly as he could speak the words, he replied, "Oh, yes, every one of them!" Then I said, "Let's go on to number five. Will you stand, take me by the hand and right here in this room openly accept, profess and confess CHRIST JESUS as your Saviour?" With one hand on the arm of the chair and the other reaching for me, his tottering body began to rise. As he gripped my hand, I saw something like an electrical flash spread over his countenance and I said, "How do you feel now?" With tear-stained cheeks, quivering lips and trembling chin, he said in a broken voice, "Wonderful!" I said, "Do you feel that you are a child of GOD now?"

He replied, "I certainly do!" I said, "When we got on that fifth doorstep, we just fell right on through the door, didn't we?" He said, "Yes, I never had it explained to me that way before."

Sinner friend, it is no secret what GOD can do. What He did for that dear old man, He can do for you.

Only the Virgin Born God-Man could do this.

~ end of book ~

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net