

THE REAL CHRISTMAS STORY

A red ribbon graphic with a white, stylized letter 'A' inside.

Theme: **The Virgin Birth of Jesus**

• Mary the Mother of Jesus

- Mary is the most important woman in the history of the world.
- Mary lived in Nazareth, a small poor rural city in Galilee with a population between 50 - 100 people.
- Mary was a young devout Jewish virgin. (Mary's Song - Luke 1:46-55) (Luke 1:34) (Luke 1:28)
- Mary was spiritually mature. (there are roughly ten quotations and allusions to the OT her song)
- Mary was likely between 14 - 16 years of age at the birth of Jesus. (according to Jewish customs of betrothal)
- Mary was betrothed to a poor carpenter named Joseph (Matthew 1:18). (betrothal lasted one year)
- Mary could have lost Joseph as her future husband, her reputation and even her life because of what the angel Gabriel had told her.
- Mary trusted in God. (Luke 1:38)

• Why Did Jesus' Mom Need to Be a Virgin?

- The virgin birth of Jesus remains the second most controversial miracle in all of history, following the resurrection of Jesus from death.

• What the Bible teaches about the virgin birth.

- God promises that Jesus would be born from a woman, which is unusual because the rest of Scripture speaks of children as being born from their father. This implies that He would not have a biological earthly father.

» Genesis 3:15 // I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

- Paul echoes this in Galatians 4:4-5 // But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

- Roughly seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be born of a virgin. Isaiah 7:14 // “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us).”

» This prophecy has dual fulfillment; it speaks of the birth of a son to “King Ahaz,” as well as the birth of the Messiah to the “house of David,” named “Immanuel.”

» This prophecy speaks to much more than just the birth of a male human baby.

» The failure of the human king to respond to the invitation (v. 12) results in the divine King again taking the initiative.

- Isaiah continues his prophecy about the virgin who shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah 9:6-7 // For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. (He will reign for eternity) The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (it will be a miracle)

- The fulfillment of the inference in Genesis and the promise from Isaiah are recorded in great historical detail in two of the four Gospels. (Matt. 1:18-25) (Luke 1:26-38)

• Matthew 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for He will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14)

(which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

• Luke 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of his father David, 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

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

35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

• What the Bible does not teach about the virgin birth.

- The Bible does not teach the Immaculate Conception.

» **False:** According to Pope Pius IX and the teaching of the Catholic Church, the Immaculate Conception is the belief that Mary was born free from inherited sin.

» **Truth:** Mary was Godly and highly favored but also a sinner.

▪ Mary said she was a sinner. Luke 1:46-47 // “My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

▪ Mary showed she was a sinner. Luke 2:22-24 // And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”

▪ Romans 3:23 // for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

▪ Jesus was the only sinless human. (2 Corinthians 5:21) (1 Peter 2:22) (1 John 3:5)

- The Bible does not teach that Mary had an abnormal or a miraculous delivery.

» **False:** Some Catholic theologians have taught that Jesus was not born in the normal fashion through Mary's birth canal. Rather, they say He was born via something much like a miraculous C-section, however scripture contradicts this false doctrine.

» **Truth:** Micah 5:3 // Therefore He shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

The Bible does not teach that Mary remained a virgin for the rest of her life.

» **False:** At the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 AD the council declared Mary *semper virgo*. Some Catholic and Protestant theologians have taught that Mary was *semper virgo* or “ever virgin,” (virgin forever), however scripture contradicts this false doctrine. (Matt. 1:24-25)

▪ Three reasons why this teaching is inaccurate.

1) God designed marriage to include physical union. (Gen. 2:24)

2) Matthew 1:25 says that they did have normal marital relations following Jesus’ birth.

3) Scripture repeatedly states that Mary had other sons and daughters. (Matt. 12:46-50; 13:55-57; Mark 3:31-35; 6:3-4; Luke 8:19-21; John 2:12; 7:3, 5, 10; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:19)

» **Truth:** Matthew 1:24-25 // When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

» **Truth:** Luke refers to Jesus as Mary’s first born. Luke 2:7 // And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

- The Bible does not teach that Mary is a co-redeemer or co-mediator in the salvation of mankind.

- The Bible does not teach that we should pray to Mary.

» **False:** Some Catholics view Mary as participates in redemption with Jesus Christ, grace is granted by Jesus only through the intercession of Mary, and all prayers from the faithful must flow through Mary, who brings them to the attention of her Son.

» **Truth:** Jesus is our mediator between God. 1 Timothy 2:5 // For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

» **Truth:** The Bible nowhere instructs believers in Christ to pray to anyone other than God.

▪ Christian are to approach the throne of God with confidence. (Hebrews 4:15-16)

The importance of the virgin birth

- The virgin birth shows us that salvation ultimately must come from the Lord. Just as God had promised that the “seed” of the woman (Gen. 3:15) would ultimately destroy the serpent, so God brought it about by His own power, not through mere human effort. (Gal. 4:4-5).

- The virgin birth made possible the uniting of full deity and full humanity in one person Jesus Christ. This was the means God used to send his Son into the world as a man. (John 1:1; John 3:16; Gal. 4:4)

» Jesus is fully man and fully God. (John 8:58) (Titus 2:11-14)

- The virgin birth also makes possible Jesus’ true humanity without inherited sin. This helps us to understand why the legal guilt and moral corruption that belongs to all other human beings descending from Adam (Rom. 5:12-14) did not belong to Christ.

» Luke 1:35 // And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.”

» God interrupts/bypasses the line of sin through Adam for Jesus by the virgin birth.

Q: Why didn’t Jesus inherit sin through Mary? **A:** By the miraculous power of God. (Luke 1:35)

» Jesus was born sinless by a miracle of God.

• Mary lived in God’s will

- Mary was a worshiper and servant of God. (Luke 1:46-55) (Luke 1:38)

- Mary was a Godly wife and mother, all for the glory of God.

- Mary raised two men that wrote books of the Bible, Jude and James.

- Mary was a part of the early church. (Acts 1:14)

- Mary witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. (Acts 1 & 2)

- Mary a virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit miraculously gave birth to Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25)

- Mary worshiped Jesus as God. (Acts 1:14)

- Mary is an example of faith not an object of faith.

Mary is a recipient of grace not the giver of grace.

- Mary gave her life to God and knew Jesus, God in flesh as her savior.

• **Why Did Jesus' Mom Need to Be a Virgin?**

- Scripture clearly asserts that Jesus was conceived in the womb of his mother Mary by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and without a human father.

- Denying the virgin birth of Jesus is to deny God's word. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- The virgin birth made possible the uniting of full deity and full humanity of Jesus.

- The virgin birth also makes possible Christ's true humanity without inherited sin.

- The virgin birth shows us that salvation ultimately must come from the Lord.

• **Application / Conclusion**

- The virgin birth of Jesus reveals that God is willing to work through people like you, me and Mary.

- By the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, Mary gave birth to Jesus and Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit enables new birth for sinners.

- These Biblical truths are the hope and joy of Christmas.