

## Basic Christianity

### Part 14 – The Virgin Birth and Christ’s Sinlessness

This is the 14<sup>th</sup> and final message in this series on Basic Christianity.

I want to remind you of some of the facts and statistics we looked at when we began.

A special report found: The most widely known Bible verse among adult and teen believers [in the US] is “God helps those who help themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

The same report said: When given thirteen basic teachings from the Bible, only 1% of adult believers firmly embraced all thirteen as being biblical perspectives.

George Barna Research Group published these findings from a survey they did: The research indicated that everyone has a worldview [perspective on life], but relatively few people have a biblical worldview – even among devoutly religious people. The survey discovered that only 9% of born again Christians have such a perspective on life.

Only 9% of born again Christians had a biblical perspective on life!

So far in this series on Basic Christianity, we have talked about the Bible as the infallible Word of God, repentance, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, eternal judgment, the church, water baptism, the Trinity, Christ’s second coming, the resurrection of the dead, the resurrection of Christ and salvation by faith.

These are the basics of Christianity, and many of these doctrines are totally unique to the Christian faith.

Today we’ll look at two more unique Christian beliefs – the virgin birth and Christ’s sinlessness.

#### **The Virgin Birth**

To many people, beliefs like the virgin birth belong in the realm of fantasy.

That’s because people don’t believe in the supernatural.

But why should Christians believe in the virgin birth?

What are the implications?

#### **1. The virgin birth is clearly taught in Scripture.**

The following verses demonstrate this clearly:

Is 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.

Mat 1:18-20 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. (19) Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. (20) But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

Luke 1:30-31 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. (31) And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.”

Luke 1:34-35 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” (35) And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”

## **2. The virgin birth highlights God's involvement.**

I'm sure that with all of today's technology, it's only a matter of time before a virgin gives birth, if it hasn't happened already.

But that's not how it was 2,000 years ago – it was a miraculous event.

And the very fact that God produced this miracle reminds us that this was no ordinary birth.

God was totally involved.

## **3. The virgin birth emphasises that salvation is God's initiative not man's.**

It's too easy to think in terms of: I sought God, I found Him, I called out to Him, I believed in Him, I gave my life to Him.

And we forget that salvation is God's idea – not ours.

The Cross was God's idea.

And before we even thought about Him, God's prevenient grace was at work in our lives.

Prevenient grace means that before we even thought about Him, God was at work in our lives to turn our hearts towards Him.

Maybe that's just a little easier for me to believe. Because I wasn't searching for God, I wasn't even interested in the Christian point of view. I set out to destroy the faith of others.

But God, in His grace and mercy, pursued me.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

He took the initiative.

Even though we are the offenders, we aren't the ones who took the initiative in making things right between us and God.

1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.

We are just responders.

## **4. The virgin birth highlights the difference between us as sons of God (we are adopted) and Jesus who is by nature the Son of God.**

We are adopted as sons (a generic term – it covers females too).

Adoption means that our status has changed from that of slaves, to that of sons.

Gal 4:3-6 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. (4) But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, (5) to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (6) And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

But in contrast to our change in nature – from slaves to sons – Jesus is the eternal Son of God – He was the Son by nature.

John 16:28 I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.

## **5. The virgin birth confirms Christ's sinlessness.**

Jesus didn't have the normal human lineage.

That means that He wasn't the inheritor of a sinful nature.

(Only 35% of mainline Protestant church members believe Christ was sinless.<sup>2</sup>)

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

The Holy Spirit was involved in the conception of Christ, and so, from that very moment, Jesus was kept free from the pollution of sin.

John 8:46 “Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?”

John 14:30 “I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.”

2 Cor 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Jesus was judged as if He were sinful, and yet there was no sin in Him.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Heb 9:14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1 Pet 2:22 “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.”

1 John 3:5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

In contrast, we were by nature sinners and deserving of death.

Eph 2:3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and so was sinless.

It is only through His sinlessness that He was able to pay the full penalty for our sins.

This is the reason why the Virgin Birth and the sinlessness of Christ are under attack.

They lie at the very heart of the atonement.

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<sup>1</sup> Vlach, Michael J. Special Report *Crisis in America's Churches: Bible Knowledge at All-Time Low*

<sup>2</sup> Special Report: Crisis in America's Churches By Michael J. Vlach (quoting Barna)