

Lesson #2
Teaching Outline
Birth and Early Life

The Birth that Changed the World

Luke 2; Matthew 1

- I. Proof of Incarnation through Timing**
- II. Proof of Incarnation through Pedigree**
- III. Proof of Incarnation through Grace**
- IV. Proof of incarnation through Birth**
- V. Proof of Incarnation through Blood**

Story 2

Jesus Birth and Early Life

The Birth that Changed the World

Luke 2; Matthew 1

***GOD LOVES THE WORLD AND SENT HIS SON, JESUS,
TO BE OUR SAVIOR.***

Story Outline:

- I. The proclamation in the heavens
- II. The pronouncement of the angel
- III. The parents of baby Jesus chosen
- IV. The prophesied birth

Life Application Principles:

1. Man is without excuse as even the heavens declare God's glory.
2. God proves the truth of His word through fulfilled prophecy.
3. We can have hope that God is always on time and faithful to His promises.
4. God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary tasks.
5. God is seeking humble servants to reveal truth to a lost world.
6. God will empower us to accomplish what He has called us to do.
7. To be greatly used by God, we must be willing to obey the plan of God no matter the personal cost.
8. Joy comes to the world only by receiving the precious gift of Jesus Christ.
9. Christ is the exact image of God in human form -- fully God and fully man.
10. Jesus' birth provided hope for humanity and the promise of eternal life.

NAME OF JESUS

Devotional Reading

“IMMANUEL”

The name **IMMANUEL**, found only three times in the scriptures, is often noted as being one of the most comforting names of Jesus known to man. Literally translated “*GOD WITH US*,” it is the very essence of His nature and personhood, emphasizing Christ’s nearness to His people. As prophesied throughout the Old Testament and confirmed throughout the New Testament, in the fullness of time, God did what He promised. He sent His Son to save His people from sin and to redeem and restore all that was lost in the fall. Christ’s birth, the long-awaited **IMMANUEL** spoken of by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8), brought the Infinite Holy God within reach of finite sinful man. In the very moment when God became flesh, the great hope that sin and death wouldn’t always win and mankind wouldn’t always be alone and separated from God Most High was born. When our sins made it impossible to be in fellowship with Him, God, acting in His character of mercy and grace, provided the way back by coming to us... “*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). Because He was FOR us, He became “*GOD WITH US*.” In extreme love, “*the infinite God, who was and is, and is to come, the Almighty, the Omniscient and Omnipresent Lord of all creation, actually condescended to veil himself in the garments of our inferior clay. At that very moment, the Infinite was linked with the Infant, and the Immortal God was blended with mortality. God over all, blessed forever, became one with a newborn babe which slept in a manger where oxen fed.*” (Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Sermon: The Great Mystery of Godliness)

Thus, deeply rooted in the name, **IMMANUEL** is the mystery of God. Infinitely rich, He became poor. Leaving the splendor and majesty of His heavenly home, the Son of God came down to a sinful world. No longer was He just God above us who was infinitely FOR us, He became God near us, infinitely WITH US. God Most High assumed our nature making Himself vulnerable to sin’s disruptive power in order to cancel its claim. Although He remained sinless, He willingly took on our guilt, bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, was pierced because of our rebellion and crushed because of our iniquities (Isaiah 53:4-5). **IMMANUEL**, whose earthly life began in the manger endured the cross, and now remains today forever alive and WITH His people through the power of the resurrection. Christ’s final words spoken to His disciples before returning to the Father, “*Lo, I am with you until the very end of the age,*” is His very great promise to us today that God is WITH us, His children, now and forevermore (Matthew 28:20).

Jesus our **IMMANUEL**, is **GOD WITH US**, at every stage of our spiritual life for He has promised in His Word *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”* (Hebrew 13:5). Graciously, not only is He with us, but by the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus, **IMMANUEL** is now present and living in all who believe in His name. In John 16:7 Jesus said *“if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him...and we will be IN them”* (John 17:23). Thus, by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus **IMMANUEL**, is **GOD WITHIN US**, forever inseparable. Therefore, no matter what comes, we need not fear, for **IMMANUEL** is personally present to help us. He is our *“very present help in trouble”* (Psalm 46:1).

Prior to the full revelation of **IMMANUEL** in Matthew 1:23 we see throughout the Old Testament the undeniable truth that the heart of God is and always has been to be **WITH** His people. The promise **I WILL BE WITH YOU** is repeatedly spoken by God to encourage and enable His children to confidently and boldly move forward in times of uncertainty, trial and fear. In Genesis, He promised to be **WITH** Isaac and Jacob as they sought the Promised Land, and likewise, **WITH** Joseph throughout his many difficult trials. He promised to be **WITH** Joshua as he fought God’s enemies and **WITH** David as he served under Saul and then as Israel’s King. We need only look to the Psalms to understand the nearness of God to His people:

“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence? If I go up to the heavens, You are there; if I make my bed in the depths, You are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there Your hand will guide me, Your right hand will hold me fast.” (Psalm 139:7-10)

“The Lord is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)

“I will fear no evil, for You are with me.” (Psalm 23:4)

Perhaps one of the most encouraging promises in the Bible of the Lord’s presence **WITH US** is found in Isaiah 43 when He declares:

“When you pass through the waters, I WILL BE WITH YOU; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned.” (Isaiah 43:2)

The blessed hope of this passage is that because you belong to Him, **IMMANUEL** will preserve you in the midst of the trials of life by His presence and power. The truth wrapped up in **IMMANUEL** is that He is more than a deliverer from trials and troubles, He is **WITH US** in the midst of them and carries us to safety. Theologian JC Ryle writes, *“IMMANUEL promises to be with us daily to pardon and forgive; to sanctify and strengthen; to defend and to keep; to lead and to guide; with us in sorrow and with us in joy; with us in sickness and with us in health; with us in life and with us in death; with us in time and with us in eternity.”* This promise: *“I am with you always and will see you through”* is the very promise that has encouraged and enabled messengers of Christ, be it the prophets of old or missionaries of today to carry the Good News to those who are perishing. It is the very promise that encouraged Mary and Joseph to fully

submit to God's plan for their lives in spite of the shame, humiliation and suffering they would surely face. And it is the very promise that we can claim and build our lives upon today as we seek and serve the Lord. **IMMANUEL**, the person and power of Jesus is not only FOR us, but He is IN us and WITH US.

Believers today need a fresh understanding of Christ's name, **IMMANUEL**. More than deliverance from troubles, trials, persecution and fear, we need the sure knowledge of the power that is always available to us. We need a greater understanding of **IMMANUEL**, GOD WITH US, our ever-present Helper Who is the antidote to all our fears. May we be encouraged that at this very hour He remains WITH US and IN US so we can accomplish all that He has ordained for us. Without Him we can do nothing, but WITH Him we can do all things "*for WITH God, nothing will be impossible*" (Luke 1:37). Walk in the light of this truth today and always: **IMMANUEL**, the beloved Son of God, IS WITH US, therefore we can boldly and confidently declare "*nothing and no one can stand against us.*"

**"Lo, I am with you always,
to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:20**

THE DOCTRINE

The VIRGIN BIRTH

I. Introduction

The **VIRGIN BIRTH** is one of the fundamentals of the faith. It is usually the first doctrine to be denied by post-modern thinkers – it runs a close race with liberal theologians alongside the doctrine of inerrancy of the scriptures.. In our day, artificial insemination creates the possibility of a woman experiencing birth without “*knowing a man*” in a sexual way, however this is not true of **VIRGIN BIRTH** in the biblical sense. Simply put, in the Bible Christ’s birth involved a virgin giving birth to a child without the seed (sperm) of a man. The **VIRGIN BIRTH** therefore, is the supernatural method that was used to bring about the birth of Jesus Christ.

The **VIRGIN BIRTH** of Christ is not an independent doctrine that we can receive or reject without affecting our overall Christianity. It is one of the basic foundation stones of our faith – in fact – our faith crumbles if this doctrine is removed. This doctrine is indeed tied to a “domino stack” of additional basic doctrines including inerrancy, the deity of Christ, Christ’s sinless character, the atonement, and other key doctrines of the Bible. If Jesus was not born of a virgin, he would be unable to save us because he would not be a sinless Savior. Essentially, if we cannot accept the **VIRGIN BIRTH** of Christ, very little credibility remains in the biblical record. Therefore, we must understand several aspects of the **VIRGIN BIRTH** if we are going to understand our faith.

II. The VIRGIN BIRTH in Prophecy

Biblical authors who believed and wrote of the **VIRGIN BIRTH** of Christ:

1. Moses

When Moses quoted the words of God in Genesis 3:15, he became the first biblical writer to mention the coming of Christ, and he refers to Christ as “*the seed of the woman,*” a proclamation to a **VIRGIN BIRTH**.

The introduction of a theological subject in Scripture is often referred to as the Law of First Reference. The doctrine in Genesis 3:15 therefore, is in “*seed*” or embryonic form. When God introduced the prospect of salvation to Adam and Eve and the entire human race, the implication of the **VIRGIN BIRTH** was alluded to in the reference to “*her seed.*” If the coming Messiah was to have a normal physical birth, the “*seed*” would have come from a man. This reference in the beginning of Scripture to a woman’s “*seed*” implies that the coming Redeemer would not have a human father. God would be the father of his only begotten Son, and a virgin would give birth to “*her seed.*”

2. Isaiah

Probably the best known Old Testament verse referring to the **VIRGIN BIRTH** is found in 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.”* Under Mosaic Law, a young woman could be stoned if she was found pregnant out of wedlock. Birth control methods and abortions were not available to cover up a woman’s promiscuity in Bible times. So it is clear – Isaiah here is referring to a woman who had not known a man.

When Matthew wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he cited this particular verse to demonstrate that Christ’s birth was indeed fulfilling Bible prophecy. In doing so, he followed the Greek translation and used the Greek word *“Parthenos,”* which could only be translated *“virgin.”* Matthew noted, *“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet, saying, ‘Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us’”* (Matthew 1:22, 23).

II. The VIRGIN BIRTH in History

3 New Testament authors wrote historically of the VIRGIN BIRTH.

1. Matthew

Just as the **VIRGIN BIRTH** was implied in Genesis 3:15 at the beginning of the Old Testament, likewise it is fully revealed at the beginning of the New Testament. As the old saying goes: *“The New (Testament) is in the Old concealed while the Old (Testament) is in the New revealed.”* Matthew clearly believed Mary was a virgin until the birth of Christ as he cited Isaiah 7:14 as his proof text. On 2 occasions in the first chapter, Matthew identifies the Holy Spirit as the source of Mary’s son (Matthew 1:18, 20). In listing the genealogical data concerning Christ, Joseph is listed as the husband of Mary but NOT the father of Jesus. Even though this is an argument from silence, its omission is not accidental. Matthew records that Joseph married Mary knowing her condition. *“And Joseph knew her not until she had brought forth her firstborn son and called his name Jesus”* (Matthew 1:25). Even in announcing the birth of Jesus, it was the birth of *“her firstborn son”* (v. 25) – not *“his son”* or even *“their son.”*

In Matthew’s account of the birth, there are at least 7 direct or indirect statements suggesting Jesus was born of a virgin. Since Matthew was one of the original 12 apostles, it is reasonable to conclude that the doctrine of the **VIRGIN BIRTH** of Christ

was one of the original tenants of the apostles' "*doctrine*" taught to the members of the Jerusalem church (Acts 2:42).

2. Luke

Matthew was written by a Jew primarily to a Jewish audience. The only other gospel writer to emphasize the **VIRGIN BIRTH** of Christ was Luke, a Gentile physician writing primarily to a Gentile audience. It is particularly significant that Luke, a medical doctor, should be among the men that the Holy Spirit chose to comment on the doctrine of the **VIRGIN BIRTH**. Luke twice calls Mary a virgin. He tells of an angel sent by God "*to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary*" (Luke 1:27). When she learned she was to become a mother, "*Then said Mary unto the angel, 'How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?'*" (Luke 1:34). Later, Luke listed the family tree of Mary, not Joseph. Here he identified Jesus as "*. . . being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph*" (Luke 3:23).

Luke also teaches the **VIRGIN BIRTH** by his careful phrases. He calls Jesus "*the Son of the Highest*" (Luke 1:32), and "*the Son of God*" (Luke 1:35), but never clearly identifies him as the son of Joseph.

The Importance of Credibility and Eyewitnesses

Luke was both a medical doctor and a historian acutely concerned with accuracy as we can see in his opening greetings to Theophilus,

"In as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely from some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have CERTAINTY concerning the things you have been taught." (Luke 1:1-4)

The **VIRGIN BIRTH** therefore, was not simply a rumor but rather an historical event investigated by a historian who was also a physician, after which the account was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

3. Paul

The third New Testament writer to support the doctrine of the **VIRGIN BIRTH** was Paul. Writing to the churches in the province of Galatia, he said, *“But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law”* (Galatians 4:4). The readers in Galatia were concerned with Old Testament law, so they would have been most careful to list their genealogies from father to son. But Paul recognized the uniqueness of Jesus’ particular birth. Jesus was *“made of a woman”* meaning more than a simple acknowledgment that Jesus had a mother. It suggests that Jesus had only a mother, a reasonable assumption when we realize that both Paul and Luke were closely related in ministry and both accepted without question the **VIRGIN BIRTH**.

III. The **VIRGIN BIRTH** in Theology

At stake in the controversy surrounding the doctrine of the **VIRGIN BIRTH** are a number of other doctrines that unravel when we place into doubt the **VIRGIN BIRTH** of Christ. If Jesus had a human father, he would have inherited a sin nature. In that case he would be unable to save us from sin nor be the sinless substitute for the sins of the world. With human parents, it would be impossible for Christ to be the Son of God.

There are 4 statements of Christ’s sinless nature in Scripture;

1. 2 Corinthians 5:2: Christ knew no sin
2. Hebrews 4:15: Christ was without sin
3. 1 Peter 2:22: Christ did not sin
4. 1 John 3:5: In Christ is no sin

The following Doctrines lose their credibility apart from the **VIRGIN BIRTH** of Christ:

- **1. Christ’s Sinless Character**

If Jesus had a human father, he would have inherited the sin nature of Adam, the head of the human race. *“Wherefore, as by one man (Adam), sin entered into the world, and death by sin; thus, death passed upon all men, for all have sinned”* (Romans 5:12). It would only have taken one sin to make Jesus a sinner. Jesus was a man without a sin nature because he had a father (the Holy Spirit) without a sin nature. Jesus is the only begotten Son of his heavenly Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, nevertheless, scripture is clear that he became flesh and walked among us.

Jesus argued his divine origin with the Jewish leaders. He told them he came from the heavenly Father (John 8:38). The Jews answered Jesus that their father was Abraham (v.39), to which he replied that they should be doing Abraham's works. Then in retaliation, the Jews made the insinuation – "*We are not born of fornication*" (John 8:41), implying that Jesus was born out of wedlock. From this, we gather that news of Mary's pregnancy was known publically before the wedding to Joseph. This itself gives added historical credibility to the **VIRGIN BIRTH**.

- **2. Redemption and Salvation**

When Paul referred to the **VIRGIN BIRTH** of Christ, he also identified the reason for Christ's coming, "*to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*" (Galatians 4:5). God required a "*lamb without blemish*" as a sacrifice for sin (Exodus 12:5). Jesus was unblemished in that he had no sin nature, and he *was* "*without spot*" in that he lived a sinless life. Because of this, Paul could say, "*For he (God) has made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin*" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

- **3. Son of God**

A man can only be the son of his father. This universal principle also applies to the Son of God. Jesus is called "the Son of the Highest" (Luke 1:32) and "the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). This could only have been true if Mary was a virgin when she conceived and gave birth to her son. Again our salvation is dependent upon this truth. "*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*" (John 3:16).

- **4. Inerrancy**

A key battle among theologians today is over the question of inerrancy. If the doctrine of the **VIRGIN BIRTH** is false, then we have no confidence in the accuracy of anything else in Scripture. The following chart illustrates the books we would question in our Bible if we denied the **VIRGIN BIRTH**:

The VIRGIN BIRTH and Inerrancy

<u>VIRGIN BIRTH Taught</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Writings</u>
• Genesis 3:15	Moses	Gen., Ex., Lev., Num., Deut.
• Isaiah 7:14	Isaiah	Isaiah
• Matthew 1	Matthew	Matthew
• Luke 1: 3	Luke	Luke, Acts
• Paul		Romans, 1 Cor., 2 Cor., Gal., Eph., Phil., Col., 1 Thess., 2 Thess., 1 Tim., 2 Tim., Titus, Philemon, Hebrews

Note: 23 of the 66 books of the Bible are unreliable IF the **VIRGIN BIRTH** is unreliable.

- **5. Supernatural Power of God**

When Mary was confronted with the announcement that she would give birth to the Son of God, she asked *“How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”* (Luke 1:34). She learned the answer to her question when the angel observed, *“For with God nothing shall be impossible.”* If the truth were known, the real reason liberal theologians deny the **VIRGIN BIRTH** of Christ is their unwillingness to recognize a supernatural God.

Conclusion

When Mary was presented with the opportunity to become the mother of Jesus and to serve God in this particular way, she responded, *“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word”* (Luke 1:38). She responded by yielding her life to God completely despite the obvious problems it created. Her closest friends and relatives would naturally assume she had been morally impure. Under the law, her fiancé could have had her put away for her assumed unfaithfulness. Her dreams of marriage and *“living happily ever after”* could have been shattered, yet she yielded her entire life to God. What an incredible model of godly submission to the greater purposes of our heavenly Father.

The lesson of the **VIRGIN BIRTH** stands as a challenge to us today. Later in life from what we read in the gospel accounts, Mary had not changed her attitude. When faced with the problem of no wine at the wedding in Cana, she turned to the servants and said, *“Whatsoever he (Jesus) says unto you, do it”* (John 2:5). Mary’s continual attitude of submission brought untold blessing to the human race in the birth of Jesus Christ. If she could give us advice today, it would surely be the same exhortation as the apostle Paul, *“Present your bodies as living sacrifices... holy and acceptable unto God – it is your reasonable service”* (Romans 12:1).

Questions for Reflection

Read Matthew 1:1-17

1. What do you find most interesting about the genealogy of Jesus Christ? Why?

Read Matthew 1:18-25

1. Give the 2 names given to Mary's Son and the meaning of each.
2. What significance does each of these names have for you in your life?
3. What was Joseph's initial response to the news that Mary was with child? How did he plan to handle the situation?
4. When have you, like Joseph, submitted to God's plan in spite of potential persecution and suffering? What blessings flowed from your obedience?

Read Luke 1:26-38

5. What message did the angel Gabriel have for Mary? What was her initial response?
6. What question did Mary ask and what statement did she make to show that she believed God's promise to her? How did her actions that followed prove her faith? What lesson do you learn from this?
7. What has been your response when God has asked you to do something extraordinary for Him? How did He comfort and reassure you in spite of your doubts and fears?

Jesus' birth fulfilled prophecy

8. Give some of the Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled when Jesus was born. (Cite verses)

9. How do these fulfilled prophecies build your faith in WHO Jesus is and WHY He came?

10. Matthew begins and ends his gospel with the promises that God is with us. How would your life be different if you began and ended each day with the firm belief that God is with you?

11. In your daily experience, do you know Jesus as **IMMANUEL, GOD WITH YOU?** How have you specifically experienced God with you today?

A SALVATION CHALLENGE:

*Have you come to the place in your life where you realize that Almighty God has “done great things for you” by sending His Son Jesus, to save you? Do you now see that He is **IMMANUEL, GOD WITH YOU** and you **WITH Him** all the days of your life? If so, will you bow before Him in humble praise and enjoy His presence and saving power forever?*