

Unprecedented Parents - Matthew 1:18-20 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

The virgin conception and birth of Jesus, now that is one crazy story. It is such a crazy miracle that many find it hard to believe. Author Rob Bell wrote a "Christian" book titled *Velvet Elvis* (not recommended) which inquired what would happen to the Christian faith if the virgin birth were not true. His conclusion is that it would not be a big deal, that the ethics and moral teaching of Jesus were enough for us to have our religion. Well, he is wrong. Drop the virgin birth from the Christmas story and you lose everything. Scripture is lying, so we can no longer believe in the truthful authority of the Scriptures as God's Word. Jesus is an ordinary person who had a normal birth, just in humble circumstances. So you can wave goodbye to the nonsense that Jesus is the Son of God, God in the flesh. And if He is not God, His death cannot save us. No, the truth of the virgin birth in the Christmas story is key to our understanding of the whole Gospel story and points us to the true identity of this young Jewish boy who was wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger.

Theologian and author J. I Packer says this better than I can in his amazing book (this one I do recommend, highly) *Knowing God*.

The supreme mystery with which the Gospel confronts us lies not in the Good Friday message of atonement, nor the Easter message of resurrection, but in the Christmas message of Incarnation. The really staggering Christian claim is that Jesus of Nazareth was God made man— that the second person of the Godhead became the 'second man' (1 Cor. 15:47), determining human destiny, the second representative head of the race, and that He took humanity without loss of deity, so that Jesus of Nazareth was as truly and fully divine as He was human...

It is here, in the thing that happened at the first Christmas, that the profoundest and most unfathomable depths of the Christian revelation lie. 'The Word became flesh' (John 1:14); God became man; the divine Son became a Jew; the Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child.

And there was no illusion or deception in this: the babyhood of the Son of God was a reality. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as is this truth of the Incarnation."

His birth by means of a virgin maiden reveals that the person's birth we celebrate is truly and fully human and truly and fully God. 100% man, 100% God, and yes I know that makes bad math, but it makes good theology. The profound truth revealed in the Christmas story is that of the incarnation, the beautiful truth that in one person existed two distinct natures, that of humanity and that of divinity. Before time began Jesus existed as God, the second person of the Trinity, "Light of light, God of God," (Nicene Creed). He is the One True and Living God worthy of our worship, infinite in His glory and goodness, the full revelation of God. Yet, this God became human, stepped into flesh and became one of us. He was born, and yes, baby Jesus cried like all babies. He pooped in his diaper, and one day took his first steps. He went through adolescence with voice change, zits, and his first beard hairs. He grew up to be a man and experienced all that humanity experiences. He ate and drank, and enjoyed parties, He experienced the full breadth of human emotions. The only way He is not like us is that He did not sin. Yet, He died, suffering greatly as he was illegally executed. Jesus is fully God, eternally. And He is fully man, completely.

This truth is essential, to stop believing or embrace something else is to abandon what it means to be Christian. Our entire hope for redemption is wrapped up in this. As

man, Jesus can stand as our representative with His perfect life and substitutionary death. And as God His work and death are sufficient to cover infinite sin and guilt before an infinite God. This truth is a mystery, way beyond our comprehension. The more you think on it the deeper the identity of Jesus becomes and the more it will blow your mind. Yet, if we try to rationalize it so it becomes understandable we enter the danger of falling into the two ditches that have happened throughout history. We can emphasize the deity of Jesus and turn Him into Superman, the being who looks human at times like Clark Kent, but is really always from another planet. Or we can emphasize His humanity and turn Him into Batman, a glorified and smart man who has the best gadgets that make Him look divine. Nope, Jesus is something other, He is the God-Man, fully human, fully divine, sufficient for our redemption, and worthy of our worship.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
John 10	John 11	John 12	John 13	John 14	John 15	John 16

Reading from this past week: Matthew 1:18-20

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Matthew 1:21-25

Family Worship

Song - *Joy to the World/Our God Saves*

https://youtu.be/iBt0QyoIM_8

Gospel Project

Story: Peter Healed a Man

Story Point: The Holy Spirit gave Peter the power to heal a man.

Big Picture Question: How does the Holy Spirit help Christians?

Answer: The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

Scripture: Acts 3-4

New City Catechism

Question #51: Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension?

Answer: Christ is now advocating for us in the presence of his Father and also sends us his Spirit.

Verse: Romans 8:34

Scripture

Matthew 1:18-20

- What is unique about Jesus' parents?
- Why is belief in the virgin birth important and what does it show us about Jesus' identity?
- What is the incarnation? Why is it important for us to believe that Jesus is fully man and fully God?

Prayer

*During the second week of Advent, pray that we would experience the deep joy that only Christ can bring, and that we would use Christmas to announce this joy to the world.

*Pray that we would find wonder in the mystery of the incarnation, that God became a man.