

THE VIRGIN BIRTH
PRESENTED BY
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GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
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WE COME NOW TO STUDY ONE OF THE BASIC DOCTRINES CONCERNING THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST. APPARENTLY IN THE THINKING OF SOME THE DOCTRINE THAT WE SHALL DISCUSS IS NOT TOO IMPORTANT A DOCTRINE BECAUSE IT IS A DOCTRINE WHICH, ACCORDING TO POLLS, IF POLLS HAVE MUCH ACCURACY, IS DISBELIEVED BY 43 PERCENT OF ALL PROTESTANT PEOPLE. I BELIEVE THAT BEFORE THIS LESSON IS OVER WE SHALL SEE THAT THIS IS AN IMPORTANT DOCTRINE AND THAT WITH THIS DOCTRINE CHRISTIANITY STANDS OR FALLS. WE REFER TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST. OUR TEXT IS TAKEN FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE 1:26, "AND IN THE SIXTH MONTH THE ANGEL GABRIEL WAS SENT FROM GOD, UNTO A CITY OF GALILEE, NAMED NAZARETH. TO A VIRGIN ESPOUSED TO A MAN WHOSE NAME WAS JOSEPH, OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID; AND THE VIRGIN'S NAME WAS MARY. AND THE ANGEL CAME IN UNTO HER, AND SAID, HAIL, THOU THAT ART HIGHLY FAVOURED, THE LORD IS WITH THEE: BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN. AND WHEN SHE SAW HIM, SHE WAS TROUBLED AT HIS SAYING, AND CAST IN HER MIND WHAT MANNER OF SALUTATION THIS SHOULD BE. AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO HER, FEAR NOT, MARY; FOR THOU HAST FOUND FAVOUR WITH GOD. AND, BEHOLD, THOU SHALT CONCEIVE IN THY WOMB, AND BRING FORTH A SON, AND SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS. HE SHALL BE GREAT, AND SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST; AND THE LORD GOD SHALL GIVE UNTO HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID; AND HE SHALL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOR EVER; AND OF HIS KINGDOM THERE SHALL BE NO END. THEN SAID MARY UNTO THE ANGEL, HOW SHALL THIS BE, SEEING I KNOW NOT A MAN? 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."

WHEN MANY INDIVIDUALS DISCUSS THE DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST, THEY FEEL THAT THIS CONCEPT IS LIMITED TO THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THAT THERE ARE NO REFERENCES AT ALL TO THE VIRGIN BIRTH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THIS, HOWEVER, IS NOT THE CASE. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REFERENCES TO THE VIRGIN BIRTH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PROPHECIES THAT IT SHOULD OCCUR. FROM THESE PROPHECIES I WOULD TAKE THREE, READ THEM TO YOU, AND IMPRESS THEM UPON YOUR MINDS. THE FIRST PROPHECY THAT SPOKE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH IS FOUND IN GENESIS 3. YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT IN THIS SETTING MAN AND WOMAN HAD SINNED. THEY HAD FALLEN AWAY FROM GOD. THEY HAD BEEN CAST FORTH FROM THE GARDEN, AND GOD HAD COME TO THEM AND PRONOUNCED A CURSE UPON THEM AND PRONOUNCED A CURSE UPON THE SERPENT. IN GENESIS 3:15 GOD SAID, "AND I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN THEE AND THE WOMAN, AND BETWEEN THY SEED AND HER SEED; IT SHALL BRUISE THY HEAD, AND THOU SHALT BRUISE HIS HEEL." IN THIS VERSE WE HAVE WHAT IS REFERRED TO AS THE PRIMAL MESSIANIC PROPHECY, OR WE HAVE THE FIRST PROMISE THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD COME INTO THE WORLD. WHAT WE WANT TO POINT OUT PARTICULARLY IN THIS VERSE IS THE PECULIAR EXPRESSION, "HER SEED." "I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN THEE AND THE WOMAN, AND BETWEEN THY SEED AND HER SEED." NOW TECHNICALLY, IN NATURAL REPRODUCTION IN THE HUMAN RACE THE SEED OF REPRODUCTION BELONGS NOT TO THE FEMALE, BUT TO THE MALE, AND IT IS SO RECOGNIZED AND IT IS ALWAYS SO REFERRED TO. YET, HERE IN THIS INSTANCE WE HAVE AN EXCEPTION. IT WAS AN EXCEPTION BECAUSE THE SEED OF THE MALE WAS NOT USED AND BECAUSE, AS LUKE SAYS, THAT WHICH WAS IN HER WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST. THUS, WE HAVE IN THE VERY BEGINNING OF SCRIPTURE A REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST WOULD BE SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE UNIQUE, SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT.

THE SECOND PROPHECY IS ONE THAT IS FOUND IN JEREMIAH, AND IN THIS PROPHECY GOD TELLS JUST EXACTLY HOW UNIQUE THIS EXPERIENCE IS GOING TO BE. JEREMIAH 31:22 READS, "HOW LONG WILT THOU GO ABOUT, O THOU BACKSLIDING DAUGHTER? FOR THE LORD HATH CREATED A NEW THING IN THE EARTH. A WOMAN SHALL COMPASS A MAN." NOW, IF THIS IS SIMPLY REFERRING TO NATURAL MEANS OF PROCREATION, IT WAS NO NEW THING FOR THAT HAD BEEN TRANSPILING SINCE GOD SAID TO ADAM AND EVE, "BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY." BUT IN THE SENSE THAT IT IS USED IN JEREMIAH, IN THE SENSE IN WHICH JEREMIAH PROPHESED, IT IS "A NEW THING." IT WAS SOMETHING THAT THE WORLD HAD NOT SEEN BEFORE. THE WORLD DID NOT EVEN SEE IT IN THE BEGINNING, FOR ADAM AND EVE WERE NOT THE RESULT OF VIRGIN BIRTHS. THEY WERE THE RESULT OF THE FIAT CREATION OF GOD. THUS, WHEN JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD, IT WAS SOMETHING NEW.

I THINK PERHAPS THE MAJOR PROPHECY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS ONE OVER WHICH IN RECENT YEARS THERE HAS BEEN SOME DISPUTE. IT IS FOUND IN ISAIAH 7:14. THE FOURTEENTH VERSE READS ON THIS WISE: "THEREFORE THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL GIVE YOU A SIGN; BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL." NOW BEFORE WE CAN REALLY APPRECIATE THIS PROPHECY AND THIS PROBLEM WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN PLACED. IF YOU WILL GO TO THE SEVENTH CHAPTER OF ISAIAH'S PROPHECY, YOU WILL DISCOVER THAT AGAINST AHAZ, THE KING OF JUDAH, REZIN, THE KING OF SYRIA AND PEKAH, THE KING OF ISRAEL HAD MADE A PACT AND HAD COME TO DO HIM HARM. GOD CAME TO THE PROPHET ISAIAH AND SAID, "ISAIAH, YOU GO AND TELL THE KING OF JUDAH, YOU GO AND TELL AHAZ THAT HE NEED NOT FEAR FOR THIS THAT THEY HAVE CONSPIRED TO DO UNTO HIM SHALL COME TO PASS. IT WON'T BE SUCCESSFUL. AND MOREOVER, ISAIAH, YOU TELL AHAZ THAT HE CAN ASK YOU FOR A SIGN. IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE WHAT THAT SIGN IS. HE MAY ASK IT IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE, HE MAY ASK IT IN THE EARTH BENEATH, BUT I WILL GRANT IT." ISAIAH THEN WENT TO AHAZ, HE GAVE HIM THE MESSAGE, AND HE SAID, "YOU MAY ASK A SIGN." AND AHAZ SAID, "I WILL NOT ASK A SIGN. I WILL NOT TEMPT THE LORD." AND THEN ISAIAH TURNED AWAY FROM AHAZ AND THE THIRTEENTH VERSE SAYS HE WAS SPEAKING NOT TO AHAZ, BUT HE WAS SPEAKING UNTO THE HOUSE OF DAVID, AND TO THE ENTIRE HOUSE OF DAVID, TO ALL OF JUDAH, HE SAID, "THE LORD WILL GIVE YOU A SIGN ANYWAY. AND HERE IS WHAT IT SHALL BE: A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL." NOW THOSE WHO OBJECT TO THIS BEING A PROPHECY OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH POINT OUT, AND CORRECTLY SO, THAT THE HEBREW WORD WHICH IS TRANSLATED VIRGIN IS THE WORD "ALMA," AND THAT PROPERLY TRANSLATED, IT MEANS SIMPLY "A YOUNG WOMAN." I VERILY RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS THE CASE, BUT YET WHEN THE WORD IS USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IT REFERS TO A PARTICULAR KIND OF YOUNG WOMAN AND ALWAYS THE IDEA OF PURITY OR OF VIRGINITY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE WORD "ALMA." I THINK THAT MATTHEW MIGHT BE A CORRECT INTERPRETER OF WHAT WAS MEANT BY ISAIAH AND WHAT THE JEWS WERE TO UNDERSTAND FROM IT FOR MATTHEW WROTE BY THE INSPIRATION OF GOD AND SURELY WHEN GOD TOLD MATTHEW WHAT HE MEANT IN ISAIAH 7:14, HE DID NOT MAKE A MISTAKE. WHEN MATTHEW CAME TO WRITE ABOUT THE VIRGIN BIRTH IN MATTHEW 1:23, HE QUOTED THIS PROPHECY FROM ISAIAH AND SAID, "BEHOLD, A VIRGIN (AND HE USED THE GREEK WORD FOR VIRGIN--PARTHENOS) SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BRING FORTH A SON." THE WORD "ALMA" IN THE HEBREW MIGHT BE COMPARED UNTO OUR WORD IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, "MAIDEN" WHICH, WHILE IT REFERS TO A YOUNG LADY, PROPERLY BY ITS VERY CONNOTATION REFERS TO ONE WHO IS PURE AND ALWAYS THAT IS THE MEANING OF THE HEBREW WORD "ALMA." AS FAR BACK AS THE TIME OF MARTIN LUTHER MEN WERE MAKING THIS ARGUMENT AGAINST THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND AGAINST ISAIAH 7:14 BEING A PROPHECY THEREOF AND MARTIN LUTHER OFFERED 100 GOLD FLORINS TO ANYBODY WHO COULD PROVE THAT "ALMA" MEANT ANYTHING BUT A VIRGIN. MARTIN LUTHER NEVER HAD TO PAY THE AMOUNT, AND THERE IS NOBODY WHO HAS TRIED TO COLLECT ANYTHING ON IT SINCE. YET IN SPITE

OF THE FACT THAT WHEN YOU MAKE A CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF THE WORD, PARTICULARLY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, IT STEADFASTLY MEANS VIRGIN, THOSE WHO DISBELIEVE THE VIRGIN BIRTH CONTINUE TO MAKE THEIR ARGUMENTS AND JUST TO DISCOUNT EVERYTHING ELSE. YET THEY WOULD ACCUSE THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF BEING PREJUDICED AND BEING UNSCHOLARLY. ISAIAH 7:14 PROPHECIES OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

REALLY THERE ARE ONLY THREE ALTERNATIVES FOR WHAT WE READ IN MATTHEW 1 AND LUKE 1. ONE OF THESE ALTERNATIVES IS THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS THE SON OF JOSEPH AND MARY AND THAT THE WEDDING OF JOSEPH AND MARY WAS FORCED BECAUSE MARY DISCOVERED THAT SHE HAD BECOME PREGNANT BY JOSEPH. THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE IS THAT MARY HAD AN AFFAIR WITH A ROMAN SOLDIER (OR SOME OTHER UNKNOWN) AND THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS THE PRODUCT OF ILLEGITIMATE LUST. YOU MIGHT THINK THAT NO ONE WOULD MAKE THAT ARGUMENT, BUT YOU JUST BEGIN TO READ A LITTLE BIT AND YOU WILL DISCOVER THAT IT IS ^{NOT} TOO UNCOMMON. THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE IS THAT IT IS JUST EXACTLY AS MATTHEW AND LUKE SAID IT WAS AND THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS CONCEIVED IN THE WOMB OF MARY BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. REALLY, WHEN YOU CONSIDER IT SERIOUSLY, THERE ARE ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES AND THAT IS THAT JESUS WAS EITHER BORN OF A VIRGIN OR A PRODUCT OF AN IMMORAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARY AND A ROMAN SOLDIER, BECAUSE WHEN MATTHEW WROTE ABOUT IT HE SAID THAT WHEN JOSEPH LEARNED THAT MARY WAS EXPECTING, HE WAS MINDFUL TO PUT HER AWAY. JOSEPH SAID, "THE CHILD IS NOT MINE," AND SURELY JOSEPH WOULD KNOW. SO THE ONLY TWO LOGICAL ALTERNATIVES, UNLESS ALONG WITH REJECTING THE MIRACULOUS YOU ALSO REJECT MATTHEW AS AN ACCURATE HISTORIAN, IS THAT CHRIST WAS EITHER VIRGIN-BORN OR ILLGITIMATE.

NOW WHICH OF THESE ALTERNATIVES SHALL WE CHOSE. IT HAS LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED THAT THE MOST DESIREABLE ALTERNATIVE WHEN YOU ARE FACED WITH THEM IS THE ONE THAT CAN ACCOUNT FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER OF FACTS THAT ARE KNOWN. THE SIMPLEST HYPOTHESIS THAT ACCOUNTS FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER OF FACTS IS ALWAYS THE ONE THAT IS TO BE ACCEPTED, AND I SUGGEST TO YOU THAT WHEN WE CONSIDER THE FACTS IN THE CASE THAT NEITHER OF THE ALTERNATIVES CONCERNING JOSEPH OR THE ROMAN SOLDIER IS ACCEPTABLE. THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR THE OBSERVABLE AND THE KNOWN FACTS IS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS VIRGIN BORN. FOR INSTANCE, WHEN A YOUNG LADY LEARNS THAT SHE IS EXPECTING AND SHE IS NOT MARRIED, UNLESS SHE IS SO PROFLIGATE THAT SHE HAS LOST ALL SHAME HER NATURAL REACTION IS TO SEEK TO HIDE IT. WHAT DID MARY DO? WHEN MARY LEARNED THAT SHE WAS TO BEAR THE SON OF GOD SHE DID NOT SEEK TO HIDE ANYTHING. SHE WENT AND TOLD SOMEBODY IMMEDIATELY. SHE WENT TO HER COUSIN ELIZABETH'S HOUSE AND TOLD THAT THIS WAS THE CASE. WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT THAT? IF YOU UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE ESPOUSAL IN THAT DAY AND TIME, YOU KNOW IT WAS A VERY SERIOUS THING. IN FACT, WHEN A MAN AND A WOMAN WERE ESPOUSED THEY WERE CONSIDERED AS GOOD AS MARRIED THOUGH THEY DID NOT ENJOY THE PRIVILEGES THEREOF WHEN THEY WERE ESPOUSED. WHEN THE WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN COMPLETED, THE HUSBAND WOULD LIVE WITH HIS PARENTS A YEAR, THE WIFE WOULD LIVE WITH HER PARENTS FOR A YEAR, AND THEY WOULD NEVER BE TOGETHER UNLESS THEY WERE ADEQUATELY CHAPERONED. THEN AT THE END OF THAT YEAR, THE WEDDING FEAST WOULD TAKE PLACE AND THEY WOULD BECOME, AS WE LOOK UPON IT, HUSBAND AND WIFE. NOW BOTH LEVITICAL LAW AND RABBINICAL LAW TOOK EVERY PRECAUTION TO INSURE THE PURITY OF THE ESPOUSAL RELATIONSHIP, AND IF DURING THIS PERIOD OF TIME A YOUNG WOMAN WAS DISCOVERED TO BE WITH CHILD, THEN SHE WAS TO BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE OFFICIATING PRIEST AND THE OFFICIATING PRIEST WAS TO CONDUCT A TRIAL AFTER WHICH THE YOUNG LADY WAS TO BE TAKEN OUT AND STONED TO DEATH FOR HAVING COMMITTED ADULTERY. IT WAS CONSIDERED ADULTERY FOR HER TO BECOME PREGNANT BY SOME MAN DURING THIS ESPOUSAL PERIOD. NOW THINK FOR A MOMENT THAT WHEN MARY LEARNED SHE WAS PREGNANT, INSTEAD OF TRYING TO HIDE IT SHE RAN

AND TOLD ELIZABETH WHO IN TURN WAS THE WIFE OF ZACHARIAS WHO IN TURN WAS THE OFFICIATING PRIEST, WHO IN TURN WOULD HAVE CONDUCTED MARY'S TRIAL, AND WHO IN TURN WOULD HAVE CONDEMNED HER TO DEATH. THUS, THE FIRST THING SHE DID WAS TO GO AND TELL THE WIFE OF THE MAN WHO WAS TO DIRECT THE INQUEST. IS THAT AN ACT OF A GUILTY PERSON? IS THAT AN ACT OF A PERSON WHO HAS A GUILTY CONSCIOUS AND REALIZES THAT THE LAW HAS BEEN BROKEN? NO, IT IS AN ACT OF SOMEONE WHO IS PURE IN MIND AS WELL AS IN BODY AND WHO WAS REJOICING AND KNEW THAT THESE PEOPLE OF GOD WOULD REJOICE WITH HER.

GO BACK TO DEUTERONOMY 23 AND READ THERE THE LAW OF GOD CONCERNING ILLEGITIMATE OFFSPRING. DEUTERONOMY 23 SAYS THAT THEY WERE TO BE CUT OFF FROM THE CONGREGATION WHICH MEANS THAT THEY COULD NOT COME INTO THE TEMPLE, THAT THEY COULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE WORSHIP, AND THAT THEY COULD NEVER ENGAGE IN THE SERVICE OF GOD. YET IN THE CASE OF JESUS CHRIST WE FIND HIM DOING ALL OF THESE THINGS WHICH WOULD SAY THAT HE WAS NOT AN ILLEGITIMATE OFFSPRING, AND SURELY HE HAS RENDERED THE GREATEST SERVICE IN THE SERVICE OF GOD, ATONEMENT FOR SIN.

HOW ELSE DO WE ACCOUNT FOR THE ACTION OF SIMEON AND ANNA IN THE TEMPLE WHEN MARY AND JOSEPH BROUGHT THE CHILD JESUS AND PRESENTED HIM THERE. SIMEON BLESSED MARY AND BLESSED JOSEPH AND BLESSED THE CHRIST CHILD. HAD JESUS BEEN AN ILLEGITIMATE OFFSPRING HE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED IN THE TEMPLE, MUCH LESS BLESSED. HOW IN THE WORLD WOULD A MAN OF GOD PRONOUNCE HIS BLESSING UPON A GUILTY PERSON LIKE THAT? REMEMBER JOSEPH HAD SAID THAT THE CHILD WAS NOT HIS. MARY AT LEAST WAS GUILTY OF ADULTERY IF JESUS WAS NOT VIRGIN BORN.

FINALLY, HOW DO WE ACCOUNT FOR MARY'S ACTION AT THE CROSS? LET US NOT FORGET THE CHARGE FOR WHICH JESUS WAS FINALLY CRUCIFIED, IN THE LANGUAGE OF CAIPHAS HE WAS CRUCIFIED BECAUSE "BEING A MAN HE MADE HIMSELF GOD." NOW WE TALK A GREAT DEAL ABOUT MOTHER LOVE, HOW WONDERFUL IT IS AND HOW GREAT IT IS. LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING. DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANY MOTHER WHO COULD STAND AND WATCH HER SON ENDURE SUFFERING AND DEATH ITSELF WHEN SHE COULD HAVE STOPPED IT ALL BY NAMING THE MAN WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS CHRIST? HOW IT MUST HAVE PIERCED THE HEART OF MARY WHEN SHE SAW THOSE HANDS, WHICH AS INFANT HANDS HAD CARESSED HER FACE AND PLAYED WITH HER HAIR, PIERCED CRUELLY WITH NAILS. HOW HER HEART MUST HAVE CRIED OUT AND HOW SHE MUST HAVE WANTED TO SAY, "STOP IT, QUIT IT!" BUT MARY WOULD NOT TESTIFY TO A LIE. MARY KNEW THAT JESUS HAD BEEN CONCEIVED IN HER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND IF THIS IS NOT TRUE THEN THERE WAS NOT ONE OUNCE OF MOTHER LOVE BEATING IN THE HEART OF MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS THAT DAY.

BUT YET IN SPITE OF THESE THINGS, IN SPITE OF THE CLEAR TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, IN SPITE OF PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE VIRGIN BIRTH IS THE ONLY THING THAT CAN ACCOUNT FOR THE ACTIONS OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THIS GREAT DRAMA, THERE ARE THOSE WHO OBJECT AND SAY, "BUT THIS JUST ISN'T THE NATURAL WAY. IT JUST ISN'T THE ORDINARY WAY FOR MAN TO COME INTO THE EARTH." AND I FULLY AGREE WITH THAT, BUT MAY I REMIND YOU THAT JESUS WAS NOT AN ORDINARY MAN. WE HAVE SEEN THAT JESUS WAS INDEED THE VERY SON OF GOD AND I WOULD ASK WHAT IS THE NATURAL WAY? WHAT IS THE NORMAL WAY FOR DIETY TO BECOME CLOTHED WITH HUMANITY? I KNOW IT IS NOT THE NORMAL WAY FOR A MAN WHO IS COMPLETELY FLESH TO BE BORN, BUT WHO CAN SAY WHAT IS THE NATURAL WAY FOR DIETY TO COME TO EARTH? INDEED, IF WE ARE TO DESCRIBE THE NATURAL WAY THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE IT BECAUSE THIS IS THE ONLY TIME THAT SUCH HAS TRANSPIRED.

OTHERS OBJECT AND SAY, "WELL, YOU KNOW IT REALLY WASN'T BELIEVED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT BECAUSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHRIST IS REFERRED TO AS BEING JOSEPH'S SON IN SUCH PASSAGES AS LUKE 4:22, JOHN 1:45, JOHN 6:42, MATTHEW 13:55. THAT IS TRUE, BUT I

WOULD AGAIN DO SOME REMINDING. I WOULD REMIND THAT THOSE WHO CALLED JESUS THE SON OF JOSEPH WERE FIRST OF ALL, ONE IGNORANT BELIEVER--PHILIP. HE HADN'T LEARNED ENOUGH ABOUT JESUS YET. IT MAY JUST SIMPLY SHOW HERE THAT THE ILL-ADVISEDNESS OF A BELIEVER'S TELLING MORE THAN HE KNOWS. ONE IGNORANT BELIEVER, AND THE REST OF THEM, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WERE WILLFUL, CHRIST-REJECTING, UNBELIEVERS, AND THAT IS NOT GOOD COMPANY FOR ANY MAN TO BE FOUND WITH. THOSE WHO ARE REJECTING THE VIRGIN BIRTH TODAY CLAIM TO BE ANYTHING BUT IGNORANT BELIEVERS. THEY CLAIM TO BE THE ONLY LEARNED BELIEVERS, THE ONLY EDUCATED BELIEVERS, AND THEY WOULD EDUCATE US OUT OF OUR SIMPLE FAITH THAT THE HOLY GHOST WOULD COME AND CAUSE DIETY TO BE CONCEIVED AS HUMANITY IN THE WOMB OF WOMAN.

OTHERS OBJECT BECAUSE THE DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH IS ONLY FOUND ON TWO PAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. NOBODY MENTIONS IT BUT MATTHEW AND LUKE. THEY FAIL TO REALIZE THAT THE SAME OBJECTIONS COULD BE MADE AGAINST THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. MATTHEW AND LUKE ARE THE ONLY TWO WHO EVER MENTION IT. MARK AND JOHN, PAUL, PETER, JAMES AND JUDE NEVER MENTION IT, SO IF WE ARE GOING TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT WE ACCEPT A TEACHING UPON THE BASIS OF HOW MANY TIMES WE FIND IT MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THERE IS NO MORE TO REQUIRE ME TO BELIEVE AND ACCEPT THE MORAL PRECEPTS OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT THAN THERE IS TO REQUIRE ANOTHER TO BELIEVE AND ACCEPT THE VIRGIN BIRTH. BUT THEN REALLY, ALL OF THAT IS BESIDE THE POINT BECAUSE THE OBJECTION ITSELF IS A LIE. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE ARE THE ONLY TWO WHO TALK ABOUT THE CONCEPTION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT MATTHEW AND LUKE ARE THE ONLY TWO WHO GIVE ACCOUNT OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE DOCTRINE AND DID NOT BELIEVE IT. USUALLY THEY PICK ON PAUL BECAUSE PAUL WAS THE MAN WHO WROTE MORE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT THAN ANY OTHER, AND IT IS SUGGESTED THAT PAUL DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT THE VIRGIN BIRTH. I WOULD BEG TO DIFFER. I WOULD SAY THAT EVERY TIME PAUL SAID OF JESUS, "HE IS THE SON OF GOD," HE WAS TALKING ABOUT WHAT LUKE WAS TALKING ABOUT WHEN LUKE SAID THAT "THE HOLY SPIRIT SHALL COME OVER YOU AND YOU WILL CONCEIVE AND FOR THIS CAUSE HE SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD." IN GALATIANS 4:4,5 PAUL SAID, "BUT WHEN THE FULNESS OF THE TIME WAS COME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, MADE OF A WOMAN." NOW IF THERE WAS NOT SOME SPECIAL SENSE IN WHICH HE WAS MADE OF WOMAN WHY MENTION IT? AFTER ALL, THAT IS THE NATURAL PROCESS IS IT NOT? "GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON MADE OF WOMAN, MADE UNDER THE LAW."

OTHERS OBJECT AND SAY, "IT IS JUST AN IMBELISHED STORY. IT IS JUST A FABLE. IT IS JUST A MYTH." THIS, THEY SUGGEST, IS PROVED BY THE PRESENCE OF OTHER SUCH STORIES AND TALES, AND THEY SUGGEST WE GO BACK AND READ THE BABYLONIAN MYTHS AND OTHER ANCIENT MYTHS OF MEN WHO WERE CONCEIVED BY WOMEN AS A RESULT OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH GODS; MAY I SUGGEST THAT THIS DOES NOT MITIGATE AGAINST THE VIRGIN BIRTH, BUT RATHER EMPHASISES THAT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN BACK IN THE VERY BEGINNING SOMEWHERE, SOME BASIC PROPHECY OR SOME BASIC HISTORICAL EVENT BY WHICH ALL MEN WHEREVER THEY WERE FOUND KNEW THAT THERE WAS TO BE SOME OUTSTANDING PHENOMENON TO OCCUR. THE BIBLE BELIEVER CAN FIND THAT EVENT. THE BIBLE BELIEVER CAN FIND THAT PROPHECY RIGHT BACK IN GENESIS 3:15, "AND I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN THEE AND THE WOMAN, AND BETWEEN THY SEED AND HER SEED." HERE THE "SEED OF WOMAN" TELLS OF A WOMAN WHO IS GOING TO CONCEIVE WITHOUT A MAN, AND SO IT WOULD BE NATURAL TO SUPPOSE THAT WHEN THE WORLD WAS MULTIPLIED IN NUMBER AND MEN, FOLLOWING THE BUILDING OF THE TOWER OF BABEL, WERE SCATTERED UPON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, THAT THEY WOULD REMEMBER THIS AND HAVE SOME CONCEPT OF IT THOUGH IT MIGHT HAVE BECOME CORRUPTED IN THEIR MINDS. THIS IS ONE REASON, IT IS SUGGESTED, THAT GOD GAVE THE OLD TESTAMENT TO BEGIN WITH, THAT THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND THE OPERATION OF GOD MIGHT BE PRESERVED IN THE EARTH UNTIL CHRIST SHOULD COME.

BUT THEN I WOULD ALSO POINT OUT THAT THERE IS NO STORY IN ALL OF ANCIENT MYTHOLOGY AND IN ALL OF THE ANCIENT WRITINGS LIKE THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST. IT IS TRUE THAT THERE ARE STORIES OF MEN WHO WERE THE OFFSPRING OF EARTHLY WOMEN AND GODS, BUT NEVER WAS IT BY THE PROCESS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD COMING OVER AND OVERPOWERING THE WOMAN AND CAUSING TO BE CONCEIVED IN HER WOMB DIETY ITSELF. IT WAS ALWAYS A GOD CLOTHED IN CARNAL FLESH AND THE OFFSPRING WAS ALWAYS THE RESULT OF A CARNAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A GOD AND A WOMAN. IT IS TRUE THAT THERE ARE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND SOME OF THESE ANCIENT TALES, BUT THOSE WHO POINT OUT THE SIMILARITIES ARE MAKING TOO MUCH OF THEM AND THEY ARE COMPLETELY IGNORING THE DIFFERENCES WHICH ARE GREATER BY FAR IN THEIR CONSEQUENCES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE THAN ALL OF THE SIMILARITIES THAT MIGHT BE SUGGESTED.

WE SUGGESTED AT THE OUTSET OF THIS STUDY THAT APPARENTLY SOME DO NOT THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE 43 PERCENT OF ALL PROTESTANTS DON'T BELIEVE THAT CHRIST WAS CONCEIVED IN THE WOMB OF MARY BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD. SO LET US ASK THE QUESTION, "WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF IT?" I WOULD ANSWER IN THREE WAYS. FIRST, IT IS IMPORTANT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE. THERE IS LITTLE DISAGREEMENT AMONG MEN AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE BIBLE ACTUALLY TEACHES THAT JESUS WAS BORN OF A VIRGIN. THE GENERAL CONCENSUS, EVEN BY THOSE WHO WOULD DENY IT, IS THAT THE BIBLE DOES TEACH IT. THE QUESTION, THEN, IS, "IS THE TEACHING OF THE BIBLE TRUE OR IS THE TEACHING OF THE BIBLE FALSE?" IS WHAT MATTHEW AND LUKE SAID ABOUT JESUS CHRIST, HIS CONCEPTION, AND HIS BIRTH FACT, OR IS IT FICTION? IS THE BIBLE TRUE OR IS IT A PIOUS FRAUD OR, IF YOU PLEASE, IN PLAINER LANGUAGE, A RELIGIOUS LIE? IF WE SAY IT IS FALSE, WHAT THEN SHALL WE DO? THOSE WHO WOULD REJECT IT SAY THEY ARE GOING TO REJECT THE BIBLE AS FAR AS ANY OF ITS SCIENTIFIC STATEMENTS ARE CONCERNED. THEY RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS JUST A BOOK OF WONDERFUL STORIES ABOUT GOD, BUT THEY ARE NOT GOING TO ACCEPT THESE SCIENTIFIC AND HISTORICAL THINGS. THEY WANT US TO GIVE THE BIBLE THE PLACE IT OUGHT TO HAVE. WE ARE JUST TO TAKE IT AS A RELIGIOUS BOOK AND LET ITS AUTHORITY BE INDEPENDENT OF ALL THE HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC STATEMENTS THAT ARE MADE.

WHAT SHOULD WE SAY OF SUCH AN ATTITUDE AS THIS? LET US SAY SIMPLY THAT IF THIS IS SO AND THAT IF WE ARE TO ABANDON THE HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC STATEMENTS OF THE WORD OF GOD, THEN CHRISTIANITY AS WE KNOW IT MUST BE ABANDONED. IT IS NOT THAT JUST THIS ELEMENT OF THE FAITH OR THAT ELEMENT OF THE FAITH OR SOME OTHER ELEMENT OF THE FAITH IS AT STAKE. CHRISTIANITY AS A WHOLE IS AT STAKE, AND WHEN THEY ROB US OF CHRISTIANITY AS IT HAS BEEN TAUGHT AND PRACTICED IN THE WORLD WHAT DO THEY GIVE US IN RETURN? THEY GIVE US A RELIGION THAT IS BASED UPON MAN'S ABILITY TO SAVE HIMSELF. THEY GIVE US A RELIGION THAT SAYS, "WE DON'T NEED TO DEPEND UPON THINGS THAT TOOK PLACE 1900 YEARS AGO' WHETHER IT BE A BIRTH OR WHETHER IT BE A DEATH. YOU GIVE US THE GOOD MORAL TEACHING OF THE BIBLE AND YOU GIVE US THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST AND WE HAVE EVERYTHING THAT WE NEED." IN OTHER WORDS, THEY DON'T NEED THE LIFE OF CHRIST, THEY DON'T NEED THE DEATH OF CHRIST. YOU JUST GIVE THEM THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST AND THEY ARE READY TO GO AND THE REST OF IT THEY CAN DO FOR THEMSELVES. THUS, CHRISTIANITY IS MADE INDEPENDENT OF CHRIST. IT NO LONGER DEPENDS UPON CHRIST. IT NO LONGER STANDS OR FALLS WITH THE NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST. BUT MAY I SUGGEST THAT IF THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE GOING TO BE CONSISTENT, THEY HAD BETTER LIKewise GIVE UP THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS BECAUSE EVERYTHING THEY KNOW ABOUT THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST IS TAKEN FROM HISTORICAL STATEMENTS IN THE BIBLE. THEY HAVE NO OTHER SOURCE. TO BE CONSISTENT, WHEN THEY GET RID OF THE DOCTRINE THEY NEED TO GET RID OF THE MAN WHO TAUGHT IT.

SECONDLY THE DOCTRINE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH IS IMPORTANT AS A TEST TO DETERMINE ONE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD JESUS CHRIST--WHETHER HE IS NATURAL, JUST AN OUTSTANDING GOOD MAN, OR WHETHER HE IS SUPERNATURAL, IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US. WE SAW IN OUR LESSON ON THE DIETY OF JESUS THAT MANY MODERN TEACHERS AND RELIGIONISTS CAN SAY, "JESUS IS GOD," BUT WE LIKewise SAW WHAT THEY MEANT BY THAT EXPRESSION. BUT WHEN A MAN CAN SAY THAT JESUS WAS CONCEIVED IN THE WOMB OF MARY WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF A HUMAN FATHER, THEN HE HAS AFFIRMED THE PRESENCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE WORLD, AND IF HE CAN ADMIT THE PRESENCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE WORLD AT THIS POINT THEN HE CAN READILY ADMIT EVERYTHING THAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE SON OF GOD.

WE HAVE SEEN THAT THOSE WHO WOULD REJECT THE VIRGIN BIRTH REJECT THE BIBLE AS AUTHORITY. WE HAVE SEEN THAT THEY REJECT THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE, THEY REJECT THE SUPERNATURAL. BUT THIRDLY, THOSE WHO WOULD REJECT THE VIRGIN BIRTH, REJECT ALSO THAT WHICH IS THE VERY HEART AND CORE OF CHRISTIANITY--THEY REJECT THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT IN AND THROUGH THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD. NO HUMAN BEING COULD SAVE THE RACE FROM SIN. NO MAN--I DON'T CARE HOW GOOD HE WAS, I DON'T CARE HOW GREAT A PHILOSOPHER, I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH WISDOM, I DON'T CARE WHAT HIS MORALS WERE--NO HUMAN BEING COULD SAVE THE RACE FROM SIN. AND GOD COULD NOT DO IT AS LONG AS GOD WAS SEPARATED FROM HUMANITY BY HIS NATURE. BUT WHEN GOD TOOK UPON HIMSELF THE NATURE OF MAN, WHEN GOD CAME TO EARTH RETAINING ALL OF HIS DIETY BUT BEING FOUND, AS PAUL SAID TO THE PHILLIPIANS, "IN THE FASHION OF A MAN," THEN THE SALVATION OF MAN WAS ASSURED. THE SUPERNATURAL NATURE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BELONGS LOGICALLY WITH HIS REDEMPTIVE WORKS. THE VIRGIN BIRTH BELONGS WITH THE CROSS, AND WHEN ONE OF THESE DOCTRINES IS REJECTED THE OTHER IS NOT LONG GOING TO BE MAINTAINED.

BUT FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE, FOR THOSE WHO ARE CONVINCED THAT JESUS CHRIST IS INDEED THE SON OF GOD, FOR THOSE WHO REALIZE THAT HE LEFT HEAVEN AND CAME TO EARTH, THERE IS ANOTHER QUESTION THAT IS SO IMPORTANT, AND THAT QUESTION IS, "WHY?" WHY DID MY SAVIOR COME TO EARTH? I THINK WE FIND THE ANSWER ALL THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD, BUT I WOULD GIVE YOU THE ANSWER TONIGHT NOT IN THE WORDS OF THE SCRIPTURE BUT IN THE WORDS OF SONG:

"WHY DID MY SAVIOR COME TO EARTH
AND TO THE HUMBLE GO?
WHY DID HE CHOSE A LOWLY BIRTH?
BECAUSE HE LOVED ME SO."

AND IT IS BECAUSE HE LOVE YOU THAT HE EXTENDS TO YOU AN INVITATION. IT IS BECAUSE HE LOVED YOU AND DIED FOR YOU THAT HE CAN SAY UNTO YOU, "COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST." AND IT IS BECAUSE HE IS INDEED GOD AND THE SON OF GOD THAT HE CAN FULFILL THAT PROMISE. I KNOW THERE ARE THOSE WHO NEED JESUS CHRIST. I KNOW THERE ARE THOSE WHO NEED TO BE BAPTIZED INTO HIM, WHO NEED TO PUT ON CHRIST. I KNOW THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE DONE THIS AND WHO HAVE WANDERED AWAY WHO NEED TO RETURN TONIGHT, WHO NEED TO BOW AGAIN IN THE PRESENCE OF KING JESUS, VIRGIN BORN SON OF GOD, PROCLAIM ALLEGIANCE UNTO HIM, AND WALK WITH HIM TILL TIME SHALL BE NO MORE AND GOD SHALL TAKE YOU HOME. THIS IS WHAT JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO PROVIDE FOR YOU. WILL YOU RECEIVE IT? WILL YOU COME WHILE WE STAND AND WHILE WE SING?