

# Rise Up And Build

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*"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18*

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## **The Virgin Birth Of Christ**

By Everett Hardin

It is a fundamental teaching that the human race was (and is) incapable of saving itself. *"For by grace are we saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast,"* Eph. 2:8-9. The Son of man came among us as a human being for our salvation. *"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men,"* Phil. 2:6-7. His means of coming among us was an incarnation (i.e. a coming in the flesh) by means of a fleshly birth. *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, believed on in the world, received up into glory,"* I Tim. 3:16

## **The Doctrine Of The Virgin Birth**

Some 700 years before the birth of Jesus, the Holy Spirit had moved the prophet Isaiah to foretell the miraculous birth of the Messiah. The prophet announces an unusual birth of a special child who will be a sign to the house of David and to Israel. *"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall his name Immanuel,"* Isa. 7:14. Isaiah introduces this special one as *"God with us."* Bringing into the world one who is both God and man necessitates a special means of entrance. This involved a miraculous conception in the womb of a woman, in this case a virgin.

Unbelievers have discounted the virgin birth and have sought desperately, but in vain, for a loophole to deny the virgin birth. The word *"virgin"* (*almah*) is used to indicate a virgin of marriageable or premarriageable age, a young woman who was neither married nor had known a man. The fact that the angel quotes this prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 to Joseph, as an explanation for Mary being with child, before her marriage to him, is evidence that the prophet referred to an unmarried woman who would have a son without physical contact with any man.

Joseph, perplexed over the fact that his wife to be was pregnant, was given an explanation by an angel in a dream. *“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost,”* Matt. 1:20. Joseph hearkened to the angel and took the maiden to be his wife.

When Abraham’s servant went to Haran in search of a bride for Isaac and he prayed that God would direct him to the right girl, this is how Rebekah was described: *“And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her,”* Gen., 24:16. When the servant was rehearsing the experience of praying for God’s guidance he said, *“Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water...,“* Gen. 24:43. The fact that she was a virgin is made clear.

Luke tells of Mary’s pregnancy from her perspective. The angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her, *“Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus,”* Luke 1:31. The miraculous conception is explained, *“Mary said 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,”* Luke 1:34-35.

Luke was a physician, whose training and experience would incline him to deny the possibility of such a virgin birth. Yet he affirmed without hesitation that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin. Mary would bring forth a Son and should *“call his name Jesus.”* He should be universally acknowledged as the *“Son of the Most High”* and should be given the throne of His father David.

### **Importance of the Virgin Birth**

The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, give bits of information about the anticipated Redeemer, that people could recognize and believe on Him when he came. Immediately after the first sin, God promised that the seed of woman would bruise Satan’s head, Gen. 3:15. He was to be a descendant of Abraham, Gen. 12:1-2 22:18, from the tribe of Judah, Gen. 49:10. When David slept with his fathers, *“I will set up thy seed after thee,...and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever,”* 2 Sam. 7:12. His coming was to be announced by a forerunner, Micah 4:5, and He was to be born in Bethlehem, Micah 5:2. *“His name shall be called Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,”* Isa. 9:6. Add to these prophecies and their fulfillment that of the virgin birth and there is no doubt as to who the Messiah and Redeemer of mankind is.

Notice again Isaiah’s prophecy, *“Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”* *“Immanuel”* means *“God with us.”* He is God, God with us and for us. *“In the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,”* John 1:1. John reveals Him as a distinct person, dwelling within the Godhead. He then tells us He took up an abode in human flesh. *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,”* John 1:14.

### **Dangers Of Denying The Virgin Birth**

To deny the doctrine of the virgin birth is to deny the trustworthiness of the Bible. The Bible speaks clearly and forthrightly in claiming a miraculous, virgin birth of Jesus of Nazareth. If this claim is false, by what right do we accept as true any other doctrine about Christ? The Psalmist said, *“Thy testimonies are very sure,”* Psa. 93:5. The solemn warning of tampering with God’s word should not be taken lightly, Rev. 22:18-19. We do not have the privilege of just taking the parts of the Bible we agree with. If Jesus was not virgin born, bodily raised, and capable of performing signs in the Father’s name, there is no reason for us to regard His teaching authoritative.

To reject the peculiar miracle of the virgin birth may lead to a rejection of biblical miracles in general. In his gospel, John selected the signs of Jesus to demonstrate the legitimacy of his claims to be the Messiah, the Son of God. *“Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name,”* John 20:30-31. If one rejects the miracles of Jesus in general, and the virgin birth in particular, Christianity has no place in his life.

The way Jesus made known the Father was by His words and works while dwelling among men. *“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for my very works sake,”* John 14:10-11. When the disciples heard and saw His works, they heard and saw the Father in the most illustrative fashion. Apart from the miracles, He is just another moral philosopher or religious teacher.

To deny the virgin birth is to deny that we have a Savior. The virgin birth identifies Jesus as the promised Old Testament Redeemer and demonstrates His qualifications to mediate between God and man. Without that identifying mark, we have no good reason to believe that He is the One Whom heaven has provided to save mankind.

The coming of Jesus is God’s answer to man’s need; it is the fulfillment of God’s provision for human redemption. And as we consider the fulfillment of that purpose we are forced to exclaim, *“O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out,”* Rom. 11:33!

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