

The Virgin Birth of the Messiah

Matthew 1:18-25

20 Sep 09

Let's take our Bibles this morning and open to the gospel of Matthew. We will be continuing this morning with a study we began last Lord's day. Truly this is going to last for a while as we take our time going through the gospel of Matthew. And this morning I want to direct our attention to chapter one verse 18 through 25. Matthew chapter one verses 18 through 25. Let me read those first as we begin our time in God's word. It says, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, don not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means, 'God with us.' And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."

Well, last week we say that Matthew opened his gospel with the proclamation that Jesus is the Messiah. He's the promised seed of Abraham. He's the promised son of David. And Matthew presented a genealogy in a memorable form in order to support that proclamation that Jesus is the Messiah. But you might remember that the genealogy left one thing unresolved. Verse 16, if you'll look back at verse 16, it says that, "Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah." It's significant to take note of the fact, and we did this last time, that Joseph isn't said to be the father of Jesus. Joseph is said to be the husband of Mary and it's Mary who gave birth to Jesus. Now that's a critical issue because Joseph has to be the legal father of Jesus in order for Jesus to be recognized as the son of David, as being in the line of David, as being a descendent of David, which is critical to Him being recognized as the Messiah. So what is the explanation for this? Well, the passage that we're going to look at today gives the explanation. This passage tells us of the virgin birth. The supernatural birth of Jesus, and some of the events surrounding that birth, and this answers the dilemma that was left hanging by the genealogy. And this is no small thing. Matthew writes this gospel as an evangelistic proclamation but also as an apologetic or a defense of the faith, a defense of the gospel, a defense of the message about Jesus being the Messiah. During and after the life of Christ, slanderous accusations were made about Jesus including that He had an illegitimate birth. In fact you might remember the encounter recorded in John chapter eight. Jesus is talking to some people and they are talking about their ancestry. They're claiming to be descendent of Abraham. Abraham is our father and Jesus said, no actually the devil is your father. And they responded by saying, well we weren't born illegitimately.

That wasn't just an offhanded comment. That was an attempt by them to take a jab at Jesus like, how exactly were you born, Jesus? So even then there were accusations being made of a illegitimate birth. Questions and accusations are made today as well regarding the birth of Christ. Some see the birth account of Jesus as little different than the stories of ancient Greek mythology and the strange and bizarre birth of some of their gods. Also, liberalism, especially in the last century has attacked this doctrine repeatedly, so much so that many people in America, people who would claim to be Christians, they claim to be Christians but they will not, they cannot, affirm the virgin birth of Christ. High percentage to people in our country who would call themselves Christians, but when specifically asked about the virgin birth of Christ they don't want to take a stand on that. But like I said, this is not small matter, the incarnation, the fact that God became man through the means of a miraculous virgin birth is central to all that Christianity is. It's absolutely foundational.

Apart from Jesus being both human and divine, there simply is no gospel. If He is not God and man there is no good news. That's how absolutely essential this is. If the virgin birth is not true, then you can't accept any of Jesus's teachings. So this passage not only provides an explanation for a matter that's raised out of the record of the genealogy, this is a strategic defense for the truth of Christianity. And, it's something that brings strong assurance to real believers.

So as we seek to defend the virgin birth I want us to look carefully at what this text is telling us, and we're going to call some witnesses in to this great event. We're going to listen to some testimonies. In fact we're going to look at four testimonies that support the virgin birth of the Messiah. Four testimonies that are recorded here in this passage, testimonies about the virgin birth of the Messiah. And the first testimony that we're going to look at is the testimony of the apostle, the apostle Matthew who wrote this account.

Look at what he says in verse 18. He says, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." Matthew says now I want to tell you about, and I want to explain about the birth of Christ because it was unique to say the least. He's telling us that Mary became pregnant during the time of her betrothal to Joseph. Betrothal was a common practice in their culture. Something entered in to prior to marriage. But it was much stronger, much stronger commitment than what we typically associate with an engagement today. A betrothal was a binding contract generally entered in to by the fathers of the two that were getting married, and most likely those two fathers arranged this marriage. It's probably not how most of you wound up getting married where you found someone you liked and said what do you think? They didn't have a choice. Their two dads worked this out. The women in that culture in this situation were typically 13 or 14 years old. So that's how old Mary is at this time. The man might be a little older but not necessarily. Usually the betrothal period lasted about one year before the wedding was consummated. Typically during that one year the man, the husband, would use that year to build an addition on to his father's house and that's where he and his new bride were going to live. A betrothal like I said was a binding contract. It could only be terminated by death or divorce. So Mary and Joseph are in that time, that time of betrothal, and Mary becomes pregnant.

Now, you know and I know that that pregnancy didn't catch Mary by surprise. She had been informed by an angelic visitor. We want to look at that. It's in Luke chapter one. Luke chapter one starting in verse 26. Luke 1:26 says, "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to man whose name was Joseph, of the descendents of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. The angle said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.'" Well here she gets quite a message from Gabriel telling her that she's the one who's going to give birth to the Messiah, the Son of the Most High, the One who will sit on the throne of his father David. He's in the line of David. She's engaged to Joseph, verse 27 says of the descendents of David. And this is the One, this is the promised descendent of David who is going to sit on His throne and reign over His house. He's going to have a kingdom that never ends. Quite a message for Mary to receive that day. Now, a virgin birth is a great mystery. We can't explain exactly how that came about other than to say it's something that God did. And Mary asked that question and that's the answer that Mary got. Reading on in verse 34 it says, "Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?'" How can I have a child? I'm a virgin. "The angel answered and said to her, 'The power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the Holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God.'" So this is how it's going to happen, Mary, the Holy Spirit is going to do a work and you're going to experience a supernatural conception. Elizabeth, your relative, whose way past the childbearing age, she's conceived through natural means with her husband. But still, at her age, this is way beyond normal. And all these things can happen because with God nothing's impossible.

So here you see in Luke 1:35 and back in Matthew 1:18 that the Holy Spirit is the source or the cause of this miraculous conception. The creative power of God worked within Mary to bring this thing to pass, because nothing is impossible for Him. Matthew records there in verse 18 that she was found to be with child. In other words, just like with any other woman, eventually it became evident that she was pregnant. Joseph would have become aware of her condition. In a matter of time her pregnancy became obvious. But the child growing within her is the result of the Holy Spirit, the result of the working of God bringing about a supernatural conception. And this is the testimony of Matthew. He establishes this fact right from the very beginning of his gospel, his record of Jesus Christ, that He came in to the earth through the means of a supernatural conception. Matthew is convinced of this truth. He thinks it's important to record this event. He's not ashamed of it. He's not embarrassed by it. He thinks it's important. And Matthew was an intelligent man. He had been a tax collector. He was intelligent enough to swindle you out of extra money. He's intelligent enough to write this gospel. He spent three years in the company of Jesus. And he's convinced of the reality of a virgin birth. And under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, Matthew gives us an account of Christ's birth. Now Matthew wasn't there at Jesus's birth, but he knew Mary and he knew Jesus, and was convinced of this event. This really happened. Even though it's physically, medically, biologically impossible, it really happened. That's the testimony of the

apostle Matthew. That's a strong testimony. But Matthew's testimony doesn't stand alone. When he says that she was found with child, Joseph becomes aware of this, well that leads to more explanation that needs to be given. There's a second testimony that's given here in this passage and it's the testimony of the angel in verses 19 through 21.

It says, "And Joseph her husband being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.'" Now remember that during this time of betrothal, the parties are legally bound to each other. That's why Joseph, in verse 19, can be referred to as her husband, even though they haven't consummated the marriage yet. The betrothal is such a legally binding thing that they are considered husband and wife in a sense already. So infidelity during that time of betrothal was considered adultery. And Joseph becomes aware of Mary's pregnancy and he draws the natural conclusion. The natural conclusion being she's been unfaithful. And Joseph we're told was a righteous man, meaning one who was careful to keep the law, and so he knew that he could not marry her. In the Old Testament, adultery was a capital crime, meaning it was punishable by death. You can read about that in Leviticus 20:10, and it was even considered a capital time during the engagement or betrothal period as Deuteronomy 22 verses 23 and 24 make clear. But in God's sovereign plan Israel was under Rome's control at this time and Rome had abolished the Jewish death penalty. Remember that when they want to put Jesus to death they had to get Rome to say it was okay. So they couldn't put Mary to death for adultery because they didn't have the power to do that at that time. So Joseph was going to divorce her. That's what it means when it says he was going to send her away. That's referring to divorce. He's going to divorce her and there's two ways that he could go about doing this. He could make a public accusation against her and follow it up with a trial and make a great big deal out of this. Or, he could do it privately and just conduct this divorce matter. All you needed was two witnesses. Joseph being a righteous man chose the second option. He didn't want to disgrace her. He wanted to do this quietly, secretly. Not wanting to publicly expose Mary's sin or so he thought she had sinned.

But while he's thinking about this, something happened. Verse 20 tells us what happened. "When he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream." The Lord gave a revelation to Joseph. Dreams were often used as a means by which God gave revelation. In this dream an angel speaks to Joseph. And the angel addresses him there in verse 20 as Joseph, son of David. Well that's a clue to the significance and purpose to this little angelic visit. It has something to do with Joseph being in the royal line of David. This again makes the connection back to the genealogy. And the angel tells Joseph that it's okay for him to take Mary as his wife because her situation, well Joseph, it's not quite what you think it is. He tells Joseph that the Child has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. And just the way he says it there, the Child has been conceived, just underlines the passive role of Joseph and Mary. This Child isn't coming about by anything that they have done. This has nothing to do with them. God is initiating everything that's happening here. It's God's working. It's the conception brought about by the working of the Holy Spirit. The scripture in both Luke one and Matthew one clearly and repeatedly states that the virgin conception was a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. And this is the

testimony of the angel. But he says more than that about this child in verse 21. It says, "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

So here Joseph is told that the child will be a Son, and that Joseph needs to give Him a particular name. That's important. You see, it was the responsibility of the legal father to give the child his name. Typically that was done on the eighth day after the birth on the day that child would have been circumcised. And you can see that happening in the account in Luke one, both of the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus also. And they're worth taking note of.

In Luke chapter one verse 57 we're given a record of the birth of John the Baptist. And it says, "Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her. And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father." Apparently the whole community thought that they got a voice in what the name of this child was going to be. "But his mother answered and said, 'No indeed; but he shall be called John.'" Now why isn't Zacharias talking up at this point? Because he can't, right? Because he questioned how this whole thing was going to happen and the angel said, that's it for you, you're not talking until this child is born. So, Elizabeth speaks up and says, no, we're going to call him John because that's what they were told to name him. Verse 61 the friends are confused, they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name." And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called." Because he's got the final say in this. "And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, 'His name is John.' And they were all astonished. And at once his mouth was opened." So I guess they're going to call him John. But the idea here is that they gave him a name on the eighth day and it was the father that gave the name. There is significance to that. In Luke chapter two, verse 21, we're told regarding Jesus, "And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb."

So the name was typically given on the eighth day, the day of circumcision, and given by the father. The thought being that as the legal father give the name that ensures the child's status as an heir. That was the significance that they placed on the father giving the name. That includes the child in as a descendent from him. That ensures the child's status as being an heir in his line. So, through this act, Jesus will be recognized as the son of Joseph, the son of David. Now that fills in the gap and answers the questions raised by the genealogy. Joseph isn't the physical father, he's the legal father and by naming Jesus he includes Jesus in the line of David. And notice the angel tells Joseph to name the son Jesus. Names had significance to people in those days. The naming of Jesus is significant. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua which means Yahweh saves. And He's given this name specifically because He will save His people from their sins. This child is unique in every way. He's going to save His people.

Now when Joseph heard that, and probably initially when Matthew heard that, and when Matthew's primarily Jewish audience heard that, his people immediately in their mind are thinking Israel; we're His people, Israel. But as we've seen and will continue to see, Jesus's people include gentiles. We saw some gentiles listed in the genealogy that we looked at last week. Next week we're going to look at some Magi

from the East, a bunch of gentiles, who are going to come and worship Him. His people are the Messiah's people. The people that He's going to save. And, He will do the saving. It's emphatic here. You couldn't say it and He Himself will save His people from their sins. He and nobody else. He all by Himself will save His people from their sins. Now the Jews were expecting a Messiah who would come and save them from the political oppression of Rome, but Jesus didn't meet the popular expectation. Jesus saves His people from their sins. And the ministry of Jesus which really began with His forerunner John, and then carried out by Jesus Himself, both of their ministries began with a call to repentance. In chapter three verse two John begins his ministry and the first thing he says is "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus begins His ministry, chapter four verse 17, "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" Repent. Turn from sin, turn to God. Sin is man's real problem. It was then and it is now. Sin is the real problem. Our problem is not the environment. Whether you talk about the physical environment and what you think or don't think is going on there, or even the social environment. That isn't our problem. That isn't the bottom line issue. Our problem is not the economy. Our problem is not politics or who happens to be in the White House. Our problem is not what kind of health care we get. Our problem is not terrorism. And on a more personal level, your problem is not your parents, or your husband, or your wife, or your job. Our problem is sin. Sin is the bottom line problem. Our problem is sin.

The good news is, Jesus saves us from our sins. He saves from the penalty and the power of sin. He saves from the consequences and the dominion of our sins. Jesus saves sinners. And He Himself will save His people from their sins. Men don't save men. Men don't save themselves. Only Jesus saves sinners and everybody is a sinner in need of salvation. The people who gave Jesus the hardest time during His ministry, the people who wound up getting Him killed, were the people who would never acknowledge that their problem was sin.

And what is it that sets Jesus apart from everybody else, that makes him the one who can save people from their sins is because He and He alone is God in the flesh. He entered our world through a miraculous virgin birth. That's the testimony of the angel. I'm not making this up. And angel said this. It's the testimony of the apostle and it's the testimony of the angel.

So third testimony in this passage, and that's the testimony of the prophet. The prophet. Verses 22 and 23, it says, "Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means, 'God with us.'" Well this is the first of many Old Testament quotes that Matthew gives in His gospel. And you can see that Matthew took inspired prophecy seriously. Prophecy had its origin in God Himself, not the mind of the prophet. And, verse 22 is very clear saying that the Lord spoke through the prophet. It wasn't the Lord spoke to the prophet or put an impression in the mind of the prophet and the prophet spoke, and he might get it right or he might have changed it a little bit. No, the Lord spoke through the prophet. Words spoken by the prophet were directly from God. They were inspired, infallible words. God originates it. Notice the prophet here isn't even named. And this isn't a no name prophet that he's quoting from. This is Mr. Isaiah. And we know what verse he's quoting from. It's Isaiah 7:14. And we're told that what was spoken by the prophet recorded in that verse was fulfilled by the

virgin birth of Christ. What the prophet said, what he recorded, was fulfilled in the birth of Christ, specifically the virgin birth of Christ.

Now, we don't have time to go into all the issues related to Isaiah 7:14 today, but it is treated as an inspired prediction regarding Christ that Matthew says was fulfilled in the birth of Christ. Let me just address a couple of issues you might be aware of related to Isaiah 7:14. In the Hebrew that Isaiah wrote in, the word that's translated virgin in your Bible, the Hebrew word *alma*, could simply refer to a young woman, You may have heard that argument. He's not necessarily predicting a virgin birth because the word could mean a young woman. And that's one of the attacks that is commonly brought against the virgin birth of Christ. But every time that word *alma* is used in the Old Testament, it usually means a virgin, or there's not enough evidence to prove otherwise. So that's how the word was used to refer to a virgin. When they made a Greek translation of the Old Testament a couple of hundred years before Christ, called the Septuagint, they used the very specific word for virgin when they translated this word. It's apparently how they understood it. And Matthew affirms it. Matthew affirms that that's what the prophet said. That a virgin would give birth.

Something else that we can't appreciate in looking at Matthew's quotation from Isaiah is, and actually this reveals somewhat of our Biblical illiteracy, the illiteracy that we live with within the church today, Matthew's reference to Isaiah 7:14 would have made his readers think of a whole section of the book of Isaiah. Chapter seven through 12, known as the book of Immanuel. They didn't think of a specific verse, they didn't have chapters and verses. They thought of the section that this verse came from that Matthew is making reference to. They understood because they understood that section, that the child that is referred to here in Isaiah 7:14 is the same child that's spoken of two chapters later in Isaiah nine verses six and seven where it says, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." This virgin born child that's promised in chapter seven, it's the same child spoken of in chapter nine. Same child spoken of in chapter 11, there referred to as a descendent of Jesse, who's the father of David. So understanding how the Jewish audience would have understood his reference to Isaiah seven really helps us in understanding the meaning there. Also, Matthew broke his genealogy down very carefully as we saw last week to highlight the exile into Babylon. Remember he had it broken down into three sections of 14, the first section started with Abraham, the second section started with David, the third section began with the exile into Babylon, very significant. And Isaiah also speaks of this exile in his prophecy and the conditions that would result from that exile would produce the situation in which the Messiah was born, where He'd be born into poverty. So, all of that to say that Matthew says Jesus, He's the one that Isaiah spoke of in that section we know as the book of Immanuel.

Isaiah brings powerful testimony to the reality of a virgin birth, one that he predicted and was fulfilled seven hundred years later. Now, Matthew did alter one word in the text. By the way, he quoted almost word for word except for this one word, from the Greek translation of that passage in Isaiah. He changed one word. He says in verse 23 as he quotes it, and 'they' shall call His name Immanuel, not 'she' as it says in Isaiah 7:14. Well, who are the 'they' that he's referring to? They are the ones who Jesus is going to save from their sins. Those one's who Jesus saves from their sin, they are the ones who are going to call Him Immanuel, mean God with us. Immanuel is not so much a title or a name as it is a

description of His character. And those who know Him as Savior, know Him as God with us, and this is significant in Matthew's gospel. The very last verse has Jesus saying to His disciples, "And lo, I am with you always." I am Immanuel. To those who know Him as Savior, they know Him as Immanuel, God with us.

This is a powerful testimony. You got to figure this is a pretty unlikely prophecy. What? A virgin? Isaiah, let's think about it. Sure you want to write that down? It's an unlikely prophecy of a virgin birth perfectly fulfilled in Jesus. Powerful testimony to the virgin birth of the Messiah. So we've seen the testimony of the apostle, Matthew. We've seen the testimony of the angel who spoke to Joseph. We've seen the testimony of the prophet who predicted this unlikely and unique birth.

One last witness and that's the testimony of the man, the man Joseph himself. Look at verses 24 and 25. It says, "And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus." Now, do you find that even just a bit amazing? I mean think about it. Joseph, he's a righteous man. He finds out that his fiancé is pregnant, and he knows what he's got to do about that. But one night he goes to sleep and he has a dream. And an angel appears in his dream and an angel tells him, hey don't worry about Mary. Take her as your wife. Don't be afraid. Yeah, she's pregnant, but it's the result of the Holy Spirit in her life. Joseph's sleeping. He's having a dream. An angel is talking to him telling him about something that has never ever happened before. Don't worry Joseph. Everything's under control. The pregnancy is through the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. So Joseph wakes up and he does exactly what the angel told him to do. Don't you find that at least a bit amazing? I mean, I have a lot of unusual dreams. I don't wake up and do what was indicated to me in that dream. Joseph must have been convinced that this was from God, that this was a real angel, this was a real message. I'd better get up and do what he told me to do. He must have been convinced. And this wasn't an easy thing he was being told to do here. Yet he does it. And then he watches this supernaturally conceived child grow up in his home. Joseph's actions and his subsequent observations confirm what he was told, and adds powerful testimony to the truth that Jesus was born of a virgin.

And notice how careful Matthew is in recording this. Just to make sure that there wouldn't be any doubt that the child was not Joseph's physically, we're told that Joseph kept Mary as a virgin until Jesus was born. So there can't be any question about it. Joseph is not the father, the physical father, he kept her a virgin till after Jesus was born. And that little word until is significant as well. He kept her a virgin until she gave birth to Jesus. That implies that after the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary enjoyed normal marital relationships. And that blows away the Roman Catholic doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary. Saying that she was a virgin all of her life. This argues against that. It says she was kept a virgin till after Jesus was born implying that after Jesus was born she wasn't kept a virgin anymore.

Luke 2:7 refers to Jesus as her first born. Well, what's the point of calling Him the first born if there isn't a second born? And in fact, there was a second born, and a third born, and a fourth born. We're told in Matthew chapter 13 verses 55 and 56 that he had four brothers, at least four, because they are named there, and sisters. More than one. But, the main thing to notice here is at the end of verse 25. To see how it ends, Joseph gives the child the name that the angel told him to. He called His name, that's the

issue of the legal relationship. That all is resolved in Joseph giving this child His name. This fills in the gap unresolved by the genealogy. And he gave Him the name Jesus. He's the One who would save. Joseph believed all of this. He believed in the virgin conception and the virgin birth of Jesus. Joseph believed all of that. This whole account is incredibly amazing. It's short, it's simple, it's almost matter-of-fact. It's like Matthew said, hey let me just tell you how it happened, and he just gives it out, short, simple, matter-of-fact. But, this is powerful and this is profound. A supernatural Christ bringing a supernatural salvation requires that He come through a supernatural birth. And this is our Savior. This One who came through this supernatural birth. There's only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. He had to become a man without stopping to be God in order to be the mediator between God and man. How was that resolved? Through a virgin birth. It's the only solution to that issue. And that shows why a virgin birth is so important and that's why the testimony of these four is so crucial.

So what's your testimony regarding Christ and His virgin birth? Are you like Joseph? Joseph received a revelation from God and his response was totally submissive and obedient. Even though what he was being told to do was extremely difficult. He's being told to take as his wife a woman who's pregnant. Do you think there was some talking about that? And they're teenagers. These two are in our junior high group. Let's put it in perspective for you. These are two junior highers doing this. This is Joseph the junior higher receiving a revelation from God saying take that pregnant woman to be your wife because it's a supernatural conception. You can't understand that Joseph, you'll just have to take my word on it and Joseph does exactly that. He had to deny himself. He had to be willing to suffer to do what the angel was telling him to do. But he did it. He responded in submissive obedience. Believing in the virgin birth of Christ is absolutely foundational. It is foundational to our understanding of Christ and His nature. It's foundational to a real saving faith. You have to believe in the Jesus of the Bible in order to be saved. The Jesus of the Bible was born of a virgin. This gives an assurance and a confidence to our faith. This isn't a story. This isn't a myth. This is reality. If it's not, if this is not reality then the whole thing can be thrown out. If Jesus wasn't born of a virgin you can forget the whole deal. There is not Christianity, there is not gospel, there is no salvation if this is not true. Because the choice is not between a supernatural birth or a natural birth, the choice is between a supernatural birth or an illegitimate birth. The choice is between a holy birth, or an unholy birth. That's how you have to understand it. This is a crucial issue.

If Jesus is just the physical son of son of Joseph and Mary then He's a sinner, and not only can He not save sinners, He can't even save Himself. He has to be born in a supernatural manner. This is a crucial issue. We have testimony regarding the virgin birth of the Messiah. Four powerful testimonies brought in to the courtroom to give their story. The apostle Matthew, the angel from heaven, the prophet who predicted it, and Joseph who had to believe it. Four powerful testimonies. We can have confidence that by placing our faith in this Jesus, He will save us from our sins because He is the Messiah. He had to be born this way. There is no other way. But by believing in Him, we have confidence that He will save us from our sins and that's what you and I need more than anything else, is a Savior to save us from our sins. Only Jesus can do that. He's the only Messiah. Matthew's trying to make that absolutely, perfectly clear. So the only question is, do you believe these testimonies? Do you believe them or don't you? Testimony given is that Jesus is the Messiah born of a virgin. The One who came to save people from their sins. Do you believe that, or don't you? Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for this record that convincingly portrays Jesus as the Messiah, the One who came to save His people from their sins. Lord, help us to see that this is a crucial issue. This is an important matter. It's necessary that we have a right understanding of Christ and who He is and how He came in to this world, and why He came in to this world. Father, I pray that we might pay careful attention to this testimony that we've heard today. I pray, Lord, that we would respond even as Joseph did, that we would respond with a confident faith that this is all really true, and I can put my trust unreservedly in this One. Lord, I pray for those who don't know Christ, that they would hear the testimony today and that they would respond to Christ. I pray for those who know Christ as their Savior, that this might be an assuring, encouraging truth to us. That the One that we're trusting in, the One that we're following after, He is the Messiah. We don't have to have any doubts about that. Lord, help us to keep our eyes on Him, the One who is our Messiah, the One who is our Savior. Help us, Lord, to keep our attention on Him. Not on ourselves, not on our circumstance, not on all the issues and problems of our day. Help us to realize that He's the One who's dealt with the most serious issue. Increase our faith Lord. Help us to have a testimony for Christ. For we pray this in His name. Amen.