

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 38, **No.49, December 11,** 2012 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."** (2 Peter 3:18)

SAD FACT: Because of the many demands made by and the deep addiction to cultural Christmas— few and rare are those with interest and time to meditate upon the miracle virgin conception and the precious blood of Jesus. **GLORIOUS FACT:** **Those who are CAPTURED by the deep truth of the Birth of Christ,** (as were Angels, Shepherds, Simeon, Anna, and the Magi), **will find time; and they will experience great delight, encouragement, fuel for celebration worship, and fresh empowerment for victorious daily living!**

The Virgin Conception and the Precious Blood of OF JESUS!

When we speak of "the virgin birth," we simply mean that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, a virgin, without the agency of a human father. And while we speak of Jesus as "virgin born," **the actual unique miracle was not in His birth, but in the conception.**

The angel said to Joseph, *"that which is conceived in her is **of the Holy Ghost.**"* The teaching of the virgin birth has been attacked from many quarters. It has been labeled a scientific impossibility, derided as a vestige of pagan mythology, and rejected as a teaching because some say it is not taught uniformly in the New Testament. Some argue that it doesn't matter whether we believe the doctrine or not.

Frankly, the virgin birth is rejected by those who refuse to accept the Word of God! If we are willing to accept the Bible as the Word of God (which it claims to be and which it is!), there is no doubt whatever as to the reality of the virgin birth. It is not only substantiated in the Old and New Testaments, it is absolutely essential to man's redemption.

I. BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE VIRGIN BIRTH_

Genesis 3:15 says: *"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." This is God speaking to the serpent after he had beguiled Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. Interestingly, it was through the woman that sin entered the race. However, by the seed of the woman also, salvation would come.

Isaiah 7:14, the Prophet says: *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, **a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**"* This prophecy was written centuries before Christ was born in Bethlehem of the virgin Mary. **The Hebrew word for "virgin"** [*almah*] according to the Hebrew scholar **Gesenius**, means "girl, maiden, young woman of marriageable age." The word is used seven times in the Old Testament. It is not the strongest Hebrew word for virgin. It is not only translated as "virgin" but also in a couple of places as "maid" or "damsels."

HOWEVER, WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT moves the pen of Matthew, as he quotes from Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew 1:20, **the Holy Spirit dictates that ALMAH be translated into the Greek word, PARTHENOS**, a word meaning "absolute, unspotted virginity!" Thus, proving that *VIRGIN* is also the correct word for Isaiah 7:14, instead of "young woman" as the Revised Standard Version wrongly has it!

Galatians 4:4-5: It is argued that since Paul never refers to the virgin birth, he therefore did not know of it or did not believe it. How can anyone read Galatians 4:4 and receive any other impression than that the birth of Christ was unique, even miraculous? In this verse, Paul states, *"When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, **made of a woman, made under the law.**"* God sent forth His Son, **made of a woman**—no mention is made of Joseph. Paul's description takes us back to Genesis 3:15 which speaks of the seed of the woman! Paul was in full agreement with the virgin birth. Well, of course, for the same Holy Spirit is the Author of all the Bible; and He speaks without contradiction!

Matthew 1:18: *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise." In other words, "This is exactly how it happened." "When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost."* **Matthew states** that Mary's pregnancy was a condition that existed prior to her coming together with Joseph in the husband-wife relationship. The conception of Jesus in the womb of the virgin Mary differs from all other conceptions of children by their mothers. There was no human father. The place of the human father was taken by God himself. God did not appear in human form to beget the child, but by the Holy Spirit and in some extraordinary way, not revealed to us, the virgin Mary was impregnated with the holy seed. **Matthew continues:** *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins."* **And all this happened "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 Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us.**" "God with us."** **Jesus accepted the worship of His disciples without rebuking them.** Had He been less than God, it would have been a violation of the very first Commandment to have permitted His disciples to engage in such acts of devotion. If Jesus was not virgin born, it was impossible for Him to have been God and to have existed before His birth in Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2 : We are informed that while the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, his

goings forth were from old, even from everlasting. That is, He had an existence prior to Bethlehem.

John 1:1: reveals a similar truth: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Who is the **"Word"** spoken of here! **Verse 14 gives the answer:** *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."* The Word, the Logos, was none other than Jesus Christ. He was in the beginning with God. He collaborated with God the Father and God the Spirit in the creative acts recorded in Genesis 1. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

II. WHY THE VIRGIN BIRTH IS ESSENTIAL

If there is no virgin birth, (virgin conception), we have no reliable Bible. It boils down to a question of the authority of the Bible. **If** we don't accept the Bible in one place, then we must reject it in another. **If** the Bible is not faithful in relating to you the facts of the birth of Christ, it is not faithful in relating other events associated with the ministry of Christ and the apostles. **If** the virgin birth is to be regarded as a myth, similar to Greek and Roman mythologies, who is to say whether the resurrection and the second coming of Christ are in the same category! **The witness of the New Testament stands or falls as a whole.** Either you accept all of it or you reject all of it, one of the two. **If you deny** the virgin birth of Christ, you must deny the other miracles that are recorded in the Word of God.

One has wisely said, "If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you like— it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourselves!" (This also explains why the masses REJECT the Biblical model of responding to the birth of Christ in the fashion of the Angels, Shepherds, Simeon, Anna and the Magi)

If there is no virgin birth we have no Son of God.
If we have no Son of God, we have no Saviour!

If Jesus had a human father, He could not have been the Saviour of the world. He would have inherited a sin nature from His father. **If** Jesus had an ordinary birth, His death would have been an ordinary death. His death upon the Cross would have been nothing but a shameless act of a man who was deluded by His own opinions of himself!

Jesus is either Christ, the Son of God, virgin born of Mary in Bethlehem, or else He is a fraud whose claims are full of sound and fury, signifying nothing!

The virgin birth of Jesus takes the crucifixion of Christ out of the category of mere human sacrifice and puts it in the category of God's justice and mercy. In His death, Christ was carrying out the purpose for which He entered the world, that justice might be executed through Him. He was God, voluntarily paying the penalty He had imposed upon sinful man. Paul explains that God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation *"that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"* (Romans 3:25-26).

Such a death could be considered just only if it were inflicted upon the one

prepared for that purpose. And that is exactly what Jesus claimed to be. Hebrews 10:5 says, "*Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.*" The virgin birth is the means by which the Son of God could enter the stream of human life to effect the justice required by a righteous, merciful God.

While wars, social problems, political ideologies and man-made holiday madness continue to usurp the attention of humanity— **THE crucial issue is whether or not**

YOU or I can stand before the Creator free and clean of sin— that is, whether or not we are justified in the eyes of God!

Justification rests upon the sole act of God in providing a sin offering through the blood of Jesus (Romans 5:9). To provide such a sacrifice, it was necessary that the innocent victim, the Lamb of God, enter into the world from outside the realm of man. Thus, Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born without the intervention of a human father. **What a cause for rejoicing!** God, in the person of Christ, has come into our world, taken our flesh, and died in our place. **"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself"** (2 Corinthians 5:19). (This portion was EDITED from works by Abram Long, John Rawlings and others)

III. The Birth of Christ and His Precious BLOOD! "*Without shedding of blood is no remission.*" (Hebrews 9:22)

To focus on the Birth of Christ apart from the Cross leads to mere seasonal sentimentality and a deadly neglect of the horror, magnitude and penalty of sin

and minimizes the incredible cost for God to pay sin's wages in our stead!

Think about it: The whole emphasis of the Bible is on Redemption by the shedding of the Saviour's blood! From the shedding of blood in Eden's garden for the clothing of our fallen first parents, to the great throng of the Apocalypse who sing of the Blood of the Lamb, the Bible is a book of blood! With the indelible writing of God in the crimson letters of the blood of redemption, God's eternal law stands written across the whole volume:

"Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22)

WHERE Among the sons of Men Can Blood be Found— Rich enough to pay the tremendous debt of sin? **Precious enough** to satisfy divine justice? **Strong enough** to cancel sin's appalling guilt? **Pure enough** to usher in the reign of righteousness? **Overcoming enough** to crush the devil? And, **Divine enough** to redeem the elect of God from every tribe, kindred, tongue and people!?

FOR we learn in the Bible that God has made of one blood, all the nations of the earth. **By God's creation** man's blood is one in composition. **By sin's ruination**, [sinful] man's blood is one in pollution. Through the veins of [sinning] humanity flows a poisoned bloodstream! As God's Word tells us, the life of the flesh is in the blood. BUT SADLY, the life of [sinning] man is totally depraved! Therefore, his blood is but human depravity in solution. Such blood calls for judgment! And the shedding of such blood

can only bring God's wrath and not God's mercy. **This is all true—** yet wonder of wonders amongst the race of sinners and in the house of David, (A house as much cursed with sin as that of any other human family!), there has opened up a fountain of cleansing for sin and for all uncleanness!

The blood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST has all the essentials necessary for the accomplishment of the great work of redemption and reconciliation:

His Blood is *innocent* Blood: "I have betrayed innocent blood." -Matthew 27:4.

His Blood is *precious* Blood: "With the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." -1 Peter 1:19.

His Blood is *incorruptible* Blood: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things... But with the precious blood of Christ." -1 Peter 1:18-19.

His Blood is *divine* Blood: "The church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." -Acts 20:28.

His Blood is *supernatural* Blood: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His Own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." -Hebrews 9:12.

His Blood is *voluntarily-shed* Blood: "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." -John 10:18. "For this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." -Matthew 26:28.

His Blood is *cleansing* Blood: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth [keeps on cleansing] us from all sin." -1 John 1:7.

His Blood is *living* Blood: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." -Hebrews 13:20.

His Blood is *peace-speaking* Blood: "The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." -Hebrews 12:24.

His Blood is *justifying* Blood: "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." --Romans 5:9.

Christ's Blood could only have these great attributes if He was Virgin-born— for the required supernatural blood Necessitates the supernatural birth!

The Virgin Birth of Christ took place with no male contribution, (which would

originate the infant's blood in the usual way), but by a supernatural act of God by the Holy Ghost! Only by such a birth could blood be produced— precious, incorruptible, supernatural and divine, to redeem the fallen sons of Adam's accursed race!

But so what! For we live in a world that is more concerned about temporal health, beauty, success, fame, fortune, sports, entertainment and what is under a Christmas tree! **The miracle birth of Christ has been DEVALUED to a mere 'story' to be read before digging into a mountain of brightly wrapped presents!** We live in a world focused on dealing with economic, social, ecological, political and military issues!

IT SEEMS THAT FEW KNOW OR CARE
that the absolute most critical issue is whether or not
a man, woman, youth or child can stand before Holy God
forgiven, free and clean of sin— **that is,**
whether or not he/she is justified in the eyes of God!

NEVERTHELESS, Bethlehem's manger and Calvary's Cross are
profound testimony to the reality that "Without shedding of blood
is no remission" and that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world
unto himself!" **THEREFORE, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable
gift!"**

'Tis Jesus' Precious Blood Shed for Sinners!

What sacred fountain yonder springs up from the throne of God, And all
new covenant blessings brings? **'Tis Jesus' precious blood!**

What mighty sum paid all my debt when I a bondman stood, And has
my soul at freedom set? **'Tis Jesus' precious blood!**

What stream is that which sweeps away my sins just like a flood, Nor
lets one guilty blemish stay? **'Tis Jesus' precious blood!**

What voice is that which speaks for me in heaven's high court for good,
And from the curse has made me free? **'Tis Jesus' precious blood!**

What theme, my soul, shall best employ thy harp before thy God, And
made all heaven to ring with joy? **'Tis Jesus' precious blood!**

[Article Edited from Several Sources]

MAY There Be Glorious, Wise, Year around Celebrations of Jesus Christ From All Who Are In Christ! ~ ~ James Bell

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

- 1. Ladies Bible Study— ‘LORD, HEAL OUR HURTS!’-- starting January 8!**
- 2. WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM! YOUTH: Wednesdays, 6-8pm @ Adam and Bethany’s home.**
- 3. Thursdays @ 6:30pm: OUTREACH VISITATION**
- 4. EVERY SATURDAY @ 8:00am: Men’s Fellowship and Bible Study**

Sunday Schedule for December 16 {No Children’s Church on 12/16}

- 1. 9:30am- Church-wide BRUNCH** (Brunch in the place of Sunday School)
- 2. 10:45am- A SPECIAL TIME OF WORSHIP, REJOICING in the Birth of JESUS CHRIST:**
 - a.** Several Men will speak— sharing Biblical REASONS why Jesus came.
 - b.** The Choir and various ones will lead us in PRAISE/SINGING/CAROLS— rejoicing in Christ’s birth.
 - c. THE CLIMAX of the service will be THE LORD’S SUPPER.**

Sunday Schedule for December 23

- 1. 9:30am- Sunday School /**
- 2. 10:45am- Morning Worship / Children’s Church /**
- 3. LORD’S SUPPER at conclusion of the worship hour.**

Sunday Schedule for December 30

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal**
4. **1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**

Sunday Schedule for January 6, 2013

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **Noon Fellowship 'Covered Dish' Meal**
4. **1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**

PLANS: Last Newsletter of 2012 to be on December 18; First Newsletter of 2013, on January 8