

# Community Group Discussion Questions

“Non-Negotiable” Luke 1:26-27, 34 Dec 9/10

## Getting Started

There are certain practices and expressions concerning the Christian faith that are open unto debate and discussion, but the Virgin birth is not one of them. Why is this doctrine the bedrock of our faith? Today, we explore the importance of embracing this doctrine as a core conviction through the criticism’s commonly referenced.

Where do your beliefs come from? How do you make decisions about what things you absolutely will hold to no matter what, and what things you are willing to change your mind about? Why does it matter that you have a standard for truth?

## Going Deeper

**WARNING LABEL:** The principles highlighted in “RED” are common criticisms that seek to attack the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of which are NOT THE BELIEF of Community Bible Church nor Pastor Ed Newton!

- I. **The Problem:** The word “Virgin” doesn’t mean “Virgin”
  - A. Definition: Greek word-Parthenon
    - Single woman of marriageable age.
    - Absence of physical intimacy.
  - B. Distinction: Context is Everything
  - C. Delineation:
    - Galatians 4:4: “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law”
    - Matthew 1:16: “and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ”

*(Leaders, see the first addendum at the end of these questions for a more in-depth understanding of this issue.)*

In the Matthew passage, there are 39 repetitions of the phrase, 'was the father of,' but when you get to Joseph, it doesn't say 'was the father of Jesus.' Instead, it says, 'was the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born.' Matthew goes out of his way to show you that Jesus was not conceived or born of the union of Joseph and Mary, but was instead brought to us another way.

If you read Luke 1:27, Mary is called a 'virgin' twice, then in Luke 1:34, Mary indicates that she knows she is a 'virgin.'

This is very important because if Jesus had been born of human parents he would have the same sin nature all of the rest of humanity are born with. Since the Father placed Him in Mary's womb, he was able to be born both fully God and fully human. **What do you think of God's creative solution to our sin problem?**

## II. **The Parallel: The Story is Plagiarized**

- A. Timing: Matthew & Luke (A.D. 40-70)
- B. Teachings: Greek Mythology vs. Christianity
- C. Truth: Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring..."

*(Leaders: see the 2<sup>nd</sup> addendum to these notes)*

It's hard to plagiarize something when the first reference to it goes all the way back the first few chapters of the Bible, which records the beginning of human history! It's true that other cultures and religions have similar stories of divine births, but we can't be said to be copying their stories when ours was first! **What does this first promise of the gospel (Gen 3:15) do for your confidence in the Virgin Birth and your confidence that Jesus was both fully God and fully man?**

### III. The Prophecy: Mere Coincidence

- A Jew, not a Gentile (Gen. 12:1–3; Num. 24:17)
- He would be from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10)
- The family of David (2 Sam. 7:1–17)
- Born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14)
- Bethlehem, the city of David (Micah 5:2)
- Rule with Authority (Isaiah 9:6)
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:1-5)

The odds against one person fulfilling all eight prophecies pertaining to the birth of Jesus are astronomical - one in ten to the 21st power ( $10^{21}$ ). To illustrate that number, Professor of Mathematics Peter Stoner gave the following example: "First, blanket the entire Earth land mass with silver dollars 120 feet high. Second, specially mark one of those dollars and randomly bury it. Third, ask a person to travel the Earth and select the marked dollar, while blindfolded, from the trillions of other dollars."

(For those interested in more on this subject, see the following website:  
<http://y-jesus.com/what-are-the-odds/>)

What does this prophetic accuracy do to strengthen your faith that Jesus really was the promised Messiah who came to save us from our sins?

### IV. The Praxis: Jesus is just a Man

- A. Value: Confirms the Supernatural
- B. Victory: Confirms Sinless-ness
- C. Validation: Confirms Scripture

*Take Away:* Jesus went to great lengths to demonstrate His love for you and the Virgin Birth teaching proves it! IMMANUEL GOD WITH US!

From all other written sources around the time of Jesus, there is not a single reference that does anything to refute the Bible's record that Jesus lived a supernatural life among humanity, performing miracles, and living without sin. His life confirms everything the Old Testament prophets said

would be true of Him. Perhaps most importantly, Jesus has touched the lives of billions of people long after He was crucified and resurrected. **In what ways has Jesus changed your life? How have you seen supernatural and miraculous changes from who you used to be before you met Christ?**

## **Prayer Requests**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Addendum on the Virgin Birth**

There's something different about Jesus. Of all the people who have ever been born on the earth, only one can claim that He is God's Son, that His conception was supernatural, and that He was born of a virgin. As you begin reading the first book of the New Testament, The Gospel of Matthew, you find yourself immediately looking at the lineage of Jesus. Verse 1 makes an astounding claim, that Jesus is the Messiah (the Savior that God had promised to Abraham and David in the Old Testament). Right from the opening bell, Matthew tells you that the Jesus he will be writing about is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises. But it gets better.

From verse 1 through verse 16 you hear a familiar refrain, that "\_\_\_\_\_ " was the father of "\_\_\_\_\_". In fact, the word father is used 39 times. If you read it out loud, the cadence will almost hypnotize you. And then, right at the end of verse 16, you see and hear something different. "Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah." Did you catch it? You expect it to say, "Joseph was the father of Jesus," but it doesn't say that. Joseph will raise Jesus as a father, but Joseph was not Jesus' biological father. Jesus is different from all those who came before Him. He is the God-Man, the eternal One, the Word of God made flesh.

There are many religions in the world, and many faiths. But only one has a Savior who is supernatural. Though Jesus was born on earth, He does not share the taint of sin that all the other sons and daughters of Adam and Eve are born with. He is sinless, and as such, He can represent us as our Savior. He can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He can pay the price of our sin against a perfect and holy God.

1 John 2:1-2 says, "If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the perfect payment for our sins..." Apart from Jesus, you know deep down inside that you are not

righteous. Will you come to the only one who can save you? Will you tell others of the only one who can save them? His name is Jesus. He is supernatural, and He is the Savior of the world.

## **2nd Addendum on the Virgin Birth**

Why do we even need Jesus? The Creation Story from Genesis 1-3 tells us that Adam and Eve made a very poor choice. They chose to believe the lie of Satan, rather than the truth of God. They believed that God was holding out on them and that there was more they could experience if they would disobey Him. If you've ever been a young person growing up with parents, you've probably felt this way. "My parents are clueless! Everyone else is having fun except me! I'm going to tear down those rules and break through those barriers and experience what everyone else is doing." G.K. Chesterton warns us, "Don't ever take a fence down until you know the reason it was put up."

Adam and Eve found out that 'knowing good and evil' wasn't so great after all. Before they sinned, they only knew good. But after they sinned 'their eyes were opened' and they knew evil as well. They knew they had violated the perfection of God by disbelieving Him. His answer: to provide an immediate and temporary payment for their sin, which would point to a later and permanent payment for their sin. God provided animal skins to cover their sin. In doing this, they saw the terrible truth that something pure and innocent would have to die to pay for the sins of the guilty. We call this 'Substitutionary Atonement,' when the righteous dies for the wicked, to make the wicked right with God. "For our sake He made Him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him (Jesus) we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21

Genesis 3:15 is often called 'the first gospel,' the first time the good news of a coming Savior appears in the Bible. As God announces His judgment on Satan, God says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." In the Hebrew language, the 'He' is a singular male pronoun, meaning there will come in the future, one man, who will stomp the head of Satan and defeat him, while at the same time being killed in the process.

As we begin the Christmas season, we should enjoy the many sights, sounds, smells, and traditions. But let us never forget that Christ had to

come in order to provide the perfect sacrifice for our sins, to make right what Adam and Eve made wrong.