

What the Virgin Birth Means

- 1) For Joseph 2) For Mary 3) For Jesus 4) For Us

The Virgin Birth

- **Is 7:14. Mt 1:18.** That's just weird! Don't mean be irreverent at all. But a baby being concvd inside woman who's nvr been sexly intmt w/man before – that sort/thng just doesn't hap! Unless God goes out/way make hap. Today in both rdngs, Isa & Mt, we see: God did go out/way make hap. J: concvd in womb virgin girl. And bec that's so out/ordnry (weird), and bec so vital to Xian faith, salvtn, and undrstndng of who J really is – today: focusing on VB/J and what VB means for Jsph, M, J, and us.

For Joseph

- Let's start w/Jsph. Played very imp role in life/J, even though Bible doesn't actly have lot say re Jsph. Know: carpentr by trade; faithful bel/Lord; there at J's brth in Bthlhm; there when Magi visited sev mnths later; brought fam safely to Egypt to escape fr Herod; there in Jrslm w/M when J was 12. But then don't hear re Jsph during J's min, or when J crucfd; so assume died smtm when J: young adult. In today's Gos hear: Jsph married Mary; **vs. 18b**. Back then, they did enggmt & marg diffly fr how we do it today. Today, get engagd, then have marg & recptn. Back then, getting enggd (betrothed) meant legally married; recptn came later; but no sexual intmcy until. So if enggd or "**pledged be married,**" you legally married. And that's where we find J&M: there hadn't been recptn yet or any sexual union. But, **before...Mt 1:18cd**.
- So put yourself in shoes of Jsph. What to do? Drag her into public arena for cheating; orchestrate a humiliating divorce; shame her for rest of her life? Or just get this over with quickly & quietly and move on w/life? This, Jsph's soltn: **Mt 1:19**. But this, God's soltn: **Mt 1:20**. Exactly what Jsph did.
- So what VB mean for Jsph? Means first, had go thru heartache of thinking his wife'd cheated on him; then visited by angel/hvn and put thru emtnl & spirtrl rollrcstr of realizing God had chosen his wife be mother/Mes; and had to come grips w/fact: he'd be earthly fr/fig for Son/God. We may not know all that much re Jsph; but we do know took respnsblty sersly & raised J as his son and his Sav.

For Mary

- How re M; what VB mean for M? Girls got married younger back then. M: likely HS aged girl. Looking frwrud upcomng wed recptn, like all brides do – when all sudden, angel/hvn appears: "**Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is w/you... You will conceive & give birth to a son, and you are to call him J. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father Dvd, and he will reign over house of Jacob forever**" (Lk 1:28-33). "Woah! Me, mother/Mes?! My son, king; Sav?!" And while all that's sinking in, dawns on her: pregnncs don't just hap! "**How'll this be,**" M asked angel, "**since I am a virgin?**" (1:34). And then angel went on to expln unexplnbl: HS'd touch her womb; and same Lord, who had protctd M when she was in womb, would now himself be protctd in her womb.
- Think she was happy to hear the news? Absolutely! Magnificat: "**My soul proclaims greatness, my spirit rejoices**" (1:46-47). But how think she felt when, for most/rest/life, ppl called her adltrss? Here she is: *the* girl chosen be mother Son/God, and evone in town says she sleeps around. But what was her reaction to God's plan? "**I am Lord's srvnt; may your word to me be fulfilled**" (1:38). M faithflly follwd will/Lord. And while we Luths are very careful not worship M, pray to her, or view her as another savior, we do greatly respect her great faith.
- So what VB mean for M? Means: husb thought re divorcing her; wed recptn was overcast w/unfair disgrace bec pregnancy; looked down on, called bad names. But VB also means: M became mother of God; raised her son and her Sav; and she fulfilled Isa's prophecy: **Is 7:14b**.

For Jesus

- How re J; what VB mean for J? Probly meant: grew up being called illgtmt child; made fun of by other boys, who also made fun his mother. But aside fr all that, VB/J defines him as no one else can be defined; makes J both truly God and truly human.
- J is true God. Existed fr all eternity; created wrld; created us; his home is in hvn. But at Xmas, left that home, took on human flesh, and became a tiny baby! Think: God became human baby! Compltly dependent on prnts; had learn how walk, talk, potty trained (diapers!); got hungry, tired, sad, tempted to sin like we do (but never gave into sin like we do). Even suffered a human death (a terribly violent one!), before rising fr dead & returning to hvn in glory. Going thru VB, taking on human flesh, being true God & true man, earned J the title: Immanuel.

For Us

- Finally, that name Immanuel brings us to what VB means for all of us. **Is 7:14b**. 700 yrs later, **Mt 1:22-23**. God w/us – J left home in hvn to be w/us, live among us, save us. If God were not w/us, he'd be against us, our enemy. But God proved that he's not against us, not our enemy, does love us – by sending us J, Immanuel, God w/us.
- God is w/us in womb/childbirth; baptism; infancy & childhood; home & school; as we study GW, confirmed, and receive HC; adolescent yrs of internal turmoil & tempttn; in adult yrs; married & children; with our children as they grow up; in older years; thru sickness & setback; and when we draw last breathe, to bring us to be w/him forever in hvn.

Conclusion

- **Is 7:14b**. Jesus is our Immanuel, born of a virgin girl, to be God w/us. But a VB – that sort/thing just doesn't hap! Could call it weird; or could call it a miracle of God's grace, that means world for Jsph, M, J, and all of us. So "Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!"

Isaiah 7:10-14

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹ "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test."

¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

Matthew 1:18-23

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means, "God with us").

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.