



“Tuesdays with Pastor Jake”

Tuesday, December 10th
in the year of our Lord, 2024

Unfolding the Redemptive-Historical Promise of Christmas.



#2. “The Virgin Birth”

It is no surprise the Bible unashamedly and unapologetically describes some incredible, supernatural events.

Sometimes those things can really challenge our faith, but when you come to think of it – once a person believes in One God who forever existed eternally as Father, Son and Spirit – and who also created the universe by simply speaking it into existence, the other miracles in Scripture *pale* in comparison. If one can believe, ‘*In the beginning God,*’ the other events of Scripture, while not quite ‘easy-peasy,’ are at least plausible.

When you read the Old Testament, it’s helpful to read it like a ‘mystery.’ There are twists and turns in the narrative as the theme of Redemption slowly emerges and develops. Last week we saw an early announcement of that theme in the promise of a Messiah who would defeat the works of the devil. As we trace the trajectory of that theme, Isaiah the prophet foretold the Messiah would come through a virgin and that he would be called Immanuel – *God with us!*

No doubt, this is a challenging prophecy but not a difficult one. It’s challenging on two fronts. The first being the word used for ‘virgin’ and secondly, the context. Here’s the oft’ quoted text from Isaiah 7:14,

“Therefore, the LORD himself will give you (Ahaz) a sign. Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

The first challenge is the word used for ‘virgin.’ The technical name for virgin would be בתולה (Bethulah). But the word used here by Isaiah is העלמה (Almah). This word *can* be interpreted as a virgin (and the Greek translation of the Old Testament does exactly that), but it really means a young woman of ‘conceivable’ age. It *can* mean a virgin, but not necessarily. 2ndly, in the context, the prophecy is meant to be a “sign” to King Ahaz who was fearful of two armies threatening to invade. God told Ahaz “before **the boy** (born of the ‘Almah’) knows how to refuse evil and choose the good...the two kings you dread will be destroyed.” As you continue to read in the chapter, Isaiah claims *he* went into the prophetess and she conceived and bore a son...and before **the boy** knows how to cry ‘My father’ or ‘My mother’ the two kings Ahaz feared would be destroyed. And after the child had been born Isaiah says, ‘Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel...’

In some sense, it sounds as though this prophecy of a virgin (or young woman) conceiving and bearing a son, which *was* a ‘sign’ to Ahaz was fulfilled when Isaiah the prophet went into his wife and she bore a son. And true to His word, before ‘**the boy**’ knew the difference between good and evil, those two kings Ahaz feared were destroyed.

So, the \$64,000.00 question (remember the TV show?) is, how did we come to understand this prophecy to refer to a *virgin* birth and see its fulfillment in the Virgin Mary and the Lord Jesus?

Two Important Things to Learn

#1: The Meta-Narrative: Whenever the Old Testament is read there is an underlying ‘narrative’ (story) that reaches its fulfillment in the Person of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament, *properly read*, is read “Christologically.” We read it as an unfolding ‘mystery’ that culminates in the Lord Jesus. After His resurrection, Luke records that Jesus met with his disciples, and ‘beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.’ When Joseph related his dream of the angel who told him that which was conceived in Mary “is from the Holy Spirit,” *Matthew* (writing *after* the resurrection) understood this as the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah: “*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord has spoken by the prophet, ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.’”*

#2. Salvation Involves a “Miraculous Birth”: The birth of the Lord Jesus was not the first ‘miraculous’ birth recorded in the Scriptures. You remember the story of Abraham and Sarah, how they tried to bring about God’s promise of descendants through their own efforts (i.e., Hagar/Ishmael). But God would not have them think His promise depended upon them. It was when ‘all hope was gone’ that God enabled Sarah to conceive, teaching them – *as well as us* – that salvation doesn’t depend on our efforts but on God and His enabling grace. That’s why Jesus Himself spoke of the necessity of being ‘born again.’ Every true believer in Jesus has had a ‘miraculous’ birth. According to St. Peter, God has caused all true believers in Jesus “to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” It is this *kind of a birth* that enables us to *see* (understand) and *enter* (exercise faith) into the Kingdom of God. The Virgin Birth and our “birth” teaches us that SALVATION IS OF THE LORD, and that humbles the proud and is a source of unending gratefulness and joy to believers.

A Winter Warm-Up!



At Pastor Jake and Marilyn's Home

*****A Thursday of Your Choice***
January 9th, 16th or 23rd**

Sign up on Fellowship App
or call Ou @ 610-769-8101

Van will pick you up around 3:15 p.m.
Back home around 8:00 p.m.

MENU

"Tutti a Tavola a Mangiare!"

(Everyone to the Table to Eat! - Lidia Bastianich)

Chicken Parmesan on a bed of Penne Pasta,
topped with a slice of mozzarella cheese and
a velvety Marinara sauce.

Garden Salad with Farm Fresh Vegetables,
Cheese and Garlic Croutons, Assorted Dressings.

Fresh Pan Neapolitan Bread, thickly sliced
from the Italian Bakery.

Dessert

Tiramisu with a dollop of Whipped Cream & Chocolate Mints

Piping Hot Decaf Coffee, Ice-Cold Spring Water and Lemonade

Our home is handicap friendly with no stairs.

All are welcome to join us for a great evening of being together!

It's worth a Maryann's Cruller...

If you can quote from memory the last words spoken by Santa in
Clement C. Moore's story, "The Night Before Christmas", give me a
call at 610-769-4314, or leave a message and I'll bring you a
Maryann's cruller of your choice!

From Top Down...White Christmas / Miracle on 34th St. / Holiday Inn
A Christmas Story / Muppet's Christmas Carol / It's a Wonderful Life

Can you guess the
Christmas Movie
represented by
these pictures?



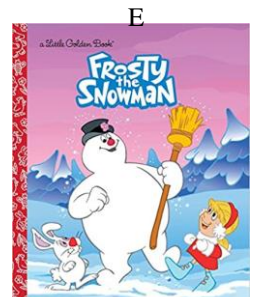
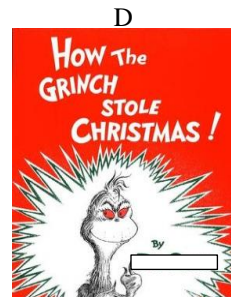
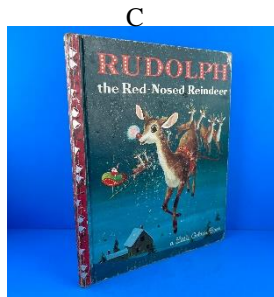
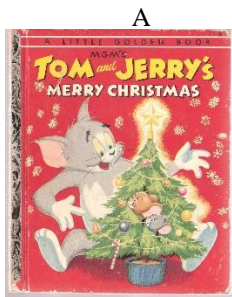
Better Lyrics

While I enjoy the song, 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,' I am bothered by the lyrics, 'Someday soon we all will be together, *if the fates allow.*'? What in the world does that mean? How comforting can that be?

In 1944 the songwriters Hugh Martin and Ralph Blaine wrote the classic song "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" for Judy Garland's 1944 movie, Meet Me in St. Louis. Years later however, Hugh Martin was converted to faith in the Lord Jesus, and he eventually re-wrote the song and lyrics – 'Have Yourself a Blessed Little Christmas'

*Christmas Future is far away, Christmas Past is past. Christmas Present is here today, bringing joy that will last.
Have yourself a blessed little Christmas, Christ the King is born. Let your voices ring upon this happy morn.
Have yourself a blessed little Christmas. Serenade the Earth, tell the world we celebrate the Savior's birth.
Let us all proclaim the joyous tidings voices raised on high send this carol soaring up into the sky,
this very merry blessed Christmas lullaby. Let us gather to sing to Him and to bring to Him our praise.
Son of God and a Friend of all to the end of all our days. Sing hosannas, hymns, and hallelujahs
as to Him we bow make the music mighty as the heav'ns allow. And have yourself a blessed little Christmas now.*

Remember These Christmas Books?



Who wrote them?

1. Clement C. Moore / 2. Peter Archer / 3. Johnny Marks / 4. Steve Nelson, Jack Rollins / 5. Dr. Seuss