



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy, part VI

Exodus 19:1-8, 20: 1-21

Eschatology Doctrinal Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Well, it is 7:30, let's begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for another opportunity to open Scriptures and consider the teaching of the prophets and apostles and, especially, that of our Lord. We thank Thee for the ministry which he has accomplished which makes it possible for us to know that through Him we have eternal life and with Thy grace are led to entrust ourselves to him. We thank Thee Lord for the purpose of the ages which Thou has set forth in Holy Scripture. We acknowledge there are many things about it which we do not fully understand but, nevertheless, we thank Thee for the light that is contained in scripture and for the light that the Holy Spirit has thrown upon these marvelous pages.

We thank Thee for the promises that have their climax in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for him. We praise Thee for a Father in heaven who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings and heavenly places in Christ. And we thank Thee Lord for the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who enlightens us concerning divine truth. May he do his work in our hearts tonight.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now, for those of you, who may not have been here until tonight, we are studying “The Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy” and this is the sixth in our series of studies in that topic. What we have done up to this point is to summarize in a very succinct way, simple way, brief way, pointed way, what God is doing through the ages according to the revelation that is found in Holy Scripture. And so we have studied the Creation, we have studied the Fall, we have studied the significance of the patriarch Abraham, and especially the covenant that God made with him as well as the way by which Abraham was justified because that’s a pattern how you and I may be justified. And you’ll remember it was by believing the word of God concerning the promised one who was to come. We then looked at Moses and Moses’ Covenant, the Covenant of the Law. It was sought to show that the Covenant of the Law was not an eternal covenant but a covenant which was consummated in time and which came to its conclusion when the Lord Jesus died on Calvary’s cross and the veil of the temple was writ in twain from top to bottom; God’s way of saying that the Mosaic Law had been done away with as a code under which men had been placed.

Now, of course, we don’t mean by that the truth contained in the Mosaic Law such as the revelation of the moral character of God, that that no longer stands, but nevertheless the fact remains that law as a code has been done away with and we’re not under it as Israel was during the period of its liability. We tried to point out in connection with that this particular history of human beings has a history of twenty five hundred years before the law was given, before Moses was given that law. And, therefore, to live and to live in a way that pleases God, for that is what Abraham did, the law is not an essential. But it was an essential at that particular time and the purpose that God had in mind in showing us that we are sinners and preparing us for the offer of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then in our last study we looked at the unconditional promise program through the ages, that is the covenantal promises that were given to Abraham, to David, and the New Covenant that was given through Jeremiah. These three covenants, unconditional covenants, dependent upon the sovereign mercy and purpose of God which shall be fulfilled. We looked at some of the prophecies of the Old Testament which set forth the triumphant conclusion of those three unconditional covenants. And we looked briefly at Romans chapter 11, and the New Testament where in Romans 11 verse 25 through verse 27, the Apostle Paul in a climatic statement concerning the future salvation of ethnic Israel used portions from the three unconditional covenants to underline the fact that those promises that God had made many centuries before were promises that he would fulfill. That the truthfulness of the word of God depends upon the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, to David, and through Jeremiah in Jeremiah chapter 31.

I made reference also to a common objection that was raised to the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament such as the ones we read. A frequently heard objection is, “Well in the New Testament we don’t have references to the land promises.” Now, I made this statement and I stand behind it that the apostles would have considered that singularly strange if not perverse for someone to make an objection like that. For this reason, the apostle’s Bible was the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, it was the Bible of the Christian Church for a lengthy period of time. And the promises concerning the land are written over and over again in the Old Testament.

Now, I also suggested that in the light of that objection there seems to be lurking behind the demand that the promises set out so clearly and fully in the Old Testament must be repeated in the New Testament in order to validate them I suggested that that is a false principle. That we should not say that the things that are said in the Old Testament must be repeated in the New Testament to be valid, that the proper principle, the correct principle, to my mind and to the mind that many of us is that we should not consider

invalid and discard any of the Old Testament unless we are specifically told to do so in the New Testament.

Now, let me give you a simple illustration. In the New Testament we are told that the Law of Moses had been done away with. We are told that we are not under that code. We are told specifically that we are not under the moral law, the civil and ceremonial law, and the social law although there are many features of the particular revelation that are stated again in the New Testament as apostolic teaching. For example, nine of the ten commandments, Bible teaches generally admit, are repeated in the New Testament. But the one concerning the Sabbath is not. The ceremonial law is obviously not something that lies upon us as an obligation. Epistle to the Hebrews has specifically made that point. Anyone who reads that will realize the author of the Epistles to the Hebrews did not believe we were under the Mosaic ceremonial law.

In fact, even contrasts what the Lord Jesus has done with what was done in the Old Testament. I hope I don't have to keep repeating that because it lies at the among the fundamentals that determine that the Christian has a hope of the ethnic future of Israel and the kingdom of God upon the earth. In fact, I believe, that I can honestly say that God stakes his word and character upon that fact. Those promises are made. Jerusalem shall ultimately be exalted. The kingdom of God shall exist upon this earth as set forth in the promises of the Old Testament.

Now, tonight I want to turn to the climatic, perhaps we should say the critical, at least the critical or climatic, first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in fulfillment of the promises concerning the seed. I'd like to suggest also that if there is a fulfillment of the promise of the seed of Abraham and the seed of David, specifically and literally, then we may expect also a specific and literal fulfillment of the other promises that were made to those individuals or through the prophets of the Old Testament. So tonight then we are turning to Luke, chapter 1, verse 26 through verse 28, and let me read these verses. We

could, of course, used the Matthian account, but I'm using the Lukan account for our principle Scripture tonight.

“Now, in the sixth month” Luke 1:26, “the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary and having come in the angel said to her ‘Rejoice highly favored one the Lord is with you blessed are you among women.’ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God and behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the highest and the Lord God will give him the throne of this father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end. And Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be since I do not know, man?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the highest will overshadow you: Therefore also that holy one who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now, indeed Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age and this is now, the sixth month for her who was called barren for with God nothing will be impossible.’ Then Mary said, ‘Behold thy maidservant of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word,’ and the angel departed from her.”

On the first pages of Scripture before Eden’s gate is shut and locked by bolts of flame, heaven gave word of what was to come. The undoer of the curse of sin we are told would be a woman’s seed. Now, we all know, that promise one of the greatest promises of the word of God and we read, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, [That is between Satan and the woman.] and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.” From that time, the thought of

Messianic motherhood had fallen deep within the heart and soul of the Hebrews. As a matter of fact, when the first individual was born, the thought may well have been from the birth of Abel that the undoer of the curse of sin had come. Of course in the Old Testament we learn that there were centuries that would come before he would come. But at any rate, that was the constant hope of the women that they might really be the mother of the Messiah who would come who would undo the effects of the fall in the Garden of Eden.

Well, after thousands of years the fullness of time did come with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is he who is the one who will undo the work of the fall in the Garden of Eden. Those passages are so interesting, Genesis chapter 3 in verse 15, “Thou” we read “he shall bruise your head, thou you shall bruise his heel.” Thou is personal and so we should expect that the other would be personal. The head and the heel are individuals, individualized, and so we should expect that the head and the heel would be individualized in the fulfillment of the prophecy. In other words this is a prophecy of the seed of the woman that is to come.

We don't have time to turn to Isaiah but there Isaiah given the prophecy that the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel. The virgin, well Isaiah chapter 7 refers, ultimately, to the Lord Jesus; the term virgin is the Hebrew word *almah* which in the Old Testament never refers to anything other than a virgin. It doesn't occur often but never anything other than a virgin not a young woman who is married but to a virgin. When the Septuagint the Old Testament translation in Greek of the Old Testament Hebrew was made the term that is used is the term *parthenos* which in Greek means a virgin. So the Greek translators understood it that way and when we come to the New Testament in Matthew in chapter 1, refers to that prophecy, he too speaks of the virgin as one who has not been married.

Some other passages we don't have time to turn to but I think you can see that we have here clearly in the Old Testament the prophecy of a virgin birth and now, in time in

the birth of our Lord this has come to pass. This is still a very hotly debated thing among scholars. Many of them will tell you that they do not believe the virgin birth accounts.

Emil Bruner, who was a professor for a number of years of dogmatics at the University of Zurich in Switzerland, believed that the birth accounts contained what he called legendary features that Jesus is the product of two sexes although parthenogenesis expresses an important religious idea. Jesus is by nature God, but the virgin birth is something we are not to believe.

Helmut Thielicke, who has just not too long ago died, one of the outstanding evangelical theologians and preachers in Germany, took the viewpoint that the belief in the virgin birth was optional not an obligatory confession, obligatory confession. He believed it but he didn't think it was necessary to believe it.

Donald Bloesch, a contemporary Presbyterian scholar, has accepted the virgin birth but doesn't believe it's necessary for salvation although necessary for the integrity of faith and marking off our Lord's origin from the human race as his end is marked off by the resurrection.

G.C. Berkouwer, the Dutch theologian who was an evangelical and still living although is retired, does have a doughty defense of the virgin birth insisting that it is something that is taught in the word of God, and that it is through the virgin birth that we are delivered from the guilt of Adam's sin.

It's very hotly debated in contemporary circles in the Christian world, for example, some of you may remember that sometime back in one of the messages here I made reference to a book that was published a year or so ago by Dr. Uta Ranke-Heinemann, professor of history of religion at the University of Essen. She in nineteen ninety, I believe, wrote a book called *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven* in which she asserted that Mary was not a virgin when she gave birth to the Lord Jesus. She was the first woman to receive a chair in theology at a German University, but she lost it over this dispute concerning the virgin birth. Her statement which she made which sums up in,

not the most clarifying way, her view was this; the biological semen was Joseph's, but the theological semen was the Holy Spirit's. Her book was essentially an indictment of clerical attitudes toward sex, but this was one of the major points that he wants to make.

Now, I don't like to engage in politics as you know,. I'm interested in politics and I don't think that I have ever given the impression to the audience that I would like for my friends to vote a certain way or that I would try to exert any kind of influence, those of you who know me know I don't have any influence. But some of you don't know might think I did have some influence and so you might say something about it. So I just want to say a few things that don't have any thing to do with politics but many of you as I heard the Democratic convention and some of the speaker's, political conventions are very interesting in parts but as a whole most of us get lost in them.

But Mr. Jesse Jackson made some points that touch on this point in his speech that he gave. I'm not saying anything about his politics, I'm just going to talk about his theology. He made the statement that Jesus was born to a homeless couple. That's an error. Mary and Joseph had a home in Nazareth. They were married by Jewish law. They were legally married they had a home. The reason they were in the area was because they were required by the Roman government to come and enroll, and they had to enroll according to the membership in the family that they had and where they had their origins. So they had to come to Bethlehem. For they both were of David's line.

He also asserted that Jesus was the child of a single mother. Now, that is not so. Mary and Joseph were considered fully married under Jewish law and so our Lord was not the child of a single mother. He was the child of Joseph and of Mary, of Joseph legally but he possessed a human nature that he possessed from Mary. He said that Mary was abused and questioned when she said Joseph was not the father. No one but Joseph knew that Joseph was not the father other than Mary. There was no abusing, no questioning, and so, consequently, that's false. He suggested that Mary was called, I'm using his terms I don't want to say anything he didn't say, was called “immoral if she

aborted or unfit if she had the baby.” Well such statements can be attributed to the fertile imagination of politicians because there isn’t a thing in the Bible to suggest that.

I mention this because it is so often in our public life, and it’s not true of the Democrats only, its true of the Republicans, it’s true of all who get up in public discourse and talk, when they refer to the Bible it’s so often that they are wrong in their theological handling of the word of God. We are living in the day of scriptural misunderstanding and ignorance. That is surely true. So the question of the virgin birth still on the front pages and still, if I may indict me and others as well, the reverends are still erring over the truth of the word of God and that’s why you people who sit in the pews ought to read the Bible constantly for yourself and check everything anyone ever says behind the pulpit desk such is this, check me, I hope you will. If you find I erred come and tell me. I probably won’t like it but maybe after you’ve corrected me I’ll change what I say when I stand behind the pulpit desk which is probably which is probably what I should do.

Now, we should not be surprised at unbelief as long as the Scriptures were believed, the supernatural birth of our Lord Jesus Christ was believed. It’s very interesting that the denial of the virgin birth coincided with the denial of the deity and pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ. So when men began to deny that, they denied, of course, the virgin birth.

The Apostle Paul makes a statement in 1 Corinthians chapter 4 in verse 6, which I think is important because it points us to the problem that human beings have with reference to divine truth. Paul wrote in verse 6 of 1 Corinthians 4, “Now, these things brethren I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for you sakes that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written or not to go beyond what is written that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.” In other words, the rule of Christians is don’t go beyond that which stands written in the word of God.

Now, let’s turn to our passage, and we want to look first of all at the angelic commission that is described in verse 26 through verse 29. Remember the forerunner,

John the Baptist, has been announced also by Gabriel and he has been conceived, and he is due to arrive in twelve short weeks. We read now, in the sixth month, that's the sixth month of the pregnancy of Elizabeth, so twelve short weeks the forerunner is to come. So the natural question would be, for those who knew anything about this, well from whence is the Lord coming if the forerunner is due in twelve weeks? The one whom he is the forerunner of surely must not be far off, because he is the greater than the forerunner. Therefore, where shall we find the mother elect would have been a question that would have been raised. In other words, the Lord Jesus was conceived and born in this electric atmosphere the forerunner has been born and now the time has come for the seed promised way back in the Old Testament to make his appearance. The same Gabriel I mentioned who announced the first advent to Daniel in chapter 9 is the one appointed by God to announce the advent to Mary. I think that's striking. You go back and read Daniel chapter 9, it's Gabriel who gives Daniel the information in Daniel, chapter 9, telling us precisely when we may expect the Messiah to come. Very few people paid attention to Daniel's prophecy is the 9th chapter and so they weren't looking as they should have been.

And now, Gabriel again makes an announcement. “Now, in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.” Nazareth what a surprise, history passes Nazareth by, poetry passes Nazareth by, in fact it appears that all the places from which our Lord might come, Nazareth would be the least likely, Nazareth in Galilee. Galilee they said was too dry to produce a prophet. Read the Book of John. Out of Galilee arises no prophet. Of course, like so many they were wrong. Jonah had come but only Jonah out of Nazareth no prophet. And then Nazareth what did they say about Nazareth? Why Nazareth could produce no good thing. So its surprising in the sixth month the angel Gabriel sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, verse 27, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, the virgin's name was Mary.

Now, it is difficult to form an unbiased viewpoint of the Virgin Mary. One of the reasons is that we who are Protestants are so disturbed by some of the things that have been said about her by our Roman Catholic friends. Someone has put it this way; we are confused with the childish prattle of their Ave Maria's, Hail Mary's. In fact Hail Mary in sports today is the name now, of a particular football play, in fact the Cowboys use. Oh I know, you're thinking about Roger Staubach when he threw Drew Pearson, the impossible catch by Pearson, and the win that they had over the Minnesota Vikings at a very crucial time. But that has become a specific play, that's now, called the Hail Mary and the Cowboys used it last season and managed to get a touchdown out of it when Alvin Harper caught the pass. Three men go down station themselves in a particular way, quarterback throws it to the middle man hoping that in the crowd jumping for the ball, someone would catch it. They had at least three there and having Alvin Harper who was a Southeastern conference high jump champion, and you can imagine he'd have a pretty good chance of getting it, and, of course that is what happened.

So here it is “rejoice highly favored one or hail highly favored one the Lord is with you blessed are you among women.” Never before have angels so addressed a mortal but it is very fit. Angels don't read Emily Post, they don't read Amy Vanderbilt, and they address individuals according to truth. And so this is not something said just to be nice but rejoice highly favored good one. That's a very interesting expression. It means something like someone who has been blessed, someone who has been graced. Now, the larger religious organizations speaks of her in Latin as full of grace, grace to dispense, no, no, she's full because of what she is received. Not that she has great grace to dispense to the rest of us if we pray in her name, but rather she has been blessed by the Lord God as the mother of the seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. So “Rejoice highly favored one the Lord is with you blessed are you among women.” What a magnificent address incidentally. Rejoice highly favored one and then two promises the Lord is with you blessed are you among women, magnificent address.

Now, then, verse 30, the angelic communication is described. The angel said to her, oh I should have not stopped, I should not have passed by the statement in verse 29, “But when she saw him she was troubled at his saying and considered what manner of greeting this was.”

Now, I want you to turn forward to chapter 2 in verse 51. This will give you a little insight into Mary. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them but his mother kept all these things in her heart.

You know, I hate to get old in one respect. When you get old you are easily deterred from something else and thinking about those football passes deterred me from what I was saying.

What I was saying was we are confused, we Protestants, by the childish prattle of their Ave Maria's. We are amused at the Roman Catholics dogma of the Immaculate Conceptions and ever virginities. We are surprised and shocked that the apotheosis of the virgin to make her out as if she is a divine being, lift her to a throne practically higher than her son the Lord Jesus Christ, worshipped and devout homage, supplicated with more earnest and more frequent prayers, and at the blasphemous of their Mariology which make her a supreme honor and supreme in heaven. That's not surprising that Bible students turn aside from that because that is blasphemous isn't it?

On the other hand, very often we Protestants in our endeavor to point out that the church in those respects stand on the ground of blasphemy, we ourselves have not appreciated Mary the mother of our Lord. Now, that statement in chapter 1, verse 29, “But when she saw him she was troubled at his saying and considered what manner of greeting this was.” And then in chapter 2, verse 51, we read, “His mother kept all of these things in her heart.” And then also in verse 19 in chapter 2, “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart,” will surely give you an impression of the marvelous spirituality of the Virgin Mary.

Now, I mentioned I think the other day somewhere maybe in these meetings, but I am occasionally preaching elsewhere and I’ve forgotten exactly where I may have said this, but in the Magnificat, in the Magnificat that is found right here over and over again that Magnificat is simply the putting together of words from the Old Testament. In other words it’s very plain that Mary was one who meditated deeply upon the Holy Scriptures. I think it can be said that those who look constantly to the Lord God are those who see spiritual things. It’s they who read the word and who read the word on their knees and ask God for light who come to understand the truth of God. And if you and I are not reading and pondering the word of God it’s not surprising that we don’t see the great truths of the word of God. So my word of exaltation to you is read the word of God, study the word of God, get down upon your knees and have the word of God before you and ask the Lord to give you light and make that the most significant part of your daily life the communion that you have with Him over the Scriptures that are spoken to you and to me.

Now, the communication that is given in verse 30, begins with “Don’t be afraid Mary for you have found favor with God and behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus. He will be great he shall be called son of the highest and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be not end.” Marvelous blessings for Mary, blessings that she will receive herself, not to dispense to others, she is one who receives, and so it’s not surprising we see that. We also learn of the blessings that will come from Mary as the instrumentality of God’s promises. Notice verse 31, “Behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus.” Great in his name because Jesus means the Lord is my salvation. Great in his character because he is the son of God and great also in the calling because the angel says the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.

You know, one could start as Mr. Spurgeon did in one of his sermons with a little clause he will be great and set forth most of the soteriological teaching of the word of God. Think of the greatness of the son of God, God's prophet, God's priest, God's king, think of all that he accomplishes when he dies on Calvary's cross, your justification, forgiveness of your sins, the ultimate hope that you have all of the many things that are found in the word of God as the products of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the ground for the angel saying he will be great.

Now, John is said to be great before the Lord. I've often wondered about that I don't want to make too much of this preachers are inclined to do that. But Gabriel said when he announced the birth of John that "He would be great in the sight of the Lord." But with reference to the Lord Jesus, there is not kind of qualifying statement at all, "He will be great and will be called the son of the highest and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David."

Now, you can see that what is bound up in this is all of those promises that we were talking about last week, those Messianic promises that had to do with the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. All the promises that have to do with the future of ethnic Israel, all the promises that had to do with the land, all the promises which had to do with the glories of that kingdom are bound up in the statement will give him the throne of his father David.

Many of you in this audience were here Sunday morning when I was giving the series on the life of David, and you'll remember when we came to 2 Samuel chapter 7, where the Davidic covenant is set forth and I stopped and gave five messages on the Davidic covenant. And if you have any doubt about what is meant by that then go in the tape room and get those tapes because I went into great detail over what is actually meant for the promises to be given to David that they would come from him and an eternal kingdom and an eternal throne and that that demanded that there come from David someone who would be eternal. That is, those promises if they are to be eternal

they must run out in someone who possesses eternity. Is that not clear to you? How can you have anything eternal like a throne in a kingdom if you don't have someone who is eternal? So the promises had to run out in someone who would have eternal life. That's why there can be an eternal throne and someone to sit upon it. That was a promise of the coming of the seed of Abraham and David, the Lord Jesus Christ

Now, I find it very difficult I must confess I have lots of friends who fall right into this category and I don't want to act like I'm more intelligent than they are, more learned than they are. There are many areas of Biblical truths that they are probably far more learned than I am, but in some things I must say I think they're wrong. Here we have notice the words the angel said, “We have a prophecy of a son that he will be great that he will be given the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever;” a kingdom that has its foundation, its central feature in the ethnic necessity of the future of the nation Israel.

Many years ago when I was in the insurance business I read a book written by a man who was a minister to the Jewish people. W.E. Blackstone wrote a little book called *Jesus is Coming*. When I read it I was astonished. Someone told me it's a great book and I read it and the book is a fine book but the thing that makes it a fine book it's so largely a quotation of the Holy Scripture. And he magnificently put those texts to Scripture together to make his point. But in it he told a story and I've never forgotten it. In fact I've used it a half a dozen times in the ministry I guess. It's the story about the inconsistency of accepting literally verse 31 and spiritualizing verse 32 and verse 33, “Behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son and you shall call his name Jesus,” was that fulfilled literally? Now, “He will be great because the son of the highest the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end.” To be fulfilled literally? I would think so.

The story he told was the story of a conversation between a Christian minister and a Jew. Taking a New Testament and opening it to Luke chapter 1, verse 32, the Jew asked "Do you believe what is here written shall be literally accomplished, the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David that he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever?" "I do not" answered the clergyman. But rather take it to be figurative language descriptive of Christ's spiritual reign over the church. Then replied the Jew "Neither do I believe literally the words preceding which say that his son of David should be born of a virgin but take them to be merely a figurative manner of describing the remarkable character if purity of him who is the subject of the prophecy." "But why" the Jewish man continued "do you refuse to believe literally verses 32 and 33 while you believe implicitly the far more incredible statement of verse 31?" "I believe it" the clergyman said, "Because it's a fact." "Ah" exclaimed the Jew. With an expressible air of scorn and triumph Mr. Blackstone said, "You believe Scripture because its fact, I believe Scripture because it's the word of God." You see the difference? It makes all the difference in the world.

Well Mary is puzzled by this naturally so we read in verse 34, "Then Mary said to the angel how can this be since I do not know, a man." Well it is, of course, something that would be hard to be understood. This is a miracle and so we read in verse 45, "Blessed is she who believed for their will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." But specifically verse 37, "With God nothing shall be impossible."

Now, having said that the angel goes in a says a word about the manner of the Messiah's birth and the angel answered and said to her "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the highest will overshadow you, therefore, also the holy one which is to be born will be called the son of God." You can see the difference between John's origin and our Lord's origin in this. They are worlds apart. John came in the promise of the Lord God concerning the forerunner and at a specific time announced by

Gabriel. But our Lord comes in supernatural fashion. So the Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the most high will overshadow you, the holy one who is to be born will be called the son of God. The father is the father of our Lord's human nature through the Spirit. And so when we read here in verse 35, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you the power of the highest will overshadow you.” My mind always goes back to the statement made by Campbell Morgan, “The holy mystery, the touch of God upon the simple life that made it forever sublime.” “The power of the highest shall come upon you, shall overshadow you, the Holy Spirit will come upon you,” the father the father of his human nature by the spirit, Mary the mother of his human nature by the Spirit. I mention it's by the spirit because Mary was a sinner. In verse 47, we read “That Mary in her Magnificat says my spirit has rejoiced in God my savior.”

By the virgin conception then the body of the seed of the woman is fit for the habitation of a holy nature because the holy one shall be born is truly holy. The question arises at this point is it necessary to believe the virgin birth? I've made reference to that because it's very frequently in modern theology debaters say individuals who say they even believe it though they have doubts about it but it is not necessary to believe. Now, I fully agree that it's possible for a person to be confused about this and not have the answer to the question but be a simple believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they say, “I look to the Lord to clarify this for me.” I'm not denying such a person is not a Christian. What I am suggesting that theologically it's necessary to believe the virgin birth. I'll tell you why. The first place it's essential for the Davidic domain. The very thing that was promised in 2 Samuel 7, that the angel promises that the son of God shall have the throne of his father David and rule forever upon it could not have come to pass if our Lord had been born of Joseph. Why, well because there was an obscure prophecy in Jeremiah, chapter 22 in verse 30 that says that anyone who proceeds from this King in Israel shall never sit on the throne of David. Joseph is in that line. If our Lord had been of Joseph's seed, he would disqualify sitting on the throne of David.

As a matter of fact, our Lord Jesus possesses the only incontrovertible genealogy from King David and that's found in Holy Scripture. All the records of genealogy were destroyed when the Romans took Jerusalem. The only person at this day who has a genealogical record by which could demonstrate that he belongs on David's throne is the Lord Jesus Christ. So essential for Davidic dominion is the Virgin birth for Joseph was his legal father. He obtained legally the throne rights from Joseph but avoided the curse because he was not of the fleshly line of Joseph.

I'd suggest also the virgin birth is essential for a divine deliverance. Is it not Job who in his book in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter in verse 32, in verse 33, speaking about the mediator who is to come says, “For he is not a man as I am that I may answer him and we should go to court together nor is there any mediator between us who can lay his hand on us both.” You see the reason that our Lord must be born of a virgin is that he cannot be touched by human sin. A sinful man cannot save sinful men. A sinless man at least has qualifications, but even the sinless man if he were only a man could not save he needs divine power. And so, consequently, the Lord Jesus Christ we have the divine son, divine personality who possesses human nature as well as a divine nature and, thus, has the power to save us and the qualifications to be that savior who does save. Consequently, our Lord cannot be born as Dr. Heinemann has said, “Of Joseph's semen, he cannot be.

The credibility about the virgin birth rests, ultimately, upon the miraculous. God's not imprisoned within natural processes. There are so many things that we don't understand that it is amazing that human beings will stumble over this. Do you understand an electric light? Well I suggest if you were really a scientist you would reach a place where you see beyond this we cannot go. Do you understand the nature of the universe, scientifically? We wouldn't have a super collider if scientist really believed that they did. That secret rests with God at the present time. And so a virgin birth, there is no way in which we can deny it, “How can this be since I do not know, man” the answer is for with God nothing will be impossible.

And so I conclude with the creeds that the Lord Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and is thus a promised seed of Genesis 3:15, the heir to the Davidic throne, the heir to the prophecies and promises that were made to Abraham, and also the one in the consummation of the New Covenant has made it possible for you to have the forgiveness of sins.

Anselm was an eleventh and twelfth century theologian. He reasoned rather deeply about a lot of things in the Christian faith. He said there were four ways to make a human body; one way is with a man and woman; a second way is without a man or a woman, Adam was so made by the Lord God; without a woman, Eve was so made; and without a man, our Lord Jesus Christ.

So how shall we respond to this? I'm going to read something that I've read before I believe in this chapel more than once but when I read it many years ago it really impressed me very much and every time I think of the virgin birth and think about the conclusion of any kind of talk and I think about these words by Clarence Edward Macartney who in the last generation was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburg. Mr. Macartney in his simple study on the virgin birth at the conclusion of it said, "I would rather bow and adore than debate and argue. Let us even go unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass. Come with the shepherds and wise men let us bow down before him who came that we might become the sons of God. Shepherds with your staves and shaggy coats move over. Wise men with your gifts your gold, frankincense and myrrh, move over please. Wondrous star with your guiding radiance move over and make room for me. That's how I feel. The angel said he shall be great. He is great, he will be great, he will always be great and amid his greatness is his mighty power to save a sinner like me."

So join the voices of the ages, Macartney didn't say that I'm saying that, join the voices of the ages the angels and the redeemed and sing halleluiah for the Lamb of God has made it possible for you to have the forgiveness of your sins. If you're here in this

auditorium and you've never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we point you to him. He's great enough for all of your sins and you have many, he's great enough for the forgiveness of them, he's great enough for justification of life, he's great enough to establish you in the family of God as a son or daughter, and he's great enough to be your high priest now and forever. Come to him and believe in Him.

Let's bow in a closing word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for these magnificent words that are the special words of our triune God in heaven for us. We thank Thee Lord for the seed of the woman, the Lord Jesus Christ, for the faithfulness of the God of heaven to his word, and for his mighty power in accomplishing all of these promises. We look forward to the completion of them and especially, Lord, for saving me, for saving us who need divine power, to have divine life.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.