

## Dear God | Why Christmas? Part 1 | Discussion Guide - *Isaiah 7:14*

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The Liturgical Calendar that many churches follow each year includes Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and a few others. If followed, it provides an annual opportunity to teach and celebrate the distinctives of the Christian Faith. The danger is that we miss their importance because we are so accustomed to them. We should approach each year afresh! So, Merry Christmas!

**Isaiah 7:14 (NLT)** *All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').*

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### What is the Virgin Birth?

*The Virgin Birth is about God becoming Man.* God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, became a man - specifically a Jewish man, born and raised in a Jewish culture. Consider for a moment - the Infinite poured Himself into a finite person. The Eternal became a mere moment. That God could and would become that which He created, it's beyond miraculous!

**John 1:10 (NLT)** *He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him.*

What do we need to understand about this? *This is AWESOME!* This is totally worthy of a "Geek out" moment! Mary was pregnant with God! Mary was given the privilege of bringing God into this World. Mary then demonstrated the mission of every Christian. *The Holy Spirit filled her with God, and she gave God to the world!*

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### What actually Happened?

**Luke 1:35 (NLT)** *The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.*

According to the angel and **Hebrews 10:5**, *God the Holy Spirit created a human body in Mary's womb for Jesus to inhabit.* Now, Jesus wasn't merely "wearing" his humanity. Jesus inhabited His body in the same way we inhabit ours. You are inseparable from your body and feel all that your body feels. So did Jesus with some exceptions. Jesus was God AND Man. He was fully human AND Divine. He did not have a human father, nor was He born under the curse of sin. (**1 Cor 15:47**)

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### Does it Matter?

There have been a number of people over the last 150 years who have questioned whether or not this happened or was even necessary. Admittedly, there are a number of beliefs that are up for discussion in the Christian Faith. However, the *Virgin Birth* is not one of them. It is foundational to the Christian Faith - to an *ordinary faith*. Without it, you don't have a man who comes from heaven. Without a man who is fully God and Man, you no longer have a viable candidate to take our place in God's judgement upon sin. So, yes the Virgin Birth matters, especially in regard to the Bible, Jesus Christ and Salvation.

*Do You Believe the Bible?* One of the earliest songs many children have learned over the years is Jesus Loves Me. The well-known verse states, "Jesus loves me. This I know for the Bible tells me so." The Bible tells a number of incredible and miraculous stories. The simple question is, "Do I believe them or not?" After all the Virgin Birth is merely one of many miraculous stories.

Mel Gibson was once asked in an interview if he believed the Bible. His response was an immediate and unequivocal "Yes". He said he believes every word of the Bible. Then he added, "You have to believe it all. Either you believe all of it or none of it." If you don't believe the Bible, then what do you believe? What informs our understanding of truth or our moral senses?

*Do You Believe in Jesus Christ?* The REAL One, not an imagined version of Jesus. We can't create our own Jesus. Because, the REAL Jesus *suffered* for our sins.

**Matthew 1:21 (NLT)** *And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."*

The Angel that showed up in Joseph's dream connected the Virgin Birth to the Cross. In order for the Cross to have any real meaning, three things had to be true. The one who died on it had to be a man, Infinite (He had to be God) and Innocent (without sin). Jesus born of a Virgin is the only way.

*Do You Believe in Salvation?* The Virgin Birth teaches us that our salvation is entirely supernatural (of God). When God wanted to save the world, He had to take the initiative and send his Son. We were helpless. We could not bring a "Christ" into the world. The Virgin Birth teaches us that salvation is entirely by grace. God does it all because we could not do any of it.

**John 11:25-26 (NLT)** ... *"I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. 26 Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never, ever die. Do you believe this...?"*

There will come a day when clever words, cliches, and speakers who tell us what we like to hear won't matter. In that day, we won't need someone to make us feel better, or encourage us. On that day we will need a Savior. And, there is only one... *We believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; - The Apostles Creed*

### Discussion:

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- Discuss the a few holidays of the Liturgical Calendar. What is the value of remembering them each year? How could we use them to teach the next generation about faith?
  - Name a few miraculous birth stories in the Bible. How did they prepare us for a Virgin Birth?
  - Discuss Mary and Joseph's situation and feelings. (Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:30-38)
  - Read **Philippians 2:6-7**. What is the Virgin Birth? Discuss.
  - Review **Hebrews 10:5**. How did God do it? How was Jesus fully God AND Man?
  - Read **1 Corinthians 15:45-47**. What does Paul mean when he speaks of Jesus as the "Last Adam" and the "Second Man"?
  - Do you believe the Bible account of the Virgin Birth? Why or Why not?
  - Read **Hebrews 2:17-18**. Does this Scripture encourage you in any way? How?
  - Share the story of how you met Jesus Christ and discovered Salvation.
  - Did anything stand out in your reading today that you could share with someone else?