

January 3 Answers

- **Galilee** is very important in the story of Jesus: he grew up there, his ministry was headquartered there, many of his disciples were from there, he performed most of his miracles there, and of his 32 parables, 19 were spoken there.
- You cannot **deny** the virgin birth of Jesus and be a Christian. The virgin birth of Christ is an **essential** Christian belief. It's part of a body of truths that are called "**orthodoxy**" (from the Greek *orthos* meaning "straight" and *doxa* meaning "belief or doctrine").
- How do we know that Mary was a virgin? When Gabriel told Mary that she would conceive a child, Mary said, "How can this be, since I do not **know** a man?" (Luke 1:34 NKJV).
- Gabriel told Mary that her pregnancy would be the result, not of physical intercourse, but of the miraculous work of the Holy **Spirit** (Luke 1:35). Jesus' **conception** would be the work of God alone, ensuring Mary's virginity until Jesus' birth.
- The virgin birth is an essential truth in several ways: (1) It is essential to a proper understanding of the **person** of Jesus. When Jesus was conceived, an eternal, **preexistent** person, the second person of the Trinity, took on humanity, flesh and blood, our human nature. Jesus is Emmanuel: God-with-us (Matt 1:23). He is the God-man, truly God and truly man, two distinct **natures** in **one** Person.
- (2) It is essential to the moral **character** of Jesus. In the OT, the animals sacrificed for atonement for sin had to be without defect (Lev 1:3; 4:3; 6:6; etc., see 22:17–25; Mal 1:8). The perfection of their physical bodies pointed to the **spiritual** perfection of the coming Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).
- *Jesus was not **in** Adam when he sinned*, for Jesus is the second **person** of the Trinity, uncreated and eternal, and thus he is not affected by Adam's sin. At conception, the Son of God took on our human nature, enabling Jesus to be sinless and yet still be a descendant of Adam and qualified to be our High Priest.
- The corruption of the human nature is caused by a **deprivation**, that is, *a lack of a right **relationship** with God*. When the human nature from Mary was added to Jesus, it received from him all that it lacked, and, in him, our human nature was restored to its original state. That is why Jesus is called the "last **Adam**" (1 Cor 15:45).
- Two other reasons why the virgin birth is so important: (3) It **refutes** those who say that Jesus' birth was illegitimate. (4) The **truthfulness** of Scripture depends on it.
- The incarnation is a lesson in **self-denial**, and when Jesus later called on his disciples to deny themselves, he was asking no more of them than he himself had done.