

ADVENT FRIDAYS

Chapter Three – Can You Believe in a Virgin Birth?

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.
Genesis 1:1-2 ESV

Glen Scrivener has said, “Christians believe in the virgin birth of Jesus. Atheists believe in the virgin birth of the universe. Choose your miracle.”

I don’t remember the specific golf course where I shot my first 69, but I know it happened the spring semester of my freshman year at San Jose State University. While I signed many scorecards for a 70, breaking into the 60’s felt like a forbidden barrier. Ironically, it only took one time before I believed I could do it again and again.

We believe in many things every day. If you’re sitting in a chair, then you sat down believing the chair would hold you. When we turn the handle on the faucet, we believe water will flow out. Driving down the road requires us to believe the other drivers will follow the rules of the road.

What about the Christmas story? Before we believe the infant Jesus was laid in the manger, we must believe in a virgin birth. Do you believe?

The first two verses of the biblical narrative reveal “the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.” This same Spirit of God is the one who impregnated Mary (Matthew 1:18). As I write these words, a surge of doubt rips through my spine. Really? A virgin birth?

We are told that science and Christianity hold opposite viewpoints, but did you know that modern science was first developed by Christians? “Not despite their belief in a Creator,” Rebecca McLaughlin writes in *Is Christmas Unbelievable?* “but because of it.” The Christian pioneers of science didn’t question, “Is God working?” They asked, “How is God working?” Professor Hans Halvorson says, “Belief in a Creator God remains the best philosophical foundation for science today.”

There are rational, finely-tuned laws that science shows govern the universe. Yet, the very God who created these laws is not bound by them. He can and does behave differently at times. The resurrection of Jesus and the virgin birth occurring at specific times and places in history are two significant examples of God’s miraculous maneuvers of love toward his created beings—including us.

Is it important to know how God formed the universe, raised Jesus from the grave, or made way for a virgin birth for us to believe in Immanuel, God with us? I don’t think so. But we are pressed to consider Scrivener’s remarks and “Choose your miracle.”

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Opening Questions

1. What is the next barrier you are hoping to break in golf—100, 90, 80, 70, etc.?

Are you being intentional to improve your golf skills to help facilitate your belief that you will do it?

Reading: Genesis 1:1-2, 2:1-2; Matthew 1:18-23; Isaiah 7:14

The Spirit of God (Genesis 1:1-2)

2. Does knowing the same Spirit of God that formed the world we I experience help your belief in the virgin birth?

How might you share this with someone inquiring about Christmas?

An Angel of the Lord (Matthew 1:20)

3. Do you believe that God works outside the rational laws of the universe?

If this is true, how can you keep your heart and spirit open to God's unexpected ways of working around you?

The Sign of Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14)

4. The virgin birth was prophesied long before Joseph and Mary were betrothed. How does knowing the words of Isaiah help your belief that God was working out his plan of salvation for all humankind?
