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**B1024 – June 13, 2010 – The Jewish & Gentile Rejection Of The  
Virgin Birth**

We want to continue building the foundation under the Biblical doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have made a case the past two or three classes of the virgin birth. Keep in mind the method that we're using. We always associate a doctrine or a truth with an event. You always have an event of history and a truth or truths that God reveals through that event. That's the way you want to learn Scripture because if you don't learn it this way, what happens is that you can get to the point where you can start dismissing the historicity of Scripture, thinking all the time you're going to hold on to the truth. But if you've learned from the get go that you cannot accept truths unless the reality behind those truths is valid, then that insulates you, or it sets up a litmus test in your brain, so when these events are endangered warning bells go off and you realize, wait a minute, if we compromise this event then we dismiss the doctrine that goes with the event. So it's important that we understand this. Plus the fact that it's easier to believe the truth when you know that the truth actually occurred in history, and you're not the first person that walked and breathed that thought about this, struggled with this, and had to deal with it before the Lord. Lots of other people did in other centuries.

What we are doing in the NT is we're taking the same methodology and looking at the event of the virgin birth, and we're going to associate that event with what is called the hypostatic union of the Lord Jesus Christ. We'll explain that term as we get into that doctrine, but right now we're looking at the event of the virgin birth. There are three reasons from the Scripture why the virgin birth is necessary.

We outlined the last two times the three necessities of the virgin birth. It's Prophetically Necessary because of Jeremiah 22 and Isaiah 7. It Is Legally Necessary because of a legal unity that we all have in Adam, therefore the Lord Jesus could not be a descendant of Adam in the same sense we are because if He was then He inherits imputed sin. It's also Spiritually Necessary because He couldn't be caught in the fallen lineage of Adam or He would have had inherent sin; since Jesus Christ is a "Lamb without spot or blemish," He must go to the cross sinless. And the only way He can go to the cross sinless is to avoid having fallen flesh and that occurs only by the virgin birth which interrupts the transmission of the sin nature.

That's why the virgin birth is *sine qua non*, you cannot leave it. Maybe you wonder why I'm making such a big deal out of the virgin birth. We're going to see why, historically why. This is not a little side note to Christianity. This is the heart and substance of Christianity. Without the virgin birth we've got no salvation. And so today we're want to look at the reactions to the virgin birth claim. First the Jewish reaction, then the Gentile reaction, but whether it's the Jewish or the Gentile reaction it illustrates the presuppositions at work. When a believer comes to it they accept it, when a non-believer comes to it they reject it. Why? It's the same virgin birth. The virgin birth claim is being interpreted through one grid over here and another grid over here. Here's where we're going to see presuppositions.

First, the Jews had to face the claim of the virgin birth that was being made. Turn to John 8:41 and you'll see how apparently they were already doing this at the time of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jewish excuse to cover up and re-interpret the virgin birth claim is that Jesus was an illegitimate child, that Mary fornicated. You can't be nice about this, the Bible is quite brutal. It forces you to take a position; people don't like to take positions, but the Bible backs you into a corner. You've got to say it was a virgin birth or Mary fornicated. John 8:41, this is a hint many exegetical scholars have seen as sort of an intimation; it's one of these angry discourses between Jesus and the Jews, and He says, "You are doing the deeds of your father," in other words, you're murderers, not nice, this is the gentle Jesus operating in John 8. "They said unto him, 'We were not born of fornication,'" where'd they get that one from? It's an intimation that was on the street, this was the talk in the street, and Jesus had to deal with that, all of His life; you're a bastard, you're an illegitimate child.

I want to quote some Jewish authorities to show that this was a part of Jewish tradition. Joseph Klausner, a Jewish scholar, writes of the Mishnah, (the *Mishnah* is a compilation of Jewish writings from the general NT period).<sup>i</sup> “That Jesus is here referred to seems to be beyond all doubt.” Klausner notes that throughout the Jewish Talmud, including its Mishnaic section, Jesus is known as ‘*Yesho ben Pandera*’ (Jesus son of Pandera), a title which may refer to Mary’s alleged paramour or to the virgin-birth claim itself (virgin in Greek is *parthenos*).

A Talmudic scholar, Herbert Danby, summarizes the entire Talmudic reference to the virgin birth claim. ‘A *Yeshu*,” that’s Jesus’ name, Jesus=*Yeshu* “called Notsri, so Son of Stada, or Son of Panaters [or Pandera] was born out of wedlock. His mother was called Miriam. She was a woman’s hairdresser (the word here is *M’gadd’la*, a pun on the name Mary Magdalen).” So they confused Mary Magdalene with Mary the mother of Jesus, two different women. “Her husband was Pappus, the son of *Yehudah*,” they at least got that right, he was of the Judaic line, “and her paramour a Roman soldier, Pantera.”

This ancient Jewish unbelief very clearly contradicted the actuality of the virgin birth by the clear counterclaim that Mary fornicated. Unwittingly, however, this kind of reaction refutes the later unbelief among Gentile critics that the virgin birth claim came “later” in church history. It couldn’t have come later in church history because early on they were already calling Jesus a bastard. So the argument here is that this whole issue came up during Jesus’ lifetime, probably in John 8 he’s dealing with it right there. So if they’re calling Him a bastard, why are they doing that? They’re doing it because they have to deal with the virgin birth claim. So it obviously shows that the virgin birth claim was already circulating at the time of Jesus. Why do we make a big deal about that? There’s a good thing that came out of that rejection because modern Gentile critics of the virgin birth will tell you that the virgin birth was just an idea the Church invented in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. But we just read the Mishnaic writings and saw evidences that the Jews in the 1<sup>st</sup> century were denying the virgin birth claims of Joseph and Mary. So what can we say to the Gentile critics? If the Jews were already calling Mary a fornicator and Jesus an illegitimate son in the 1<sup>st</sup> century then obviously the 1<sup>st</sup> century church was making claims of the virgin birth. That proves the

virgin birth claim was not an idea invented later by the Church. That's the Jewish response.

Now we're going to deal with modern Gentile rejection. We go from the ancient Jewish rejection to the modern Gentile rejection. Turn to John 3 because this is the structure of the unbelief. Whether we're going to deal with this detail this week and another detail next week, what we want to see is the spiritual principle that's operating here because it operates in us. Every time we disbelieve, we share this kind of mentality. You pick it up like you do a virus, because it's all around us. Frankly, none of us are immune to this. We don't get antibodies to this till the resurrection.

John 3:16, right after the verse everybody knows, verse 17, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. <sup>18</sup>"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already," Why is that? The Second Advent hasn't happened, how can he be judged already? "because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." <sup>19</sup>"This is the judgment," Verse 19 expounds why unbelievers are already considered, theologically and spiritually, to be judged. "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>"For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." There's the explanation, Biblically, of unbelief.

It is not an intellectual problem, it's a spiritual problem. I don't want to get too close to this gospel thing because it's a reminder, a bothersome reminder that I am responsible for my life before the God who created me and the entire universe. And that's not comforting. I'm at odds with Him and I don't like to be reminded of that kind of responsibility, so I flee. It's part of the sinful fallen, sinful nature, to flee that confrontation. Were it not for the grace of God, we'd all be fleeing. It's because He has personally intervened in our lives, graciously, to call us to Himself that we face Him.

We've seen that men love darkness so they invent a cover story. The mechanism for the cover up... there's another passage in the NT parallel to John 3 in mechanism. Turn to Rom 1, there's a few vocabulary words that we want to look at here, because the rest of today we're going to develop those

words. The picture we get in the Scripture is when man rejects God's revelation there are certain things that begin to happen inside the person; certain things that happen in the mind, certain things that happen in the soul. This is a self-destructive consequence of fleeing the Light. That's why it's so serious. It's self-destructive, it starts a self-destructive process.

In Rom 1:18 Paul says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness," Why? He's talking about all kinds of men, whether they've heard the gospel or they haven't heard the gospel. "Men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." What is the truth that all men suppress? ALL men suppress this truth. He goes on to explain, verse 19, "because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." The word "excuse" is a technical term there, it's not just an excuse, it's a term for a defense in a court of law, "without a defense" *anapologetos*. Two words, *apologetos* from which we get the word apology, but it's not an apology in the sense of saying your sorry, it's a defense in a court of law. And the prefix *ana*—meaning "without." So it means these people are "without a defense." At the final judgment of history for the unbeliever, it wouldn't matter what defense lawyer you had come and argue your case, you haven't got a case.

Why would an unbeliever want to make a case at the final judgment? To get forgiveness, to get off the hook for not believing the gospel. To do that he'd have to come up with something. What might you come up with? Think from their shoes. You're facing God in the final judgment, you have not believed in the gospel, so you've got to come up with something, and basically you have to answer for your life. What are you going to build your case on? I think I would try to make the case that God, your Bible has errors in it or what about the people that never heard, something like that. Or God your existence just isn't clear. You can come up with 100 different things you might say. But what Paul says here is that there is nothing that you can say. Verse 20 says that regardless of what you say you knew very well that God was there and you are held accountable for that knowledge simply by being surrounded by His creation. Therefore it's beside the point whether you think the Bible has an error in it, whether the hot-n-tot from Africa ever heard the

Gospel, that's not the basis of the condemnation. The basis of the condemnation is because you lived, slept, breathed and ate in God's creation, and all the while you knew that, because of the verbs in verse 20—look at the verbs. What's one of the heavy main verbs in that text? It says "clearly seen." It's emphasis, not just "seen," but in the Greek it's *kataorao*, the Greek word from which we get "to see," but the *kata* prefix intensifies the meaning of the main verb. So they "clearly see." Not only is the verb intensive in its stem, but it's in the present tense. Isn't that interesting? It doesn't say they clearly saw. It says it's clearly being seen. How long has this been clearly seen? It's been clearly seen since the creation of the world. Does that include all people? Is everybody created? So that means everybody who's been created has seen and is accountable. Our basis of accountability is not whether we heard the gospel or not, it's whether we were a creature or not. Do you see how basic and fundamental that is. That catches everybody.

In verse 21 he goes into the consequences of the rejection in this life. "For even though they knew God, they did not honor God or give thanks," there's the response of the creature to the Creator. It's not an intellectual issue because they knew God, it's a spiritual issue. They did not honor or give thanks to God. Isn't that interesting that of all the different ways one could respond, it doesn't say they didn't obey Him, it says they didn't honor Him and give thanks, just be thankful. "But they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened, <sup>22</sup>Professing to be wise, they became fools." So the cause, if we think in terms of cause-effect, is spiritual, not giving thanks; the effect is intellectual, futility in speculations, foolish heart darkened, professing wisdom, becoming fools. That list of effects shows the destructiveness of not giving thanks. It makes no difference whether the person has an IQ of 180 or 80, IQ isn't the issue, the issue is not giving thanks.

Let's spell out that list of effects. "They became futile in their speculations," Futile is the word *mataiotes*, it's the NT Greek word that is translated by the Hebrew word "vanity" in Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs; remember the theme there, "vanity, vanity, all is vanity." This is that same word, it occurs in Eph 4 and in Colossians. Anywhere the mind of unbelief is discussed in the NT you will see this Greek word, *mataiotes*, it means vanity. "In their speculations..." what are speculations? They're guesses. They may be educated guesses, but they're still guesses. They don't know; they're just

guessing and its vanity on the thinking level. Speculations are what you think about; it's the basic ideas, its gut level thinking, what you believe most strongly, your presuppositions. On the most basic level you get screwed up; unbelief destroys thinking at the most basic level.

So it's not true that a person can remain unaffected by rebellion against God. That negative rejection always has a negative effect, that negative effect is *mataiotes* in their thinking. Their thinking gets all warped and it appears to have substance, but ultimately its hot air.

Then it says "their hearts were darkened," and it's the same kind of idea; they are wandering around without light in their hearts; that's the mind, mental blindness has set in and basically they've done this to themselves. They didn't want to see the light so God said, alright, you like the dark, you'll go blind. It's amazing; it's saying that in our unbelief, if we rebel against God's word, if we turn Him off, we wind up punching out our own eyes. What else can it mean, when their hearts became dark? It means that their ability to see reality correctly is gone.

Then verse 22 tells you what they're saying with their lips while this mental destruction is taking place. They're "Professing to be wise," see, this is a heightened form of wisdom to be able to say no to Jesus, that shows how intelligent I am. It takes extra thinking to deny creation and substitute evolution. This takes a higher order intelligence, you low class Christians that still believe in creation...While they're saying that what happened? "they became fools." That's what actually happened. The Greek word here isn't very flattering, it means "morons." That's the word, they "moron-ized" themselves, they became idiots. This is the result and all the while they are professing to be wise. I would venture to say there are probably more morons with PhD's after their names than probably any other strata of society, because that's where your rejection is the strongest. Think about it. So Paul takes you right through this decay process. There's radioactive decay and there's mental decay, not necessarily at the same rate. But in John 3 and Rom 1 unbelief sets in motion this decay into blindness.

Now we're going to trace a bit of history. It's one of these areas where I wish someone would create a short church history for us fundamentalists of what happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is a nightmare. All of you probably have

access to books, pamphlets, and stuff your parents read or your grandparents read, and if you could go back and look at that reading material of your ancestors in this century, say from 1910-1930, somewhere in that period of time, it would give you some insights into your own family, and some of the ideas that have crept into our family tree.

Just some quick background. When God moves, Satan makes a counter move, and there are two moves we want to look at: the Reformation and the Renaissance. The Reformation was God's move in Europe to get people back to the authority of the word of God. It started with men like Wycliffe who translated the Bible into other languages. Do you know why those men wanted to translate the Bible? These are great heroes of the faith. Here's what happened - an amazing work of God in providence. The Black Plague went across Europe and killed people by the thousands, the tens of thousands. It would go from one village to the next; people would be dying by the hundreds in every village. As the plague spread, the Roman Catholic priests fled the villages; that left the deacons of the Church. What were they going to do without a priest to recite the mass? They had to have something, and it was out of that social turmoil that they began to say we need a translation of the Bible. And a couple of guys here and there began to translate it. It came in response to this awful social upheaval. And one thing led to another and finally the whole Reformation ignited. So the Reformation was a return to the Scriptures.

But just after that was the Renaissance thing. The Renaissance is going back to the classes, and it's always looked upon as the new birth. I want you to look at the vocabulary because we've all learned this in our history courses and we've all, to that degree, sucked this up without thinking carefully. Think about this vocabulary. We've all heard of the Dark Ages. Who gave that name? Those of the Enlightenment Age. What kind of picture in your mind does that vocabulary denote? Dark Ages, that's when Christianity was covering Europe, it was the dark ages. Then the Dark Ages gave way to the Enlightenment, when philosophy and science began, the new birth. What was that? That was humanism. Men called light darkness and darkness light. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," and we all buy it in our history courses, we don't know what to think, we don't have enough time to critically think, so we buy it.

It is exactly the opposite. We're not saying everything was great in the Middle Ages, but the Middle Ages was not dark. There was a long line of Christians, largely emanating through Switzerland, who kept the light of the gospel at the price of their own blood, kept the light of the gospel throughout Europe, built hospitals, cared for the orphans, and cared for the widows. Books and libraries and valuable source materials were kept. Who did all that? It was the Christians. And all this is just swept aside... Dark Ages...Dark Ages... Dark Ages! That's the way we've all learned history, we've been trained in that vocabulary. And it was all the agenda of the humanists to get us to demean the contributions of Christians down through history. You've got to watch, there are powerful agendas at work.

So we have these two words. Out of the Renaissance unbelief became more clearly defined and widely expounded. In other words, what happened in the age of the Enlightenment? Actually, it's good in one sense, because what happened is that unbelief came more out in the open. You can study these thinkers and realize they're brilliant guys; I really think that if you are involved in the education sector and you're going to get your bachelor's degree and you're thinking about taking graduate courses or you're interested in that kind of thing, prepare yourself by reading Calvin on one side and on the other side go to Immanuel Kant; at least read Calvin. You can read Aristotle, Plato, but get some contrast. Put Calvin against these guys. Always read side by side, always read the Scripture or the men who defend the Scripture over against the men who attack the Scripture; don't just read the Scripture, read some of the attacks. It trains you to see where the attacks are coming from, how Satan is moving.

Here are the men: Kant and Hegel. They are the two biggies in this period of time, right around the birth of our country. These guys expounded unbelief in such a way that they wanted to reinterpret Christianity in terms of unbelief, the amoeba idea, that here you are and this big slurpy amoeba of unbelief comes and wants to slurp you up into itself. That's why you have these things that occur in family gatherings - oh Mary, she became a Christian but you know, she's such a weak person; she needs God as a prop, God as a crutch. That's the operation amoeba; we're going to psychologically explain why Mary believed the gospel. We as Christians can always turn it around, we can run an operation amoeba too, we just run it the other way around. Oh, I understand why John rejects the gospel, so would I if I knew I had to face a

God without any atonement, in all my filthy rags, I'd think of every excuse I could why the Bible was wrong. Now what are we doing? We're taking unbelief and we're absorbing it into our framework. Two can play that game.

What happened with Kant and Hegel was that they tried to take Christianity and suck it up into their amoeba of unbelief and reinterpret it. Out of that they taught men who taught men who taught men who taught men, who finally taught gospel ministers. And this crept into the seminaries; it crept into the mainline denominations. I want to quote an example: a faculty member of Presbyterian Western Seminary in Pittsburgh. Western Seminary has produced tremendous preachers of the gospel, and here's this guy, on the faculty at a Christian seminary, paid for with donated money, these guys never earn their own money, they always mooch off of Christian contributors; it burns me up. If you want to say what you want, hey, freedom of speech, fine, go out and earn you own way but don't parasite off of contributions by God-fearing people who have given, who have made sacrifices in their family budgets to pay, and these clowns have the gall to live off that kind of contributions. It goes on all the time. Here's a guy, a faculty member, and what better place can Satan have these guys than at seminary, because that way you can contaminate all the ministers and then you've ruined hundreds of pulpits in the next generation; slick trick. This quote shows you how they're responding to the virgin birth claim. This gives you a flavor of how (quote) "sophisticated" people think about the virgin birth. If you go to The First Liberal Church some place and hear the pastor talking all about Jesus, be careful, he may be talking about a different Jesus than you're thinking about. There's 110 different Jesus' out there. The question is, which is the biblical Jesus?

Here's his Jesus. "He wrote: 'If Jesus knew of the tradition of his virgin birth, he never pressed it. After all, who should have decided between him and any number of demigods and heroes for whom such a birth was claimed? It was the Church that added these mundane traditions to its Gospels.'" Do you see what he's saying? We're going to get more of this throughout the year, because I want you to see what modern unbelief does to the NT so that when you hear this you won't be shocked; the shock has worn off, you've already heard, you're already aware of the bullets whistling by. Here's where the bullets are coming from. Their point is that the NT is not the truth, the NT is a book compiled by the Church with all the different ideas of the Church in it,

but what the real truth was we really don't know. This is a self-defeating statement, because you know what they've basically said? If they say they don't know what the truth is and the Bible is just a compilation they've already said that they know something, namely that the Bible is false. But if you don't know anything, how do you know that? It's always amusing, you hear the liberals say John could not have written the Gospel of John, you know, there were a million people living in that time in history and 999,000 of them could have written the Gospel except one person, we know that for sure, the John that the Gospel says wrote it can't have written it, that we know, but we don't know anything else.

This is part and parcel of unbelief. Here's this guy who says the Church added these traditions. See, he knows so much about all the historical details; he knows so much about the real Jesus that he can distinguish between the historically real Jesus and what the NT says. And what the NT says is an add-on, the Church added that. Notice the middle sentence in this quote, "who should have decided between him and any number of demigods and heroes for whom such a birth was claimed." Do you remember when we started the virgin birth, what did we say? Isaiah 7 was traditionally interpreted by the Jews to be a virgin birth. That was well known in the ancient world. It was an idea that was circulating all over the place. What this guy does, he knows very well what we went through because everybody knows that, but look in that second sentence what he's doing with the historical fact. He knows like we know that the virgin story was circulating all through the ancient world, in distorted form, mythological versions of it. The constellation Virgo was named back then, what was that named for? It was named long before Jesus. So what was going on here? Where did that start? What did we say last week about the female sperm from Genesis 3? Eve was going to be the mother of all living, and it says "her sperm," "her seed," "her sperm shall conquer the sperm of Satan." Obviously something's wrong. You don't have to be an expert in the birds and bees to know there's something strange about that expression. It's found nowhere else.

So it's clear that this tradition of a coming virgin was rampant in the ancient world. Now Satan had twisted it and turned it. This guy sees all that, but he interprets it as of equal validity, the mythological virgin stories were of equal validity to the NT virgin story. He lumps them all together, failing to see that the other virgin stories are corrupt forms of the early Genesis text passed

down through Noah and his sons to all the people groups in the world. So watch these statements, if you look carefully at them, somewhere or another they'll let the cat out of the bag. He says the early church invented the virgin birth but he inadvertently says there were all these virgin birth stories circulating all over the place. So he shoots himself in the foot.

We come down to our era. This happened in every family in America. It happened to your family, if you knew all the facts you could probably trace it in your own family. I'm going to quote from a most famous sermon. This is one of the most famous sermons ever given in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, made newspapers from New York to California when it was given. Today you can read a history book and nobody knows that the sermon was even given. This is in the midst of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy. There's a vocabulary word, modernist, what does that word mean? It was a term coined by the Christians the early part of this century to designate the liberal theology that was coming into America, the Modernist. They were modernizing the NT and denying the faith. The opposite word to Modernist was Fundamentalists. Those two are the key buzzwords. They are two different distinct positions held in the early parts of this century. The fundamentalists, by the way, were men like Robert Dick Wilson of Princeton University, fluent in twenty-six languages, and other uneducated people. So don't get into this excuse why fundamentalists are always stupid people. Robert Dick Wilson, J. Gresham Machen, B. B. Warfield, we have all these guys; brilliant men, wonderful Christians, into the word of God, great scholars, and they fought against this modernization of Christianity.

Here's where the two words come from. Let me give you an explanation for the two vocabulary words. The liberals wanted to modernize Christianity, get rid of the virgin birth, get rid of the blood atonement, get rid of all these primitive features and update it, make it applicable to modern man. The fundamentalists, however, on the other side said there are certain fundamentals and you can't give up the fundamentals without destroying the faith. One of the fundamentals was the virgin birth, and the modernists got defensive about this. They were so angry at these fundamentalists going around the country of America, in California and New York, Chicago and all these places teaching you have to believe in the virgin birth; what kind of primitive stuff is this.

Think what is at stake. What have we said about the virgin birth? It's the only vehicle to get a sinless Savior into the world. You've got to have a virgin birth. These guys are absolutely right. What the modernists didn't like was that they got caught, they got exposed. Their unbelief got exposed because it was a particular question that Mary in the pulpit could come up to the pastor after a Sunday service and say, Rev. So and So, do you believe in the virgin birth, and what is the guy going to do? He's got to say yes or no, right? The Scofield Bible came in this environment and it was explosive precisely because it gave a tool to the average person in the pew to probe, to find out if are you a modernist, are you an unbeliever in the pulpit? The modernists hated it, because they could talk about Jesus from now until hell froze over, but when they started questions like "do you believe in the virgin birth," Rev. So and So, now what are you going to do. Well, er, ah, hmm, and that's all that Mary needed, she's out of there, bye. And people started leaving. So that's what was going on then. I wish more people would do that today. But no, now everyone is loyal to tolerance rather than Christ and so no one makes waves, we just keep chugging along in unbelief, hearing nothing from the pulpit. But the fundamentals are attacked week after week after week. Who's listening, who cares? Friends, we live in the wake of a disaster with very few people re-building; most people just accept the disaster as the norm.

In the middle of the struggle that led to this, we have Harry Emerson Fosdick, June of 1922. He was a Baptist clergyman, and if you look in the book shelves of your family, somewhere back in the 20's and 30's, if they shared in this culture, you should find books by Fosdick. He was as well known in that generation as Billy Graham is today. That's how powerful this guy was. One of his key books was this one; *The Manhood of the Master*. If you're in a used book store sometime you might get it. You can tell from the title, what has he already done? What has he done to the deity of Christ? You can talk about Jesus as a man, but when it gets to talking about Jesus as God, ooh, we can't do that... that's primitive. Here he is, he gets up, as a guest speaker at the First Presbyterian Church in New York City. It was a big pulpit, (New York Times and all the big newspapers in those days would cover what these big pulpits said on Sunday) and on Monday you could read it in the paper. That was how papers used to follow things. Now we follow whatever happened in the football game. The title of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick's sermon was 'Shall the Fundamentalists win?' a sermon which ignited a full public exposure of the simmering Modernist-Fundamentalist

controversy. Fosdick's sermon specifically attacked the Fundamentalist defense of the virgin birth claim. Here's what he said, I'm going to read this, and imagine this guy with charisma, I don't have any, but imagine some guy with charisma, that smooth voice, impressive, speaking from one of the largest pulpits in America, on the radio. Think of how this sounds. Talk about somebody that's slick.

“Here for example, is one point of view: that the virgin birth is to be accepted as historical fact; it actually happened; there was no other way for a personality like the Master to come into this world except by a special biological miracle. That is one point of view, and many are the gracious and beautiful souls who hold it. But, side by side with them in the evangelical churches” please notice, “evangelical churches, “is a group of equally loyal and reverent people who would say that the virgin birth is not to be accepted as an historic fact.... Here in the Christian Churches are these two groups and the question which the Fundamentalists raise is this, Shall one of them throw the other out?” Nasty people, imagine that, here we have this blessed Christian group and the fundies are saying I'm going to throw you out, what kind of nasty people are these fundamentalists? “Is not the Christian Church large enough to hold within her hospitable fellowship people who differ in points like this...? The Fundamentalists say not. They say the liberals must go....”

Of course, the Fundamentalists failed in their attempt and they were the ones thrown out. Godly, Bible believing scholars like the great Greek expert, J. Gresham Machen, who wrote the basic Greek Koine text book used by every first year student of the NT Greek, still to this day, was “defrocked, disciplined, and kicked out of these denominations by the Modernists.” They not only threw him out of the church, they excommunicated the guy. Why? Machen fought a war inside the Presbyterian Church. It was something that was covered in the newspapers as a result of this. Machen said part of my job as a faculty member here at Princeton is to teach NT Greek in the seminary, and because of my faculty position I've been appointed to the Presbyterian Board of Missions and I'm on the missions committee. And I've been bothered, we interview these people that want to go out in the mission field and they want to help people. They want to go into medical work, they want to do this and that, but they're not theologically prepared. Last week I interviewed somebody from the mission's board of the Presbyterian Church

and they didn't believe in the virgin birth. Now I just don't think as a good Presbyterian I want to have my money supporting this mission. And Machen decided he was going to cut off the money to anybody who didn't believe as the fundamentalists. And that really heated things up. Why? Because the most sensitive portion of the human anatomy was involved, the pocketbook. When this gets involved, all of a sudden people get upset because now thousands of dollars are at stake, ooh, and now these fundies not only are calling us names, they're not only going to throw us out of church, they're turning off the money, we can't have that. So they maneuvered and threw Machen out. He went across from New Jersey over to Pennsylvania and started Westminster Seminary.

That's the history of our wonderful country in the 1920's. You've heard of the roaring 20's, now you know what the roaring was all about. It wasn't everybody dancing a jig in funny looking dress. It was the theology that was in an uproar during this whole period of time, from 1920-1930; by 1930 every major denomination had been captured by the modernists. Do you realize what that cost us as a nation? That meant they controlled the libraries. Now where does the conservative godly guy that wants to study for the ministry go? There were no libraries, they didn't have CD ROMs, didn't have the internet, where do you go to get training? It's gone. In ten years every denomination in this country, every major denomination fell, and then the depression came, then World War II, and it was only after World War II that five men, Donald Grey Barnhouse up in Philadelphia, Billy Graham, and three or four other people got together and decided the country is in a wreck; theologically we've had a nuclear fallout. And the miniscule good Christian work today is largely a result of the work that happened after World War II. It's pretty amazing; there's a long, very thin thread in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of those who saw the issues and held the line. We were blown to pieces in the 20's and 30's. You think we have a problem today, the apostasy that set in between World War I and the depression was one of the worst things that ever happened to this country. That's where the roots of modernism came from and that's where the attacks on this great historic event of the virgin birth of Christ came from. And we're still dealing with it today. Nuclear fallout hangs around for awhile. The problem now is most people don't care.

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<sup>i</sup> The Mishnah reads, “R. Joshua says, “[The offspring of] any [marriage] for which the participants are liable to be put to death by a court.” F Said R. Simeon b. Azzai, “I discovered a family register in Jerusalem, in which was written: ‘Mr. So-and-so is a *mamzer*, [having been born of an illicit union] of a married woman [and someone other than her husband]”<sup>i</sup>

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