

# DIVINE INTERVENTION | THE INCARNATION

## INTRO

### “RE-ENCHANT YOUR WORLDVIEW”

- Recent podcast described the fallout of the Salem Witch Trials in colonial America was the de-supernaturalizing (demythologizing) of their world view.
- This had begun with the renaissance era and into the enlightenment period (a focus on reason, science—not bad things)
- However, the Salem witch trials were a great accelerant in western Christians taking an overly materialistic/modern worldview where the Scriptures were stripped of their supernatural elements and replaced with a fixation on moral teaching only.
- Thomas Jefferson is a great example here:
  - Thomas Jefferson believed that the ethical teachings of Jesus were unparalleled but felt they had been obscured by what he considered later additions—the miracles, supernatural events, and statements about Jesus’ divinity that conflicted with Enlightenment reason. To recover what he saw as the “pure” moral philosophy of Jesus, he gathered multiple copies of the Gospels in English, Greek, Latin, and French. Using a razor and glue, he physically cut out the passages he judged to be authentic moral teachings and arranged them into a new, streamlined narrative. The resulting work, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, removed all miracles and ends with Jesus’ burial, reflecting Jefferson’s rationalistic approach to religion and Scripture.
  - A famous quote of his regarding this work: “I separate the diamonds from the dunghill”
    - He saw the diamonds as the moral teaching of Jesus
    - He saw the dunghill as the miracles or anything supernatural

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## WHY IS A SUPERNATURAL WORLDVIEW IMPORTANT?

- The Bible is a book that contains the revelation of God, His word, and His actions.
- By definition... that makes it a book of supernatural activity — miracles!
- God hasn't changed.
  - He still speaks (that's supernatural)
  - He still works (miracles!)
- If one were to remove all supernatural belief, you'd have a very trimmed and powerless bible (like Jefferson).
  - You'd be left with a moral teaching with no eternal rewards or punishment — no resurrection—no divine authority. And you'd lack the Holy Spirit's (supernatural) power to live out and fulfill that moral teaching.
  - Further, you'd be no different than an atheistic pragmatist, depending on your reasoning and rationale — serving and following the god of your own understanding—determining which parts you thought right (good) and wrong (evil) instead of recognizing the absolute authority of God.
  - You'd also be... wrong.
    - Wrong about it all.
    - Wrong with eternal ramifications.

## DIVINE INTERVENTION: Our Christmas/Advent Sermon Series

- I want to re-examine some of the Christmas passages and simply point out the supernatural themes/miracles.
- I want to remind you, that we serve the same miraculous God who intervenes, steps into our lives and world and does amazing things!
- In doing so, I want to re-enchant your worldview.

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- Help you recognize that a biblical worldview is one that embraces God's divine intervention—supernatural activity—miracles.
- So that you'll have the faith to believe and ask God to move and speak in your life.

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### Luke 1:30–37 ESV

<sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” <sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” <sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.”

### Matthew 1:18–25 ESV

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from

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sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

## John 1:1–5 ESV

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

## John 1:14 ESV

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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## 1: THE VIRGIN BIRTH | MARY CONCEIVED JESUS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT — THE VIRGIN BIRTH

### THIS IS SIGNIFICANT IN A NUMBER OF WAYS:

#### A: REVEALS THAT JESUS IS BOTH FULLY DIVINE AND FULLY HUMAN

- Being born of the Holy Spirit, he is the 2nd Adam and did not share in Adam's sin.
- This uniquely qualifies Jesus to identify with humanity, while being free from sin.
- This further qualified Jesus to be the savior—the sinless sacrifice for sin.

#### B: REVEALS THAT GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF SALVATION

- God brought the Savior to mankind, not the other way around.
- Through Jesus, God made his salvation available to all mankind.

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- This was not a distant act of love, but God is seen to be personally involved in mankind's redemption
- God saw our need for salvation (obvious in his plan from eternity past), and HAD to step in and redeem us.

## C: REVEALS GOD'S GRACE

- God cared about lost humanity and divinely intervened at the right time for our salvation because He loved us.
- It's a salvation by grace through faith (Eph 2:8)
- God chose and used Mary by grace, not her own righteousness

## D: FULFILLMENT OF OT SCRIPTURE

- Matthew 1:22-23 quotes Isaiah 7:14

### **Isaiah 7:14 ESV**

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

- The amazing thing here is that pre-Christian Judaism didn't see this passage as messianic or predicting a virgin birth (they didn't look for it—they missed it)
  - OF NOTE: Different words used between the Hebrew & Greek texts for virgin.
  - The Greek text would come to specifically use a word that means virgin, not young woman, whereas the Hebrew word was all encompassing of both ideas.
- What was IN the text, but was NOT fully unexpected, God spoke and fulfilled.
  - This points to the supernaturally revelation of God's Word
  - AND God's ability to fulfill such a word!
- God is able to move and speak in ways that are so beyond our expectations and understandings.

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- This is important to remember when considering the scriptures that proclaim His 2nd coming.

## SOME IMPORTANT THINGS THE TEXT DOESN'T SAY:

- That Mary was sinless - aka the immaculate conception.
  - Rather Matt 1:30 states that she had found favor (charis—grace) with God
  - As in she didn't earn this place in God's plan due to her sinlessness.
  - Jesus was born sinless because He was conceived of the Holy Spirit rather than by man.
- That Mary remained a virgin
  - The scriptures clearly teach that Jesus had other siblings.
  - Joseph 'knew her not' until she had given birth to Jesus.
- That this conception was of grotesque nature like pagan mythology.
  - The Holy Spirit 'overshadowed' her - 'came upon her'
  - It was conception by miraculous means, not natural means
  - All that to say, she was still a virgin

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## 2: THE INCARNATION | JESUS, THE SON OF GOD BECAME HUMAN AND DWELT AMONG US

A: HE KNOWS THE FULL HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND CAN RELATE TO US

**Hebrews 4:15 ESV**

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<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

## Hebrews 2:14–18 ESV

<sup>14</sup> Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. <sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

## B: HE REVEALED THE FATHER TO US

- John 1:18 notes that Jesus made the Father known
- John 1:14 describes Jesus revealing the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- John 12:49-50 - Jesus states that he has spoken by the Father's authority and the Father's words.
- John 5:19-20 - Jesus says that he does only what he sees the Father doing.

## C: HE REVEALED THE FATHER'S LOVE AND COMPASSION FOR US

- Look at all the miracles:
  - Delivered the demonized
  - Healed the sick
  - Raised the dead
- Look at how he crossed boundaries
  - Showed grace to a samaritan woman

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- Answered the requests of the Gentiles
- Brought back the wayward Jews (prostitutes and tax collectors)
- He rebuked the heartless and self-righteous clergy
- He inaugurated the Kingdom of God
  - Defeated the powers of darkness
  - Made kingdom values and principles clear by his actions and his teachings
  - He taught grace and faith which produce good works (not the other way around)

## D: HE CAME TO PAY THE PRICE FOR OUR SINS

- He died the death debt we owed
  - He reconciled lost humanity to God through his death and resurrection
  - He saw our lost and helpless condition and intervened.
  - If he did so once, won't he do so again?
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## 3: TWO QUICK APPLICATIONS TO WHAT WE'VE COVERED:

### 1: AS SURELY AS HE SUPERNATURALLY CAME, HE WILL COME AGAIN

- 1st time to save us from our sin
- 2nd time to judge sin AND establish his kingdom on earth - to bring us to Him forever

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2: HE CAME TO BE GOD WITH US—HE'S NEAR AND NOT FAR.

- Immanuel - God with us
- All of us need relationship with God — He's made us for it and came in order to seek and save us.
- Some of us (if not all) need a special moment with the Lord right now.

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## RESPONSE:

- Communion - Come Walk With Me