

V. Conclusion

- A. We must understand the historical / contemporary challenge.
- B. We must understand the eternal challenges.
 1. The virgin birth accounts for the hypostatic union of Jesus.
 - If the virgin birth is not true, how would the Son of God have taken on humanity?
 - If the virgin birth is not true how do we maintain Christ's enhypostatic/anhypostatic humanity.
 - If the virgin birth is not true, how do we account for the sinlessness of Christ?
 2. The virgin birth shows the sovereignty of God in salvation.
 3. If the virgin birth is not true, Jesus would not be the Redeemer.
 4. If the virgin birth is not true, Jesus would not have completely fulfilled prophesy.
 5. If the virgin birth is not true, the Bible is unreliable (at least large chunks of it).
 6. The virgin birth inaugurated the Son taking on humanity forever (Rom. 9:5, Col. 2:9, Heb. 13:8, Eph. 2:6, Heb. 4:14–15).

COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

Reflective Questions for You and Your Small Group

Icebreaker: What was the coolest present you gave to someone else this year?

1. What was the significance of I.E.3 on your outline (Virgin Conception vs. Virgin Birth)? Why is the former more theologically accurate?
2. While Roman Catholicism is guilty of over-emphasizing Mary (perhaps even idolizing her), Protestants have been guilty of minimizing her. Look at the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke and see what they say about Mary. What lessons can we learn from her positive example?
3. Imagine how Mary felt being a pregnant virgin. Imagine the rumors and gossip that spread about her. Imagine the hardships Mary endured to bring the Savior into our world. How does it feel to know that you are innocent and yet have people attacking your character and whispering behind your back?
4. Which of the objections to the virgin birth have you heard? Have you heard of others? Speaking of objections to Christianity, what objection do you hear most often when you share your faith with others? Besides objections, what intimidates you about sharing the good news of Jesus?
5. Discuss what you learned in this series on Christology. How did the series impact your worship of Christ this Christmas?

THE PREGNANT VIRGIN

Christmas Christology Part 4

Del Rey Church, Pastor Matt Jones, PhD

I. Introduction

- A. Christology (*Christ* [Jesus Christ] – *ology* [study of])¹
- B. Presuppositions to our study (Bible and Trinity)
- C. Christmas requires the Trinity
 - Father:** The initiation of the Christmas plan (Acts 2:30; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4)
 - Son:** Condescension and execution in relation to the plan (Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:7)
 - Holy Spirit:** Actualized the plan through the virgin conception (Mt. 1:20; Lk. 1:35).
- D. Essential Christmas Christology
 1. Christ is fully and completely God [Sermon 1] ← DIVINE NATURE
 2. Christ is full and completely human [Sermon 2] ← HUMAN NATURE
 3. The divine and human natures of Jesus are distinct and completely united in one person [Sermon 3]. ← HYPOSTATIC UNION
 4. The virgin conception/birth of Jesus [Today's Sermon]
- E. Key terms:
 1. Incarnation
 - The word *incarnation* means “in flesh” and denotes the act whereby the eternal Son of God took to Himself an additional nature, humanity, via the virgin conception and birth.
 2. “Only begotten”²
 - a. Begotten in this context does not mean created.
 - Monogenes* (μονογενής)
 - 1. *Mono* – Only, alone, sole
 - 2. *Genos* (γένος) – race, people, of a class, of a kind
 - 3. The word indicates that the thing is “unique” in some special sense.
 - 4. Jesus is the eternal, unique Son of God. He is God the Son and should be distinguished from the other kinds of “Sons of God” (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; Luke 20:36; John 3:16; 20:31; 1 John 4:9)
 - 5. Note John did not use *monoktisis*, which would clearly indicate “only created.”
 - b. Begotten theologically speaks of eternal generation
 1. This concept was taught early in the church (e.g., Origen).

¹ In Greek it's *christou logos* (χριστοῦ λόγος) literally “a word/discourse about Christ”.

² See John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9 (μονογενής θεός ὁ μονογενής υἱός).

2. "Begotten of the Father before all worlds" Nicene Creed (325)
3. "...our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man... begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead..." Chalcedonian Creed (451)
4. "...The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten..." Athanasian Creed (c.350-500AD)
5. This term "begotten" describes an eternal relationship between the Father and the Son (John 5:19; 26; 8:28).

3. Virgin Conception vs. Virgin Birth

II. The Biblical Evidence for the Virgin Conception

A. Luke 1:26-38

1. Mary is explicitly identified as a "virgin" (*parthenos*, v. 27), a fact she confirms in v. 34.
2. Verse 35 clearly attributes the conception to the work of the Holy Spirit.
3. Verse 35 indicates that Jesus was born free from sin.
 - a. Christ's human nature was cleansed of the stain (*macula*) of Mary's nature.
 - b. The fact of Christ's Sinlessness (Lk 23:4, cf. John 19:4, Matt 27:24, Mark 15:14; Lk 23:41; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5; Heb. 4:15; 9:14; Jn. 8:29)
4. The terms translated "come upon" and "overshadow" (v. 35) are not euphemisms for sex (Ex. 40:35; Ps. 91:4; 140:7; Mt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Lk. 9:34)

B. The Gospel of Matthew 1:18-25

1. Joseph and Mary were betrothed (1:18,20,24).
2. Joseph and Mary were not "knockin boots" (see vv. 18, 25; cf. Lk 1:34).
3. Mary's pregnancy is attributed to the Holy Spirit:
 - (a) v. 20 - "of the Holy Spirit";
 - (b) v. 16 - "and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by/of whom [feminine] was born Jesus." Matthew clearly excludes Joseph;
 - (c) note that the repeated active verb ("was the father of" or "begot") gives way to a divine passive in v. 16 (i.e., God is the active agent in the conception and birth of Jesus).
4. Joseph is the step-daddy (vv.20-21).
5. Matthew believes the event fulfills prophesy (vv.22-23, cf. Isa 7:14, 9:6-7)
 - a. Isaiah 7:14: What is the context?
 1. Divided kingdom of Israel (Israel and Judah)
 2. King Ahaz (735 BC - 715 BC)
 3. Syro-Ephriamite Crisis (736-732 BC)
 - a. King Pekah (king of Israel)
 - b. Rezin (king of Damascus)
 - c. Assyrian King Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BC)
 4. Isaiah gave Ahaz a sign with three elements:
 - a. The boy would be born of a virgin (v. 14).
 - b. He would be raised in a time of national calamity (v. 15).

- b. *Sensus plenior* and typology of Scripture
- c. Messianic prophesy in Isaiah

III. The Theological Significance of the Virgin Conception

- A. The virgin conception was not the beginning of the Son of God.
- B. The virgin conception does not entail a reduction or denial of the deity of Christ.
- C. The virgin conception does not entail a reduction or denial of the humanity of Christ.
- D. The virgin conception does not teach that Mary has a miraculous delivery.
- E. The virgin conception does not require us to affirm Roman doctrines of Mary.
 1. We don't believe in the immaculate conception of Mary (as claimed by Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1854).
 2. We don't believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary (as claimed by the Council of Trent in 1545-63).
 3. It does not elevate Mary to a place of worship and veneration.
- F. The virgin conception calls for a biblical maryology.
 1. She was not a mere incubator.
 2. Christ derived His human nature (body and soul) from her (Gal. 4:4).
 3. Mary is *theotokos* in a certain sense.³
 4. Mary was an amazing woman of faith.

IV. Objections to the virgin birth

- A. The virgin birth did not happen because miracles do not happen.
- B. The virgin birth is only mentioned in 2 gospels, so it isn't true.
- C. The genealogies go through Joseph so the virgin birth is false.
- D. It's a plagiarism; other religions have virgin births.
- E. The virgin birth is not true because *almah* (in Isaiah 7:14) doesn't mean virgin.

³ *Theotokos* was a Greek word used to describe Mary that means "Mother of God." In 451 the Chalcedonian Creed described Mary as *theotokos* to guard against the heresy of Nestorianism (they denied the unity of Christ's two natures in one person). The Creed says, "Jesus Christ...born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the manhood". The key phrase is that part about the "manhood." While the *theotokos* guards against Nestorianism, the part about "manhood" guards against Mariolatry and heathenism. Mary is the mother of God, only in the sense of the "manhood" of Jesus. Since Jesus is God and Mary is his mother, it is fine to say she is the "mother of God" BUT ONLY IN THE SENSE OF THE INCARNATION. Obviously, the triune God has no mother.