

The Incarnation and Virgin Birth

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Matthew 1:18–25 (NKJV) “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’ ²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, “God with us.” ²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.”

In June 2012 Larry King celebrated twenty-five years of broadcasting on television. Close to the end of the show, Donald Trump asked Larry King who he would like to interview that he had not had a chance to interview and what questions would he ask. Larry King answered, “I would like to interview Jesus Christ and I would like to ask Him if He really believes that He was born of a virgin. This would answer a lot of questions in history.”¹

Is the incarnation (God becoming flesh) and the virgin birth of the Son of God important? It was important enough that the early church made it a part of the Apostle’s Creed: “I believe in...Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was born by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary.” Doctor Walvoord, the former president of Dallas Theological Seminary, said, “The incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is the central fact of Christianity, upon it the whole superstructure of Christian theology depends.” In other words, if Jesus Christ is not God in the flesh, then the Christian faith collapses.

The question is raised, “Whose Son is Jesus the Christ?” We know that Jesus was not the biological son of Joseph because Mary was found to be with child before their marriage was consummated. (Matthew 1:18) The Scripture tells us that Jesus, as the Word, pre-existed with God from eternity. (John 1:1) The Scripture also tells us that the Word became flesh (“incarnation of the Word”; John 1:14). Jesus, the pre-existent Word of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit inside the womb of the Virgin Mary. (Luke 1:34-35; Matthew 1:20)

Why is the virgin birth important? It is because the Bible teaches it: “*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*” (Isaiah 7:14 NKJV) Since the Bible teaches it, the inerrancy of God’s Word is at stake. To deny the virgin birth of Christ is to reject the Bible as the infallible rule of faith rather than the incarnation of Christ. While Jesus, the Son of God, was born of the Virgin Mary, it is important to remember that He did not come into existence through the virgin birth. Long before the genealogies of Christ in Matthew and Luke were written, the Son of God pre-existed with the Father.

The incarnation cannot be explained in purely biological terms because there was nothing sexual about it. It was the result of a divine miracle in the womb of Mary. On the technical side, science has discovered that there are two sex chromosomes, X and Y. A female has two X chromosomes and a male has an X and a Y chromosome. Theoretically it is possible to create a female from a male by extracting X chromosomes. However it is impossible to create a male from a female since she has no Y chromosomes. If the male supplies an X chromosome with the female’s X chromosome, then the child will be a female. If the male supplies a Y chromosome, then the child will be a male. In order for

¹http://www.zimbio.com/Larry+King/articles/zAf_z3ieBHK/Larry+King+wants+interview+Jesus+Christ

the virgin birth to occur, God would have to create a Y chromosome to merge with Mary's X chromosome. If we believe in God and that He created the universe, then it is completely possible that He can create a Y chromosome without the aid of a human father! Bible teacher R.T. Kendall put it this way: "The virgin birth of Christ shows that salvation can never come through human effort." The virgin birth is one of God's greatest declarations that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed His promised Messiah.

In the incarnation, the divinity of Jesus Christ was merged with humanity. Jesus, being fully God and fully man, began a nine-month gestation in the womb of Mary. Jesus was both son of David and Son of God. "Son of David" refers to his humanity. Jesus was of the human lineage of David. "Son of God" refers to Jesus' deity. Though He was born physically according to the lineage of David, Jesus existed prior to David. Jesus asked this question to the Pharisees, Matthew 22:41–46 (NKJV) *"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?' They said to Him, 'The Son of David.'⁴³ He said to them, 'How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: ⁴⁴ The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? ⁴⁵ If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?' ⁴⁶ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore."* (Matthew 22:42-46) Do you hear what Jesus said? He claimed to be more than the son of David; He claimed to be David's Lord! Jesus bore witness to being the Son of God before the high priest: *"And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!'⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.'*" (Matthew 26:63-64)

Why was the incarnation of the Son of God necessary? Let me give an illustration. A father had told his son he would send him to sleep in the attic, with only bread and water for his supper, if he broke the laws of the home once more. The child disobeyed again and was sent to the attic: The father could not eat. He had the boy on his mind and his heart. His wife said: "I know what you are thinking. But you must not bring the boy from the attic. It would cause him to disobey again. He would have no respect for your word. You must not cheapen your relation as his father by failing to keep your promise." To which her husband replied: "You are right. I will not break my word. To do so would cause my son to lose his respect for my word. But he is so lonely up there." He kissed his wife good-night, entered the attic, ate bread and water with the boy, and when the child went to sleep on the hard boards, his father's arm was his pillow. He who knew no sin suffered for the sinner." —Wilbur Nelson² Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became incarnate in order to become our substitute. Hebrews 2:14–18 (NKJV) *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ¹⁶ For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."*

During this Christmas season, take time to celebrate the incarnation and virgin birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of David, who is King of kings and Lord of lords! The next time you see a Nativity scene, remember that the baby in the manger is not just another baby. He is a miracle. He is Immanuel—God with us! He is the gift of God's Son wrapped up in human flesh!

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² Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.