

## Christology 101

### Lesson 10 The Incarnation of Christ

“The incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is the central fact of Christianity. Upon it the whole superstructure of Christian theology depends.” (John Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, 96).

Definition: The word “incarnation” is a theological term referring to the “Son of God” coming to us in human flesh. It is taken from two words that are put together which mean “in” and “flesh.” John says, “<sup>14</sup>And the Word **became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14). He also uses this as a test of orthodoxy in 1 John 4:2 “<sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come **in the flesh** is from God;”

Jesus did not possess humanity until His birth in Bethlehem. He possessed humanity in absolute sinlessness. “<sup>3</sup>For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son **in the likeness of sinful flesh** and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,” (Romans 8:3). Hebrews refers to Christ as our sinless high priest, “<sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, **yet without sin.**” (Hebrews 4:15).

So the Incarnation is the theological fact that one point of time in human history, the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, became human or took on himself sinless humanity, without giving up his deity. So that He is the “God-Man.”

#### Old Testament Predictions of the Incarnation

Isaiah 9:6

<sup>6</sup> For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;  
And the government will rest on His shoulders;  
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God**,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 7:14

<sup>14</sup>“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, **a virgin will be with child** and bear **a son**, and she will call His name **Immanuel**.

Micah 5:2

<sup>2</sup> “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too little to be among the clans of Judah*, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.  
His goings forth are from long ago, **From the days of eternity.**”

## Old Testament Prediction of the Virgin Birth

Isaiah 7:14

<sup>14</sup>“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, **a virgin** will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name **Immanuel**.

Matthew 1:22-23

<sup>22</sup>Now all this took place **to fulfill** what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“**BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,**” which translated means, “**GOD WITH US.**”

The Vehicle of the Incarnation = The Virgin Birth  
(See the Nicene Creed)

### The Announcement to Mary

Luke 1:30-38

<sup>30</sup>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 name Him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>“He will be great and will be called the **Son of the Most High**; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; <sup>33</sup>and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, “**How can this be, since I am a virgin?**” <sup>35</sup>The angel answered and said to her, “**The Holy Spirit** will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the **Son of God**.

<sup>37</sup>“**For nothing will be impossible with God.**” <sup>38</sup>And Mary said, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

(Keep in mind that the real miracle was not the virgin birth, but the virginal conception of Christ. When theologians refer to the virgin birth of Christ, they are also referring to His miraculous conception.)

### The Announcement to Joseph

Matthew 1:18-25

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. <sup>20</sup>But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; **for the Child who has been conceived in her is of 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> Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:<sup>23</sup> **“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,”** which translated means, **“GOD WITH US.”**<sup>24</sup> And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife,<sup>25</sup> **but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.**

### The Event: The Birth of Christ

Luke 2:1-20

<sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,<sup>5</sup> in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.<sup>6</sup> While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.<sup>7</sup> And **she gave birth to her firstborn son**; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; <sup>11</sup> for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

### An Actual Human Birth

Galatians 4:4

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, **born of a woman**, born under the Law,

Revelation 12:1-2, 5

<sup>1</sup> A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; <sup>2</sup> and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

<sup>5</sup> And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

John 8:33-59 Were Jesus' enemies aware of His birth and genealogy?

<sup>48</sup> The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that **You are a Samaritan** and have a demon?” <sup>49</sup> Jesus answered, **“I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.**

## The Genealogies

Even a casual reading of the genealogies of Matthew and Luke shows that there are obvious differences in these two accounts. The question sometimes arises, "Which one is correct?" The answer is, "Both."

"Matthew and Luke both trace the genealogy of the virgin-born Son. Matthew contains forty-one selected names, while Luke includes seventy-seven. Matthew traces the King back to Abraham; Luke goes back to Adam. Matthew's list is commonly regarded as Joseph's real line and Luke's, Mary's." (Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology, 243).

For a more technical discussion of these two genealogies I will refer you to Jesus Christ Our Lord by John Walvoord, 102-105.

## The Reliability of the Virgin Birth

"The accounts of the birth of Christ of course do not stand simply on their own credibility, but are supported by the miraculous life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fact of the New Testament church, the spiritual transformation of those who are believers, and the evident acceptance of these facts by thousands who were contemporary with Jesus and who had the best opportunity to investigate, combine to substantiate these solid conclusions. An attitude of unbelief too often is linked with an unwillingness to bow before Jesus Christ as divine Lord and Savior, not from attested facts which contradict the Gospels." (Walvoord, 102).

## What Was the Purpose of the Virgin Birth?

1. To Reveal God. John 1:18
2. To Redeem Man. Hebrews 10:1-10
3. To Give us an Example. 1 Peter 2:21
4. To Fulfill the Covenant with David and the Patriarchs. Luke 1:31-33
5. To Defeat Satan. 1 John 3:8
6. To Become a Sympathetic High Priest. Hebrews 4:14-16
7. To Become a Qualified Judge. John 5:22, 27

## Nicene Creed

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, **being of one substance with the Father** by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and **was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man**, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.