

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Christology— Study of Christ— Part 2
Virgin Birth, Kenosis, Hypostatic Union
& Temptation of Christ

Introduction

- Last time we covered – Divinity, Humanity, Christophanies, and prophecies of Christ.
- We must move into the subjects that make the most sense out of Christ's two natures.
- These are the Virgin Birth, Kenosis, and Hypostatic Union.
- Afterward, we will look at the temptation of Christ.

Virgin Birth -- Importance

- There are many reasons it is important.
- Most importantly of all is it answers the following question.
 - How did the divine and omnipotent God become a full human and walk with a body of flesh?
- It is the connection between the two natures.
- Sadly, many liberal Christians deny it.



Virginal Conception

- Virgin birth is not the main point.
 - Virginal conception is. The birth was quite normal. It is still secondary since Joseph did not know her "until" Jesus was born (Matt 1:25).
- Do not confuse this with immaculate conception. This is a Roman Catholic doctrine.
 - They argue for Mary's sinlessness.
 - They also argue for perpetual virginity.
- We will move on to the relevant texts.



Isaiah 7:14

- This is the classic text.
 - Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.
- In Matt 1:22-23, Matthew sees the virginal conception of Jesus in Mary's womb as the fulfillment of this text.
 - Many question this. They see it as being ripped out of context.
 - Remember, ultimately the Holy Spirit recorded this, through Matthew, as the fulfillment of this text.
- It is true that the immediate context of Isaiah 7 does not seem to be in reference to a future Messiah.
 - So how are we to understand this?

Isaiah 7:14



- Immediate context:
 - To wicked king Ahaz.
 - God said He would give a sign.
 - Before a particular child reaches age of accountability, Israel and Syria will be defeated.
 - The Hebrew word "almah" means chaste maid.
 - Immediate context does not necessitate a virgin birth.
 - Was probably fulfilled by either Ahaz's son Hezekiah or one of Isaiah's children.
- If it was fulfilled in Isaiah's time, how could Matthew apply it to Jesus?

Isaiah 7:14

- First, we need to understand that Isaiah 7-9 is single unit.
- In chapter 9:6, a birth prophecy is made again, but this time the identity of the child is unmistakable.
 - Isa 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7) Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.
- So the 9:6 child would be God. The Isaiah 7:14 child would be "God with us."
 - Neither Hezekiah nor Isaiah's kid match this.



Isaiah 7:14

- The birth of this child would be more profound than the regular context for Isaiah and Ahaz allowed.
- The way to understand this is typology. The immediate fulfillment was not a literal fulfillment, but a typological fulfillment, whereas Christ's birth was the immediate fulfillment.
 - Ex. Hosea 11:1 and Matt 2:14-15.
 - This is both typology and prophetic foreshortening.
 - You also have the divine sovereignty over history.
- The maiden in Isaiah's day was a type that partially represented the true reality that was to be fulfilled later.



The Septuagint Helps

- The Hebrew translators rendered *almah* into the Greek *parthenos*, which was the technical term for a virgin.
 - They narrowed down the Jewish interpretation to a literal virgin, which means they did not see the total fulfillment being in Isaiah's day.
 - Matthew quoted from the Septuagint, showing the Holy Spirit declared the narrow definition of "virgin" to be the intended meaning of *almah*.
- So the LXX translators had a future expectation.
 - The early Christians made such good use of this text, the Jews abandoned the LXX to create a Hebrew one so they could go back to the ambiguous understanding of *almah*.
- This is not double-fulfillment. This is typological fulfillment.



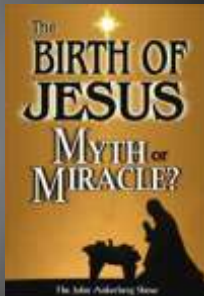
Genesis 3:15

- This is the proto-evangelium.
 - Gen 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."
- First Messianic prophecy.
- "Seed of Woman" is very unusual due to the garden view of conception.
 - Woman's womb is the field (hence infertile was called barren), and the man had the seed. The seed caused conception.
- Seed of the woman signifies that this promised one would come from the woman alone, without being fertilized by the man.
 - Even a modern view shows men to have the seed and women to have the eggs.
 - Isaiah 53:2 is a possible reference.
 - Christians did not steal the idea from pagans.



New Testament Accounts

- Matthew and Luke record the virgin birth.
 - Critics say they are contradictory.
 - Matthew shows Joseph's perspective; Luke shows Mary's.
- Differences are not contradictions. Differences should be expected. Look at all of the agreement.
 - Mary is the mother
 - Betrothed to Joseph
 - Mary is a virgin
 - Her pregnancy is after the betrothal but before the marriage
 - Angels announce the coming
 - The child is conceived of the Holy Spirit
 - The child is to be the Savior
 - Joseph takes Mary as his wife
 - The child is to be born in Bethlehem
 - Both accounts guard against the suggestion that Joseph was the father.



New Testament Accounts

- Both make it clear Joseph is not the father.
 - Mat 1:18 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.
 - Luke 3:23 Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,
- What about the genealogies? Do they contradict.
 - Christians often assume Matthew traces Joseph's legal line, and Luke records Mary's bloodline? A lot of faulty reasons cause people to presuppose this.
 - The blood curse of Jeremiah 22:24-27 is not a problem due to Haggai 2:20-23.
 - Joseph's line is important because it gives Jesus the legal royal right.
 - The line in Luke makes Christ the literal son of David. But how can we say it is traced through Mary?
 - Look back up at Luke 3:23. Now look at Matthew 1:16.
 - Matt 1:16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.
 - We need to have an answer.

Genealogical Problem

- If Luke present's Mary's lineage, then the problem is solved. If not, we have a big difficulty.
 - Luke claims the lineage is through Joseph, but then names a different father for him (Heli). Matthew says Joseph's father was Jacob.
 - Property laws explain this.
 - Mary was most likely an only child. Heli would have to adopt Joseph to keep the property in his own family line.
 - Mary is never mentioned as having brothers.
 - Mary's genealogy would not even be present if not for this adoption.
- This is the prevailing view of most conservative scholars.



What About Mark and John?

- Some critics say since Mark and John do not have the virgin birth account, it must be false. How could they leave out something so important?
 - It all depends on the purpose of the author. If their purpose did not require it, they didn't need it.
 - Also, the Holy Spirit only needs to say something once for it to be true. It was shown twice already.
- Furthermore, it is implied in Mark and John.
 - Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him.
 - This is very strange since normal convention is to state the father, not the mother. They doubted Joseph's fatherhood, but assumed fornication.
 - John 8:41 You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God."
- This shows there were known unusual circumstances concerning His birth.

The Rest of the New Testament?

- Critics will then claim the rest of the NT says nothing of the doctrine and so it must not be true.
- Once again, the Holy Spirit only needs to put something once.
- Furthermore, it is implied.
 - Galatians 4:4 – But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,
 - It would not make sense to point out that Jesus was born of a woman unless something was unique about it.



Why the Virgin Birth Matters

- Liberal Bible teachers claim that it is an unimportant doctrine.
- How can that be?
 - If it is not true, Matthew and Luke are liars, and Moses and Isaiah are false prophets. It makes Paul fallible as well.
 - Do the math. Paul, Moses, Isaiah, Matthew, and Luke-Acts constitute 21 out of the 69 books of the Bible.
 - If 21 out of 69 books contain errors and present lies as the truth, then the Bible is not inspired and it is not inerrant.
- Furthermore, God's faithfulness is at stake.
 - He promised it in Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 7:14. To deny the virgin birth is to deny God's faithfulness.



Liberal Pastor Rob Bell

Why the Virgin Birth Matters

- Another highly important reason for the virgin birth is it preserved Christ from inheriting the sin nature.
 - We inherit original sin directly from Adam.
 - Many conservative scholars believe the sin nature is passed on through our fathers since sin entered the world through Adam rather than Eve.
 - If Jesus would have been born from a human father, than He would have been born with both original sin and the sin nature.
 - The virgin birth solved this problem. He was the direct Son of God born free from the disposition of sin that is inherent in the rest of us. Thus, it guaranteed the holiness of the incarnation.
- The virgin birth set the stage for us to have a spiritual birth brought to us from the Holy Spirit.
 - John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (13) who were born, **not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man**, but of God.
 - When we are born again, it is not by a human father, but it is of the Holy Spirit through regeneration. Christ's physical birth is a model and picture of spiritual birth.