

Bible School: Defending the Faith #7

The Incarnation and the Virgin Birth Part 2

12/7/2022

Things to remember:

We are all given the same instructions by Jesus in the gospels of Matthew and Mark to preach and teach. It's called the Great Commission.

We are commanded in 1 Peter 3:15 - “Always be ready to give a defense (answer) for the hope inside of you”

We are exhorted in Jude 3 – “to contend earnestly for the faith. (Fight with all your strength to win)

When we do these things, we are considered “apologists”. But we're not apologizing for anything, to the contrary, we are increasing our knowledge and understanding of our Christian faith and fortifying what we believe in order to help each one of us, no matter what the circumstance or location or person or question, we would be able to “defend” what we believe and why we believe it. We also need to be able to recognize and confront errors as we see or hear of them. (This could be our Mission Statement.)

Recap from DTF #6 – In our last session we started our defense of what we consider two of the most important of our essential beliefs, that of the Virgin Birth and the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Just a reminder of what we said in the Intro Lesson, essential beliefs are things that are non-negotiable, the very core of our faith, that are not up for a different interpretation or matters of opinion. Removal of any of the essential beliefs, and you don't have a belief system that will stand the testing of your faith.

We looked at the Virgin Birth and why we believe in it, by examining the Biblical record of it and the scriptural evidence in the word of God, both in the OT prophecy and in the fulfillment in the New Testament. Truly, salvation is of the Lord. Only He could perform this once in history, miraculous event.

Again, our stand on this is that the Virgin Birth is absolutely essential to the Christian faith. To deny the Virgin Birth is to deny the deity of Jesus and if Jesus is not God in the flesh, then you and I have no hope whatsoever.

The Virgin Birth – if we deny this doctrine, or call it legend or fable, then we have also just denied the integrity of the entire word of God.

When we surrender the authority of scripture, we resort to doctrinal and spiritual laxity – the relaxation of standards and absolutes. Everything becomes questionable if one thing is doubted.

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The only other conclusion you can have other than the Virgin Birth is that Jesus was born of a man, and because of the biblical record in the two gospel accounts we have reviewed, we conclude that the Bible is teaching a lie. The word of God is either 100% true or its 100% false.

The Virgin Birth and the Incarnation Part 2

AOL Statement of Belief: We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, second person of the Trinity, is eternal in existence, and is the Word of God become flesh as is stated in the gospel of John, Chapter 1. That He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

John 1:1, 14 NKJV

As we move into the study of the doctrine of the Incarnation, let's take a quick look at the genealogies provided in the two gospel accounts to see another divine set up for the Incarnation to take place. The two genealogies for Jesus are found in Matthew 1:1-17 and in Luke 3:23-38.

A word about genealogies: There are many genealogies in the Bible and a lot of times when reading the Bible, we tend to skip or skim through them, finding them largely irrelevant and maybe even boring. No one likes to read all the “begats”, right? But we have to remember they are part of scripture and according to 2 Timothy 3:16, “all scripture is given by inspiration of God”, so then there must be some significance.

Genealogies help substantiate the Bible's historical accuracy. The lists confirm the physical existence of the characters in the Bible. When we see the family history, we know that the Bible is more than a mere story, fable or parable and the characters identified are real people. We know that we all descended from Adam, that Adam sinned and that his sin has consequences.

Genealogies confirm prophecy. Messiah was prophesied to come from the line of David in Isaiah 11:1:

Isaiah 11:1 NKJV

We saw the prophecies of the virgin birth in our last lesson. These two genealogies we will look at showing the lineage of Jesus' is God's way of confirming that He indeed did descend from David and attests to the fulfillment of OT prophecies by Jesus.

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Genealogies also show us that our God is very detail oriented and has a deep interest in the individual lives that make up the lists and not just the history. The genealogies show His involvement, people are mentioned by name, they are real, they are human just like us, they had problems and issues, but God had a plan for them all. God values each and every life, Jew and Gentile, and we can learn some great lessons from each story that is told.

Some history to help us understand the genealogies:

King David had desired to build a house or temple for God, or at least for the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the Presence of God. But God would not allow it, giving David His reason in 1 Chronicles 22:7-8, with God saying to David, “because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight.”

But God did make a promise to King David about allowing his son Solomon to “build a house for My name.” We find this promise to David in 2 Kings 7:12-16 as follows:

2 Samuel 7:12-16 NKJV

This particular passage is referred to as the Davidic Covenant by bible scholars.

Matthew 1:1-3, 5-7, 11-12,15-16 NKJV The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

Matthew 1 :1-16 - Matthew’s genealogy record starts with Abraham and goes forward and is considered the “royal lineage” (spiritual) or legal line from Solomon, David’s heir. (This is called the Davidic Dynasty or House of David).

Matthew was Jewish and his gospel was written mostly to the Jewish people. This is very important, because it is a gospel written by a Jew in order to convince Jews, both believers and non-believers. One of Matthew's greatest objectives in his gospel is to demonstrate that all the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus. As you read the gospel of Matthew, you will see an ever recurring phrase throughout that demonstrates this - “This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.” This phrase occurs at least 16 times, depending on the translation.

This genealogy in Matthew is considered very important to the Jew, because the Jews had a high interest in pedigrees. The Jews of this time set the greatest possible import on the purity of lineage. If in any man there was the slightest hint of mixture of foreign blood in his lineage, he lost the right to be called a Jew and a member of the people of God. (Keep in mind that the Jews did not reckon women in their genealogies, even though you see in Matthew's gospel genealogy reference to several women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and **her who had been the wives of Uriah**)

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So, the genealogy of Jesus was not petty or uninteresting to Matthew's Jewish audience, but to them it would be a most impressive matter that the pedigree of Jesus could be traced all the way back to Abraham, the father of them all.

Luke 3:23, 31-34, 36-38 NKJV The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

Luke 3:23-38 - Luke's genealogy record starts with Joseph and goes backwards all the way back to Adam. If you read both of these in detail, you will see much difference in the names from Solomon on to Joseph. Most conservative Bible scholars consider Luke's record as the natural line or biological line of Jesus, who is called the last Adam. So, this is considered the genealogy of the line of Mary from David. Take note of v. 23 that we just read, "Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli". Heli was actually the father of Mary, the only human parent of Jesus, and since there was no Greek word for son in law, it was legal for Joseph to be called the son of Heli. That's why it says "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph. It was an "in law" thing. Joseph basically adopted Jesus as his son, and in so doing, gave Him all the legal right to be a legitimate heir to the throne of David.

Luke, being a Gentile believer and looking at this from a Gentile believers' perspective, would naturally take this route of tracing back. Luke is writing his gospel mainly to Gentile believers and part of his objective is to show the inclusiveness of the gospel message to all people, that Jesus is the Savior of all mankind, going all the way back to Adam. Luke's gospel is rightfully called the universal gospel; all barriers are broken down; Jesus Christ is for all men without distinction.

Luke 3:6 NKJV

Both extend from the line of David, via his sons, Solomon to Joseph and Nathan to Mary. To me, it is double affirmation of the right of Jesus to the succession of the throne of David as promised to David in 2 Samuel 7:16. As indicated earlier, this is considered to be the Davidic Covenant!

The Incarnation

What is the meaning of the Incarnation? The term "incarnate, incarnation" means "to become flesh, the act of being made flesh." This word comes from the Latin "incarnation" from the Latin Vulgate translation, which was used mostly in the church through the Middle Ages.

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The Incarnation is that event where the second person of the Trinity, the Word, became flesh and dwelt among us as Jesus.

John 1:1,14 NKJV

When the Word became flesh, He first dwelt in the womb of Mary until He was born as Jesus and then dwelt among men for 33 years. Jesus is the Incarnation of God. He is God in flesh.

Remember from the last lesson where we quoted Colossians 2:9, where it says, “In Him dwells all the fullness of deity in bodily form.”

Incarnation is similar to the hypostatic union that we studied about two lessons back. The difference is that the hypostatic union explains how Jesus' two natures are joined without loss, 100% God and 100% humanity, no mix or dilution of either nature and the Incarnation more specifically affirms His humanity. The term “incarnation” itself does not appear in the New Testament, but the concept is definitely taught.

In previous lessons on the Deity and Humanity of Jesus, we saw Biblical support of His humanity where He experienced hunger, thirst, fatigue and the most extreme pain. He perspired as a human; He bled as a human. He had emotions as a human, weeping at Lazarus' tomb; He had great sorrow in the garden before His crucifixion (Matthew 26:37, Luke 22:44). He called Himself a man (John 8:40) and even after His resurrection, His humanity was still recognized. (Acts 2:22 – Peter's sermon) And we cannot forget this passage from Isaiah:

Isaiah 53:3-5 NKJV

So, we have seen much scriptural support and proof that Jesus was fully Man and experienced all the trials and tests that we as humans go through in our lifetimes, even that of temptation.

The writer of Hebrews expressed it this way, talking about Jesus:

Hebrews 4:14-15 NKJV

The purpose of the Incarnation was not just to feel thirsty or tired or to feel sorrow. The Son of God, Jesus, came in the flesh in order to be the Savior of mankind. Let's look at several reasons why this is the true and perfect plan of God.

One of the reasons that Jesus had to be born of the flesh is found in Galatians.

Galatians 4:4-5 NKJV

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Only a man could be “born under the law.” No animal or angelic being is “under the law.” Only humans are born under the law, and only a human being could redeem other human beings born under the same law. Born under the law of God, all humans are guilty of transgressing that law. All of us have failed to fulfill God's Law.

Romans 3:23 NKJV

And the penalty for breaking the law of God:

Romans 6:23a NKJV

Only a perfect human—Jesus Christ—could perfectly keep the law and perfectly fulfill the law, thereby redeeming us from that guilt. Jesus accomplished our redemption on the cross, exchanging our sin for His perfect righteousness.

Matthew 5:17 NKJV

2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV

Another reason Jesus had to be fully human is that God established the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins.

Leviticus 17:11 NKJV

Hebrews 9:22 NKJV

The blood of animals, although acceptable on a temporary basis as a foreshadowing of the blood of the perfect God-Man, was insufficient for the permanent remission of sin because “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins”.

Hebrews 10:4 NKJV

Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God, sacrificed His human life and shed His human blood to cover the sins of all who would ever believe in Him. If He were not human, this would have been impossible.

Hebrews 10:5 NKJV

When we see the above passage, “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire”, we see what was done under the Old Covenant. When the Incarnation happened, we see “the body You have prepared for Me.” A sinless human body of flesh and blood, the God Man, Immanuel, that can provide a perfect sacrifice. Without the Incarnation (God in the flesh), Christ could not have really died and shed His blood and the cross would have been meaningless, no more than the crucifixion of any other nameless slave to the Romans. But as the Incarnate One, Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, could fulfill the requirement of God

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Listen to what Jesus Himself said to His disciples at the Lord's Supper:

Luke 22:19-20 NKJV

Without the human body and human blood, there would have been no New Covenant. Without the divine Person and the divine blood, there would have been no New Covenant. Jesus was representing both the divine side and the human side at this inauguration of the New Covenant. It was the only way. Blood for blood, Man dying for man, to pay the debt that we could not pay, to reconcile us to God, the Father.

We believe the Incarnation, Jesus, nailed to the cross, with all of its ugliness and judgment, is the divine bridge to the New Covenant.