

Christian Fundamentals

The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus is of course totally central to the foundations of our faith: *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”*. He is the person, the Son of God, the saviour of the world, the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. the Prince of Peace: He was all the fulness of God in a body. Jesus means Saviour, for *“He shall save His people from their sins”*; the Hebrew word is Joshua, *“The Salvation of Jehovah”*. Christ means Anointed, the Hebrew word is Messiah, the Anointed of God. Jesus came as ‘Jesus of Nazareth’, but from 3 verses in Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost, -

a) *“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs*

b) *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses*

c) *Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ”*.

- we can see that Jesus is made Christ in heaven having been raised from the dead, and hence His correct title is Jesus Christ, anointed, yes on the earth for His early ministry but more so now in heaven for His eternal work reigning as Lord and Christ.

To make this section more manageable it will be broken down into 4 parts, 8.1 Jesus’ birth, 8.2 His life, 8.3 His death, and 8.4 His resurrection

Jesus’ Birth

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost”

Matthew sums it all up so well for us. ‘Mary was found with child by the Holy Spirit’. We have seen earlier, when looking at sin, how sin has been passed on through all human beings. It is our spiritual inheritance, ‘spiritual genetics’ may be better, as it has come from our spiritual father. It was necessary that there was to be a new generation of human being; a human with a different spiritual origin, of a new generation, and that the conception of that person was not of a human being. Mary was found with child by the Holy Spirit. The conception was of God, it was holy and did not pass on the sinful nature. Here was God’s new man, it was His Son.

This is the account in Luke’s gospel; it is set out in full as it is important to see every step.

*“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named **Nazareth**, to a **virgin** espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt **conceive** in thy womb, and bring forth **a son**, and shalt call his name **Jesus**. He shall be great, and shall be called the **Son of the Highest**: and **the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David**: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and **of his kingdom there shall be no end**. Then said Mary unto the angel, how shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, **The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,***

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and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy Cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible, And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word"

The whole passage is important but again the most important words are in 'bold'. We have the place where Mary lived, which was Nazareth and, in the opening words of this section, we have identified 'Jesus of Nazareth' as the person who did all the miracles, was crucified, and raised again from the dead. So, at the beginning of this section in Luke's account of the birth of Jesus, His home town is identified. We then have the word 'virgin'. Mary was a virgin, this was imperative and essential in God's plan. She had never had any sexual encounter with a man, she was clean, she was pure and therefore there was nothing that would spiritually pollute the child that was to be born of her. We have therefore what is known as the virgin birth, a total miracle but in agreement with Isaiah chapter 7, "***Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel***". God had set out His intention 700 years or so earlier, it was in the prophets; it might sound impossible but that is what God had said. At the end of the words from the angel Gabriel, we read 'with God nothing shall be impossible'. The next of our words in 'bold' is conceive. This was an ordinary, and yet extraordinary, conception, the child which would be born would be a completely natural man. This is the miracle of the virgin birth, the combination of the work of the Holy Spirit and the natural childbearing ability of a woman. We move on to the next two words, 'His Son', and also the name of 'Jesus'. We can put those two together, recognising that the son that would be born was to be called Jesus. We have identified the name of Jesus, its meaning and its origins earlier. There is a description of the Lord Jesus, who He was and what His final purpose would be. He was the Son of the highest, the Son of God, and He was to have the throne of His Father David for ever. Of His kingdom there would be no end. This shows the eternal purpose of God in Jesus' coming, in relation to the history of Israel, and confirming that He was to be made Christ, Lord and Christ. "***Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ***"; Acts chapter 2.

The additional information from the angel is supplied in answer to Mary's very legitimate question. How will it happen? A very sensible question, as the concept of having a child without having a husband was completely beyond Mary's, indeed anyone's, thinking. In the history of Israel there were times when God had intervened and barren women had conceived children, Sarah, Rebekah and Hannah to name three, but these had all come naturally through relationships with their husbands. So how? "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Highest will overshadow you", this was totally the work of God. The child who would be born would be holy, no sin here, nothing from Adam's sin passed on, but holy, and He shall be called the Son of God. God was His Father, not a man, and Mary was His mother. She was the mother of Jesus, not the mother of God as wrongly suggested by some Christian groups. Mary's involvement was not to bring forth the eternal God, impossible as God always has been and always will be and needs no 'bringing forth'. Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, and provides Jesus' totally natural humanity, even the actual birth being quite normal. Just as an encouragement to Mary, "your cousin Elizabeth has conceived a son in her old age".

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(Her child was John the Baptist). Mary would have known that, it was family news, and been encouraged that 'with God nothing shall be impossible', and so her response of faith. *"Be it unto me according to your word"*. The word for 'word' in the Greek is 'rhema' meaning the 'living word', or maybe better the 'heard word'. 'Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God'. So, Mary believed; as with all aspects of the gospel 'it is of faith that it may be by grace'. Mary believed and grace was able to work, she was highly favoured: such grace. Paul tells us that Jesus was a 'life giving spirit'. The spirit in Him, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit, gave Him life; where humans had death, Jesus had life. The response 'in faith' of Mary, a virgin, allowed the conception to be free from the corruption of human flesh, allowing her to bring forth a Son, whose name was Jesus, who was the Son of God. The virgin birth is a miracle, it had to be so that God could start a new generation of human beings, holy ones, spiritually alive ones, and One who could lay down His life for the whole world.