

# The Doctrine of the Virgin Birth

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These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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**Preface:** The virgin birth is a rather complex topic, the closer that one examines it. And the world is filled with many confused concepts about Mary and Jesus and sin. This material was taken from Luke 1 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) and Luke 3 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

(The MKJV is primarily used below:)

The is an introduction. All of these concepts will be fleshed out at we move forward in this study.

## Introduction: Imputations, the Sin nature, the Virgin Birth and Salvation

1. There are two kinds of imputations: judicial imputations and real (natural) imputations.
2. A real imputation connect something with its natural target or home.

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3. There is no natural target or home for a judicial imputation. Therefore, the recipient of that imputation must agree to it. He must make a volitional choice to accept it.
4. There are two real imputations at human birth: life is given to the soul and Adam's original sin is imputed to the genetically formed old sin nature.
  - 1) Life to the soul (or the soul is imputed to the child). Adam is our example. 1Corinthians 15:45 (...The first man, Adam, became a living soul...) Genesis 2:7 And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
  - 2) Adam's sin is imputed to all mankind. Romans 5:14 1Corinthians 15:22 (...in Adam all die...)
5. A real imputation is an imputation which takes place apart from the volition of the party or parties involved. There is a natural attraction between two things—the thing being imputed and where it is imputed to.
6. The soul is a natural target or a natural home for human life. God has designed these things to be naturally attracted to one another. At birth, we are alive with a soul. God breathes lives into infant. This comes with the infant's first breath. The human soul and human biological life are automatically coupled together at birth.
7. R. B. Thieme, Jr. taught that the imputation was human life to the human soul, but it might be the other way around. The human soul is imputed to the biological life of the person. Soul-life (which is unseen) and physical life (which is seen) are combined at birth.
8. However, we are born with a sin nature which we inherit from our father. This is a genetic trait which all men and women are born with; and it is found in every cell of the body (there is one exception to this).
9. Also at birth, God imputes Adam's original sin to our sin nature. The sin nature is the natural home for sin, human good and evil. We receive the sin nature from our father and from our ultimate ancestor, we receive the imputation of his first sin.
10. Therefore, we are born condemned by God's justice at birth. God sees a beautiful little baby born and His justice condemns that infant.
11. However, our personal sins are not imputed to us at birth. They are saved up and poured out on Jesus Christ on the Roman cross. Romans 5:12–13 Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men inasmuch as all sinned: for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 2Corinthians 5:19 ...whereas God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them...
12. Now, either man is born without a human spirit or that human spirit is overwritten by the genetically formed sin nature (also called Adam's trend). By this, the sin nature has sovereignty over our lives.
13. The sin nature produces sin, good and evil. As an example of this, after Adam committed the first sin, he then committed the first act of human good. He and his woman put on fig leaves to cover up their nakedness. This was not an act of sin; this is an attempt to make them right with each other. This was an attempt to improve their immediate environment.
14. Adam's original sin is imputed to all people at the moment of birth; Adam's sin resides in the sin nature. Every person at birth has a sin nature. However, that sin nature comes down only through the man.
15. There is a natural affinity between our sin nature and Adam's original sin, so these two things are immediately bonded at birth. The sin nature is the natural home or target for Adam's first sin.
16. Although the woman sinned first, she had been deceived. Now, she was guilty of this sin and

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this sin broke her fellowship with God. However, when Adam sinned, he was fully cognizant of what he was doing. 1Timothy 2:13–14 **For Adam was first formed, then Eve. Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.**

17. Adam, when he sinned, chose the woman over God. At that point in time, there were not plenty of fish in the sea. There was just one Adam and one woman. Adam fully understood that he would be disobeying God when he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam did not necessarily know all that would happen, but he fully understood that he was choosing the woman, whom he loved, over God.
18. Because Adam sinned from having a full understanding of this sin, his wilful act of disobedience is the sin which is imputed to all of us and, therefore, the sin which condemns every one of us at birth.
19. When a woman's egg is made ready for fertilization, it is made up of 46 chromosomes. It throws off 23 corrupted chromosomes and 23 uncorrupted chromosomes remain behind. Virtually every woman produces this uncorrupted egg many times in her life. This is because the sin nature of the woman is not passed down to her son or daughters. She carries the child; she has a sin nature; but she does not pass that sin nature down to her children. When the man fertilizes her egg with his sperm, its 23 chromosomes brings with it the sin nature. Every single chromosome of the man is corrupted by Adam's trend.
20. God promised redemption through the seed of the woman. The seed of the woman is this uncorrupted egg. However, the problem is, every time that there is male sperm involved, that corrupts the egg.
21. When Jesus is conceived, the Holy Spirit matches up 23 pure chromosomes with the pure egg within Mary, and a child is born without a sin nature. There was no sex involved; there was no intercourse; this is not some sort of tryst between the Holy Spirit and Mary. This is more similar to artificial insemination than it is to the old fashion way of making babies.
22. Jesus is born without a sin nature. Therefore, there is no natural home for Adam's original sin. So Adam's original sin is not imputed to Jesus because there is no place to put it. There is no natural home or target for Adam's sin.
23. When Jesus is born, the human soul and a fully functioning human spirit are imputed to the physical life of Jesus. The human soul is where we store knowledge of people and the world; the human spirit is where we store knowledge of God and our relationship to Him.
24. Because Jesus was born without a sin nature and without Adam's original sin, He was born just as Adam was first created: with a soul, a spirit and a body; and no sin nature.
25. Jesus lives His life to about age 30 without committing any personal sins (had He committed a sin, then his human spirit would be shut down or overwritten by a sin nature). We have no idea what the result would have been beyond that, since Jesus is God.
26. The blood of Christ and the Roman cross where the Lord was crucified are both real; but they also both represent something. They represent the judicial imputation of our personal sins to the humanity of Jesus Christ.
27. Because this is a judicial imputation, that means that there is no natural home or target for our personal sins. Therefore, they could only be imputed based upon the volition of Jesus Christ. He had to accept our personal sins by choosing to. Otherwise, they would not be imputed to Him.
28. Our sins were poured out on Him and He took the association with our sins and the penalty for our sins from the justice of God.
29. On the cross, it was the humanity of Jesus which was crucified and the humanity of Jesus which took upon Himself our sins. His Deity could not be confined to one place at one time and His

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Deity could not have any direct association with our sins. This is why Jesus must be a man. A man can be confined to one place at one time; and a man can take upon Himself the punishment for our sins.

30. Over the three hour period of time, all of our sins were poured out upon the humanity of Jesus Christ. He accepted these sins willingly. He accepted the punishment for these sins willingly. Every sin committed by every member of the human race, past, present and future was poured out on Him along with the punishment for that sin.
31. During this time, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit deserted Him. He took upon Himself in His humanity, without any divine assistance, the penalty that we deserved for our sins.
32. Before Jesus died physically, He said, "Finished," which meant that all of our sins had been paid for. He died physically as an act of free will, as His work given Him in the plan of God was now complete.
33. His actual human blood provided nothing with regards to our sins being paid for. No one kept a bowl near the cross and got a lot of His blood and carried it into heaven. Although Jesus suffered intense physical pain due to the cross, this was not efficacious for our salvation. Only the fact that God the Father poured out our sins on His body and judged Him for those sins—that act is efficacious for our sins.
34. Since Jesus has done all of the work for our salvation, we can contribute nothing at all. We can only believe in Him, a nonmeritorious act. God accepts that nonmeritorious act as a volitional choice which we make. Therefore, God is able to impute His righteousness to us. We have not done anything good which means that we are being reward for that good. All of the work was done by Jesus. All that we can do is believe, which is a few second of positive volition toward Jesus. Romans 4:20–24 **He [Abraham] did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for him alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it is to be imputed, to the ones believing on Him who has raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead...**
35. Because of that act of volition, the justice of God is free to impute the righteousness of God to us. This is also a judicial imputation. There is no natural home or target for God's righteousness. But, because we have exercised our volition to allow this, God can judicially impute His righteousness to us. A judicial imputation requires volition to allow for it to happen. Romans 4:6 **...David also says of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works...** James 2:23 **...Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness...**
- 36.

See the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union.

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Luke 1:26 **In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,...**

The angel Gabriel previously appeared to Zechariah in the Temple. Now he is going to Nazareth. The word *angel* means *messenger*; and Gabriel is delivering a message. We have not the slightest clue why one angel is chosen for a job, over another; or why Gabriel here gets double duty. I would assume what he is doing is seen as a great honor.

The sixth month refers to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy (Barnes, Benson, Pett, Utley). The Cambridge Bible and Whedon suggest that this is six months after Gabriel appeared to Zechariah. Either understanding makes John the Herald about 6 months older than Jesus (Gabriel will appear to Zechariah and then to Mary, and he tells them what is about to happen). Given the imprecision of the dates of conception and births, this could be a 7 or 8 month gap. In any case, this is the only passage which gives us this information, where the births of John and Jesus are covered in the same context. Luke, by his narrative, indicates that John is conceived and therefore born before Jesus.

This minor problem with the *sixth month* is cleared up by what the angel will tell Mary: **"And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren."** (Luke 1:36) So, the context tells us exactly which *sixth month* is being referred to. So there should be no disagreements.

Dr. John Gill: *[This] same angel...five hundred years before gave Daniel an exact account of the time of the Messiah's coming.*<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth is in the hill country of Judæa (v. 39); and Mary is living in Nazareth (v. 26).

Galilee is the small sea north of the Jordan River, and Galilee is also the name of a district in northern Israel. One of the cities within the Galilee region is Nazareth.

Nazareth was not considered a very important city by the Jewish people. No prophet is said to come from Nazareth (John 7:52); and Nathanael will later ask, **"can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"** (John 1:46).

Nevertheless, the angel was sent to Nazareth, where Mary is living. It is she who would bear the LORD.

Luke 1:27a **...to a virgin betrothed to a man....**

This time, the angel went to a woman—a virgin who was to be married. The word here is *parthenon* (παρθένος) [pronounced *par-THEN-oss*], and it means, *a virgin, a marriageable maiden*. Strong's #3933. Unlike American society today, the Jewish people were not sexually active outside of marriage. American society in the 1950's and earlier was also much more conservative regarding sex and marriage. As a result, there were far more rock solid marriages than not. Since the sexual revolution, the divorce rate and the bearing of children out of wedlock, and abortions have all increased dramatically. There's God's way and there is man's way; and the sexual revolution of the 1960's (and beyond) is certainly an example of man's way.

It was not unusual in that era for marriages to be arranged far in advance of the actual marriage. Some couples might be matched up before age 10; and some couples may not meet until the time of their marriage. Mary is a virgin who was engaged to the man Joseph. I don't know that we are aware of any of the particulars concerning their engagement.

Portions of the Mosaic Law speak to this very thing. There were laws on the books, so to speak, about women engaged to be married, but who were taken and lost their virginity prior to the marriage. If this occurred off in some deserted area, it was assumed that she was raped and the man would be executed.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Luke 1:26.

If this occurred in a populated area, both the woman and the man could be executed (if the woman did not call out for help, the relations are considered consensual).

In any case, the Bible clearly discourages promiscuity prior to marriage (sex within the confines of marriage is never discouraged, except for a short length of time). Those who violated this Law of Moses against promiscuous behavior could be stoned to death. As a result, marriage in Jewish society was strong and stable. Since their families were stable, nation Israel was stable and strong as well.

Luke 1:27b ...whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

This virgin is engaged to be married to a man named Joseph who is from the house of David. This means that he is descended from David the most famous of Israel's kings, who is written about in the books of Samuel. We will later find out that this virgin is also a descendant of David's (both Joseph and Mary are descended from David).

Luke 1:27c And the virgin's name was Mary.

The name of the virgin that Gabriel went to see is Mary.

Despite anything that you have heard about Mary, such as, she was not really a virgin, contradicts Scripture and the common morality of that day. In that era, it was not unusual for a man and a woman to have one and only one intimate relationship in all of their lives. In fact, in the United States, prior to the 1960's, this was not unusual either.

Whereas our culture today allows for all kinds of promiscuous and deviant behavior, this was not true of the Jewish culture nor did the Law of Moses allow for it.

The angel Gabriel comes to Mary—the surrounding circumstances are not noted.

Luke 1:28a And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored [or, *graced-out*] one,..."

This is the same Gabriel who went and spoke to Zechariah in the Temple. Whereas, we knew all about the surroundings of his meeting with Zechariah, we are told nothing of the circumstances Mary was in when he spoke to her.

Gabriel describes her with the feminine singular, perfect passive participle of the verb *charitoō* (χαριτώ) [pronounced *khar-ee-TOW-oh*], which means, *graced [with, out] [one], honored [one], being indued with a special honor; being given special blessings*. Strong's #5487. The perfect tense refers to a person who has been given grace in the past with results that continue on. All of this was in the mind of God and therefore the plan of God from eternity past. The passive voice means that she receives this grace or honor. The participle here is a vocative, so Mary is being called by this name. The angel addresses her as *favored one, graced-out one, honored one*.

Luke 1:28b ...the Lord is with you!"

The angel also tells her the God is with her. It should seem obvious that she is to understand this in more than just a general sense. *God being with her* indicates a very important relationship.

The angel Gabriel has come to Mary to inform her that she will give birth to the Savior.

Luke 1:26–27 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

When Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant, the angel Gabriel went to speak to Mary, a woman engaged to Joseph. Both of them are from the house of David.

Luke 1:28a-b And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored [or, *graced-out*] one, the Lord is with you!"

Then, at the end of v. 28, some ancient Greek manuscripts add the phrase, *Blessed [are] you among women*.

Luke 1:28c "...blessed are you among women!" (BSV, KJV, WEB, WPNT)

This final phrase is not found in some manuscripts. Some of the best translations leave it out: ANT, AUV, ESV, NKJV, VW.

This exact same phrase is found in v. 42. It has been theorized that a copyist looked down at the original manuscript which he is copying and fixed his eyes on the wrong place; and then, a few seconds later, looked down at the correct place. Meanwhile, he has inserted a phrase from elsewhere. There is an actual name for this kind of textual error, but I do not recall at this time.

Pickering writes: *Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit 'blessed are you among women' (to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).*<sup>2</sup>

This appears to be quite a strong argument from Pickering to leave these words in.

When it comes to small phrases like this, the number of people who appear to weigh in on one side or the other does not necessarily indicate who is probably right. The King James Version of the Bible carries a great deal of weight, even today, over 400 years later. Despite whatever manuscript evidence that we have, if the KJV inserts the phrase (or leaves it out), many follow suit. This phrase is no exception. The KJV has this phrase in it, and so do many other translations. At the same time, a considerable number of translations leave the phrase out.

Since this phrase is found elsewhere in this verse (spoken by Elizabeth rather than by the angel Gabriel), whether it belongs here or not is a moot issue. Personally, I would lean toward this phrase not being found here, but only in v. 42.

When it comes to manuscript differences, whether in the Old or New Testaments, this is very much what the typical level of problem is. Although there are manuscript differences throughout the entire Bible, there are almost no circumstances where the differing texts are of any theological significance (one of the few exceptions to this is the end of the book of Mark, which material appears to have been added by charismatics).

Luke 1:28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"

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<sup>2</sup> Translation and the notes are from Wilbur N. Pickering, ThM PhD; from e-sword; Luke 1:28

I use the ESV for the translation throughout this study, and they leave out this final phrase.

Bear in mind that Mary is quite young at this time. I would place her somewhere between the ages of 15 and 21. I am unaware of any passage which actually fixes her age. In fact, even determining the typical age for marriage in that era is difficult. According to one **source**, Rabbis set the age of 18 as being the ideal age for a woman to marry; but that some, when physically developed, might marry as early as age 13. Another **source** said that young men could get married as young as 14 (12 for girls) with parental permission (which was required until they reached the age of 21).

According to Scripture, men might be considerably older when first married, as in the case of Isaac (40) and Jacob (over 40). On the other hand, King David married Saul's daughter around age 20 or so.

We know that Gabriel appeared to Zechariah when he was quite old; and Gabriel is appearing to Mary at a fairly young age (presumably).

Luke 1:29a **But she was greatly troubled at [or, over] the saying,...**

She is troubled over the saying, "**Greetings, O favored [= graced-out] one, the Lord is with you!**" The verb used is the aorist passive indicative of *diatarassō* (διαταράσσω) [pronounced *dee-at-ar-AHS-sow*], which means, *to agitate greatly, to trouble greatly, to disturb; to perplex*. Strong's #1298.

Gabriel speaks to the woman, and it does not appear that she either discerns that this is an angel or, she is more concerned with what he says than with who he is. Mary focuses upon the content of Gabriel's words.

My thinking is, she does not know how to understand this greeting. This seems to be much more than, "Hi, how are you? God be with you."

Meeting the angel troubled Zechariah (v. 12). Here, we have a different verb. It means *to agitate greatly, to trouble greatly*. It appears here that Mary is more agitated or perplexed over the saying, than the fact that she is speaking to an angel here. It is not even clear that she realizes that this is an angel.

She seems to accept the angel; but it is what he says is what concerns her. No doubt, she is wondering, *who am I for an angel to appear to me and call me graced out, and tell me that God is with me?*

The meeting between Gabriel and Zechariah began with Zechariah clearly being afraid. Zechariah was troubled and fear fell upon him. Mary is simply troubled or confused. The Greek words are quite different, but the words appear to be synonyms.

Luke 1:29b **...and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.**

Mary, although she is *shaken* by the sudden visit (a good definition for the Greek word translated *troubled*; which could also have been translated *perplexed*), her real concern is determining what sort of greeting this is. Her focus is on the content of the message, despite being initially shaken up.

The word translated *discern* is the imperfect indicative verb *dialogizomai* (διαλογίζομαι) [pronounced *dee-al-og-IHD-zohm-ī*], which means, *to deliberate (by reflection or discussion); to cast in mind, to consider, to dispute, to muse, to reason, to think; to revolve in one's mind, to bring together different reasons*. Strong's #1260. You will note that the verb meaning *to be troubled, perplexed* is in the aorist tense,



which is a point of time. So, she is momentarily thrown off her game, so to speak, but when she considers what was said to her, that she thinks about in the imperfect tense, meaning that she began to think about it and she is still thinking about it.

From the very beginning, Mary's mind is at work. She is thinking about the meaning and implication of these words from Gabriel. Her mind is fully engaged with the import of this unexpected meeting.

Zechariah's response seems to have been more emotional than cerebral; but Mary's response seems to have been just the opposite.

Mary has been greeted by an angel—this has never happened to her before—and the angel has said, "Greetings, O graced-out one, the Lord is with you! [You are blessed among women!]" She is taking the situation that she finds herself in, along with the words spoken to her, and she is trying to make sense of it all. Whereas, Zechariah in the Temple was having a hard time getting past the fact that an angel has appeared to him and suggested something he believed to be impossible. No doubt that Mary is concerned that she is speaking to an angel; but she is also trying to determine the meaning of what Gabriel says to her. Her mind is clearly engaged.

Her mind is also engaged in a different way than Zechariah's. Zechariah immediately shared with the angel his opinion as to why he and his wife could not bear children ("We're just too old," he explained). What Zechariah implied was, "You might be an angel and all, but I live here in the real world and I know the facts on the ground." Mary is not going to be so argumentative. Zechariah reacts negatively to the message of the angel; and Mary, although she is questioning the meaning of what Gabriel is saying, she does not dismiss what he says as impossible.

Luke 1:30a **And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary,...**

Although we have Mary described with a verb that means *agitated, troubled, disturbed; perplexed*; there is apparently some fear as well. She is perplexed at the message; but also fearful, because this is an angel speaking to her. Even though Mary is not specifically said to be afraid, the angel saying this suggests that she is. A mental attitude sin might make it more difficult for Mary to discern what she is being told.

It is certainly possible and very normal to experience two emotions at once, and for one of those emotions to be dominant. She is somewhat afraid of the angel; but she is even more perplexed by his message. More of her thinking appears to be directed towards figuring out just what the angel means by what he said to her; but emotionally, she is experiencing some level of fear.

The fear she feels appears to be a sin; however, the fact that she is confused by these words is not a sin.

Luke 1:30b **...for you have found grace** [the ESV has *favor* here instead] **with God.**

*Find* here is the aorist active indicative of *heuriskō* (εὕρισκω) [pronounced *hyoo-RIHS-koh*], which means, *to find (literally or figuratively); to discover, to get, to obtain; to perceive, to see*. Strong's #2147. The aorist tense is interesting, and I would suggest that this is the iterative aorist tense. The aorist tense usually refers to a point in time, but the iterative aorist refers to several points of time. The iterative aorist expresses repeated or customary past action. These would be the points of time when she was in

fellowship and growing spiritually. During those times, she was discovering grace with God (although she may not have realized this).

What she has found (or, *discovered*) is the feminine noun *charis* (χάρις) [pronounced *KHAHR-ic*], one of the most important words in the Bible. This word means *grace, graciousness; acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, joy*. Strong's #5485. The verb which I translated *graced out* is the cognate of this noun. The noun is one of the most important words found in the New Testament, occurring over 150 times. I believe the only epistles lacking this word are Jude and 1 and 3John. Some understand this word to mean *undeserved love, unfailing love*. Personally, I like the word *grace*.

*Grace is all that God is free to do for us on the basis of the cross.* Without the cross, God is restricted by His Own essence. God is holy and we are not. Because of our fallen state, God is unable to have any contact or relationship with us. However, because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, we are placed *in Christ* when we believe, and can therefore enjoy a relationship with God, despite our sins and sinful nature. Jesus removed these barriers between us and God by taking upon Himself the penalty for our sins; so that God is able to give us grace (which God will do, far more than we deserve).

Luke 1:30 **And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found grace with God.**

The angel first speaks of God's relationship to Mary. She is not to be afraid and she has found grace with God.

I should add here that Mary is not some 2<sup>nd</sup> tier deity; she is not a little bit better than the rest of us; and maybe or maybe not as good as God. Mary is just like anyone of us—she is a recipient of God's grace. Did she think doctrine? Did she believe in the Revealed God? Yes and yes. But, does she occupy some space outside of or above the human realm? No. Should we worship her or pray to her? No and no.

Luke 1:31a **And behold, you will conceive in your womb....**

In the New Testament alone, we come across the word *behold* over 200 times. A few modern translations render this word *listen, look, observe*. We may want to even go with a more informal *listen up* or *listen here*. However, this participle (Strong's #2400), commonly translated *behold, listen, lo* or *see*, is the 2<sup>nd</sup> person, aorist middle imperative of *horaō* (ὁράω) [pronounced *ho-RAH-oh*], which means *to see*. Strong's #1492. The Brits used to have almost an exact colloquialism which would properly translate this word: *see here*. The idea is to get the other person to focus in on what you are about to say.

The famous talk show host Rush Limbaugh will, on occasion, on the radio, say, "Now look at me..." when he is about to make a point. Obviously, you cannot look at him if he is on the radio. This is said to focus attention on what he is about to say. *Behold* here is used in much the same way, despite that being an archaic translation.

The angel tells Mary that she will conceive in her womb. What is important is, there is no man involved. She is a virgin. She understands by the way that the angel is speaking, that this will be a conception apart from and prior to her future marriage.

Luke 1:31b **...and bear a Son,...**

She will conceive and she will give birth to a Son.

Luke 1:31c ...and you shall call His name Jesus.

She is told to give her Son the name *Jesus*. *Jesus* means *Savior*.

The angel Gabriel has come to Mary and is speaking with her.

Luke 1:28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one [= *graced-out one*], the Lord is with you!"

Gabriel, an angel, appears to Mary, suddenly, out of the blue; much as he appeared to Zechariah.

Luke 1:29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

Interestingly enough, Mary, from the beginning, is focused upon what this angel is saying to her. Unlike Zechariah, Mary was not argumentative, despite having some misgivings. She was listening, despite being confused by what the angel was telling her.

Luke 1:30–31 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor [or, *grace*] with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus.

Right now, the angel is speaking to Mary about the son Who would be born to her. Mary understands this to refer to her having a son apart from interaction with a man. She understands that the angel is not talking about what will happen after consummating her marriage with Joseph.

He continues by saying:

Luke 1:32a He will be great...

*Great* is the masculine singular adjective *megas* (μέγας, μεγάλη, μέγα) [pronounced *MEH-gas*], which means, *large, great; wide, spacious; rich; loud [i.e., a greater intensity]; high [position], more prominent, important*. Strong's #3173. Jesus is the most prominent figure of all time; more people know about Jesus than any other person in human history. Even those who do not believe in Jesus, and speak English, will use His name in order to swear.

Hollywood, which rejects almost all that is in the Bible, almost cannot develop a script for a movie or a series without using Jesus' name. In the work which I have done (as a teacher, realtor and landlord), I interact with quite a number of people. In any Hollywood movie or series, there might be two or three characters who speak with profanities throughout (using the Lord's name in vain). In my life, I can remember specific people—pretty much just a handful of them—who often spoke with profanities—these people stand out in my mind because there are so few of them. And, at the same time, I have known hundreds of people in school and real estate who do not resort to using Jesus' name in a trivial way. In Hollywood, it appears to be characteristic of every other person, based upon their portrayal of people in their movies and series.

My point is, Hollywood appears to be incapable of producing a script without using the name of Jesus. In fact, I would suggest that, if you took all of the television or movie output, the proper name that we would find spoken most often is *Jesus* (or, *Jesus Christ*). Let me suggest that you will find His name more often than the names *John*, *George* or *Liam*. Even when cursing, Hollywood cannot set Jesus aside. They *must* use His name.

Luke 1:32b ...and will be called the Son of the Most High.

Jesus will be called *the Son of the Most High*. *Most High* is a name for God the Father. For the second time in this first chapter, Jesus Christ is spoken of as Deity. Jesus is called the *Son of God* 40 times in the New Testament and *Son of the Most High [God]* 4 times (3 times in the book of Luke). This is different than being a generic *son of God*, as in being born of *God*, as in being saved. Such titles indicate Deity; Jesus is not a *god* (whatever the means), but *the God*.

No one else in the Bible is called *Son of the Most High*.

There are only a few passages which use the phrase, *sons of God*, where this is not a direct reference to the Lord. However, there is no other person in the Bible called the *son of God* as Jesus is.

Luke 1:32c And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David,...

The title *the Lord God* in the New Testament is equivalent to *Jehovah Elohim* in the Old. It refers to one particular member of the Godhead. You will recall that back in vv. 16–17 of this chapter, *the Lord their God* referred to Jesus Christ, and John the Baptizer would act as the herald for Jesus Christ (in that context, John was specifically called the herald for the *Lord their God*). Here, *Lord God* refers to *God the Father*, Who will give Jesus the throne of His human father David.

Now, we, as believers, are sons of God, because we have exercised faith in Jesus Christ. As a result, we are placed *into Christ*, and *in Christ*, we share His Sonship. **For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith** (Gal. 3:26). This does not make us Deity, however, but we do share Jesus' sonship.

The angel also refers to Jesus as *the Son of David*; as he calls David the father of Jesus. Having both a Divine Father (Jesus is the Son of God) and a human father (King David) is known as the hypostatic union. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He is undiminished Deity and true humanity in One Person forever.<sup>3</sup>

Quite obviously, when you speak to some other person, you do not reveal your every character trait to him with everything that you say. Similarly, when God speaks, we do not necessarily recognize or appreciate every facet of His essence in the words which He speaks at any give point in time. When Jesus speaks 5 or 10 words, we cannot pull from such a short phrase or sentence the entire concept of the Hypostatic Union. We understand Who Jesus is on the basis of many things which He has said.

When it comes to our Lord Jesus Christ, understanding Him is more complex than understanding any other person. This is because Jesus has two natures—He is fully human and fully divine. However, when He speaks, we do not necessarily perceive every aspect of every facet of His being. Sometimes, He speaks strictly from His humanity (“**I thirst**” or “**The Father is greater than I**”); sometimes He speaks specifically from His Deity (“**Before Abraham was, I am**”—which means, *before Abraham, I existed*

<sup>3</sup> I believe that this is a quote from R. B. Thieme, Jr.; and it may have originated from someone else before him.

*eternally*); and sometimes He speaks from His hypostatic union (which is the combined nature or the union of his humanity and His Deity) (“I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me.”).

Luke 1:33a ...and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,...

Every person born of Jacob is considered an Hebrew. Jacob, also called Israel, sired 12 sons by 4 different mothers, and each of those sons is considered to be a tribe of Israel (actually, Jacob’s son Joseph received the double-portion, so his two sons—Ephraim and Manasseh—are considered as two separate tribes<sup>4</sup>).

Jesus will have a specific relationship with Israel; He will rule over Israel (regenerate Israel) forever. Every son of Jacob who has believed in the Revealed God (that is, has believed in God as He has revealed Himself) is true Israel (for, not all Israel is Israel—Rom. 9:6b).

The angel Gabriel continues to describe Who Jesus will become:

Luke 1:33b ...and of His kingdom there will be no end."

We know much about the Lord’s thousand year reign called the Millennium, but the Lord will rule over all of us after that as well. We know very little about the eternal kingdom, apart from it being a new heavens and a new earth.

Luke 1:33 ...and He [Jesus, the Son to be born to Mary] will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

This prophecy, made by the angel to Mary, will be a fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. God promised David that he would have a Son Who would rule forever over Israel (1Chron. 17:11–14 Psalm 89:26–29). Psalm 89:34–37 (God is speaking, making these promises to King David) I will not profane My covenant, nor change what goes from My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. His Seed shall be forever, and his throne as the sun before Me. Like the moon, it shall be forever; and a faithful witness in the sky. Selah. (Green’s literal translation) This promise can only be fulfilled if there is a powerful nation Israel ruled by a king again. That King would be the Son that Mary gives birth to; the Child Who is virgin-born, the Child Who will be called both the Son of David and the Son of God.

What we are discussing is both the first and second advents of our Lord. His first advent is when Jesus is born in a manger in Bethlehem and walked this earth as a man, healing the sick, and then going to the cross to die for our sins. Jesus, at His second advent (also known as, His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming), will rule over all the earth, from Jerusalem, for 1000 years (also called the Millennium). Understanding these different advents will be fundamental to understanding the Lord’s first public pronouncement as the Messiah of the Old Testament.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent and the Millennium, then Satan and the fallen angels will be freed for a little while, and they will wreak havoc on this earth, because they are ruled by their hatred and rejection of God (Rev. 20:1–10). After this rebellion is put down, then there will be a new heavens and a new earth, and Jesus will rule over that new creation forever.

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<sup>4</sup> And if you are counting, this gives us 13 tribes in all, not 12.

Now, angel Gabriel has given a full picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, from His birth to His eternal rule. But Mary has a question.

Luke 1:34 **And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"**

As I have mentioned before, when some people are confused by something that was said, it is hard to move them forward from that point until it is explained to them. Mary heard some of what the angel said, but she keeps thinking about what the angel told her back in v. 31. In Luke 1:31, the angel tells Mary that she will have a Son. So, Mary is back there, mentally speaking, thinking out loud, "Wait just a minute...let's go back to this part where you say I will have a Son."

Mary understood that the angel said, she was to be pregnant with a child as a virgin. This was not something which she understood would occur after her marriage to Joseph. She understood that she would become pregnant prior to her marriage to Joseph. This suggests to me that there was possibly more to their conversation than what is recorded here. I would suggest that the angel cited 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 [= God (is) with us].** Luke has put together what he could of this conversation, possibly from a secondary source (someone who spoke to Mary directly, like John or Peter) and possibly from the primary source of Mary herself.

When it comes to critics of the Bible, there is a great deal of dishonesty out there. You may have heard of those who make the claim that Jesus was not born of a virgin, but that these words were mistranslated, and they should simply read *young woman*, and some go to great lengths of "scholarship" to make their point (it is amazing how studied some of these critics sound, people who have never taken a single course in Greek or Hebrew). It should be clear that Mary is *not* saying, "How is it possible for me to have a child? After all, I am a *young woman!* That is unheard of!" She is a virgin—she has not had sex with any man—and she understands that, as a virgin, she will give birth to this Descendant of David. She clearly understands what Gabriel is telling her. She also knows enough to know that women do not give birth apart from a husband (or, a man).

In the next 2 verses, the angel will explain how, saying, **"Nothing is impossible with God."** None of this exchange makes any sense—her question or the angel's answer—if Mary is a fertile young woman who will conceive a child in the normal way with her new husband, Joseph. That is not a feat which requires the angel to say, "Nothing is impossible with God." *Having a child* as a young, married woman is *not* a sign; it is the normal course of events.

There is no way that one can read this passage and understand it in any other way—Mary is a virgin and she will conceive a child as a virgin, not having known a man. Much of the Scripture concerning Mary, as a virgin, giving birth to a child, is clear and unequivocal. The other passages are similar in this same way—they make sense if Mary is a virgin when giving birth to Jesus; they do not make sense if we simply assume that she gives birth as a young woman.

We have just read and studied a passage where an angel tells Mary that she will have a Son, but that this son will be born to her as a virgin. This concept of the Virgin-born Savior is integral to Scripture. This is far more complex than being a simple trick or sign by God.

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Let's look at the virgin birth, approaching it from 4 different angles:

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## Four Approaches to the Virgin Birth

### The Prophetical Approach:

When we go back to the Old Testament, where this was prophesied, God the Holy Spirit, through Isaiah, says, “So the Lord Himself will give you this sign: A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a Son, and she will name Him Immanuel [= God Is With Us].” (Isa. 7:14). Although, some go to great lengths to try to prove that this does not refer to a virgin, but simply to a young woman, they intentionally ignore the first portion of this verse which tells us that this is a *sign*. It is not a *sign* when a young woman gives birth. Young women give birth all of the time. If a virgin gives birth, that is a sign.

### The Theological Approach:

Furthermore, there is much more to the virgin birth than it being simply a sign from God. Every person born is conceived by the sperm of a man and the egg of a woman. Adam’s sin nature is passed down by the man. Rom 5:12 **Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—...** (ESV; emphasis mine) (This will be explained by the doctrine to follow.)

Throughout Scripture, Adam always receives the *blame* for sin to have entered the world and to be passed along to all mankind. There is not passage that says that Eve is 50% to blame for this.

In original sin, Adam is blamed because he sinned out of his cognizance. He unequivocally knew that eating the fruit was a violation of God’s one command to them. The woman sinned as well, but she had been deceived by the serpent. So it is logical that, when the sin nature is passed down, it is passed down from Adam (and from all subsequent males) and not from the woman.

Because of the difference of their sins, the woman has the one thing which is not permeated by the sin nature—her egg. Whenever the egg is combined with the male sperm, the beginnings of a child is the result, but the child is already biologically corrupted with Adam’s sin nature. At birth, Adam’s original sin will be imputed to this sin nature. There is a natural affinity between the Adam’s original sin and the indwelling sin nature, and both are full-blown in all infants (but One).

On the other hand, in a virgin birth, there is no sin nature passed down by the man; so such a child, conceived by the Holy Spirit, has both the nature of God and of man; but lacks a sin nature. There is no natural affinity in this new human soul for Adam’s original sin, so Adam’s sin is not imputed to such a Child.

Whatever sort of connection Jesus has with sin would have to be the result of his free will. He will choose to be associated with our sins on the cross.

### The Prophetical Approach combined with the Theological Approach:

This concept of the woman alone bearing the Christ child goes all the way back to the third chapter of Genesis. Gen. 3:14a, 15 **And Jehovah God said to the serpent,...I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.** (Green’s literal translation) God contrasts the seed (or, *offspring*) of the serpent with the Seed of the woman. The offspring of Satan refers to those who are unregenerate, who choose Satan over God; the Seed of the woman is Jesus.

What is unusual in this passage is, God is speaking of *the Seed of the woman*. This is a very unusual

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thing to say. When speaking of *seed* or *seeds*, everywhere else in the Bible, this refers to a man, and never to a woman (except in this one instance and all of its parallels in Scripture).

The serpent bruising the Seed's heel refers to the cross. The thing we are to imagine is a serpent biting the heel of Jesus (this is the cross). It is a painful but not a deadly blow. However, He (referring to *the Seed*) will crush the serpent's head—that is a deadly blow.

### The Typical Approach:

The passing down of the sin nature is illustrated by the Coniah curse. The Coniah curse is illustrative of the imputation of Adam's original sin; and of the sin nature.

The line of Adam will go through David, through Solomon, and to Jeconiah (also known as *Coniah* and as *Jehoiachin*), a very evil King of Judah. God pronounced a curse upon Jeconiah through Jeremiah in Jer. 22:24—"As I live," says the LORD, "though you, Coniah son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, were a signet ring on My right hand, I would tear you from it." The signet ring on the right hand of God guarantees that the promises which God made to David (the Davidic Covenant). However, these promises would not be passed down through Jeconiah's line. Jeconiah was cut off from that signet ring.

This is the *Coniah curse*. Jeconiah is treated, in essence, like the old sin nature. His evil nature attaches itself to the line of David and prevents God's promises from being fulfilled in his particular branch of the Davidic line, just as the sin nature that is within each one of us (which we receive from Adam) makes it impossible for us to have fellowship with God.

The Messiah cannot come from this man's line, because he is the man to whom the curse is given. Coniah represents the sin nature which is passed down. The Messiah cannot be born in the line of Jeconiah because his line is cursed (again, Coniah is typical of the sin nature). This is the exact opposite of being the line of promise.

Coniah illustrates the passing along of the sin nature in Scripture. We find these real-life situations which illustrate spiritual realities over and over again in the Bible. Jeconiah was a real king; he was a real person; God really cursed him for his evil actions. However, he *illustrates* (or he *typifies*) the passing down of the sin nature and the passing down of Adam's original sin to all mankind.

Joseph, the man to whom Mary is engaged, is in the line of David, Solomon and Coniah. But, Joseph contributes nothing to the genetics of Jesus. Joseph will be Jesus' legal father, but he not the Lord's biological father. Mary is born in the line of David and Nathan; so she is not in the line of the Coniah curse. Coniah represents the passing along of the sin nature; and Mary is not in that line. She contributes her DNA, minus the sin nature, to Jesus.

Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, is in the line of David, Solomon and Jeconiah (Matt. 1:1, 6–7, 12); but his seed was not used to impregnate Mary (Matt. 1:18–25). Therefore, the Jeconiah curse—the curse of the old sin nature—is not passed down to our Lord. The line which was not corrupted—the line which was not cursed—goes from David to Nathan to Mary (Luke 1:26–35 3:23, 31). The line through Nathan bypasses the Coniah curse. The result of the line of Mary is Jesus, the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:14–15).

So there is no misunderstanding, every male in the line of David to Nathan to Mary has a sin nature. However, this is the line of promise, as opposed to the line of Coniah, which is the line of cursing (we



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have such a delineation throughout all of Scripture; the word *holy* means *set apart*; and the people of God are set apart from all others).

It *should* be the desire of every person to be in the line of promise rather than the line of cursing. We become sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26). *That* is the line of regeneration; *that* is the line of promise.

The virgin birth was real, and the sin nature was not passed down to Jesus through the man, because there was no man involved in His conception. The *curse of Coniah* (which is a real curse that *represents* the sin nature) is thereby bypassed.

Most Christians do not realize just how complex certain Biblical doctrines are.

## Adam's Sin and the Sin Nature Come to Us Through Adam

1. There was a difference in the quality of sins between the man and the woman in Gen. 3. The woman was deceived by the serpent when she sinned, but Adam was fully cognizant of his choice to sin against God. Adam may not have known the many consequences from his choice to sin, but he knew it was wrong, he knew this was the single thing that God forbade, and yet, he went ahead and did it anyway.
2. Therefore, Adam is the responsible party—not Eve—when it comes to sin. Both Adam and the woman sinned; but Adam consciously and intentionally sinned against God. He may not have fully appreciated all of the consequences, but he fully understood that he was doing exactly the one thing that God told him not to do.
3. The woman, on the other hand, had been confused and deceived by the serpent. Although her sin is not ignored or set aside, it is a different quality of sin than Adam's. The consequences for the woman will be different than the consequences for Adam (which consequences continue to this day).
4. Because of the difference of the quality of their sins, there were different outcomes. In conception and childbirth, the woman would give birth to children and the man would pass along the sin nature.
5. It is possible that the traditional roles for men and women in society are related to original sin.
6. Whereas, Adam was created in the image of God; man now is descended from Adam and all men born of Adam and Eve are born in the image of Adam. Genesis 1:26–27 5:3 9:6
7. Adam, not the woman, passed along the sin nature to his sons and daughters; and his sons continue to pass along the sin nature to their sons and daughters. (All males in the human race are sons of Adam.)
8. Psalm 51:5 (David is the author) **Point of doctrine: I was born in iniquity and my mother conceived me in sin.**
  - a. David begins this verse with a word often translated *Lo!* or *Behold!* in the old English. What this word does is focus the reader on what is being said. We might better translated the first word, *listen, listen up, look here, point of doctrine.*
  - b. David is conceived in sin. *Conceived* is just the word that we would expect it to be; it generally refers back to the act of conception.
  - c. The realm in which David is conceived is *sin*, which is the masculine singular noun *chêt*<sup>o</sup>

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(ἁμαρτία) [pronounced *khayt*], which means, *sin, offense, fault; penalty for sin, guilt for sin*. Strong's #2399 BDB #307. Sometimes when we find the word *sin* in the singular, it can refer to the sin nature. The very act of conception passes along the sin nature to the person created by that act of conception.

- d. Through the act of conception, the sin nature is genetically attached to the child who is being made.
  - e. David is also born or brought forth in the realm of 'āvôwn (אָוֹן) [pronounced *gaw-VOHN*], which means, *iniquity, crime, offense, transgression, depraved action, guilt*. Strong's #5771 BDB #730. When David was born, he was born guilty, he was born into iniquity. No matter how cute little David was as an infant, in his soul was his old sin nature. And imputed to that soul was the guilt or iniquity of Adam's original sin.
  - f. Because David was born with a sin nature, there was a natural receptacle in his person for this imputation of Adam's original sin. Adam's sin was imputed to David's sin nature (Adam's sin is imputed to our sin natures as well).
  - g. As R. B. Thieme, Jr. so marvelously explained this, *God hates babies; right from the womb, God hates babies because they have Adam's original sin imputed to them*. (Not an exact quote.)
  - h. Therefore, at birth, Adam's original sin is imputed to David and he has a sin nature. This is true of every human being, save one.
9. The progression and responsibility is described by Romans 5:12–13 **Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man [= Adam], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.** (ESV)
- a. Sin enters the world through one man—that would be Adam. Adam intentionally, purposefully and knowingly sinned. As the federal head of the human race, he made this decision for all of us. The responsibility of his sin would belong to all men (and women).
  - b. Bear in mind that this is very different from the angels. God created angels as discrete beings. Some of them sinned and some did not. Those who sinned are called fallen angels or demons; those who did not are called elect angels.
  - c. At birth, I had no choice. I was born into sin. I would become a sinner. And I personally would choose to sin many, many times.
  - d. With angels, there was not the same domino affect where, one angel sinned, and so they all sinned. But with man, because we are not created individually, but are, in part, the result of conception and volition of our fallen parents, we are born into sin because Adam is our (ultimate) father.
  - e. With Adam, he is the first domino to fall, and all dominos after him fell. With angels, each angel chooses for himself.
  - f. Therefore, with Adam, **death spread to all men and all men sinned**.
  - g. Sin was obviously in the world before the Mosaic Law was given to man.
  - h. Although the final phrase is outside of the confines of our study, it does require some explanation:
    - i. It is clear that all men are subject to sin and to death (Rom. 5:12, 14).
    - ii. These are two related concepts; because all men have sinned, all men die.
    - iii. If there are specific transgressions described in the Law that men were not aware of, God does not count that against them as sin. However, all men in all eras have an understanding of sin and wrongdoing (this is known as our conscience), and all men choose to violate their conscience and sin.

## Adam's Sin and the Sin Nature Come to Us Through Adam

- iv. All men will die because they are subject to their sin nature and Adam's original sin is imputed to them (Rom. 5:12–13a), even if they have not committed a similar sin to Adam's (Rom. 5:14).
- 10. You may think, *it is unfair that I was born with a sin nature and with the imputation of Adam's sin*; but, as a result, we can all be redeemed. Rom. 5:18–19 **Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.** The disobedience of one man is Adam; the obedience of one man refers to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ first lived a sinless life, empowered by God the Holy Spirit; and then He agreed to go to the cross and to die for our sins. He was qualified to take our sins upon Him because He Himself had not sinned.
- 11. Through the simple exercise of faith in Jesus Christ, we gain so much more than Adam lost in the fall. Furthermore, we have the experience of having been born into sin. We get to see our relationship to sin and to God from both sides. In addition to this, elect angels have observed us and have seen our lives from both sides of sin as well.
- 12. We will have a complete understanding of sin, God, and our relationship to God; as we have been on both sides of God (we are born condemned; but we will be raised incorruptible). Angels learn all of these things by watching us.

See also <https://www.gotquestions.org/inherit-sin.html>

In looking over this doctrine, it strikes me as a fundamental objection of fallen angels to their eternal judgment would be, "You made me to sin. I had no choice but to sin against You." Similarly, there are quite a number of people who seem to think that they have no free will. However, there should be nothing more real in your life than your free will.

Let us return to narrative. The angel Gabriel is speaking to Mary. The angel has already explained to Mary just how she will become pregnant with the Savior (Luke 1:26–33). Now Mary has a very specific question.

Luke 1:34 **And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"**

I do not mean to beat a dead horse here, but Mary is *not* saying, "How can I become pregnant if I am a young woman of a marriageable age?" She means, *how can this happen if I am a virgin?*

Mary understands enough biology to know that, apart from conception, which occurs only when there have been relations between a man and a woman, she cannot have a child, which is what the angel has just assured Mary that she would have. She also understands from the angel that he is speaking of her giving birth to a child apart from normal, human conception. The angel addresses this question specifically.

Luke 1:35a **And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you,...**

First thing that would occur is the Holy Spirit would come upon her. What the Holy Spirit would do is the future deponent middle indicative of the verb *eperchomai* (ἐπέρχομαι) [pronounced *ehp-EHR-khom-ah-ee*], which means, *to supervene, to arrive, to occur, to attack, (figuratively) to influence; to come (in, upon)*. Strong's #1904. This is a word *never* used for anything remotely sexual. When the Holy Spirit

is promised to the Apostles in Acts 1:8, the exact same verb is used. The future tense means future from the time that the angel says this to Mary. The deponent middle means that the verb is middle in form, but active in meaning. The indicative mood is the mood of reality. The Holy Spirit will arrive at some time in the future *to influence or to come upon* Mary, causing her to become pregnant—but completely apart from any sort of sexual relations.

Is this something that she would necessarily know or feel? There is nothing in Scripture which indicates that this would be an experience that she would feel. There is no physical act involved or implied here; Mary will remain a virgin until all respects until *after* the birth of the Lord.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit in the Church Age, there are no supernatural effects. We are not suddenly happier, more clever, faster; there are no accompanying emotions. We understand that we are filled with the Holy Spirit based upon the Word of God. The testimony of the Word of God is our evidence. In eternity, we will see the actual dividends of a Spirit-filled life. However, at this point in our lives, we take that on faith. Let's say you had a grandmother who put \$50 a month into a bank account or into a mutual fund for you. When she does that, you do not feel anything, but when the bank account is given over to you, then you realize that it was all very real.

As an aside, the believer takes a great deal by faith; but, as time progresses, we become more assured of our righteous path. The believer who is growing spiritually becomes more stable, happier, and more at peace with himself and with life. For the believer who grows spiritually and trusts the Word of God, and trusts that he is being filled with the Holy Spirit when he rebounds—that same believer will *always* end up in a much better place in life.

I kept a journal when I was younger; and when I go back and read it, I can see a lot of anger, spite and rebellion. And combined with all of that was also a healthy dose of unhappiness. I did enjoy periods of time when I was stimulated in my youth; but I also spent a significant amount of time in depression and unhappiness. In moments of clarity, I could see how I was screwing up my own life. Through my own negative volition and rebellion against authority, I continually caused trouble for myself and others.

After believing in Jesus Christ, and getting on doctrine, all of that changed. I did not turn into a perfect person; not overnight, and definitely not now. I still do some really boneheaded and wrong things. But I serve a forgiving God, and He deals with me *graciously*. God does not deal with me *appropriately*, for if God dealt with me appropriately, I would have been taken out of this life by divine discipline a long time ago.

Throughout my life as a believer, I noticed very little by way of day-to-day change; and the filling of the Holy Spirit has never been an experience that I could feel in any way. You do not feel as if you have physically grown after eating a meal<sup>5</sup>—particularly as a teenager eating almost everything in sight (which is what I did). But, did I measure myself each day after a meal to see if I had grown? Did I feel as if I had grown? Of course not. But, as imperceptibly we grow physically, the same is true of growing spiritually. We may walk out after a few dozen Bible classes and feel no different whatsoever; but, if we consider where we are today and compare that to a year ago or to 5 years ago, then we can reasonably recognize that spiritual growth has taken place (just like, if you measure the height of your kids at the same place in the garage, every six months, there will be definite strides made).

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<sup>5</sup> As I grow older, I can see my stomach expand noticeably after a meal; but the actual growth of more height and muscle—that is simply unobservable in the short term.

As time progressed, I fell into my spiritual gift; and am in a place where it seems clear to me, given the time, my abilities and weaknesses, and every other factor. I know that I am in the right place at the right time, and sometimes even doing the right thing.

One additional thing: I have been blessed far beyond anything that I deserve. I don't know anyone that is happier than I am (no doubt, there are). This is a result of spiritual growth, which comes from the filling of the Holy Spirit and knowledge of Bible doctrine.

When I am out in the world, I can think of many examples of interactions with people, where I can tell that they are angry, unhappy, frustrated and unfulfilled—and some of them are Christians! But what the unbelievers lack is Jesus and what the believers lack is peace, which comes through the intake of Bible doctrine.

In short, this is a life that I would recommend to any person at any point in their lives. If you are an unbeliever, you need to believe in Jesus Christ; and if you are a believer, then you need to be under the direction of a well-qualified pastor-teacher (and I don't mean one-on-one direction; but impersonal, auditorium or classroom-style teaching).

Back to our narrative:

Luke 1:34 **And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"**

Mary fully understands what the angel is saying, and she asks the most reasonable question, *how can this happen? Virgins do not become pregnant.*

Luke 1:35a **And answering, the messenger [or, angel] said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you...**

We take the Trinity for granted in our day and age. It is unclear whether any of the Jewish people appreciated this. How did she understand this to be?

Again, there is no physical contact of any sort; but something is changed inside of Mary, so that her egg is fertilized by God the Holy Spirit. No woman ever feels the exact instant that she becomes pregnant; a woman does not feel her egg being fertilized. This certainly would have been true of Mary at this time.

Luke 1:35b **...and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;...**

Mary would have understood *the Most High* to be God.

What God would do also involves an unusual verb. The verb is the future active indicative of episkiazô (ἐπισκιάζω) [pronounced *ehp-ee-skee-AD-zoh*], which means, *to throw a shadow upon, to envelop in a shadow, to overshadow; to envelop in a haze of brilliancy; figuratively, to invest with preternatural influence.* Strong's #1982.

The future tense indicates that this has not happened yet; the active voice indicates that the Holy Spirit would perform the action of the main verb (He would Himself *cast the shadow*). The indicative mood is the mood of reality; this would definitely take place. One thing that does not appear to be an issue? Mary's volition. This is going to happen.

There would be some kind of close interaction between two Members of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit and the Most High—and Mary. There is no reason to be crass here or to imagine some sort of sexual union. God used modified cloning to make Eve (the mother of all living); and God could certainly start up Mary's reproductive system without the intrusion of a male sperm.

How do we know that this is not something that Mary will feel or be aware of? God's power casts a shadow over her. Now, what does a shadow feel like? Nothing, right?

Now, once Mary is pregnant, she will go through all of the various things that pregnant women go through. So, there will be a point at which she has the normal physical traits of a woman who is pregnant.

The angel explains how this will happen. The Holy Spirit would *come upon* Mary, which is a future indicative. The same verb is used for sleep *coming upon* a person, or a disease *coming upon* a person or even of calamities *overtaking* a person. The power of the Most High will *cast a shadow upon Mary* or *envelop Mary with a shadow*, and a Child will be born; which Child will be called holy, the Son of God.

Luke 1:35c ...therefore the Child to be born will be called holy--the Son of God.

What does this mean that this child will be called *holy*? This is just the opposite of the way that you or I (or King David) were born. As we recently studied, David wrote: **Point of doctrine: I was born in iniquity and my mother conceived me in sin.** (Psalm 51:5) Paul writes in the book of Romans: **Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.** (Rom. 5:12) All men (and women) are conceived in sin, which is the opposite of holy. We are born with a sin nature and with Adam's original sin imputed to that sin nature. Jesus is born *holy*.

Adam was born and called the son of God. This is because God created Adam without a sin nature. However, we are all sons of Adam, as we carry his mark, his sin nature (which he acquired when he chose to act against God).

What the angel is telling Mary is some pretty heady stuff; and, no doubt, Mary is taken aback by all of this. As if speaking with an angel is not enough, she has just been told things that no one has ever heard before (except prophetically).

The angel Gabriel is telling Mary about what God has planned for her. So Mary, who is listening very carefully, asks the angel Gabriel a very pertinent question:

Luke 1:34 **And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"**

Gabriel's answer will include every Member of the Trinity. This is the first time in the book of Luke where each Member of the Trinity is found in the same passage.

Luke 1:35 **And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born [to you] will be called holy—the Son of God.** (Emphasis mine.)

Interestingly enough, not only does every Member of the Trinity appear in this passage, but each one has some sort of interaction with Mary.

Quotation marks were added; as many of these passages were quotations (many times, a Member of the Godhead is speaking). This is not necessarily true of every passage.

The ESV; capitalized (emphasis mine) is used below:

### Passages Featuring all 3 Members of the Trinity

Psalms 104:30–32 When You send forth **Your Spirit**, they are created, and You renew the face of the ground. **May the Glory of the LORD** endure forever; may the **LORD** rejoice in His works, **Who** looks on the earth and it trembles, **who** touches the mountains and they smoke!

The *Glory of the Lord* is Jesus Christ; the *LORD* is God the Father.

Isa. 11:1–3a There shall come forth a **Shoot** from the stump of Jesse, and a **Branch** from his roots shall bear fruit. And the **Spirit of the LORD** shall rest upon **Him**, **the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge** and the fear of the **LORD**. And **His** delight shall be in the fear of the **LORD**.

The 3 references to *Lord* is God the Father. The One spoken of, the *Shoot* and the *Branch*, is Jesus. This passage describes the relationship of Jesus to the other two Members of the Trinity during the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent.

Isa. 42:1 “Behold **My Servant**, whom I uphold, **My Chosen**, in **Whom My** soul delights; I have put **My Spirit** upon **Him**; **He** will bring forth justice to the nations.”

God the Father is speaking (Isa. 42:5); and He is speaking of Jesus, *His Chosen One*. God the Father is describing God the Son. Each possessive pronoun *My* refers to God the Father.

Isa. 48:16–17 “Draw near to **Me**, hear this: from the beginning **I** have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be **I** have been there. And now the **Lord GOD** has sent **Me**, and **His Spirit**.” Thus says the **LORD**, your **Redeemer**, the **Holy One of Israel**: “**I am the LORD your God**, who teaches you to profit, **Who** leads you in the way you should go.”

The first *Lord God* is God the Father, Who sent (along with His Spirit) God the Son (the Person speaking), identifies Himself as *the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel*.

Isa. 59:20–21 “And a **Redeemer** will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the **LORD**. “And as for **Me**, this is **My** covenant with them,” says the **LORD**: “**My Spirit** that is upon you, and **My** words that I have put in **Your** mouth, shall not depart out of **Your** mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,” says the **LORD**, “from this time forth and forevermore.”

God the Father is speaking; the personal pronouns therefore refer back to God the Father. The *Redeemer* sent by God is Jesus.

Isa. 61:1–2a “The **Spirit** of the **Lord GOD** is upon **Me**, because the **LORD** has anointed **Me** to bring good news to the poor; **He** has sent **Me** to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the **LORD's** favor.”

The *Lord God* and two references to the *Lord* are references to God the Father. The Person speaking is the Revealed God (Who is Jesus). Jesus is the One sent by God the Father. Jesus quotes this very short passage near the beginning of His ministry in order to announce Who He is.

## Passages Featuring all 3 Members of the Trinity

It is quite amazing, the number of times that we find all 3 members of the Godhead in the book of Isaiah. However, this is quite logical as Isaiah, more than any other prophet, gives very specific prophecies about the 1<sup>st</sup> advent of the Lord Jesus.

We have all 3 members of the Trinity mentioned in Matt. 3:16–17 **And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased."** (ESV; capitalized; emphasis mine)

The *voice from heaven* is the voice of God the Father.

Of course, we have the passage from Luke:

Luke 1:35 **And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."**

John 1:32–34 **And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him. I myself did not know Him, but He Who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on Whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that This is the Son of God."**

John the baptizer is giving his witness, explaining that he saw Jesus and that he baptized Him, and the Spirit came upon Him. The Person Who sent John and spoke to him is God the Father.

John 3:34–35 **"For He Whom God has sent utters the words of God, for He gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand."**

Jesus is speaking and the One Who sent Him is God the Father.

Some of Jesus' final words given to the Disciples, outlining their mission:

Matt. 28:18–20 **And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

Acts 1:4–5 **And while staying with them He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, "you heard from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**

The disciples also testified as to all 3 Members of the Trinity:

Acts 2:32–35 (Peter is speaking a powerful sermon on the Day of Pentecost) **"This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out This that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.' "** (Psalm 110:1)

*This* refers to God the Holy Spirit. *The Lord* is God the Father; *my Lord* is God the Son (*my* refers back to David, who wrote Psalm 110).



## Passages Featuring all 3 Members of the Trinity

At the very end of Saint Stephen's sermon, we read: **Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."** But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. (Acts 7:54–58)

At the end of Stephen's sermon, the antagonistic religious crowd rushed him and killed him. He saw all 3 members of the Trinity (or manifestations of them) prior to His death.

Acts 10:36–38 (Peter is speaking in another sermon) "As for the word that **He** sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through **Jesus Christ** (he is **Lord** of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how **God** anointed **Jesus of Nazareth** with the **Holy Spirit** and with power. **He** went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for **God** was with **Him**."

Paul in his epistles speaks of the Trinity:

Rom. 1:1–4 Paul, a servant of **Christ Jesus**, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of **God**, which **He** promised beforehand through **His** prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning **His Son**, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the **Son of God** in power according to the **Spirit of holiness** by **His** resurrection from the dead, **Jesus Christ** our **Lord**,...

Gal. 4:6 And because you are sons, **God** has sent the **Spirit of His Son** into our hearts, crying, "**Abba! Father!**"

The Trinity is found in the book of Hebrews (author unknown):

Heb. 9:13–14 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of **Christ**, who through the eternal **Spirit** offered **Himself** without blemish to **God**, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living **God**.

Peter speaks of all 3 Members of the Trinity when writing his first words in 1Peter:

1Peter 1:1–2 Peter, an apostle of **Jesus Christ**, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of **God the Father**, in the sanctification of the **Spirit**, for obedience to **Jesus Christ** and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

I admit to being surprised the many times that we find all 3 Members of the Trinity named together in Scripture.

See also Isa. 59:20–21 Ezek. 3:11–12 22–24 11:22–24 Matt. 12:28 Luke 3:22 4:15–20 John 14:26 Rom. 8:8–14 1Cor. 6:11–15 2Cor. 13:14 Eph. 1:16–17 2:13,18, 22 Titus 3:4–7. This is likely not a full list of Trinity passages. There are many more passages where only 2 members of the Trinity are mentioned together.

Although I mostly used Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge in e-sword, there are also passages given in the **Overview Bible** which I used. I also came across or knew others already.

## Part II: the Line of Mary and the Coniah Curse

Luke 3:23 Jesus, when He began His ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, [Jesus is] the [actual] son [or, descendant] of Heli,... [the ESV, capitalized; with some supplementary text designed to clarify the relationships]

Jesus is not the biological son of Joseph; however, He is the biological son grandson of Heli, who would have been Mary's father.

Heli's name is only found here in this verse.

There are two genealogical lines for the Lord: here and in Matt. 1; and these lines are different. So, how do we determine which is Joseph's and which is Mary's? Joseph would be Jesus' legal father, but not His biological father. Mary would be Jesus' biological mother. Therefore, those in one line are directly related to the humanity of Jesus; and those in the other line are Jesus' legal, but not biological, ancestors.

Let's approach this in another way. The way that this is written is *Jesus was assumed to be the son of Joseph, the son of Heli*. There are two ways in which this can be interpreted. Either Jesus is the son (descendant) of Heli or Joseph is. This can be understood either way in the Greek. Although usually, the closest noun would be taken, this is not a hard-and-fast rule. Generally speaking, if Jesus is the son of Joseph, then He is automatically the son (descendant) of Joseph's father. But the line differs from a normal genealogical line from the very beginning....Jesus is the *supposed son of Joseph*. So Jesus is not the son of Joseph nor is He the grandson of Joseph's father.

When we come to the name *Heli*, there is no phrase *as was supposed*. We have a binary choice here: Jesus is of Heli or Joseph is of Heli. One of those things must be true; and the other false. Since there is no Heli in the line of Joseph (given in Matt. 1)<sup>6</sup>, then Jesus must be the son or descendant of Heli. Therefore, Heli would be Mary's father (possibly grandfather, but I would suggest father).

Let's take this in points:

### Reasons why Luke 3 the line of Jesus through Mary

1. There are two lines which lead to Jesus—the line of His mother and the line of His (supposed) father. Since the line to his legal father is found in Matthew, then this line must be that of His natural mother. Matt. 1:1–17 Luke 3:23–38
2. Joseph is the legal father of Jesus; but Mary is Jesus' actual mother. Matt. 1:16–21, 25 Luke 1:30–35 2:5–7 3:23
3. Either Joseph is the son of Heil or Jesus is the son of Heli—an option from the Greek text itself. Since Joseph is the son of Jacob (Matt. 1:16), and because there is no Heli in the line of Joseph in Matt. 1, by process of elimination, Jesus (not Joseph) is the actual son (or, descendant) of Heli.
4. If Jesus is the actual son (descendant) of Heli (there are no qualifiers in the Greek), then this would mean that Mary is the daughter of Heli and Jesus is her biological Son.
5. Jesus is fully human and fully divine, so His humanity or human nature comes through Mary.

<sup>6</sup> Although there are a few names which are the same, there is no way that these lines could be assumed to be identical.

## Reasons why Luke 3 the line of Jesus through Mary

Rom. 5:12, 14 1Cor. 15:21 1Tim. 2:14–15

- 1) This is why Jesus is called, simultaneously, the Son of Man and the Son of God.
  - 2) Son of Man: Matt. 11:19 12:40 16:13 Mark 8:31 14:62 Luke 6:5 18:31
  - 3) Son of God: Matt. 4:3 14:33 16:16 27:54 Mark 1:1 Luke 1:35
6. As an aside, because Jesus is born without a human father, He does not inherit the sin nature; nor is Adam's original sin imputed to Him. Every child, male or female, inherits his (or her) sin nature from his (or her) father. Heb. 4:15 9:28
7. The gospel of Matthew very much focuses upon Jesus as the fulfillment of many prophecies; the book of Luke focuses upon the Man Jesus (He is often called the *Son of Man* in the book of Luke). So, we would expect the genealogical line which reveals the fulfillment of Old Testament promises to be found in Matthew; and the genealogical line which emphasizes His human nature to be found in Luke.
- 1) Although both Joseph and Mary are spoken of in Matt. 1, it is clearly Joseph who is focused upon. Many things are seen from his point of view in this first chapter. Matt. 1:19–24
  - 2) Similarly, Luke 1–2 focus upon Mary and her experiences, even though Joseph is mentioned.
  - 3) For these reasons, we would expect to find the line of Joseph to be found in Matthew and the line of Mary in Luke.

Now, this may seem as if I am beating a dead horse here, but the issues here are directly related to a fundamental understanding of the Person of Jesus Christ.

Knowing all of these things, many translations should have done a better job indicating that the genealogical line found in Luke 3 is the line of Jesus through Mary, as I have done below:

Luke 3:23 **Jesus, when He began His ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, [Jesus is] the [actual] son [or, descendant] of Heli,...** [the ESV, capitalized; with some supplementary text]

*Heli* means, *elevation, ascending; climbing up.*

With that, we have complete one entire verse of the Lukian genealogy.

We have been studying Luke 3:23, making many references to the line of Christ in the book of Matthew. The genealogical line in Matthew is unequivocally the line of Joseph (that is, we do not have the words *as was supposed* anywhere in the Matthew record). We will take a break from the Lukian genealogy and take an abbreviated look at Matthew's record.

We begin in Matt. 1:1–2:

Matt. 1:1 **The Book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the Son of David, the son of Abraham:...** (Green's Literal Translation)

Matthew gives the highlights of the Lord's genealogy: Jesus, David, Abraham. These men are legally the Lord's ancestors through Joseph. They are also genetically the Lord's ancestors through Mary (as we will see, the line from Abraham to David is identical and intact for both Joseph and Mary. Matthew

does not completely distinguish between two lines here, but we will. The line given in Matthew is Joseph's line. There will not be another way of interpreting it.

Matthew is a book of fulfilled prophecy. He continually quotes the Old Testament and relates it to the events that he records in his biography of Jesus. He focuses upon both Abraham and David in v. 1 because a number of promises were made to each man, by God; and many of these prophecies are fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ.

With v. 2, Matthew begins to tell us exactly how Jesus is legally a descendant of Abraham and David. However, in the book of Luke, we will see that Jesus is the actual descendent of Abraham and David.

Matt. 1:2 **Abraham fathered Isaac, and Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers.** (Green's Literal Translation)

Everyone who is a descendant of Jacob is a true racial Jew (by genealogy). All of the sons of Jacob are specifically descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and as such, they are God's chosen people. All people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are God's chosen people. Every person descended from the 12 sons of Jacob is considered a Jew by genetics. At this point, at the end of v. 2, we are in the line of Judah, Jacob's 4<sup>th</sup> son.

Do not panic; we are not going to cover the entire genealogical line in Matthew and then do the same in Luke. There is a very important consideration for us to consider in Matthew's genealogical record.

We proceed through a list of names, and then we come to...

Matt. 1:16 **...and Jacob [ben Matthan] fathered Joseph, the husband to be of Mary, out of whom Jesus was born,** the One called Christ. (Green's literal translation)

Notice that **Jacob ben Matthan fathers Joseph**—it is hard to understand this in any way other than Jacob (son of Matthan) being Joseph's actual father (or grandfather). But notice how Jesus is placed in this line: Joseph is identified as the son of Jacob and the husband to be of Mary. It is from Mary that Jesus is born (*not* from Joseph and Mary). Jesus is clearly born of Mary, but Joseph is simply listed as the future husband of Mary (they had *not* yet consummated their marriage). There is no direct genealogical connection stated between Joseph and Jesus.

### **The Two Genealogies and the Coniah Curse:**

There is a very important difference in these two genealogies. From Abraham to David, the genealogies recorded by Matthew and Luke are the same; however Joseph's genealogy (in Matthew) picks up with Solomon and follows the royal line to Joseph; but Mary's genealogy (in Luke) picks up with Nathan (presumably Solomon's younger brother) and follows his line to Jesus.

As we view these two genealogies, bear in mind that Luke begins with Jesus and works backwards to Adam (and to God); Matthew begins with Abraham and works forward to Joseph, Jesus' step-father.

Luke 3:31b–32a **...the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse,...**

Matt. 1:6 **...and Jesse fathered David the king. And David the king fathered Solomon out of her who had been the wife of Uriah,...** (Green's literal translation)

This is where the two lines diverge. The book of Luke presents the line of Heli to Nathan (Heli being the Lord's genetic grandfather) and the book of Matthew presents the line as going forward from Solomon to Joseph (called the future husband of Mary in Matt. 1:16 and called the supposed father of Jesus in Luke 3:23). Joseph is never tied genetically to Jesus; Joseph is the legal father of Jesus; and throughout his life, he was presumed to be the father of Jesus (even though he wasn't).

There are two different lines leading to Jesus—the line of Abraham to Jesus, through Solomon, found in Matt. 1:1–16. This is the legal line of Jesus, going from Abraham to Joseph, who is Jesus' adopted father, but not genetic father. The line in Luke 3 is the actual line of the humanity of Jesus, which goes through Nathan, the son of David, proceeding eventually to Jesus Himself. Both of these lines are identical between Abraham and David; but Joseph and Mary are descended from different sons of David. They are 25<sup>th</sup> cousins, give or take.

In the line of David, we come down to Josiah, one of Israel's last good kings; whose son was Jehoiakim; whose son was the father of Jechoniah (1Chron. 3:16 Matt. 1:11). Jechoniah was cursed by God.

In the book of Matthew, Joseph's genealogy goes through Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah or Coniah). This line reads:

Matt. 1:10–12 **...and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,...** (ESV)

Jeconiah was evil, as was his generation, so that God caused them all to be deported to Babylon as a national punishment (also known as the 5<sup>th</sup> stage of national discipline or the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle of discipline). For Israel to be forced out of the land, things had to get pretty bad. Very often, when a nation reaches such a stage when maximum discipline is applied by God, both the leaders and the people are in maximum reversionism (or maximum negative volition towards the plan of God). Whereas, I believe that Coniah was (or eventually became) a believer in the Revealed God, we do not know about the people of Israel. No doubt many were; but it appears that believers in Israel did not grow spiritually during Coniah's reign.

The Coniah curse is found in Jer. 22:24, which will present in a fuller context:

Jer. 22:24–27 **"As I live, declares the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off and give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. But to the land to which they will long to return, there they shall not return."** (ESV; capitalized)

God says, if Coniah were a signet ring on His hand, that He would tear that ring off. Does this sound like the line of the Messiah?

Jer. 22:28–30 **Is this man Coniah a despised, broken pot, a vessel no one cares for? Why are he and his children hurled and cast into a land that they do not know? O land, land, land, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."** (ESV, emphasis mine)

Because of the evil done by Coniah, if he were a signet ring on God's hand, God would tear him off. There is no future for the line of Coniah. God calls for this man to be childless, and that no man will succeed him in his days. None of his children will follow him in sitting on David's exalted throne. Nevertheless, Coniah's line continues, as testified to in both the Old and New Testaments. Jeconiah is the father of Shealtiel and Shealtiel fathers Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel, as some of you might know, would be the leader to return to Jerusalem, to build up the walls of the city once again.

The phrasing found here is interesting. This does not read, *Let this man be childless*; it says instead, *Write this man down as childless...* The Hebrew word for *write* is *kâthab* (כָּתַב) [pronounced *kaw-THAHB*<sup>v</sup>]. In the Qal imperative, it means, *write, write down, record [chronicle, document], direct or decree in writing, proscribe; describe*. Strong's #3789 BDB #507. Jeconiah is childless by decree or childless by record; but he is not in fact childless, as he does sire children. So, how do I explain the difference? A king may have bastard sons—sons who are genetically his through an affair (or even by a long-standing relationship), but children who are not heirs to his throne (as they are not sons of the wife of the king). As far as many are concerned, these are not his children; and they are not *recorded* anywhere as being the king's children. They will never be royalty. This is the way in which Coniah is childless; he is *decreed* in writing to be childless. He is childless in the way that is most important to a king—particularly as a king on the throne of Judah. His line would no longer yield a royal son and his line would not lead to David's Greater Son. Jeconiah's son (s) would never sit on the throne of Judah (which is the remaining southern kingdom).

If Jesus were descended from Coniah, then He could not sit upon the throne of David, as per this curse. Jeconiah had a son (or sons) but they would not sit upon the throne of Israel (actually, Judah).

Jehoiachin's reign is described in both 2Kings 24:8–16 and more briefly in...

2Chron. 36:9–10 *Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. In the spring of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the precious vessels of the house of the LORD, and made his brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.*

Nebuchadnezzar did not besiege Judah for a few months, but waged a campaign that apparently went on for many years. After 3 years, the removal of the people of Israel was begun (Daniel 1:1–5); and after 8 years, nearly all were removed (2Kings 24:8–12). With that, the royal family and nearly all the people of Israel were removed from the land (only the poorest remained behind—2Kings 24:14).

Whatever Coniah did was so bad, that the people were removed from the land for 70 years (obviously, the people had turned cold towards God as well, as God is not going to remove an entire people simply because their leader is evil). Coniah was the appropriate leader for the people of Jacob. Coniah was the leader that the people of Israel deserved at that time.

**Application:** I write this in October of 2020, with a presidential election on the near horizon. Always remember that, a people get the leader they deserve. It does not matter how much politicking that you do, or how many articles you splash on your fb page, the leader which God has determined, the leader who is appropriate, that is the leader that we will get. This may help to explain why we have had so few great presidents in this nation.

**Application:** The United States is a client nation to God, just as Israel was. Because of this, there is great blessing, but also great scrutiny and, sometimes, great punishment. There are dozens of memes

out there portraying 2020 as an horrendous year. However, if our nation is on the downhill slide, 2020 will seem like a picnic to subsequent years. We need to turn around spiritually as a nation, if we expect to continue in the great blessing that we have enjoyed.

**Don't Ever Go To 2020** (a meme); from **Know Your Meme**; accessed October 23, 2020.

Back to our topic, which is the Coniah curse.

Surprisingly enough, after 37 years in prison, the next Babylonia leader Evil-merodach, set Coniah free and dined with him, giving Coniah an allowance to live off of. The graciousness of Evil-merodach was no doubt representative of the graciousness of God; which suggests that Coniah had a change of heart towards the God of his people. Yet the Coniah curse still stands.

Again, the curse is: Jer. 22:24, 30 ["As I live, declares the LORD, though Coniah were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off Thus says the LORD: "Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah."](#)

Although Coniah was not literally childless, the complete independence of nation Israel along with its kingly throne had come to an end. Coniah's genealogical line continued down to Joseph, but, because Joseph was not the real father of Jesus, Coniah's line did not lead to the Eternal King. It was cut off, so to speak, with Joseph. There were no more royal sons in the line of Coniah; in that way, he is *written off* as childless.

But there is another line of David, through his son Nathan, which leads us to Mary (that is the line that we are studying here in Luke 3), and this becomes the true royal line, culminating<sup>7</sup> in the Greater Son of David.

We now return to the line of Mary, the line that Coniah is not a part of. There is no *Coniah curse* in Mary's line.

Luke 3:23 [Jesus, when He began His ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son \(as was supposed\) of Joseph, \[Jesus is\] the \[actual\] son \[or, descendant\] of Heli,... \[the ESV, capitalized; with some supplemental text\]](#)

We are going to skip many generations and resume with v. 31d:

Luke 3:31d [...the son of Nathan,...](#)

Nathan means *gift, giver*. King David had 5 sons total by Bathsheba, one of them being Solomon (he was the second child; the first child died). The prophet Nathan braced David over his affair with

<sup>7</sup> Not to imply that Joseph and Mary lacked other children; but the royal line would end with Jesus.



Bathsheba and the killing of her husband. David recognized the wrongness of his actions and confessed this sin to God.

Nathan by his unflinching assessment of David's sin endeared himself to David. David recognized that he was not the highest authority in the land, but that God was; and Nathan was God's prophet.

As a result of this respect, David named one of his sons by Bathsheba *Nathan*. This shows wonderful grace orientation on the part of David. Many kings, when reproached by a prophet, try to destroy the prophet. David recognized how wrong he was in his actions and he respected the role of the prophet.

Nathan here is quite significant. Both Joseph and Mary are descended from King David (the next name on the list). Mary is Jesus' actual mother, by birth, by blood; but Joseph is not the Lord's genetic father. This has great theological significance in what is known as the *Coniah curse*. We have already studied the Coniah curse, but we will review it and consider one thing in this study that we did not consider before.

The Coniah curse is a reference to Jehoniah, also known as Coniah, is stated in the book of Jeremiah. Jer. 22:24–30 "As I live," says the LORD, "**though you, Coniah son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, were a signet ring on My right hand, I would tear you from it.** In fact, I will hand you over to those you dread, who want to take your life, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the Chaldeans. I will hurl you and the mother who gave birth to you into another land, where neither of you were born, and there you will both die. They will never return to the land they long to return to." Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered pot, a jar no one wants? Why are he and his descendants hurled out and cast into a land they have not known? Earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says: **Record this man as childless, a man who will not be successful in his lifetime. None of his descendants will succeed in sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah.** (HCSB; emphasis mine) Jeconiah was a king in the line of David and Solomon. That line leads to Joseph, who is the legal but not biological father of Jesus (Matt. 1:11–17). Mary is the actual mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26–33); and her line comes through Nathan rather than through Solomon (Luke 3:23–31). So there is no cursed Coniah in Mary's line.

There is more to the Coniah curse, than the idea that Messiah cannot come from the line of Coniah (Jeconiah). Think of this curse as being the sin nature, which is the genetic curse passed down through the man. Every child with a father has a sin nature, that sin nature is passed down by his father, who got it from his father. That is our Coniah curse. Every person born from a human father carries this curse—the sin nature—within him.

This goes back to the original sin. When Eve sinned, she had been deceived; but when Adam sinned against God, he did so knowingly. Adam knew that he was disobeying God and that this would change his relationship with God powerfully (Adam chose his woman over God). So, there were different punishments meted out for each gender, which punishments have followed mankind down through the centuries. Eve would be the child bearer; but with that responsibility came the promise. God, in speaking to the serpent, who had deceived Eve, said, "**I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring; He [= the woman's Offspring] shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.**" (Gen. 3:15, ESV; capitalized) Throughout the Bible, the offspring (literally, *seed*) is always spoken of as coming from the man; but here, in this one instance, God speaks of the woman's seed. *Her Seed* is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus will deliver the death blow to the serpent (**He will bruise your head**); but the serpent would bruise the heel of her Seed (that would be the cross).



So, somehow, the woman will produce the Seed Who will defeat and destroy Satan, despite being bruised by Satan. This is a forward reference to the virgin birth of our Lord, Who is the Seed of the Woman. The sin nature is removed from the equation because that is passed along to all the children by the father (because Adam sinned knowingly against God; he is, in that way, responsible). The woman has a sin nature (as we all know and can testify to<sup>8</sup>), but she does not transmit her sin nature genetically. The sin nature is passed along from only the father to his offspring (male or female).

There is a weird doctrine in Catholicism about Mary being sinless. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a real person with a sin nature which she got from her father Heli. She was very clearly a mature believer, based upon what she says in Luke 1; but she is still like all of us: a fallen creature. Nevertheless, because there is no human father involved in the conception of Jesus, there is no sin nature which is passed along to Him. The woman does not pass along her sin nature to her sons or to her daughters. The sin nature only is passed down by a human father.

The problem with the idea that Mary is sinless is three-fold: (1) Mary had a father (Heli). Because she has a father, she has a sin nature. (2) Adam's original sin is imputed to her. Adam's original sin is imputed to every person, its natural target being the sin nature (which every person, save One, has). (3) Finally, Mary committed personal sins (as all people do). We may not know what those sins were, but that is sometimes the case with some believers named in Scripture (like John the Herald, for instance).

The idea that Mary was sinless, came from someone recognizing that Jesus is sinless, but that He has a human mother. Well, how can Jesus be sinless if He has a mother? Therefore, she must be sinless. Obviously, the big flaw in that argument, besides #1 & #2 above is, how was Mary sinless? If Jesus needed a sinless mother in order to be sinless (based upon that faulty theology), then how did Mary get born without sin? Wouldn't she have required a sinless mother (and an immaculate conception) as well, who would then require a sinless mother before her? Accepting the premise, still leads us to an untenable position.

Furthermore, all Mary adoration ignores the concept of a sin nature. We all have a sin nature which is a part of our being from birth. We do not become sinners the first time we sin; we are sinners from birth. Denying that concept denies a huge amount of Scripture.

And while I am on this topic, I should also lay to rest the notion that Mary is the mother of God. She is not! That is absurd. She is the mother of the humanity of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the *Father* (so to speak) of the Lord's Deity. The same argument applies. If Mary is somehow in some way sort of deified; and that made her the mother of God, then how did she become deified? Was she somehow born from perfect parents as well? These false doctrines do not stand up to scrutiny. They are both illogical and unbiblical. Furthermore, we are right in the midst of studying the line of Mary, and the people we know in this line are not sinless.

There is nothing in the New Testament which ever suggests that Mary is somehow a 4<sup>th</sup> member of the Trinity; or pretty close to that, or way up there; or that we all should pray to her. Nothing like that is suggested anywhere in the New Testament. The doctrines of the Church Age are found primarily in the epistles. How many times is there any doctrinal information related to Mary in the epistles? Never! Paul, Peter and John do not write about Mary being divine, or sinless, or a intermediary? They do not tell us any such thing, because those concepts are false! Mary plays absolutely no part in the believer's life

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<sup>8</sup> Ask *any* man who knows a woman. Really.

today. Nowhere in Scripture are we told to have some sort of relationship with Mary. And she is nowhere called *the mother of God*.

The concept that Mary is divine or, at the very least, way better than us, who somehow plays an active part in our lives today? This is faulty doctrine which is based upon faulty doctrine (that she has some sort of divinity within her, in order to give birth to Jesus and impart to Him His Deity).

Let me try to approach this from an analogy. Let's say that I marry an Asian woman, and we have a child, and that child has jet black hair and "Asian eyes." Would it make sense for me to say, "She gets that from me. See those almond eyes? That is from my side of the family!" That would be nonsensical. People would think I was an idiot to suggest such a thing. It is equally idiotic to somehow think that Jesus' Deity came from Mary.

I have gone pretty far afield here. We were last speaking about Nathan (which led us to Coniah and what he represents as a type; which led us then to the weird and false doctrines of Mary worship). I have recently spoken to someone about this absurd doctrine, so it happens to be on my mind.

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