

## SUPPORT OF DEITY: THE GREAT PROPOSITION

By Mark Paynter THD

In Answering the question “ Why would God become man?”<sup>1</sup> McDowell writes

“Jesus is the very Word of God in human form, revealing God to us in person, not just in verbal statements. He gave us God Himself in a form we could touch, hear and see. Jesus brought God to our level and lifted us with Him in the process.

Not only did God want to communicate with us, He wanted to demonstrate to us just how much He loves us...(John 3:16-17)”<sup>2</sup>

McDowell suggests that if God were to become man, then we would expect that man to have eight essential characteristics. These are

- 1 That man would have to make his entrance into the world in an utterly unique way. Jesus birth through a virgin was prophesied centuries before it occurred.

The first hint of the virgin birth can be traced to Genesis 3: 15, which is known as the Protoevangelium. In that verse God Himself prophesies that a man would come who would crush the serpent’s head. The verse does not say out of the man’s seed but out of her seed (speaking of the seed of the women), thus hinting at the virgin birth.

Warren Weisbe provides a commentary on one of the most significant passages of Scriptures concerning the virgin birth namely Isaiah 7:10–16.

“Instead of speaking only to the king, Isaiah addressed the whole “house of David” and gave the prophecy concerning “Immanuel.”  
Of course, the *ultimate* fulfillment of this prophecy is in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is “God with us” (Matt. 1:18–25; Luke 1:31–35). The virgin

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<sup>1</sup> McDowell page 286

<sup>2</sup> McDowell page 286

birth of Christ is a key doctrine, for if Jesus Christ is not God come in sinless human flesh, then we have no Savior. Jesus had to be born of a virgin, apart from human generation, because He existed before His mother. He was not just born *in* this world; He came down from heaven *into* the world (John 3:13; 6:33, 38, 41–42, 50–51, 58). Jesus was *sent by the Father* and therefore came into the world having a human mother but not a human father (4:34; 5:23–24, 30; 9:4).<sup>3</sup>

- 2 That man would be without sin.
- 3 That man would authenticate his identity through miracles.
- 4 Live the most perfect life anyone ever lived.
- 5 Speak the greatest words ever spoken by any man.
- 6 Having a permanent influence throughout History.
- 7 Satisfy the spiritual hunger that lies within everyman's heart.
- 8 Overcome mans biggest enemy and threat – Satan and death.<sup>4</sup>

There is only one man who ever met these criteria- that God man was our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible contains two accounts of the genealogy of Christ (Matt. 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-28). Some see in the two accounts a discrepancy. Brian Bailey explains.

“The genealogy of Christ was purposely included in the Holy Scriptures for basically two reasons: number one, to prove that Jesus is the promised Messiah and King who descended from David, and

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<sup>3</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1992. *Be comforted*. An Old Testament study. (Is 7:1). Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

<sup>4</sup> These eight points are derived from McDowell page 287, See McDowell page 285-328 for dicussion.

number two, to prove that Jesus was the son of Mary and the Son of God, not the son of Joseph. Therefore, Christ was given two natures. Because god was His Father, He was the Son of God, and He was divine. As God, He could not sin because God cannot sin...

Thus it is very clear that Matthew records Jesus genealogy through Joseph, and Luke records Jesus genealogy through Mary. This view, though not accepted by all scholars, is found as early as the third century A.D in the writings of Eusebius, the noted historian and “father of Church History” (Circa A.D 263-340) and is the only satisfactory way to reconcile the two genealogies.”<sup>5</sup>

J I Packer highlights the significance of the virgin birth when he places it alongside the resurrection as an act of supernatural power. Both of these events were fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies mainly Isaiah 7: 14 and Isaiah 53: 10-12. Both events carry the same significance. Both point to the fact that Jesus is both man and divinity. The virgin birth proves that Jesus was the spotless Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. “The New Testament emphasizes his sinless ness (see John 8:29, 46; Romans 5:18ff; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22–24; etc.). Being sinless, he could not be held by death once his sacrifice was done”.<sup>6</sup>

Earlier Packer had written concerning the virgin birth.

“Most Christians accepted the Virgin Birth without hesitation until liberal theology challenged miracles in the nineteenth century. Then it became a pivotal point in the debate about Christian supernaturalism and the divinity of Jesus. Liberalism, seeking to desupernaturalize the faith and reinterpret Jesus as no more than a uniquely godly and insightful teacher, surrounded the Virgin Birth with a spirit of needless and unreasonable skepticism.

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<sup>5</sup> Bailey page 19

<sup>6</sup>Packer, J. I. 1996, c1994. *Growing in Christ*. Originally published: I want to be a Christian. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, c1977.;Includes index. (Pages 47-48). Crossway Books: Wheaton, Ill.

In reality, the Virgin Birth meshes harmoniously with the rest of the New Testament message about Jesus. He himself worked miracles and rose miraculously from the dead, so no new problem is involved in affirming that he entered the world miraculously. He left the world supernaturally, by resurrection and ascension, so a supernatural way of arriving was entirely fitting. The stress laid on Jesus' preincarnate dignity and glory (John 1:1-9; 17:5; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1-3; 1 John 1:1) made a mode of entry into incarnate life that involved proclamation of the glorious role he was coming to fulfill (Matt. 1:21-23; Luke 1:31-35) more natural than any alternative.

It is noteworthy that Matthew and Luke show themselves much more interested in the fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose than in the virginal conception as a physical wonder or an apologetic weapon or a pointer to two-nature Christology.

While we cannot affirm that a divine person could not have entered this world any other way than by virgin birth, Jesus' miraculous birth does in fact point to his deity and also to the reality of the creative power that operates in our new birth (John 1:13). Also, while we cannot affirm that God could not have produced sinless humanity apart from virgin birth, Jesus' humanity was sinless, and the circumstances of his birth call attention to the miracle that was involved when Mary, a sinner (Luke 1:47), gave birth to one who was not "in Adam" as she was, nor therefore needed a Savior as she did. Rather, Jesus was destined through the maintained sinlessness of his unflawed human nature to become the perfect sacrifice for human sins, and so the Savior of his mother and of the rest of the church with her."<sup>7</sup>

Paul Enns emphasizes that the virgin birth was the means through which Jesus took on human form? The virgin birth establishes the human nature of Christ as sinless (John 7:18 and 1 John 3:5). Although Christ was sinless, the virgin birth resulted in a truly human nature. When Christ became human He accepted certain limitations. Christ was tired (John 4:6); He became thirsty (John 4:7); He slept (Matt. 8:24); He wept (John 11:35). He submitted to the voluntary limitations of humanity.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Packer, J. I. 1995, c1993. *Concise theology : A guide to historic Christian beliefs*. Tyndale House: Wheaton, Ill.

<sup>8</sup>Enns, P. P. 1997, c1989. *The Moody handbook of theology*. Moody Press: Chicago, Ill.