

The Supernatural Conception Of Jesus

'The Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin will conceive and bear a Son and will name Him Immanuel' (Isaiah 7:14). 'All this has happened so the prophecy might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, "Behold, the virgin will be with child and will bring forth a Son. They will name Him Immanuel," which is being interpreted, "God with us" (Matthew 1:22 & 23). Our Saviour was actually given a Hebrew name, Yeshua ben Yosef (Yeshua Son of Joseph, John 6:42) but the Greek version of His name (Jesus) is how most people know Him.

'The (messenger) angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin named Mary, pledged to be married to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David. The angel Gabriel said to her, "Rejoice you highly favoured one! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women!" When Mary saw him she was greatly troubled at the saying and wondered what kind of salutation this might be. Gabriel said to her, "Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favour with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and will name Him Yeshua (meaning 'Yah is salvation'). He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His forefather David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to His Kingdom." Mary asked the angel Gabriel, "How can this be for I am a virgin?" Gabriel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come on you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. The Holy One Who is born from you will be called the Son of God. Behold, Elizabeth your relative (cousin or aunt) has conceived a son in her old age and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. Everything spoken by God is possible." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it to me according to your word." Gabriel departed from her. Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste into a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby (who became John the Baptist) leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.'

(Note, somehow Elizabeth already knew about what had taken place with Mary and as a young unmarried pregnant woman, Mary would have received a lot of negativity. Gabriel sent Mary to her mother's family for support.)

'Elizabeth called out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the Fruit of your womb! Why am I so favoured, the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came into my ears the baby leaped in my womb for joy! Blessed is she who believed for there will be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord!"

Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour for He has looked at the humble state of His handmaid. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed. He Who is mighty has done great things for me. Holy is His name. His mercy is for generations of generations on those who fear Him. He has shown strength with His arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down princes from their thrones and has exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things. He has sent the rich away empty. He has given help to Israel His servant so He might remember mercy as He spoke to our forefathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever." Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned to her house' (Luke 1:26 to 56).

Our history notes the birth of Jesus was unique in many ways but the virgin birth stands out as the most significant. It had never happened before. It was both a miracle because it was utterly impossible for humans to achieve this, and His birth was a fulfilment of many prophecies. For humans, a woman who had never had sex, then to give birth is impossible but with God, nothing is impossible. When the messenger angel Gabriel told Mary she would have a child, knowing she was an innocent young virgin aged about sixteen, she asked how it could be possible so it was explained to her in detail by Gabriel. Notice here, Mary was not frightened by Gabriel at all and spoke to him as though talking with an angel was the most natural thing. Seeing the angel did not frighten Mary, what troubled her was the way he greeted her. Once she knew it was all from God, she agreed. If she had refused, God would have chosen another woman but Mary agreed, believed and obeyed. It was God Who created the laws that govern our bodies and He can change anything He wants to at His own discretion. 'Our God is in the heavens. He does whatever He pleases' (Psalm 115:3).

Joseph has great doubts Mary's story was true. God had to intervene to make sure Joseph and Mary married. Joseph's doubts were possibly the reason why Mary stayed with Elizabeth for so long. 'After Mary was engaged to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph her (betrothed) husband, being a righteous man and not willing to make her a public example, intended to break up with her secretly. When he thought about these things, behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to yourself Mary your wife, for What is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bring forth a Son. You will name Him Yeshua (Yah is Salvation) for it is He Who will save His people from their sins." ... Joseph arose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary his wife to himself and did not know her sexually until she had brought forth her firstborn Son. Joseph named Him Yeshua' (Matthew 1:18 to 25).

Modern science has sometimes attempted to offer various medical theories to explain how a virgin could conceive a baby but there is never a human explanation for a supernatural event. Throughout the Bible, God did things that are impossible for mortal humans to do and supernatural events cannot have an earthly explanation. They are supernatural, outside of our natural world. God's perfect timing in the life of Mary would have made Jesus' virgin birth possible in fulfilment of numerous prophecies, given to the prophets by God Himself. Prophecies said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, come out of Egypt and live in Nazareth. 'You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, being small among the clans of Judah, out of you One will come forth to Me Who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting' (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1). Jesus was actually there before Creation 'from of old, from everlasting' ... 'You loved Me before the foundation of the world' (John 17:24.) 'When Israel was a child then I loved him and called My Son out of Egypt' (Hosea 11:1). 'A Shoot will come out of the stock of Jesse and a Branch out of his roots will bear fruit' (Isaiah 11:1). 'They lived in a city called Nazareth so it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, "He will be called a Nazarene"' (Matthew 2:23). The word Nazarene means 'Branch' making Jesus a 'Branch' or 'Shoot', the descendant of David and his father, Jesse.

If the family lived in Nazareth, how did they end up in Bethlehem where Jesus was born? Mary and Joseph were forced to travel to Bethlehem for a census. There was no postal service so people had to travel long distances. The fact Jesus was born in Bethlehem shows the accuracy of the prophecy. One or two weeks either side of the birth of Jesus and He could have been born in Nazareth but God knows in advance what will happen and He predicted it. 'In those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, all the (known) world (within the Roman Empire) should be enrolled ... All went to enrol themselves, everyone to his own city. Joseph went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to enrol himself with Mary who was pregnant and pledged to be married to him. While they were there, the day came for her to give birth. She brought forth her firstborn Son and wrapped Him in strips of cloth and laid Him in a feeding trough (a manger) because there was no room for them in the inn' (Luke 2:1 to 7). So many people had got there first, Mary and Joseph missed out on a room at the local inn. Mary would have been heavily pregnant so they would have travelled slowly, probably riding donkeys, which would have been quite uncomfortable for Mary. After arriving in Bethlehem, they would have stayed in a cosy, comfortable downstairs room, made up for guests. During the cold winter months, flocks of sheep spent cool nights in those rooms to keep them out of the weather but in the warmer months, those same rooms were cleaned out and used for guests.

Why was Jesus called out of Egypt? 'Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, "Arise and take the young Child and His mother and flee into Egypt. Stay there until I tell you for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." Joseph arose and took the young Child and His mother by night and departed into Egypt and was there until the death of Herod, so the prophecy might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." ... When Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt saying, "Arise and take the young Child and His mother and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Joseph arose and took the young Child and His mother and returned to the land of Israel. When Joseph heard Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Being warned in a dream, they withdrew into the region of Galilee and lived in a city called Nazareth, so the prophecy might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, "He will be called a Nazarene"' (Matthew 2:13 to 15 then 19 to 23). Joseph and Mary were told to go to Egypt for the safety of Jesus because Herod wanted Him dead. After Herod died, they returned to their home in Nazareth.

These events were mostly supernatural events, which we call miracles because as mortal humans, we cannot carry out the impossible. What is impossible for mankind is completely possible for God. After all, He created this entire universe and the earth by speaking it all into existence. The visits from the messenger angel Gabriel were supernatural because they were not earthly visits; the angel came from heaven. The dreams Joseph had regarding the safety of Jesus were supernatural. The exact fulfilment of many prophecies regarding the conception and birth of Jesus were supernatural, however the birth of Jesus Himself was a natural birth. The virgin birth of Jesus our Messiah was a complete miracle, as were the events that occurred around His birth. The prophecies were so accurately fulfilled only the power of God could have accomplished these miracles.

'We have seen and can testify, the Father has sent the Son as the Saviour of the world. Whoever confesses Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in them and they remain in God' (1 John 4:14 & 15). 'At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow' (Philippians 2:10).

Amen and God bless you.

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