

What Christians Believe

Part 4: “Who was Conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary”

I. Who Was Born of the Virgin Mary?

A: Though the entire _____ was involved in the Incarnation, it was only the _____, the second person of the Holy Trinity, who took on flesh. (John 1:14, Gal. 4:4, Phil. 2:5-11; see also Heb. 10:5, Luke 1:35).

II. How Was He Conceived?

A: not from _____ by natural intercourse, but from the _____ by a miraculous conception in the womb of the _____.

“...the formation of Christ's human nature, though common to all the three persons, yet is particularly, and most properly ascribed to the Spirit; not to the first person, the Father, lest it should be thought that he is only the Father of him, as man; nor to the second person, the Son, since it is to him that the human nature is personally united; but to the third person, the Spirit, who is the sanctifier; and who separated, and sanctified it, the first moment of its conception...**John Gill**, *Commentary on Luke*

“...the Holy Ghost did as it were cast a cloud over her, to teach us that we should not search overmuch into the mystery of the incarnation.” **William Perkins**

III. Why Was He Conceived in this Way?

1. To _____ the OT prophecy from Isaiah (Matt. 1:22—23)
2. To ensure that Jesus was fully _____.... (Gen. 3:15, Matt. 1:1, Rom. 1:4)

Christ’s humanness was created not *ex nihilo* [from nothing] but *ex Maria* [from Mary]: of her substance. She contributed to him exactly what any human mother contributes to her child: ovum, genes, ordinary fetal development and ordinary parturition. He was, in an entirely proper sense, ‘the fruit of her womb’ (Luke 1:42)

-**Donald Macleod**, *The Person of Christ* (see Westminster Confession of Faith, 8:2)

3. ...and yet also fully _____ (Luke 1:35)

“This sanctification hath two parts: The first is the stay and stoppage of the propagation of original sin, and of the guilt of Adam’s sin...For the preventing of this evil in Christ, God in great wisdom appointed that He should be conceived by the Holy Ghost without any manner of generation by man. And by this means He takes substance from the virgin without the guilt and corruption of the substance.” **William Perkins**

“The womb of the Virgin Mary became the divine furnace from which the Holy Spirit, out of sanctified flesh and blood, drew that body destined to the obedient servant..., thus none of the defects of fallen Adam were transmitted to Christ.” **Peter Martyr Vermigli**

“For we make Christ free of all stain not just because he was begotten of his mother without copulation with man, but because he was sanctified by the Spirit that the generation might be pure and undefiled as would have been true before Adam’s fall.” **John Calvin**

4. To serve as a graphic reminder that our salvation is a _____—one that happens by _____ in God’s promise and power, and not by human _____. (Gen. 18:14, Luke 1:36, Rom. 4:19-21, Heb. 11:11-12, John 1:13)

“The virgin birth is posted on guard at the door of the mystery of Christmas, and none of us must think of hurrying past it. It stands on the threshold of the New Testament, blatantly supernatural, defying our rationalism, informing us that all that follows belongs to the same order as itself and that if we find it offensive there is no point in proceeding further.”

Donald Macleod