

The Apostles' Creed Week 2 – The Incarnation

2. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary

a) His pre-existence: The Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 1 – 5 (read) are familiar to us as the Gospel for Christmas. The Apostle John as an eye witness to the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ affirms his belief that Christ was in the beginning “with God” (verses 1 – 2) and that He was active in creation (verse 3). The Apostle Paul held the same belief as we noted last week, see Colossians 1, verses 15 – 20. As does the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, see chapter 1, verses 1 – 3.

In his Letter to the Philippians, Paul quotes from an early Christian statement of belief. Read Philippians 2, verses 6 – 8. A translation I have says “*Though in His pre-incarnate state He possessed the essential qualities of God, He did not consider his status of divine equality a prize to be selfishly hoarded*”.

b) His Conception: Read Matthew 1, verses 18 – 25 and Luke 1, verses 26 – 38. Note that the Old Roman Creed says “*from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary*”. That the Lord Jesus Christ is both divine – born from the Holy Spirit of God – and human – born from his mother, the Virgin Mary - has been the belief of the Christian Church down the ages.

The Gospel of Matthew records the announcement of “*an angel of the Lord*” to Joseph in a dream, Chapter 1, verses 18 – 25. Mary and the babe were freed from any accusation of adultery and illegitimacy by the unselfish action of Joseph!

During the early days of her pregnancy Mary visited her elderly cousin Elizabeth. Her prophetic witness to the divinity of the unborn babe is in Luke chapter 1, verses 39 – 45 and the response of Mary, which is familiar to us as the Magnificat, is in verses 46 – 55.

c) His birth: The records of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels of Matthew (Chapter 2, verses 1 – 12) and Luke (Chapter 2, verses 1 – 20) are familiar to us. It is worth reading again from the gospel of John, Chapter 1, verses 1 – 18. The One through whom all things were made (verse 3) became “*flesh and dwelt among us*” (verse 14). Literally the word used for “*dwelt*” should be translated “*tabernacled*”. For me the use of this word is so important! The picture of the original “Tabernacle” in the Old Testament is now made real in the New with all its glory and the assurance of the presence of God with us! Read Exodus 40, verses 34 – 38; and Matthew 28, verses 16 – 20.

This will reach its final fulfilment with the coming of “*a new heaven and a new earth*” when “*the dwelling of God is with men*”. Then we shall have no need of a temple or tabernacle for the “*temple will be the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb*” (Revelation chapter 21, verses 1: 3: and 22)

Round Each Habitation Hov’ring

See The Cloud And Fire Appear.

For A Glory And A Cov’ring,

Showing That The Lord Is Near.

Thus they march The Pillar Leading,

Light By Night And Shade By Day.

Daily On The Manna Feeding,

Which He Gives Them When They Pray.

From “Glorious things of Thee are spoken” John Newton 1779

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