

# *“How Can This Be?”*

**Luke 1:34-38**

East Berlin Community Church

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## Introduction

- Scientific breakthroughs in conception
- Importance of the Virgin Conception of Christ
  - *“All Christianity stands or falls with the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. If Jesus had a human father, then the Bible is not true... To confess the virgin birth is to confess the deity of Jesus Christ; to confess the deity of Christ is to confess the Virgin birth.”* (John R. Rice)

## *“How Can This Be?”*

- Luke 1:34-- *“Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’”*

### **A. Mary was NOT a virgin, but a sexually active teenager.**

#### **1. View of the Jews in the “Toldoth Jeschu”**

- *“illegitimate origin, through the union of his mother with a Roman soldier by the name of Panthera.”*

#### **2. Defies the Scriptural Record of Mary as a “Virgin”**

- Luke 1:34-- *“How can this be, since I do not know a man.”*
- Matthew 1:18-- *“before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.”*
- Matthew 1:25-- *“did not know her till she had brought forth her first born Son. And he called His name Jesus.”*

#### **3. Denies the Uniqueness of Christ!**

- Luke 1:30-33-- *“Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.’”*

#### **a. His Prestige. He will be...**

##### **1) Called “Jesus”**

- Matthew 1:21-- *“for He will save His people from their sins.”*

##### **2) Called “great”**

- Isaiah 61:1-2-- *“to preach the good tidings to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn.”*
- Matthew 9:33 -- *“the multitude marveled, saying, ‘It was never seen like this in Israel.’”*
- Matthew 14:33-- *“those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly, You are the Son of God.’”*
- Matthew 7:29-- *“for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”*

##### **3) Called “the Son of the Highest”**

- Daniel 4:24-- *“so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.”*

b. **His Position**

1) **His regal position-- "given the throne".**

- 2 Samuel 7:14 -- *"I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever"*
- 2 Samuel 7:16-- *"Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever"*
- Isaiah 9:6-- *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders"*

2) **His Realm-- "over the house of David"**

- Luke 1:33-- *"And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*
- Isaiah 9:7 -- *"Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever."*

3) **His Reign-- "forever"**

c. **His Personhood**

1) **Not an "incarnation of God" but "God-incarnate"**

- John 1:1-- *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*
- John 1:14-- *"Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."*
- Philippians 2:6-7-- *"being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."*

2) **Explanation of the 'two natures, one person' of Christ**

3) **The Importance of the Incarnation**

B. **Jesus' Conception was a "freak" of nature.**

1. **Cases of Parthenogenesis in nature**

2. **Two Serious problems**

- a. **Genetically: females contain only female chromosomes**
- b. **Theologically: Only proves that Jesus was human.**

C. **Jesus' Conception was a Non-repeatable Miracle**

- Luke 1:35-37-- *"And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.'"*
1. **The Holy Spirit will "Come upon her"**
    - Acts 1:8-- *"but you shall receive power, after which the Holy Spirit is come upon you"*
    - Matthew 1:18-- *"she was found with child of (by, or through) the Holy Spirit!"*
  2. **The Father will "Overshadow her"**
    - Acts 7:48-- *"However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.'"*

- a. **It means literally “to envelope in darkness”**
  - b. **Description of the creation of life in the womb**
    - Psalm 139:11-17-- *“If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”*
3. **The Revelation of God the Son will be the offspring**
- John 8:58-- *“Before Abraham was, I AM!”*
4. **But it takes FAITH to believe!**
- Luke 1:36-37-- *“Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.”*
- a. **Elisabeth’s pregnancy at her advanced age was miraculous, but not unique.**
  - b. **Seeing the miraculous but not unique, could Mary trust God to do the uniquely miraculous?**
  - c. **Mary’s expression of faith**
    - Luke 1:38-- *“Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.”*

**APPLICATION: The miraculous, but not unique NEW BIRTH**

- **Jesus’ words to Nicodemus** in John 3:3, *“Unless a man is born again, He cannot see the kingdom of God!”*
- **Nicodemus responds** with the same question, *“How can this be?”*
- **Takes faith to believe that God can do the humanly impossible in saving us.**
  - Hebrews 7:25-- *“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”*