

✠ Matthew 1:36-54 ✠

In Nomine Iesu

The Lord Himself shall give you a sign: the virgin shall give birth to a son, and he shall be called Immanuel.

When Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child.

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

Behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy! For unto you is born this day in the city of David a child who is Christ the Lord!

The great television news talk-show host, Larry King, was once interviewed himself by another popular interviewer, though I forget which one, and was asked this question: of all the people who have ever lived, who would you like to interview the most? Larry King did not pause for moment, which shows that he had either been asked this question before or else he asked it of himself many times. He answered: "I would most like to interview Jesus Christ, and I would only ask Him two questions: first, was He really born of a virgin; and second, did He really rise from the dead?"

I don't know if Larry King is a Christian, and I don't know what he thinks about the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. But I do know that he hit the nail on the head with his mythical interview of the Christ. Only two signs have been given to men by which we call Jesus Lord and God: His birth by the Virgin Mother, and His resurrection from the dead. All the other miracles performed by our Lord are as pale candles to the brightness of the sun that is his birth and resurrection. Even in regard to His Transfiguration, our Lord instructed those who bore witness to it, Peter, James, and John, to tell no one what they had seen. Jesus knew that His authority, He being heir as the Son of God was wrapped up in His birth, death, and resurrection. Without any of the other healings, signs, and wonders that are attributed to our Lord, we would know that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ the Son of God, the Lamb of God, very God of very God because He was born of the Virgin and rose again from the dead.

From the moment that Adam and Eve sinned and were cursed with the curse of death, God gave to them the promise of a savior who would cleanse them and restore them in the sight of God. In fact, Moses recorded for us that when Eve gave birth to Cain, her firstborn, she cried out, "The Lord has blessed me for I have given birth to a son, the Lord." Eve knew the promise of God and accordingly thought that Cain was the fulfillment of God's promise of a savior. Of course, Cain was not the Messiah; he did not save his people from their sins but he too sinned and fell short of the glory of God.

Larry King wants to ask Jesus if He was really born of a virgin because if it is true, which it is, then the birth of Jesus must be of God, for no virgin can give birth to a child. This must be the act and will of God. And if it is the act and will of God, then everyone must pay heed to it,

for God would not do such a thing to no avail. And this brings us to the sign. The Lord Himself will give you a sign: the virgin shall give birth to a son and He shall be called Immanuel, God with us. This birth is the sign that God is who He says He is. This is validation that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the God of the living and not the dead. This is proof that the God of Noah, the God of David, the God of the prophets is the living God. He sent forth His Son into the world, born of the Virgin Mother.

You see, Jesus is the fullness of God in bodily form, as the apostle tells us. As Jesus Himself said, “whoever has seen me has seen the Father, for I and the Father are one.” So also He said, “I am the Good Shepherd ... I am the truth ... Before Abraham was, I Am.” Jesus is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things are made.

This baby that lies in a manger, wrapped in blankets and held by His mother is the Son of God, born not according to the will of man or the lust of the flesh, but born of God. The narrative of the Christ Child is not celebrated simply because it was an important birth; like the births of other famous people, but because this birth was the signal that God had come to dwell among His people for the redemption of life, for the restoration of all things. God being born into the flesh of man is the sign by which we know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

We Christians celebrate the birth of Christ because it is a sign to us, as the Lord spoke through the prophet: “Behold, I will give you a sign, the virgin shall conceive and give birth to a son.”

This child, this babe in the manger, is Himself the sign. He is the culmination of all of Holy Scripture, fulfilling the Law and perfectly obeying His Father’s will even unto death on the cross. This baby, this infant who cannot yet utter intelligible words now speak words of life over you as He forgives your sins and gives to you His perfect righteousness. This coos and coughs of this Infant Child become the words of grace and peace as He speaks to you saying, “your sins are forgiven you, go and sin no more.”

The Child is born, the Son is given, the gift is upon us! Alleluia!

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠