

Incarnation - Mode and Nature

by John Murray

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ is a supernatural event in which the eternal Son of God is begotten of the Holy Spirit, and his divine identity is not suspended or abbreviated in his humanity.

Duration: 50:12

Scripture: Psalm 51:5, Psalm 139:14, Matthew 6:33, John 1:1-18

Topics: "Incarnation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of the Incarnation, specifically focusing on the mode of the Incarnation. The speaker emphasizes that Jesus was not conceived through ordinary human means, but rather through the power of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the process of the Incarnation, the supernatural is always present, even when natural processes are at work. The speaker also highlights that despite becoming flesh, Jesus did not cease to be who he was, but rather his identity as the only begotten Son of God was manifested even more fully.

Transcript

...the most gracious, the most beautiful, the Lord of the dwellers in heaven. The beauty you have for thy gracious, thy thoughts, thy... Now I'm trying to describe this in terms of verse and verse, And now the inadequacy appears in the fact that it does not take proper account, or at least it does not enunciate specifically enough, Jesus was not conceived by the conjunction of male and female, begotten man, begotten by the power of the Holy Spirit. So the supernatural appears first of all in the supernatural begetting.

The form that has become traditional is misleading. The form that has become traditional in the Christian church is misleading. What do you have in what is called the Apostles' Creed? It is not strictly proper supernatural conception.

It is the begetting, distinctly in prominence in the biblical witness. Matthew 1.20, Luke 1.35. You see, Joseph was being reassured. The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, O Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which hath been begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit.

Talk and I'll take any enemy. Not the word for begetting, and not the word for conceiving, but that which has been begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. Ect, ect, numatos, ect, ect,

ect, ect.

Then Luke 1.35, Luke 1.35, and the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, will come upon thee, the power of the highest will overshadow thee. Wherefore, also, that which is being begotten shall be called, that the holy thing that is being begotten shall be called the Son of God." So we talk, again, all along, highly along. Now there's a passive participle there, a passive participle, but that is quite the future.

I think that actually it is in the impending future. The verbs are in the future, you see. The Holy Ghost will come upon the power of the Son of God, and every other moment, the holy thing that is being begotten shall be called the Son of God.

The variant which has an exu in there is very weakly attested. Furthermore, not only does the action fall upon the begetting by the Holy Spirit, but Mary is said to have conceived, Luke 1.31, precisely what is said of Elizabeth in reference to John the Baptist. Luke 1.24 and 36, precisely what is said of Elizabeth in reference to John the Baptist.

He said it was in reference to Mary, one who shall conceive in thy womb, thou shalt not see. Now, it is perfectly true that she conceived it because there was the supernatural begetting, but it is a deflection, a distinct deflection from the biblical emphasis to say, conceived it, it is being begotten by the Holy Ghost. Now, secondly, the second section, the vault of the infirmary.

It is not simply supernatural begetting we have, not simply supernatural begetting. If God pleased, you could have supernatural begetting with a thousand, a thousand babies, ten thousand. And this is the most stupendous miracle of all, that it was the eternal Son of God who was thus begotten in respect of His human nature.

The eternal Son. So there was far more than the supernatural left, far more of the supernatural than the fact of supernatural generation, because this is the case. There is no point at which the supernatural is absent, even when conceived by the Holy, by Mary, even when conceived by the supernatural person who was being conceived.

Now this, the pervasiveness of the supernatural in view of the person who was begotten and conceived, say, the pervasiveness of the supernatural in view of the person begotten and conceived, does not in any way prejudice the natural processes that were at work in the embryonic development and in the emergence of the womb when Mary's full-time came. In connection with miracles, there is always the convergence of natural and supernatural factors. Jesus turned the water into wine.

He used the water, He used the water pot, He used the service. These were all natural factors. He fed the five thousand from five loaves and two fishes.

He used the fire to perform the miracle without any food, just by doing something in the digestive organs for no hunger. To do that, the natural was used to the fullest extent available, as in the turning of water into wine. And this is most signally displayed in the Incarnation itself.

He used, God used the Virgin's womb, He used the Virgin's conception, He used the Virgin's substance, and He used the emergence from the womb. The point is, however, that at every point, every point in the whole process, the supernatural is never absent. And even when the natural processes are most conspicuously in operation, in the respects I mentioned, even when the natural processes are most

conspicuously in operation, it is just even then that the supernatural fact in prominence, where the natural factors only point up, only point up the marvel of this condescension, He turns God into subject.

Now it is forgetfulness of this, the most stupendous aspect that leads people to entertain any difficulty respecting what is called for natural birth, that is natural generation. Natural generation would be incongruous supernatural identity of the person involved. And after all, the denial, it is popularly called the virgin birth, the denial of the virgin birth, or suspension of judgment respecting the virgin, or hesitancy respecting the virgin, is always suspect.

For this precise reason, it is always suspect. We must appreciate what is central in the incarnation, namely the incarnation of the eternal Son of God. The virgin birth falls perfectly into accord.

As B. B. Worth would say in an article in two volumes, *Christology and Criticism*, and also in the article, *The Supernatural Birth of Jesus*, a brief article, cannot be denied that the supernatural birth of Jesus enters constitutively into the substance of that system which is taught in the New Testament, that it is the expression of its supernaturalism to see if God is its doctrinal incarnation, the condition of its doctrine. A natural, natural generation, supernatural person. Now third, the third feature is the preservation of the infant in the moment of his being begotten, the preservation from the contamination, the defilement that arised in his human ancestry, in particular the doctrine of the Immaculate.

Pure imposter. What a suggestion in the whole witness of such a supposition. The Immaculate comes at the end of his existence.

There, there is a serious, a very serious attack upon the reality of the Incarnation. Christ's identification with us humans, dogma, supposed dogma of the Immaculate. Now we must therefore, we must therefore suppose that there was a miraculous preservation, miraculous preservation of Jesus from that defilement.

Now some would maintain, and there is some possibility that the absence of human generation, the absence of human generation, that is paternal generation, human paternal generation, is sufficient of itself to explain sinlessness, that hereditary depravity communicated through naturalization. Personally, I'm not satisfied. The absence of human generation is sufficient of itself for two observations to be made.

This, this supposition that the absence of human generation is of itself sufficient to guard Jesus' sinlessness. Would suppose that hereditary depravity is suspended entirely on the paternal act in human generation, suspended entirely on the paternal act. That's distinguished from the maternal.

I'm not at all sure that that rests upon assertion with respect to himself. I was conceived of that statement, and I must say that it is difficult for me, difficult to understand how contamination on the sinfulness of the virgin would have been excluded by any other means. On the sinfulness of the virgin would have been excluded by any other means than that of supernatural preservation, supernatural preservation, by which his human nature was supernaturally preserved from the hereditary depravity which belonged to that seed of which Jesus was made, which characterized the person by whom he had been conceived, in whose womb he was born.

If you want to place the whole explanation of sinlessness in the absence of paternal begetting, subjection to the main points, anyway, don't be curtailed by nature of conceiving that. Instead, there was, there was this intimate relationship, the embryo and the human mother. The absence of the paternal begetting does not interfere with the closeness of relationship to the human mother.

So I think that the absence of paternal begetting is not sufficient, and not sufficient explanation. After all, he was made. Now, please, this is cut from nature.

Transmutation, transmutation might appear to mean that there was some kind of kenosis, traction, or divestiture in order that the proposition could be true. Did God become man? Divine qualities, properties must have been exchanged for human qualities, and that divine prerogatives were surrendered in order that human identity be real. Are you half-suffocated in here? Now that is the view.

There must be kenotic tumultuous over a hundred years of poetic kenotic divestiture. Theology, times, the times of distinction made between attributes. We have divestiture, you see, of, of certain attributes without the directives, without the directives.

Now, it is very obvious any such concept of drawing attention, supposedly otherwise, might be overlooked. This is true in the case of John 1.1. Now, there is no passage in John 1.1. The logos is defined as the eternally existent one, as the one eternally coordinate with God, and as the one eternally identified with God. Now, these three propositions in John 1.1. First proposition points to His eternity.

Second proposition points to His eternal fellowship with, but distinction from God. Third, His eternal identity with God. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

So what is the divine identity of this person, this moment? Clearly, in the very outset, in John 1.1, but in John 1.14, we have the incarnation, and the Word became flesh. When I call logos, it sparks a genital, and the Word became flesh. And there is no, no hint that in becoming flesh, the person ceased to be the logos defined in the terms stated in verse 1. Ceased to be the logos in terms of the identity defined in verse 1. And not only so, but John, in that perfect follow, goes on to obviate expressly the notion that in becoming flesh, he ceased to be anything that he was.

I say to obviate expressly that notion, that in becoming flesh, he ceased to be anything that he was. For in that very text, John hastens, hastens to inform us that as a result of his having become flesh, they beheld his glory. Glory as if he only begotten from the Father, full of grace.

Glory as if he only begotten from the Father, full of grace. And therefore, the implication is that in his very manifestation in the flesh, there is no suspension or abbreviation of his identity as the only begotten. But this was not enough.

John's implication, 1.14, God only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed Him. Favoring that meaning, of course. Now here, he is indeed God only begotten, and therefore he is distinguished by the fact that he is only begotten, not beneath.

But the striking thing is that he is still Theos, with all the significance attached to that, I can see. Still Theos, and therefore possessing all that we want, a specific identity. And it is in that particular capacity, remember, that particular capacity, or in that particular identity, that he reveals, denying that identity to him in his revealing activity.

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