

THEOLOGY 101 – FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

The AFES Doctrinal Basis

The AFES upholds the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, including...

*** The conception of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit and his birth by the Virgin Mary.**

4. The doctrine of Christ's divine and human natures

- A. Jesus' conception was "by the Holy Spirit." This means that his conception was not by the usual sexual union of his father and mother (Matt. 1:18), but by the direct and miraculous work of God (Luke 1:35.) Mary did not have a perpetual virginity (cf. some elements of Roman Catholic teaching), but remained a virgin only until after the birth of Jesus and her marriage to Joseph (Matt. 1:25) and we have recorded in the gospels the fact of Jesus' brothers (Luke 8:19–21, Acts 1:14.)
- B. Jesus was the incarnation of the eternal Son of God. In Jesus Christ, all the fullness of God dwelt bodily (Col. 1:19.) He is the Word who was from the beginning with God, and was God Himself, who has become flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1–2, 14.) By the power of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of God entered into human existence – we should never cease to be gob-smacked by the fact of the incarnation!
- C. His birth was by a human mother. His unique conception does not undermine the reality of his true humanity. Jesus' unique origin does not exclude him from participation in true human existence – even our first father and mother had unusual, God-initiated origins! What the manner of his conception does mean is that he is not a participator in the situation of bondage in sin that all human beings have shared in since the fall of our first parents. He comes in real human flesh, but only in the likeness of *sinful* human flesh. It is at the cross, as a sinless one that he stands in our place, fully bearing our sin in his body as a substitute. If he were as fully involved in sin as we are, then he could not be in any way an offering for our sins.
[Heb. 2:14 – he shared in our humanity to bring us deliverance; Heb. 4:15 – as one in our humanity, he was tempted in every way as we are, but without sin; Php. 2:7, Rom. 8:3 – Jesus was found in appearance as a man, in appearance of sinful flesh – in order to become an offering for our sins]
- D. This unique conception is essential to the *grace* of the salvation that has come in Christ. Being conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus is one who comes from God and does not arise "naturally" from among human beings. He was *sent*. He comes because God the Father intervenes to rescue us from sin, death and the devil. Our salvation is by the Father, and not by any human initiative, working or effort.
- E. Jesus Christ's humanity was not disposable – he remains incarnate for eternity – and his divinity was never lost. Enfleshed deity walked human streets and "glorified dust sits at the right hand of God." In Jesus Christ, humanity is promised and secured for an entrance into the life of the Godhead in eternity in a fully human way – we will become partakers in the divine nature (2Pet. 1:4.) No eye had seen or ear heard or mind conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him!