

In order to give effect to God’s eternal purpose, the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, took on human flesh: He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and in this way two whole, perfect, distinct natures—divine and human—were inseparably joined together in one person, the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14; Romans 1:3–4; Philippians 2:6–11; Colossians 2:9). Being thus true God and true man, unchangeably sinless (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22), the Lord Jesus Christ was appointed mediator between God and man, prophet, priest and king (Luke 1:32; John 1:45 [quoting Deuteronomy 18:18]; Hebrews 7:21; 1 Timothy 2:5).

(Sola 5 Confession 4.4)

In November 1785, Scottish poet Robert Burns was ploughing his field when he accidentally destroyed a mouse’s nest, which it needed to survive the winter. Burns’s brother claims that the poet was still holding onto the plough when he composed one of his most beloved poems: “To a Mouse.” Perhaps the most famed sentiment in the poem comes from the penultimate stanza:

But mouse, you are not alone,
in proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes of mice and men
go often askew,
and leave us nothing but grief and pain,
for promised joy!

Burns’s message is clear: Sometimes things don’t go according to plan. We can sometimes be as careful as humanly possible and still see our best plans fall to the ground. Thankfully, God’s plans never fall through. Confession 4.4 talks about how God brought his plan of salvation to fruition.

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J. I. Packer called the incarnation “the real difficulty” and “the supreme mystery with which the gospel confronts us.” It is in the events of “the first Christmas,” he says, “that the profoundest and most unfathomable depths of Christian revelation lie.” In the incarnation, “God became man, the divine Son became a Jew; the Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child.”

Packer’s astonishment at the incarnation is well-founded, but it is a cardinal truth of the Christian gospel that God became man. Why is it so crucial to affirm that God took on human flesh? _____

The doctrine of the virgin conception and birth has always come under attack from critics of Christianity. It may surprise you to know that many professing Christians have also doubted the historicity of these events. Is it important to affirm the virgin conception and birth of Jesus as a historic reality? Why, or why not? _____

In his book *A Complicated Pregnancy: Whether Mary Was a Virgin and Why It Matters*, Kyle Roberts suggests that we ought not to make too big a deal out of claims to Mary’s virginity. He argues that there

are only two references to Mary’s virginity in the New Testament, and that the epistles focus far more attention on the historicity of the resurrection than the historicity of the virgin birth. The resurrection should therefore be our focus, not the virgin birth. How would you critique that position? _____

When we affirm the virgin birth, we are affirming at least three truths about the incarnation. Can you explain the significance of each of these truths?

The virgin birth highlights the supernatural nature of the gospel. _____

The virgin birth highlights God’s initiative in the gospel. _____

The virgin birth highlights the dual natures of Christ. _____

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What is the significance of the fact that Jesus was **unchangeably sinless**? _____

The Confession affirms the threefold office of Christ: prophet, priest, and king. Briefly, what is the significance of each of these offices being fulfilled in Christ.

Prophet: _____

Priest: _____

King: _____

Why should it comfort us that Christ himself is our mediator, and not another whom he appointed? _____
