



*<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. <sup>19</sup> Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. <sup>20</sup> But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. <sup>21</sup> And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. <sup>22</sup> Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, <sup>23</sup> Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matt 1:18-23)*

Here we see such a deceptively casual introduction to the most Momentous Event of all Time. A tender and pure young virgin such as the modern world could never know. Even ordinary girls of that time were characteristically modest and virtuous; however, Mary stood out from the rest as one of peculiar virtue and decency. She was chosen before the worlds were formed for this particular purpose of God to be the vessel through which His only Begotten Son would be born into the world.

We must bear in mind the Virgin Mary was mortal in the same sense Abraham, Joseph, and Moses were mortals after our own mortality; yet, each was called by God for a purpose. This is true of every elect Child of God. Mary was not the Mother of God. Such a proposition is profoundly beyond the pale of reason and biblical truth.

At the Third Ecumenical council at Ephesus in 431, Mary was proclaimed to be the *Theotokos* (Mother of God). It is for this error, and others of similar magnitude, the Anglican Orthodox Communion rejects all Ecumenical Councils subsequent to the first two. Neither do we accept the proposition put forth by the Roman See of the Immaculate Conception and perpetual virginity of Mary. Mary was not born sinless as was Christ. She did not remain ever virgin following the birth of Jesus. She bore other children after Christ. His siblings (of only one common parent) are mentioned in the Gospels. It was for this reason that we are told of Joseph, following the Angels message to him of the Holy Child: *<sup>25</sup> And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.* (Matt 1:25) If Joseph did not have conjugal relations with Mary following the birth of Jesus, why would this text be appended at the end of Matthew 1,

and how would Mary have conceived other children following? Furthermore, why did God identify Christ as her FIRSTBORN Son if there were not a second or a third? Notice how the corrupt NIV attempts to cover for the Roman Papacy in changing the meaning of the same verse: "*But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.*" (Matt 1:25 [NIV](#))

There will descend a multitude of voices from high churchmen (read, Anglo-Roman) who will castigate my remarks as advocating a Nestorian point of view. Nestorius was the Patriarch of Constantinople who denied Christ was both man and God at once. I do not deny this. In fact, I insist that our Lord Jesus Christ was both God and man without division of natures except to those that are common, on His human side, to all men - such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, and death. Both the nature of man and of God are combined in our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ did not inherit His purity and righteousness from Mary, but from God the Father. That does not deny His human side to be in union with His divine Person. My mother had blue eyes and auburn hair, but I inherited dark from my father's side of the family. The subject of is of too great depth to further plunge into in a devotion, so I will leave the remainder to the prudence and understanding of the reader.

There is one thing that is beyond doubt - Mary was good, and her righteousness exceeded that of other young virgins. Her righteous ears enabled her to hear the Voice of the Archangel, and her faith bound her to obedience to that Voice.

*<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35) <sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Consider the social calamity of such a situation for Mary. Even when I was in elementary school, the level of sensual wickedness had not reached the point that out-of-wedlock pregnancy was in any wise common. I never saw a pregnant girl in my high school, and when a woman who was reportedly divorced moved into town, my playmates and I wanted to go and see what a divorced woman looked like. This will give some perspective on to what degree common decency and righteousness have sunk in America in a short span of time. But in Mary's day, such an obscenity would have been beyond belief. Had her condition become commonly known, she would have been humiliated by society, shunned from even relatives, and perhaps even stoned to death for the sin of adultery.*

But Mary was no coward. She had heard the Voice of God, and Mary knew there was none greater than God. She preferred to follow God than man. *We ought to obey God rather than men.* (Acts 5:29)

Joseph, too, was a gentleman of uncommon valor and virtue. He loved his betrothed Mary. But no man would have considered marrying a woman who was pregnant with another man's baby in Joseph's day. But Mary was not pregnant with another man's baby. The Baby was conceived through the agency of the Holy Ghost. *Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.* Being a man of magnanimous compassion, Joseph did not desire to cause Mary harm even if she may have been unfaithful to her oath of betrothal. Instead of dragging her before the council with charges of adultery (stoning was the punishment), Joseph sought to provide for Mary to escape to some country covertly.

*But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* Though the Angel had appeared to Mary verily in broad daylight, it appears to Joseph in a dream. This seems

to indicate a slight degree of difference in Godly consciousness. God had a purpose for sending His only Son to be born of a Virgin. *and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* It will be Jesus - not Mary, not some stone saintly statue, nor some mortal priest, who absolves of sin. Mary cannot intercede for us, neither can any saint regardless of his or her virtue - only Christ. He is our Advocate with the Father. *And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* (1 John 2:1-2) It is not some priest hiding behind a curtain to hear our gossip that shall absolve us or save us from our sins - but Christ alone!

### **Postlude**

Why the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary at this moment of the Church Calendar? If the Nativity of our Lord occurred at Christmas, His conception must have occurred some nine months earlier. Although the arithmetic is confused by the inconsistencies between the Lunar and Gregorian calendars, the periods of time are fairly close. The genius of God is reflected in His timing. The Jewish calendar begins in the Spring of the year at Nissan; the Passover occurs in that Spring period. The Ark of Noah rested on Ararat during this period as well: *And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.* (Gen 8:13) The Children of Israel began their flight of freedom from Egypt during this same time. So it seems logical to Scripture that our Lord's conception should have occurred at the beginning of the Jewish New Year - Spring (Nisan). It is common in Asian countries, particularly Korean, to date a child's age - not from the moment of physical birth - but to the time of conception. Therefore, one hundred days after birth, the child is given his first birthday party.