



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL
Volume 18 Number 46
December 13, 2022

Do You Believe in The "Immaculate Conception?"

By Tal Davis

What would you say if I were to ask you, "Do you believe in the 'Immaculate Conception?'" If you are like many Christians you would answer emphatically, "Yes, of course, I believe in the virgin birth of Jesus."

"That's good," I'd say. "But that's not what I asked you. I said, 'Do you believe in the 'Immaculate Conception?'"

You might then say, "What's the difference?" Well, let's see.

In this Christmas season our thoughts, as Christians, turn toward the birth of Jesus. Unfortunately, the thoughts of our culture have almost completely excluded Jesus from the holiday festivities.

How many television networks include any mention at all of the birth of Christ in their holiday programming?

And the radio? One little girl was asked, "What is your favorite Christmas Carol?" She replied, "All I want for Christmas is You."

Thankfully "A Charlie Brown Christmas" still is shown each year which includes Linus telling the story of the birth of Jesus: "That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."

In any case, a key figure in the Gospel narratives of the birth of Jesus is, of course, His mother Mary. We all know the story in Luke's Gospel of how she was confronted by the angel Gabriel in

Nazareth who announced she was to be mother of the Messiah.

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged (betrothed) to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin (Lit - know no man)?" 35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-38 NASB)

The most significant verses in this passage are the following. In verse 27, Luke tells us that Mary was a virgin who was engaged to be married to Joseph. In verse 31, Gabriel tells her that she will conceive a child whom she will name Jesus. Verse 34 is Mary's re-

Permission to Reprint

If you wish to reprint this article in your own print or electronic newsletter, please include the following text:

*Reprinted from **Worldview Made Practical**; a free e-zine produced by **MarketFaith Ministries** featuring practical teaching and life tools to help Christians become more effective in their faith life. Discover **MarketFaith Ministries** at www.marketfaith.org.*

Speaking Schedule

If you are interested in having Freddy Davis or Tal Davis present one of our **Worldview Seminars** or to share about worldview and its practical implications at your church or organization, please contact **MarketFaith Ministries** to schedule your event. All contact information is at the bottom of this e-zine.

Worldview Resources

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

sponse in which she questions how that is possible since she had not been with a man and was still a virgin. Gabriel explains, in verse 35, that the conception will be by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, and her child will be the Son of God. How is this possible? Gabriel says, in verse 37, that "nothing will be impossible with God."

The same phenomenon is described in Matthew's Gospel when Joseph is told by an angel about Mary's miraculous pregnancy in a dream.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." 24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, 25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25 NASB)

The main point of both of those passages is that Mary was a virgin when she conceived Jesus. It is

what we call the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Actually it should be called the Virgin Conception. It was Jesus' conception that was miraculous, not His birth in Bethlehem. His birth was fairly normal except that He was laid in manger afterward. That being said, that is not what is meant by the phrase "The Immaculate Conception." That term does not refer to Jesus' miraculous conception, it refers to Mary's supposed sinless conception – which is not found in the Bible, but in the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church.

As Bible believing evangelical Christians and Protestants, we honor Mary as a great godly woman who was a wonderful example of someone who was willing to give all for God. Centuries ago, however, the Roman Catholic Church elevated her status in their church life far beyond what the Bible reveals. The Catholic Church teaches as official church doctrine that Mary had a physical mother and father. Nonetheless, she was somehow conceived without sin and, therefore, unlike all other humans, was not stained by original sin. This is what they call the doctrine of the "Immaculate Conception." They also believe she remained a virgin after Jesus' birth. As we said, this tenet is not found in the Bible, but was canonized in Catholic dogma by the Council of Trent between 1545 and 1563, and by Pope Pius IX in 1854. Today all faithful Catholics are required to believe it. Many non-Catholics assume that the term refers to Jesus' conception, but, as we said, it actually refers to Mary.

But that's not the only issue where evangelicals and Catholics differ about Mary. The Roman Catholic Church also asserts that she was, at the moment of her death, or even before that point, taken immediately and bodily into heaven to be Mediatrix (mediator between man and God) with Jesus. In other words, she did not really suffer physical death. They call this the doctrine of the "Assumption" (from Latin

Subscription Information SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE:

A subscription to **Worldview Made Practical** is complementary for anyone interested in receiving it. If you received this email as a forward from a family member or a friend and wish to subscribe for yourself, you may do so at www.marketfaith.org. If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, simply follow the instructions found at the bottom of each edition.

Contact Information

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:

info@marketfaith.org

Phone: 850-383-9756 (Tallahassee, Florida)

Fax: 850-514-4571

You can order our products and examine our services at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

This issue of **Worldview Made Practical** is a production of **MarketFaith Ministries**, © 2023. All rights reserved.

assumptio, meaning "a taking"). Pope Pius XII dogmatically defined it only 73 years ago on November 1, 1950, in his apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*. Since that date all Catholics are expected to believe it is unquestionably true.

Neither of the above Catholic doctrines are found anywhere in Scripture. They were added to Catholic dogma (official theology) by tradition, and the supposedly infallible "ex Cathedra" (from the Throne) declarations of popes. However, as biblical Christians we must stick only to what the Bible says for our essential doctrinal tenets. There is no scriptural evidence Mary was without sin or that she did not die in the usual way.

The consequences of these Marian doctrines can be seen plainly in the common practices of the Catholic people. They are encouraged to pray to Mary as the Mediatrix (mediator) between Catholic believers in this world and her son Jesus (and therefore on to the Father) because of the special relationship she has with Him. Many Catholics carry prayer beads called "the Rosary" which they use as a mnemonic tool to recite the "Hail Mary (Ave Maria), full of grace" prayer daily. Of course, they are also encouraged to pray to other saints as well, but she is extraordinary in their zeal.

Some Catholic theologians in recent decades have even

advocated that the church declare Mary as virtually equal in her ability to dispense salvation as Jesus Himself. So far the Vatican has been unwilling to go to that extent in defining Mary's theological status. Nonetheless, for many Roman Catholics, the worship and prayers to Mary take virtual priority in their devotion over that of Jesus. Many Catholics take pilgrimages to various shrines around the world where supposed miraculous appearances of Mary have taken place in order to receive special blessings or healings.

It is not our intention, of course, to diminish the significance of Mary in the birth and life of the Lord Jesus. But our understanding of who she was and what she did must be understood in the light of Scripture. Mary was a wonderful woman who God gave one of the most challenging and

Would You Consider Supporting Us?

Would you consider financial support for **MarketFaith Ministries**? I feel confident that what we are doing is consistent with your beliefs about spreading the gospel and equipping the saints for ministry. Would you let us be one element of your hands and feet in this process? **MarketFaith Ministries** is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation, so your contributions are tax deductible. If you would consider this we would be very grateful. Also, if you would like to know more about the ministry, it would be my pleasure to share with you personally what we are working on and how you can plug in. I can be reached at 850-383-9756 or by e-mail at Freddy@marketfaith.org. As for any donations, they may be sent directly to **MarketFaith Ministries** at 321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312, or you can contribute through our secure website at www.marketfaith.org. Simply click on the "Donate" button at the bottom of the homepage. We are deeply grateful for your support of this ministry.

And, as always, if you have any thoughts, opinions or suggestions about how **MarketFaith Ministries** can help you, please feel free, at any time, to call (850-383-9756) or e-mail (info@marketfaith.org). We are here to serve you.

important tasks ever bestowed: to give birth to and to raise to adulthood the Son of God on earth. That being said, Mary was, nonetheless, a human. She was a sinner as we all are, and was as dependent on Jesus as anyone else for her eternal salvation.

This Christmas we can honor her, but just keep in mind that hers was not an "Immaculate Conception." Perhaps this Christmas season, as you interact with your Catholic friends, you might ask them what that term means to them (they may not even know). Ask them where it is taught in the Bible. It may open an opportunity to witness to them about the uniqueness of Jesus. Remember, only Jesus was born without sin. Only He died for our sins. Only He rose from the dead. And it is only through our faith in Him that we can find salvation.