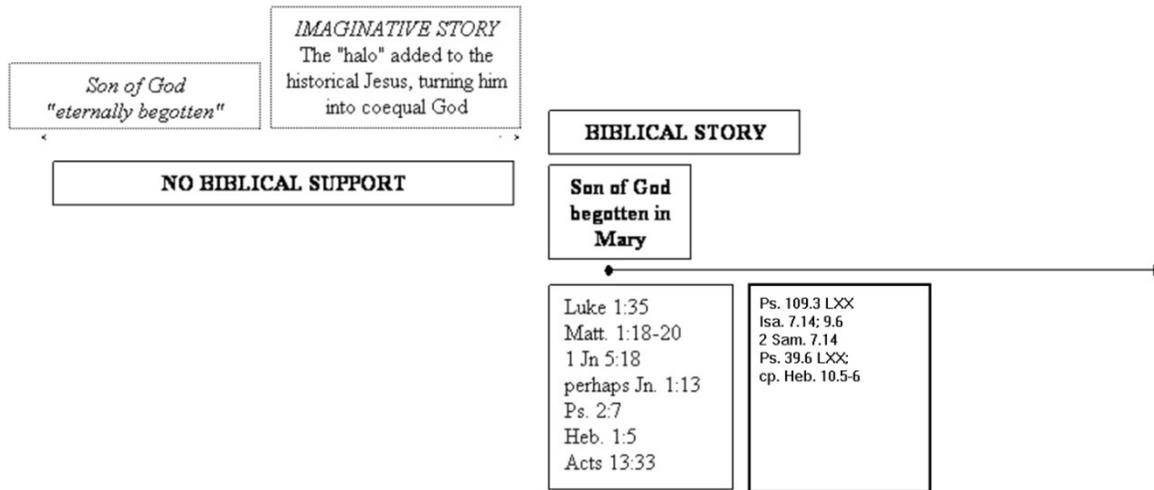


BEGOTTEN OR MADE?

The Origin of the Son of God vs the Incarnation of "God the Son"



Ray Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*: "In Luke 1.35 the begetting is not quasi-sexual as if God takes the place of a male principle in mating with Mary. There is more of a connotation to creativity. Mary is not barren, and in her case the child does not come into existence because God cooperates with the husband's generative action and removes the sterility. Rather, Mary is a virgin who has not known man, and therefore the child is totally God's work—a new creation...And this double expression of God's activity makes it clear that when the child is called "holy" and "Son of God", these designations are true to what he is and to his origins."

Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*: "The idea of Incarnation is foreign to Luke, as to Matthew. [In Luke 1.35] 'Therefore (*dio kai*)' expresses a causal connection between the virginal conception and the divine Sonship. It is another indication that Luke does not have a notion of Jesus' preexistence."

J.D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*: "In his birth narrative Luke is more explicit than Matthew in his assertion of Jesus' divine sonship from birth [1.32-35; 2.49]...it is sufficiently clear that it is a begetting, a becoming, which is in view, the coming into existence of one who will be called and will in fact be the Son of God—not by the transition of a preexistent being to become the soul of a human baby or the metamorphosis of a divine Being into a human fetus...Similarly in Acts there is no sign of any Christology of pre-existence."

D. Hare, *Matthew, Interpretation*: "Not only was [Matthew] referred to among Greek-speaking Jews as Genesis but also his phrase 'the book of the genesis of Jesus Christ' is strongly reminiscent of the Greek version of Gen 5.1, 'the book of the genesis of human beings', and Gen 2.4, 'the book of the genesis of heaven and earth'...in Jesus Christ, God had made a new beginning. To borrow from the language of Hollywood, the First Gospel could be billed as 'Genesis II, the Sequel'."

W.B. Tatum: "Now the origin of Jesus Messiah was thus" (1.18a). Following these words, the First Evangelist demonstrates that the circumstance surrounding Jesus' origin—both genealogical (1.18b-25) and geographical (2.1-4.16)—are in fulfillment of OT prophecies about the Davidic Messiah."

BEGOTTEN OR MADE?

N.H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament*: “Neither Catholic nor Protestant theology is based on Biblical theology. In each case we have a domination of Christian theology by Greek thought.”

So What Happened?

“The holy, pre-existent Spirit, that created every creature, God made to dwell in flesh, which He chose.”
Hermas, *Similitudes*, V.6.5.

“For just as, when John says, The Word was made flesh, John 1.14 we understand the Spirit also in the mention of the Word.” Tertullian, *Praxeas*, Ch 26.

“The Word and Son of God...enters into a virgin; being the Holy Spirit...He us endued with flesh; God is mingled with man.” Cyprian, *Idol*. Treatise 6.

“The Holy Ghost, descending from above, hallowed the Virgin's womb, and...mingled Himself with the fleshly nature of man...” Hilary, *On Trinity*, 2.26.

“There is one only physician, of flesh and of spirit, generate and ingenerate, God in man...Son of Mary and Son of God, first created and then uncreated, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Ignatius, *Eph*. 7:2

“Christ the Lord who saved us, being first spirit, then became flesh...” 2 Clement 9.5.

Athanasius, *The Incarnation*. “Just as the astronaut, in order to operate [in space] puts on an elaborate space-suit which enables him to live and act in this new, unfamiliar environment, so the Logos put on a body which enabled him to behave as a human being among human beings. But his relation to this body is no closer than that of an astronaut to his space-suit.”

On First Principles, Origen described Jesus as “the only-begotten Son, who was born, but without any beginning...His generation is eternal and everlasting. It was not by receiving the breath of life that he is made a Son, by any outward act, but by God’s own nature.”

Hence Wilberforce: “Origen introduced the phrase ‘the Son’s eternal generation’” and W. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*: “Only with Origen’s doctrine of the eternal begetting of the Son did the concept emerge of an eternal trinity in God.”

Complete WordStudy Dictionary: “The designation of this relationship by words with a temporal notion [“this day have I begotten you”, Ps 2.7] has troubled theologians, who have proffered various explanations. Origen understood this as referring to the Son's relationship within the Trinity and was the first to propose the concept of eternal generation.”

J.O. Buswell Jr. “The notion that the Son was begotten by the Father in eternity past, not as an event, but as an inexplicable relationship, has been accepted and carried along in the Christian theology since the 4th-century. We have examined all the instances in which ‘begotten’ or ‘born’ or related words are applied to Christ, and we can say with confidence that the Bible has nothing whatsoever to say about ‘begetting’ as an eternal relationship between the Father and the Son.”

Adam Clarke: “the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ is, in my opinion, anti-scriptural, and highly dangerous...To say that he was begotten from all eternity, is, in my opinion, absurd; and the phrase eternal Son is a positive self-contradiction.”

BEGOTTEN OR MADE?

Cut to: Christ-Mass

The New Encyclopedia Britannica, v. 13, 15th ed. 1990: “Christian festival celebrated on December 25, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ and also a popular secular holiday...was celebrated in Rome by AD 336...In Jerusalem, opposition to Christmas lasted longer, but it was subsequently accepted. In the Armenian Church, a Christmas on December 25 was never accepted... The reason why Christmas came to be celebrated...Christians wished the date to coincide with the pagan Roman festival marking the “birthday of the unconquered sun” (natalis solis invicti); In the Roman world the Saturnalia (December 17) was a time of merrymaking and exchange of gifts. December 25 was also regarded as the birth date of the Iranian mystery god Mithra, the Sun of Righteousness. On the Roman New Year (January 1), houses were decorated with greenery and lights, and gifts were given to children and the poor. To these observances were added the German and Celtic Yule rites when the Teutonic tribes penetrated into Gaul, Britain and central Europe. Food and good fellowship, the Yule log and Yule cakes, greenery and fir trees, gifts and greetings all commemorated different aspects of this festive season. Fires and lights, symbols of warmth and lasting life, have always been associated with the winter festival, both pagan and Christian. Since the Middle Ages, evergreens, as symbols of survival, have been associated with Christmas. Christmas is traditionally regarded as the festival of the family and of children, under the name of whose patron, St. Nicholas, presents are exchanged in many countries.

Tree worship, common among the pagan Europeans, survived after their conversion to Christianity in the Scandinavian customs of decorating the house and barn with evergreens at the New Year to scare away the devil and of setting up a tree for the birds during Christmastime; it survived further in the custom, also observed in Germany, of placing a Yule tree at an entrance or inside the house in the midwinter holidays. The Germans set up a Paradise tree in their homes on December 24, the religious feast day of Adam and Eve. They hung wafers on it (symbolizing the host, the Christian sign of redemption); in a later tradition, the wafers were replaced by cookies of various shapes. Candles, too, were often added as the symbol of Christ. In the same room, during the Christmas season, was the Christmas pyramid, a triangular construction of wood, with shelves to hold Christmas figurines, decorated with evergreens, candles, and a star. By the 16th century, the Christmas pyramid and Paradise tree had merged, becoming the Christmas tree.”

Rick Warren, *Christianity Today* posted 12/19/2008: “The entire reason for Christmas is the love of God. God loves you so much that he came to earth as a human so you could get to know him and learn to trust him and love him back. Theologians call this the Incarnation. God became one of us, a human being, so we could understand what he is really like.”

R.H. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah: A Survey of the Life of Christ*: “The essence of the Christmas story is not that Mary conceived as a virgin. Nor is the Christmas story a sentimental ode to motherhood. The essence of Christmas is that God’s Son came into the world in human form and dwelt among us. It is the “fact” of the incarnation that is the key to Christmas, not the “how” by which this was brought about...For orthodox Christianity that is self-evident. The Son of God did not come into existence through virginal conception. The Son of God was, is and always will be...”

Karl Rahner: “The representation of a god’s becoming man is mythological, when the ‘human’ element is merely the clothing, the livery, of which the god makes us in order to draw attention to his presence here with us, while it is not the case that the human element acquires its supreme initiative and control over its own actions by the very fact of being assumed by God...The persistence of this idea [ought to make us realize that it] probably still lives on in the picture which countless Christians have of the ‘Incarnation’, whether they believe it or not.”