

Preached on Sun, 06 Dec 2015 00:00:00 -0500

1 Me (Attention)

If the human race were to suddenly go extinct tomorrow, a lot of things would go wrong. I mean you can imagine, eventually dams would break, drones would crash to the ground, and for sure white-tail deer would overpopulate Washburn County.

But did you know another tragedy that would take place is the extinction of the banana? What you may think is a simple fructose resource found throughout the tropical areas of our planet is actually the result of human-intervention. Before the banana existed, there was only the *Musa Acuminata* and the *Musa Balbisiana*. The former fruit was much too tough to chew and the latter was full of seeds. Early on in farming history however, we put the two together, essentially cloning them with various techniques and now we have the world-famous banana. If you know anything about cloning, the problem is that you never get anything other than the gender you start with. So if humans go extinct and can't interrupt nature anymore, there will be a lot of sad monkeys.

2 We (Tension)

Sometimes things need intervention—an interruption by an outside force to produce different results. I'm not talking about fruit anymore. A drug addict or alcoholic, I think you'd agree needs an intervention, a civil war within a nation needs an intervention, and there are times even within our family relationships that we need the intervention of a counselor or a pastor.

But of all the times in the protracted history of our race, the one moment we needed an intervention more than any other was when we rebelled against God. The Fall of man. We look around the world today and can clearly see things are not right. Mass, planned murders, widespread panic and fear, racism, judgment, greed and pride. Who will intervene? Who will step in and stop the cycle? Who will come and stand in the gap between us and God? Who will lead us back to our original goodness, atone for our guilt, and remain with us for eternity?

1 Timothy 2:5 ESV *...there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...*

There is no greater need for a mediator than for the rift which has been created between God and His Creation—a bridge between infinite and finite, infallible and able to fail, between uncreated and created. Two-thousand years ago, this is where God performs His most astonishing miracle of history—the birth of Jesus—the Incarnation of God Himself as Man.

If you have your Bible with you please turn to Luke 1:26-38. Again that is Luke 1:26-38. In our Sanctuary bible that is page 855.

We're continuing our series Christmas Accomplished today. The series is an extension of our Fall Series The Grave Robber which focused on the miracles of Jesus. This month we are

focusing on the miracles of God the Father, His supernatural interventions to accomplish one thing—the salvation of mankind through the birth of His Son. You will see that our God will stop at nothing to redeem us—including superseding the laws of biology.

Let's read.

3 Truth (Catharsis)

3.1 The Impossible Miracle

3.1.1 Scripture

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said Greetings O favored one the Lord is with you! But she was greatly troubled at the saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

And the angel said to her Do not be afraid Mary for you have found favor with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end.

And Mary said to the angel How will this be since I am a virgin? And the angel answered her The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.

And Mary said Behold I am the servant of the Lord let it be to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

3.1.2 Natural Biology + Supernatural Intervention

In 1978 a little girl named Louise Brown was born in England. At 5 pounds, 12 ounces, Louise was a small baby. But what made her birth so significant was that she was the first baby conceived outside of a woman's body—what we now often call, a “test tube baby” The fertilized egg was then placed back in the mother for gestation and all went according to plan.

This was a pretty amazing intervention leading to the creation of a new life, but it still necessitated a human male and a human female. Scientists have come quite a long way though in reducing that as a key factor by cloning experiments with honeybees, silkworms, rabbits, and frogs. By removing the nucleus of an animal's skin cell (which contains its DNA) and placing it into the nucleus of the animal's egg, a copycat can be generated. In fact this phenomenon is

actually called *parthenogenesis*—Parthenos meaning “virgin” and genesis meaning “birth”.
Virgin birth!

But as amazing as this all is, it is nowhere close to the miracle which occurred that night. While modern clones have short life spans, defects, and will never be anything other than what their original host was—The Son of God’s DNA is supernaturally written, generated, and sequenced in the nucleus of a cell within Mary.

When Jesus later turns water into wine, we see supernatural reorganization of molecules and compounding chemical reactions. But the Virgin Conception of Jesus only begins to be paralleled by the miraculous creation of Adam from the dust or Eve from his side. Even then, however God wasn’t downloading the intrinsic nature of who He is into a single cell. If you were to unwrap the DNA in your body which is tightly woven together in a double-helix, it would stretch all the way to the moon—6,000 times. And here, God has written Himself into this biological code within the body of a young teenage girl, of subjugated nationality in a slum of a town. All of the hope of the world, all of the miracles Jesus would perform, all of the men and women He would inspire to become household names like Peter, Paul, and James... everything was bound up in one cell that measured 100 microns, that’s about 0.12 millimeters—the width of a human hair. Why would God do this?

3.2 The Impossible Purpose

The same reason Pastor Ron gave for why God would go through such great lengths to communicate with us—because He will stop at nothing to redeem us. He is stepping in, He is here to intervene, He is here to break the cycle of sin and death! He is here to create new life!

But specifically I would like to answer the question not to “Why did He come” but “Why did He come the way He did”—so humbly and silently? What purpose did God have for *parthenogenesis*? Three reasons.

3.2.1 For the Purpose of Relationship

First, the Virgin Birth allowed God to come as a man we can relate to.

Job had long ago complained that God “...*is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.*” Job 9:32-33 ESV. But now, just such a One has appeared. We can relate to God in a way never possible before. No other religion in history has made a claim such as this. While there have been half-gods born and gods who take the shape of a person, never has a God permanently fused Himself within the frame of His own creation. Only the most loving, intimate, engaging God would ever do such a thing. Augustine was amused as he considered patients whose physicians were slow and unwilling to get near them to help their sickness. I like how theologian Thomas Oden puts it “Humanity receives extraordinary treatment from the empathic divine Physician who is willing to come into the sphere of the epidemic to share personally the

diseased human condition.” Our God will stop at nothing to redeem us!

3.2.2 For the Purpose of Example

While Jesus was born fully God, He was also born fully man. As such He is able to communicate the essence of God’s nature as well as communicate the essence of our true nature. In other words, Jesus shows us who God is and shows us who we are meant to be. That is why you hear the phrase “I want to be more Christ-like” That is another way of saying “I want to be fully human, I want to be what God always dreamed I would be without sin in the picture.” Colossians 2:9 ESV *For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily...* 1 John 2:6 ESV *...whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.* Also see Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 2:6-7.

3.2.3 For the Purpose of Redemption

But ultimately, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary as a helpless babe, so that He might be born the perfect sacrifice, the spotless lamb to be led one day to slaughter on our behalf. Jesus’ birth and crucifixion are inextricably linked. Consider the scriptures:

Mystery of the Incarnation	Mystery of the Passion	Scripture
He came	to give his life as ransom	Mark 10:45
To this end I was born	Crucify, Crucify!	John 18:36, 19:6
God sent his Son	To redeem	Galatians 4:5
God so loved	That he gave his only Son	John 3:16
He humbled himself	Becoming obedient unto death	Philippians 3:8
The reason he appeared:	To destroy the devil’s work	1 John 3

Anticipating the cross, Jesus said: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified... for this purpose I have come to this hour.” (John 12:23, 27 ESV).

4 Application (Retention)

4.1 The Impossible Result (Blank Slide)

The Nativity of Jesus allows you to experience a nativity in your own heart—a new birth into a new life. God will stop at nothing to redeem you. Did you ever stop to think of how we are the ones who rebelled against God, and yet God saw it fitting to earn our trust back? Saw it fitting to walk slowly with us, showing us the way to live life again? Becoming the perfect mediator between God and Man—atonement for our sin on the cross—still as pure as the day He was conceived? Don’t waste His precious miracle. Trust Him, follow His example, and believe in His sacrifice.

5 Response (How)

Michelle and Julie, you guys can come up at this time. We're going to take some time to listen to the Simpson girls as they play flute. We'll also be taking up our morning tithes and offerings, if you'd like to be prepared for that. During this quiet and reflective time I want you to read through Philippians 2:6-7 a few times. Allow the weightiness of what God has done to reach you sink in. Don't resist it, but receive it this morning. *"...who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."* Philippians 2:6-8 ESV

6 Benediction

Phillip Brooks of the 19th Century wrote the words

"O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin and enter in; Be born in us to-day"

May it be so.

Please drop off your Connection Cards in the baskets on your way out and if you have a need for prayer, please come to the prayer team to my left.

Go with God.