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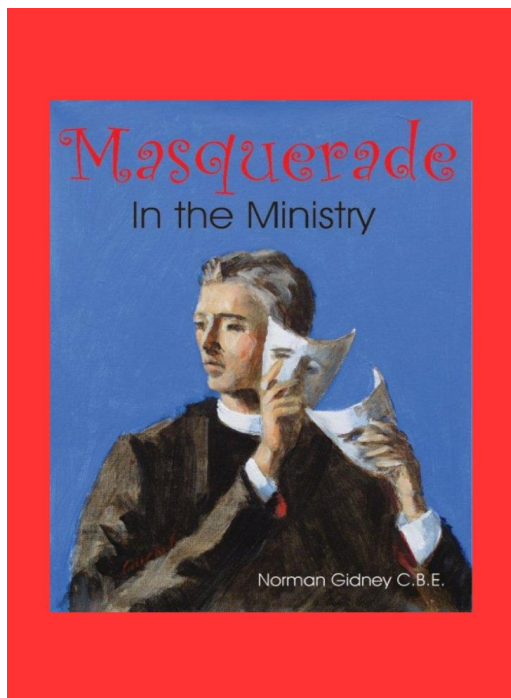
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Beloved Co-Laborers in the Gospel,

HENRY & SHIRLEY HUDSON

We begin by praying a blessed New Year on every one of you. What will 2011 bring? If you are “**in Christ**” you are already blessed with every spiritual blessing, and you have already been made an heir “*according to the hope of eternal life.*” (Tit. 1:2; 3:7). What more could there be? Check out Ephesians 2:7.

We have had many open doors for ministry these last few weeks. I personally have been greatly challenged by my studies and writings on the subject of what it means to be “**in Christ.**” The phrase is found in Paul no less than 164 times. The fuses in my mind are on the brink of breaking with the significances of what it means to be identified with, and related to my Lord and Savior. The study this month has a different slant on the phrase, but it was appropriate for the main message of Christmas.



My good friend of many years (at least 60) has a new book: *MASQUERADING IN THE MINISTRY.*

While it contains a message of importance for all believers, there is a special application to men in the pastoral ministry. How can a business man have anything to say to Pastors? Good question, but those who know Brother Gidney will know he is a man of many parts. For one thing, working as one of the directors of the European Missionary Fellowship for some forty plus years, he had direct personal experience with many pastors and with their indigenous churches in a number of various European countries. And also with many pastors both in Great Britain and the USA. His successful career in the world of business has also helped develop his insights into the dynamics of the positive and negative aspects of effective leadership.

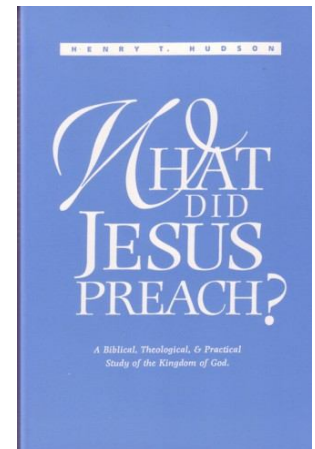
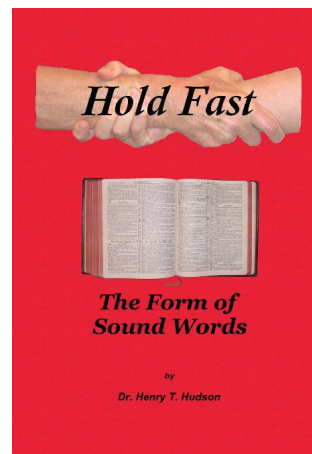
Keep us in your prayers. We both feel well, as far as our health is concerned. Truthfully, I am amazed I made it to 79! Shirley is as sweet and loving as ever. Thank you LORD. Stay in touch. Again, a blessed New Year. Yours because His, Henry T. Hudson, John 3:30

DIRECTORS: Henry, Shirley, & Bruce Hudson. ADVISORY BOARD: Pastors: J. Hollis, H. Knotts, A. J. Krause, R. Robinson, A. Watkins, P. Wiering, Mr. R. Purdy, Dr. R. Stern, Mr. N. Gidney C.B.E.



Dr. Hudson newly appointed chaplain of the 281st MP Provost Co., holding microphone. Also pictured is Jim Herring, the President and Secretary of the Group. He did the appointing, and needless to say, I was happy to accept the honor. Those Italian Ladies present must have been a little surprised to hear the message: "Poiche Iddio ha tanto amato il mondo che ha dato il Suo unigenito figliuolo affinche chiunque crede in Lui, non perisca mai, ma abbia vita eterna." John 3:16 Italian Version. It was a memorable time to be with the men with whom I served many moons ago in the city of Trieste, Italy.

Books available from Pastor Hudson:



"IN CHRIST" GOD'S INCARNATION

by Henry T. Hudson

**"God was in Christ reconciling
the world unto himself"
2 Corinthians 5:19**

The first four words in the above reference grab my attention. What do they mean? In what way was God related to, or identified with Christ? I have studied the Bible and theology for over sixty years, and my mental files are hardly adequate to comprehend all the implications resident in these words. Hence, I am obliged to look carefully at the context. What do I find? I find that not only was God in Christ "*reconciling the world unto himself,*" but I find that those who accept what God has accomplished in Christ are now also in Christ. Moreover, they also benefit from what he did. Among the benefits, the context lists at least four: (1) They know Christ in a new way, (2) They have been reconciled to God, (3) They have become a new creation, and (4) They have the privilege of being ambassadors of Christ. This ambassadorship means that they have the honor of representing Christ in the ministry of beseeching men and women to receive the blessings of this reconciliation.

The first benefit merits special attention. It is stated in verse 16, that as believers we no longer know Christ after the flesh, that is, our knowledge of Christ is not based on any mere mental and physical considerations. Have you ever heard the expression: "Perspective is reality?" In sum, it implies that your view of things results from personal and cultural inter-action. Stated differently, it suggests that perspective is molded by history and upbringing. Why do human beings differ so much on so many things? Why is it I cannot get everyone to agree with me on everything. I am sincere and I want them to be right! Of course, in case my reader missed it, I am being facetious.

The question is nonetheless a fascinating one to consider. For example, let me ask, why does the Western mind have so much difficulty understanding the motivations of Islamic militants? On an entirely different score, why are there so many consecration casualties among missionaries resulting from working in a foreign culture? Why is it that something like 60% return home before their first term is complete? The answer can be found mainly in the phenomenon of what is called cultural shock. What is cultural shock? This phenomenon is more than mere imagination. It is real and should not be discounted. The foreign culture is one that tends to collide with the innate cultural conditioning that was imparted in childhood, adolescence, and even adulthood. When this happens all kinds of frustrations arise.

For those not raised in the culture of a Christian home, let me ask, how did you view Jesus Christ before you were a Christian? How do you view him now? In my case, my out-look on life was radically changed when I came to know Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. There was a definite change. One reason was that my judgments were now being made from spiritual insights gained by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit and from my knowledge of the God-given revelations that came to me through the written word of God.

Do you remember Paul's dialogue with Jesus on the Damascus Road? Do you remember his reason for being on the way to Damascus? Scripture declares that he was going there "*breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.*" He had letters from the high priest that gave him the power to

apprehend them. He was to bind them and bring them back to Jerusalem. He was making havoc of the church. He was the leader of a persecution that was causing the disciples to flee from the security of their homes. When he caught them, he hauled them off to prison. So what on earth must have been his attitude toward Jesus Christ? It was one based on a fanatical fleshly loyalty to the cultural and religious traditions he had been taught from his childhood.

Such attitudes are capable of the most inhuman of extremes. Explore the fanatical motivations of a dyed in the wool Nazis during the Second World War. Read *Foxes' Book of Martyrs*, or any reliable history of the Spanish Inquisition. Read the book, *Jihad*. Research the history of the merciless Islamic crusade against the Armenian Christians in which so-called ethnic cleansing took the lives of over one million men, women, and children. Read of what has been happening in the the southern part of the Sudan. Millions of Sudanese Christians have been slaughtered or displaced at the hands of a government that is under the influence of a jihad mentality. This influence comes from the Koran which teaches that war is declared on all who do not believe in Allah (Sura 9:29). Well, Paul's attitude toward the disciples of Jesus was certainly not by divine mandate. It was of the flesh. It was his sincere conviction that these disciples were a threat to the purity of the Jewish religion. Such a threat could not be tolerated. It had to be dealt without any mitigation.

After his Damascus Road encounter with Jesus, what was his new attitude? The Lord had appeared in a theophany, "*above the brightness of the sun,*" and asked him: "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*" He in turn had asked: "*Who art thou Lord?*" The answer he recieved was: "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*" (Acts 9:1-5). The imagery here suggests that Paul was like an obstreperous animal. What does it mean to kick against the pricks? Did he still have the image of Stephen, the first martyr, fixed in his mind. Was it weighing on his conscience? He had heard Stephen cry out: "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*" (Acts 7:60). Some scholars have concluded that the words are from a familiar proverb. Proverbs sometimes are culturally oriented. How many who speak English know what it would mean if I were to speak of "the penny dropping?" How about "carrying coals to Newcastle?" Or, maybe, "I smell a rat?" It is thought that these words from the Lord Jesus were a common proverb associated with any adamant resistance to the will of God. This could very well be, for often those in rebellion will do things completely contrary to what they normally know should be done.

Paul was a strict Pharisee, yea a Pharisee of the Pharisees! He must have thought in his mind that there was no way that Jesus could be the long-awaited Messiah. Such was ludicrous. For one thing he was of Nazareth. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Such was a derogatory question suggesting that such a town was despied. He had been crucified on a cross as a common criminal. How could God's annointed Messiah be crucified on an accursed cross? And yet, in spite of these attitudes, what happens immediately after Paul's conversion? He began to preach this Jesus of Nazareth as being indeed the Christ the Son of God. The text actually states that he confounded the Jews that were in Damascus, proving that Jesus was indeed the very Christ (Acts 9:22). This conversion and change of attitude can hardly be the result of mere rational deliberation.

Speaking of rational deliberation, in my own case, when I became a Christian, did I one day stop, sit down, and think to myself: 'Enough of my sinful ways. I'm on a dead-end street. I think I will become a Christian?' Nothing like this happened. I was in rebellion against God, and it was the work of Holy Spirit as I heard the gospel that in spite of the fact that I was a sinner, God loved me and wanted to save me.

In some ways, Paul's words describing his new manner of knowing Christ remind me of Peter's words at Caesarea Philippi when, in reponse to the challenge of the Lord Jesus, "*But whom say ye that I am?*" he answered: "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" (Mat. 16:16). Men were speculating that Jesus was Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets, but Peter had the right answer. I'm of the opinion that we moderns don't truly apprehend the meaning of what Peter said. His answer came by divine revelation. Like Paul, such knowledge, does not come through mere rational thought. As far as much antsupernatural thinking is concerned

Jesus is reckoned to be a wise teacher, but nothing more. He was that, but if that is all he was then the Bible has misrepresented him.

Many of my readers will probably be familiar with the following provocative quotation from C. S. Lewis. It is worth repeating: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic-on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg-or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a Demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p, 56).

Recently, my cardiologist told me of a book that he was reading. However, in the way he spoke, I had the impression that he was not eager that I should read this book. He told me it was written by John Shelby Spong Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, and that it was directed at trying to rescue the truths of the Bible from the thinking of fundamentalists. Maybe he thought that the book might be hard on my heart. However, I was definitely hooked. His implied caveats were like waving a red flag in front of a bull. The very next day, I checked out a couple of Spong's books from the local public library. I soon began to understand what was behind his implied reservations. However, in reading the books, it soon became obvious to me that Bishop Spong was not really concerned with understanding the Bible in a literal manner, but was interested in what he called "the Bible's deeper meanings." Hence, his interpretation of Jesus Christ resulted along lines that were more eisegesis than exegesis. Compared with what is found in the Bible, Spong was in reality rewriting history. In essence, he finished up with a Christ whose father was possibly a rapist, who was probably married to Mary Magdalene, and who in sum was a sinner like the rest of human kind. The book really told me a lot about Spong, but little about Christ. In other words, Spong had an agenda, and his work can hardly be considered objective historical research. He might think he was rescuing the Bible from what he considered to be misinterpretations, but what he finished up with was a Jesus constructed from his own personal opinions, in other words, what he himself personally wanted Jesus to be.

THE REAL HISTORICAL JESUS

Over the last twenty years or more, there has been a group of acclaimed scholars who have been on a quest to discover "the real historical Jesus." Apparently, the main stumbling block in their quest were the miracles in his ministry. There can be no denying that the miracles are presented in the New Testament as being actual happenings. In fact, Hebrews 2:3, 4 contains not only a warning of the consequences of neglecting the salvation that was preached by the Lord Jesus and his disciples, but the passage declares, in no uncertain terms, that God bore witness to this preaching by "*signs and wonders, and divers miracles.*" Hence, the only way a person can discount the miracles would be to discredit the documents and thus those who were the witnesses.

A long time before these scholars put their heads together, the Scottish philosopher David Hume had been disturbed by the miraculous in the life of Jesus. His reasoning brought him to the conclusion that miracles were impossible because they were contrary to nature. He argued that history contained a consistent record that miracles had never happened. Hence, how could anyone believe that Jesus stilled the storm? How could they believe he rose from the dead? How would they know that the resurrection of Jesus never happened? Suppose we could ask David Hume this question, how would you respond? He would say something to the effect that he was sure that such could never happen! Ask him again, how he could be so sure? The bottom line of his answer would be that he himself had never witnessed a dead man come back from the dead. In essence, he is reasoning in a circle. His presuppositions are such that he dismisses miracles right off the bat, because according to his world of experience he has never witnessed any. What does he do with the record of the eyewitnesses in the New Testament? He can only come to one conclusion, namely, that they were all deceived. Why? Because as he

contends, miracles do not happen! Does he have a private pipeline to absolute reality? Is he willing to contend that the eyewitnesses had all been deceived? He might also contend that the historical records were fabrications. Then the challenge boils down to researching the veracity and authenticity of the documents. If he were truly sincere, I would place in his hands the book by F. F. Bruce's, *The New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable?* There is more testimony to the reliability of these documents than any other collection of ancient documents that are generally quoted without without any reservations.

The scholars engaged in the quest for the historical Jesus really thought they were doing the world a big favor. They thought the miracles were a stumbling block to the educated people. They thought that if the documents could be sanitized of all the miraculous elements, then intelligent people would be more inclined to believe them and profit from their content. But would they? Let me suggest that my reader consider what is stated in John 3:19, 20, and Luke 16:19-31. And at the same time, keep in mind the principle set forth in 2 Corinthians 5:16. Human reason, because of sinful enmity, will inevitably oppose divine revelation.

The attempt to erase the miracles, and dismiss them as being nothing but myths, and consequently reducing Christ to a mere man can hardly make Christianity more palatable. But would there not be left his ethical teachings? How on earth can you have ethical principles built on lies? Let us at least be consistent. Let us be reasonable. You cannot emasculate the documents of the Bible from the miraculous and still expect to hold them as being the inspired Word of God.

What did this seminar of some 100 scholars, after their six year quest, finally conclude concerning the real historical Jesus? Did they find him? In their consensus conclusions, they found only 18% percent of the 700 or more sayings attributed to Jesus to be unquestionably authentic. All statements in John's Gospel, with the exception of one, were rejected. The only one remaining was John 4:44, "*For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.*" How did they arrive at their conclusions? Amazingly, their conclusions were exactly the same as their assumptions. They finally wound up with a group of passages such as the popular parable of the Good Samaritan; passages critical of the rich, and the command to love your neighbor. Passages dealing with repentance and redemption not even worth considering. What about the references to heaven, hell, judgement, and the kingdom of God? What of the miracles? What about the testimony of all who witnessed them? Who should be believed? The men who were the eyewitnesses, or the modern-day revisionists who, twenty centuries later are guided by their antinatural presuppositions?

Coming back to written the record, and the eyewitness accounts, I call to mind what Andrew told Peter? He told him, "*We have found the Messiah, which being interpreted, is the Christ.*" When Philip found Nathaniel and said unto him, "*We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write?*" Nathaniel did come to Jesus and he said to him: "*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God: thou art the King of Israel* (Jn. 1:45, 49).

Most Christians today speak of Jesus Christ as though Jesus was his Christian name, and Christ his surname. No! He was Jesus, meaning Savior, and he was also the Christ, the anointed One of God, the one who will one day be crowned king over the kingdom of God on the earth. Holy Scripture declares that in the "*regeneration,*" when, "*the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,*" God "*shall send Jesus Christ (the One having been foreappointed) the One who was before preached unto you.*" With these times of refreshing there will be a new creation which will bring about the "*restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by all his holy prophets since the world began.*" (Mat. 19:28; Acts 3:19-21). How do we know all of this? We know it through divine revelation and not through human rationalization. We know it through the Word of God, and through the experiential realities that come to us through the faith in the truths found in that word. And incidentally, these experiences and testimonies have been shared by literally millions of people of both past and present generations, who regardless of their peculiar cultural environments can testify to the same experiences.

This is how we meet the real historical Jesus. We know him through divine revelation. It is not a mere intellectual pursuit of historical knowledge. It is an *epiginosko* knowledge, that is, an experiential knowledge that impacts our conscious existence. It is not any mere fleshly rational knowledge, but divine knowledge based on the authority of God's word. Incidentally, every thing a person knows is actually based on the interdependency of at least three sources: authority, experience, and reason. In the subject before us, the authority comes from the word of God.

On this authority, we are told that those who receive this proffered reconciliation with God, do not have their trespasses imputed unto them. The mere mention of the word "reconciliation" presupposes the existence of enmity. The word of God tells its readers that the carnal mind is at enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7). Such being the case, little wonder that no man can know the real Christ after the flesh. The death of Christ provided propitiation and God was able to be reconciled, that is, he was able to harbor a different attitude toward sinners. Thus, when they receive the reconciliation their transgressions are not imputed against them. Let it be highlighted: this wonderful transaction needs to be received. The human race had sinned and fallen short of God's standard of righteousness. Now, because of the efficacious death of Christ, reconciliation has been made possible. And amazingly, sinners can now have, not only no imputation of transgressions, but they can have God's righteousness imputed to their account (2 Cor. 5:21).

RECONCILIATION = AT-ONE-MENT

So, as this context makes clear, those who are in Christ have been reconciled to God. As a result of this reconciliation they have become new creatures and they belong to God's new creation. The moment a sinner becomes related to Christ by simple faith in the truth of the gospel, his whole outlook on life is different. He has truly become a new creature, or as some translators prefer, he is now an heir to God's new creation. I know what happened when I came to a saving knowledge of Christ. Like the healing of the blind man, I could say to any would be scoffers: All I know is that once I was blind but now I see. I had a new purpose in life, and everything seemed different. Like the hymnwriter wrote: The sky above was a bluer blue and the grass was a greener green; something lived in every hue that Christless eyes had never seen. No longer did I make spiritual judgments based on the flesh, that is, as Paul himself did at one time concerning Jesus Christ, but now I had a new perspective, and was able to evaluate things from the divine perspective.

The subject of reconciliation is not limited solely to 2 Corinthians, chapter five. There are some enlightening statements made in Romans 5:6-11.

"For when we were yet without strength (we were helpless) in due time (at the right time), Christ died for (in behalf of) the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for (in behalf of) us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (katallagen, reconciliation, the same word as is found in 2 Cor. 5:18, 19).

As sinners we were helpless. We personally could not pay the penalty for our own redemption. Christ could, and Christ did. Consequently, we can now be justified. That is, we can now be declared righteous. We are no longer the objects of the wrath of God. We have been reconciled to God. Thus being reconciled, *"we shall be delivered by his life."* If by his death he accomplished so much, how much more by his life.

THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS

Looking once more at 2 Corinthians 5, another thought crosses my mind. Yes, the work of Christ is prominent, but what about God? Was it not God in Christ who made the reconciliation possible? This questions should get my reader's attention. It should stretch the mind of every Christian. It touches on the extraordinary biblical doctrine of the trinity. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. In considering the relationship here, I would remind my reader once again of the statement in 2 Corinthians 5:16, "*Wherefore henceforth know we know man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.*" A person can try to follow the rationalizations of a Bishop Spong, and create Jesus in accordance with antisupernatural biases, but if a person follows and accepts the revelations in the Word of God he can hardly find fault with the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Yes, the doctrine that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh.

In past studies, I have repeatedly emphasized the concept that the preposition "in" projects thoughts connected with association, identification, and relationship, and while this is true, the words hardly skim the surface of the doctrine of the trinity. The rationalist might ask: But wait a minute, how can God be in Christ? How can God die? How can God be in three persons at the same time? And the questions push the finite limitations of our human minds to come up with answers, but we fall back on the principle implied in the words of 2 Corinthians 5:16. The questions cannot be answered apart from divine revelation. Little wonder Paul could write: "*great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh.*" (1 Tim. 3:16).

What does divine revelation teach? Consider what is stated in John's Gospel chapter 1.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was
God (Original syntax, ' And God was the Word).
The same was in the beginning with God.
All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.
John 1:1-3*

Let me add to these words from John, the words of Paul found in Colossians 1:15-19.

(CHRIST) Who is the image (the substance, the realty) of the invisible God, the firstborn (prototokos, i.e. Prince and Lord) of all creation (the emphasis here is on primogeniture, i.e. dignity and honor. He is the Prince and Lord of all created things. He is the preeminent One).

FOR (because) by him, were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him (Cf. Gen. 1:1).

And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that (hina, in order that) in all things he might have the preeminence. For (hoti, because) it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell (the **pleroma**, 'fulness' permanently resides in Christ).*

There is more here than any superficial reading can discover. The gnostic heresy behind Paul's warnings, taught that there were hundreds of emanations flowing from God to the material world. This was a philosophical attempt to bring God and man together. How do you get from what is good to what is evil? In gnostic thinking, you do so through the 300 + emanations that proceed from God. These emanations make up the bridge from the righteous God to evil man. But Paul declared, Christ is the bridge, he is the **pleroma!** Paul used the very word that the Gnostics used to describe the emanations. Paul taught that Christ is the creator of all things. He is before all things. He holds all things together, and he is the initiator, the prince, and the lord not

only of the physical creation but also of the spiritual creation. He, and he alone is the preeminent One. He is the **pleroma**. In him, "the fulness" of the godhead permanently resides.

The Prophet Isaiah had predicted some 700 years before the birth of Christ that, ". . . *the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*" (Isa. 7:14). The meaning of 'Immanuel' is, as Matthew declares: "*God with us.*" (Mat. 1:23). Scholars have bandied back and forth whether the Hebrew word *almah* can mean "virgin" or should it not be "young maiden?" The word "Immanuel" means "God with us." Whatever you conclude you eventually come back to Matthew 1:23, and there you read: "*Behold a virgin shall be with child*" The LXX translates *almah* by the Greek word *parthenos*. If the word "*parthenos*" does not in itself convince you that Joseph had nothing to do with the conception of Jesus Christ, then read what is stated in Matthew 1:18, 25. Do you believe in Genesis 1:1? Then what is so difficult about Matthew 1:23? Also, if you do read Isaiah 7:14, continue reading till you arrive at Isaiah 9:5-7. Tie them together with Luke 1:29-33. Then come back to John 1:14, and remember that this is all by divine revelation, and is not the result of a mere fleshly rational mind. This divine revelation makes it pellucidly clear that God, who was the Word, became flesh and dwelt among us. It also leaves no room for misunderstanding that this same one not only taber-nacled among, but he also died vicariously on Calvary's cross; making possible the blessed reconciliation that Paul wrote about in 2 Corinthians 5:6-11, and Romans 5:6-11.

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