

# 3 Common Misconceptions About Jesus Becoming Human

*“Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14).*

When they describe the theological significance of Jesus’ birth, theologians like to use a particular word: incarnation. It comes from the Latin meaning, “in the flesh.” Incarnation refers to the Christian doctrine that God, who is Spirit, took upon himself human flesh and came as the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of John describes the incarnation well: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1, 14). The Word—the one who was eternally face to face with God the Father as the second member of the Trinity—became a man, the man Jesus Christ. That’s the incarnation. The second member of the Trinity entered into history. The Creator entered creation. God who is spiritual took upon himself the physical. That’s why we call him Immanuel, “God with us.”

I realize that this raises a number of questions.

## 1. Did a person become God?

No. There’s a difference between a person becoming God and God becoming a person. Satan lied to Adam and Eve by telling them that they could essentially become God. Any religion that claims people can become God is false. That includes Mormonism and also many Eastern religions and New Age spiritualities that teach oneness with the divine. We do not ascend toward God—through morality, reincarnation, good works, paying off

our karmic debt, trying harder, doing better—God descends to us. The doctrine of the incarnation is not about a person who became God in order to show us how we can be godlike. It's about how God became a human person because He loves us and came to rescue us.

## **2. Did Jesus come into existence at His birth?**

Some religions teach that Jesus is not eternally God, but that he is a created being who came into existence at a point in time. In Micah 5:2 and John 1, Jesus' origins extend to eternity past since before creation. Jesus did not come into existence at His birth. The second member of the eternal Trinity entered into human history as the God-man, Jesus Christ. The Bible is clear that Jesus is our Creator and was not created, saying of Jesus in Colossians 1:16, "For by him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him." Jesus' birth was not His creation but rather His entrance into His creation.

## **3. Is the incarnation borrowed from pagans?**

If you have taken a religion course in college, one of the things you probably were told is that Christianity borrows ideas like the virgin birth from pagan mythology. This is untrue. Scripture predates any of the mythologies in question. As we saw, Isaiah's prophecy takes place 700 years before the virgin birth, but the first allusion of the virgin birth of Jesus is all the way back in Genesis 3:15 when the earth had only two people on it. After our first parents sinned against God, He promises the coming of a Savior, born of a woman—no mention of a father. This is notable, because the rest of Genesis is a patriarchal book, tracing numerous family histories through the male line.

In addition, the concepts of pagan mythology were just that:

mythology. Even the ancient Greeks did not treat the exploits of Zeus, Athena, and the various gods and goddesses as fact. These stories were more like Spiderman than Nelson Mandela. The Bible, however, presents itself as historical fact evidenced by eyewitness testimony. If anything, the pagans stole their fiction from the facts of the Bible.

*What questions do you still have about the life of Jesus? Ask a friend, study the Bible, pick a good book to read. Above all, ask the Holy Spirit to help you know, love, obey and follow Jesus. {eoa}*