

Robert A. Peterson, Christology, Session 11, Systematics, Incarnation Texts, Virgin Birth, Luke 2

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christology. This is session 11, Systematics, Incarnation Texts, Virgin Birth, Luke 2.

We're studying Christology. We're now in the phase where we're actually working with systematics, building off of key passages.

As we have been studying the incarnation of the Son of God, our passage is the great Johannine prologue to the Gospel. We've seen that the incarnation is the fundamental presupposition for the whole Gospel of John. Its background is Genesis 1 especially, and as far as theological teachings go, we've looked at pre-existence, the incarnation itself, which is taught in terms of those two metaphors as the second part of the chiasm, the true light was coming into the world, and then the word became flesh.

Then we studied the humanity of the Son, the deity of the Son, and before looking at some other great passages that also affirm the incarnation, we want to think about these great Johannine themes of revealer, life-giver, and the Christ or the Messiah. The Son pre-incarnate was a revealer of God by virtue of the things that he made. The Son incarnate is the revealer of God as the word incarnate, as the word who became flesh.

He speaks for God as the true light that comes into the world and illumines people with the knowledge of God through his sayings and his miracles. Throughout this passage, again and again, Jesus is the revealer. We have seen his glory, verse 14, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

That's because he revealed glory, grace, and truth in Jesus' character, in his words, and in his actions. 17, the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Once again, the divine attributes of grace and truth, which, because of their Old Testament background, speak of God's covenantal loving-kindness and his faithfulness, came through Jesus Christ par excellence.

I began to talk about this and got distracted. John uses hyperbole, which is the word I wanted, and sanctified over-exaggeration to make his point. And even as he said, Jesus said, if I had not come and done the works and given the words that no one ever else did, you would not be guilty of sin.

He doesn't literally mean that they were innocent or guiltless. He means, compared to their sin in rejecting him, their previous sin looks like nothing. In other words, woe to them.

And this verse has been greatly misunderstood. Good people taught that the Old Testament was all legal, and grace and truth comes only in the New Testament. The way to correct that is to see that this expression, grace and truth, is an Old Testament expression.

We see it in Psalm 117, and we see it in the great revelation of God in Exodus 34, the fundamental revelation of the name of God. This is an Old Testament concept. Once again, John uses hyperbole.

He doesn't mean there was no grace and truth in the Old Testament. He means, compared to the Hebrew *hesed v'emet*, God's covenantal loving-kindness, and his faithfulness. Compared to God's loving-kindness and faithfulness in the Old Testament, the New Testament in Jesus so far exceeds that, it makes the Old Testament look legal by comparison.

That is, the Son reveals God as never before. It is astonishing. There was grace and truth, of course, in the Old Testament, but now it explodes in Jesus.

It is so manifest that it makes the previous grace and truth look like nothing. It's similar to 2 Corinthians 4. The glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus in the gospel makes the previous glory, which Paul just said substantially in the face of Moses, who had to veil his face, look like no glory. Very similar idea.

And then, in verse 18 of John 1, no one has ever seen God, the only God who's at the Father's side. He has made him known. If I say Greek is exaggerated, you can get bad ideas from that, but it means he explained to him.

He made him known. He is the Son pre-incarnate, and especially incarnate is John's point. The incarnate Son is the revealer of God.

Oh, he makes God known manifestly, clearly, plainly in his character, in his speech, and in his works is the word most often used on the lips of Jesus himself for his miracles or signs. He's the life-giver. Verse 3, he gave life to the creation because in him was life.

Eternal life, which was the source of the creation of God, was resident in the logos. The logos is God, and he bestowed creative life in all its dimensions, so much so that all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. He was a life-giver before he was incarnate, and guess what? He's the life giver as the incarnate one.

He gives eternal life; we see it in 12 and 13 to all who did receive him and who believed in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God. This is the new life that puts us into the family of God, who were born, and John uses three different ways to speak of human birth, not of human birth in this regard, but of spiritual birth, which again is the language of new life.

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus is the revealer, and Jesus is the life-giver, so those Christological themes, along with so many other themes, are already introduced in the prologue. John just loads the prologue up with theme after theme. For example, the witness theme already occurs in verse 7. John the Baptist came as a witness to bear witness to the light.

He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which illumines everybody with whom it comes in contact, was coming into the world. That witness theme is powerfully taken up in chapters five and eight, and here is its introduction.

The great Roman Catholic Johannine scholar Raymond Brown, in his magisterial commentary, *Anchor Bible Commentary on John*, taught me this. John abbreviates the trials of Jesus in the Gospel. He didn't need to repeat Matthew, Mark, and Luke's more extensive trials.

He abbreviates, and different things are going on there, which I won't, which I'll only mention one. That is, he shows Jesus was on trial, as it were, his whole life. In contrast to the false witnesses who accused him of committing crimes at the end of his life, the Father gives true witnesses all along the way.

So, in chapter five, the Old Testament, John the Baptist, Jesus' miracles, Jesus himself bears witness of himself. Later on, the farewell discourses, the Holy Spirit, and the apostles are called in to be witnesses. It's quite remarkable how many witnesses there are to Jesus.

In other words, the unbelief toward the Son of God is totally unwarranted. It was not for a lack of evidence or witness that people rejected him. It was sinful to reject him, and it was in the face of great evidence.

That theme is already here in the prologue and, as a matter of fact, in the verses that follow the prologue, where we have the testimony of John, as a matter of fact, over and over again. So many themes are introduced here and then pursued in the rest of John's gospel. So this is our great passage, affirming the incarnation of the Son.

And what we are saying is that God himself became a human being in Jesus of Nazareth. The second person of the Trinity, the Eternal Son, the Word, the Light

became one of us, so much so Paul could call him the second man, the last Adam. Theologians have taken these words and have summarized by calling him the second Adam.

That's true. The foundation of that is the incarnation. That is, in God's covenantal unfolding of scripture, there were only two human beings made right.

I don't mean to neglect Eve. She was created right, too, but she doesn't figure in this covenant headship theology. In both Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, the two Adams are determinative of their respective races.

Adam, the human race in its fallenness and sin and death. Christ, the race of the redeemed, which involves people from all tribes and languages and people and nations. But first, Adam determines everyone's downfall.

The second Adam brings victory and eternal life now in regeneration and resurrected life after Jesus comes again to all who believe in him. This two-Adam theology is grounded in the creation of the first Adam and the incarnation of the second man, the last Adam if you will. Even as we say this, we're affirming his genuine humanness, but it's the genuine humanness of the son of God or of God the son.

So mysteriously, he became God and man in one person, and he remains God and man in one person. The other great Christological passages teach the incarnation of the eternal son. We see it in Philippians 2. Again, my *modus operandi* is to take one passage and really work with it in detail for four of these great Christological teachings, but then to show how the teachings crisscross in the other passages.

Philippians 2, 6 and 7. Christ Jesus, who thought he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God as 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. He was born in the likeness of men and found in human form, and the one who was in the form of God became a servant.

This is the incarnation expressed in at least three ways. It's the presupposition for his humbling himself to death, even cross death, literally, even death on a cross. No incarnation, no atonement.

There was an incarnation and atonement, of course, to be followed by his resurrection from the dead. So, this great two-states Christological passage, which I said last time in its context, is chiefly an exemplary passage to humble the Philippians, which were a very healthy church to start with, but there were seeds of disunity in this church. We have it explicitly said at the beginning of chapter four, as there are always the seeds of disunity in any church because the seeds of disunity are in our hearts.

Paul wants them to follow the power of the spirit, surely the example of Jesus, who humbled himself and did not remain in heaven. Oh, that's not well said. He both remained in heaven and came to earth.

He became fully incarnate and also remained the second person of the Trinity. The Trinity did not explode in the incarnation. The Trinity remains intact, and because the Son is God, he's able to do that.

At the same time, he becomes a human being. You say, this thing is more mysterious than I thought. Yes, it is indeed.

God is mysterious already in his three in oneness, let alone in the incarnation. And I'll say it again: the mystery of the incarnation lends itself to the mystery of the cross and then the empty tomb. We don't understand all these things, but they're not nonsensical or illogical.

They just transcend our ability to understand. Even as God has said in Isaiah 55, my ways and thoughts are higher than yours. They are as higher than yours as the heavens are higher than the earth.

So, if everything in the Bible was crystal clear, that would be false. It is not false. Deuteronomy already says the secret things belong to the Lord, our God.

There are secret things. There are things we can't understand. The things that are revealed belong to us and to our children.

And I might add grandchildren for the benefit of some youngsters who are listening here, that we might do them. So, God's teaching, even as that Philippians context shows, is that we might respond to him in love and worship and faith and devotion and obedience and faithfulness. John 1, 1-14 is our key text for the incarnation, but it's not the only text.

It is here in Philippians 2 as well. Likewise, I could have chosen Colossians 1:15-20 as the deity of Christ's text. It's loaded with the deity of Christ.

I had to parcel these things out in some way and correlate them with teachings. This passage teaches Christ's deity, humanity. It also teaches his work of salvation in terms of reconciliation, demonstrating again that the person and work of Christ are inseparable.

We're teaching the incarnation, and we see it in Colossians 1:15. He, the Son, spoken of in verse before, verse 13, two verses before, the Father has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom

we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He, the Son, is the image of the invisible God.

He is the invisible God made visible. In doctoral studies, I should even cast a broader net. My sweet wife, in our young years of marriage, worked a number of jobs to put me through school.

As a matter of fact, she earned two PhDs. That's called putting hubby through. She sewed in a coat factory to put me through seminary.

So I was able to go through it in three years, and I was able to do well so as to go on to further studies and even get a full ride because of that. Doing well, which in part was her enabling me to have time to study. In any case, at the university PhD program, she was a friendly waitress.

Maybe you know friendly restaurants. Well, she was a very friendly waitress. Actually, my wife is so friendly that she inadvertently caused some jealousy because rarely a friendly waitress silver dollar award is awarded, and guess who got one after being there for only a matter of months? Yeah, Mary Pat, my wife.

Anyway, she is so loving that they still got over that, and it was all right. Anyway, she worked with a fellow whose name I forget. I was a young, nominally Jewish fellow, and at the time, I was still not too rusty from my high school and small Christian college tennis career, so we played tennis.

Actually, I was a stronger player than he was, and that's why he wanted to play I said sure if we can read the gospel of Mark together. So we did a little bit of that and a lot of tennis, and one day, he got it. Oh, I wish I could have told you he believed in Jesus.

I couldn't. I can't. But we did it a number of times, and the word of God started to get into him, but one day, Randy was his name.

One day, Randy had an insight that I took from the Lord. We're reading of Jesus' activities in Mark, casting out demons, teaching the kingdom of God, doing miracles, loving the people, and giving parables, and Randy says, well, wait a minute. He says, perhaps I was explaining.

He says, wait a minute, I think I get it. He says that if I want to see what God would say if he became a man, I should read what Jesus says. I'm like, and if I want to learn what God would do if he became a man, I should see what Jesus did, and I'm like, hallelujah.

Yes, Randy, you understand that's called the incarnation. God did become a man. That's exactly the point.

He is the visible image of God, the invisible one. The incarnation is also plainly taught in verse 19. In him, that is the son, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 2.9, following Luther's and ultimately Saint Augustine's hermeneutical principle, most truths in theology go back to Augustine, and most good hermeneutics go back to Augustine. It's just incredible. God gave us gifts, and he was a genius.

There's no question about it. Anyway, both Luther and Calvin said how indebted they were in their reformatory works and ministries to Saint Augustine. It is incredible.

Colossians 2.9 informs, Colossians 1:19, Colossians 2:9 tells us in him, that is Christ, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily and you have been filled in him and so forth. The problem was the Colossians were being told they were second-class citizens. They needed more than Jesus.

They needed more than Jesus intellectually in terms of doctrinal content. They needed more than Jesus provided in terms of how to live. They needed some secret teachings.

The Colossian heresy perhaps will never figure out what it is, but it surely is an amalgamation of some aberrant Jewish business going on with some strange teaching as well that has some Greek influence to it. Just really strange ideas and confused heresies. Paul's message is no, in Christ, you have all you need as far as knowing God and power and direction to live the Christian life because in him, in the son, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

I like to ask my students how that is different than us as spirit indwelt Christians, and they often emphasized the words the whole fullness, and my response was do you think you have a fraction of the Holy Spirit in you? If there was a sudden outpouring of the Holy Spirit in North Africa this afternoon and thousands of people came to Christ, would we divide the Spirit by thousands into thousandths? No, it's ridiculous. All of us have the whole Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Jesus was indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

John 3, the father gives to the son the Spirit without measure. Actually, that verse is interpreted differently. I just gave you my interpretation.

It could possibly mean God gives the Spirit without measure to believers, but I think it's talking about the father-son relationship. No, the difference is not that Jesus has more of God within him than we do. Boy, that didn't come out right.

He doesn't have more of the Holy Spirit within him than we do. We all have; he, and we both have the whole Holy Spirit. The difference is in the word bodily.

We, as believers, have the whole Holy Spirit within our bodies in and with us. That is not what this verse is saying, although that's true of Jesus, too. He is a Spirit-filled, indwelt human being.

Never only a human being but it could be said of the person of Christ in terms of his humanity. He's filled and indwelt by the Spirit. True, this is saying more than that.

This is saying something that cannot be said of us. I can point at other believers and say there is a man or woman who has the fullness of God dwelling in them in the Spirit. That's not what this says.

This verse says in him the whole fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. It is exactly affirming the incarnation. When we point at this man, Jesus Christ, it is not only true he's indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

It is true he is God in bodily form. It's hard to say it more clearly than this. He is the God-man.

When you point to his body, I speak reverently, and you point to the body of God. That is Colossians 1:19, more fully explained by 2:9, say teaches the incarnation. Oh my word, God became one of us.

So much so that Paul could say all the fullness of deity was pleased to dwell in him or in him the whole fullness dwell of deity dwells in bodily form. He is God in a body. The Bible doesn't give all of its teaching in any one verse.

It doesn't mean in a body without a soul, Apollinarius. It means he's the God-man. Hebrews 1 is perhaps the most powerful place to show the deity of Christ.

My goodness, John 1, Colossians 1, Philippians 2 show it too. I like this one, though, because it has all five of the great historical proofs of Jesus' deity. He's got the very nature of God.

Divine titles are ascribed to him in a way that's only fitting for God. He does the works that only God does: creation, providence, redemption, consummation, good grief.

Any one of these proofs is sufficient. He receives the worship of God. When the father brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all God's angels worship him.

I used to think this was a Christmas verse. It's not. Hebrews 1 is not about Bethlehem.

It's about Jesus going, ascending, and sitting. It's about his session, his sitting down at God's right hand in heaven. It's when the father brings the firstborn from the dead into the heavenly world, he says, let all God's angels worship him.

There are five great proofs of Christ's deity. And he's got attributes that only God possesses. In this passage, he is unchangeable.

He's unlike the creation, which changes. His years never fail. He does not.

He remains the same. Verses 11 and 12. We're not doing the deity of Christ now, but I'm just saying Hebrews 1 most powerfully and comprehensively reveals the deity of Christ.

I don't know of a better place. I know other great places. Chapter 2 of Hebrews wonderfully reveals the humanity of Christ.

In Hebrews 2:5 through 18, Paul refers to Psalm 8. It's a creation psalm. I don't think it's a messianic psalm, per se. It rather speaks of Adam and Eve as created by God, crowned with glory and honor, and given dominion over the creation.

It pertains to Christ because he is the second Adam. I say it this way. It doesn't specifically predict him.

It rather talks of Adam and Eve. But perhaps it's predictive in the sense that due to the fall, the wonderful status of our first parents remains unattainable for their spiritual descendants. The writer to the Hebrews, I'm not saying Paul, says it this way.

At present, in verse 8, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. It was in subjection to Adam and Eve. God put everything under their feet.

And Psalm 8 expresses all the birds and the fish and the creeping things. Everything's under humankind, especially when speaking of our first parents. The fall messed things up.

Our glory and honor is besmirched. It's not what it was. And our dominion, good grief, James 3 says we can't even control our little tongues, which ruin our lives and the lives of others, let alone control human government around the world or relation to God's environments that he has created, his world.

No, we're a mess. At present, we don't see things in control. But we do see him, verse 9, who for a little while was made lower than the angels.

That's a quotation from Psalm 8. Psalm 8 is now being applied to Jesus. We see him, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor, the words of Psalm 8, because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone. What's going on? Jesus, as a second Adam, steps into Psalm 8, the Psalm which spoke of Adam and Eve in their great status by God, and then an unfulfilled status because of the fall.

It's fulfilled again, even in a greater way, because here comes a second man, the last Adam, who was made a little lower than the angels. That's the language of incarnation, my friends. We see this language repeated.

Since the children, verse 14, share in flesh and blood, he himself, that is, the Son, likewise partook of the same things, flesh and blood, incarnation. Why? To die, to defeat the devil, and deliver his spiritual sons and daughters. And once again, in verse 16, surely it's not angels that he helps, so as to become the God angel, I speak reverently, but he helps the offspring of Abraham, that is, the people of God, the elect.

Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect. How? Incarnation. Repeatedly, even as Hebrews 1 affirms the deity of Christ in great colors, chapter 2, three times at least.

As a matter of fact, it corresponds to three themes of the work of Christ. He's the second Adam, the author of the new creation, was the first one, verses 9, verse 9. He's the Christus Victor, the champion, verses 14 and 15. And he's the great high priest and sacrifice, verses 16 through 18.

Each atonement motif is introduced by a statement of the incarnation of the eternal son of God. Oh, the Bible is so plain. The incarnation is an absolutely essential prerequisite.

Saint Anselm had it right. The incarnation is necessary. Oh, it's not eternally necessary as if God is responding to some external commandment that came from somewhere else.

No. Given God's commitment to save his ruined creation and rebellious creatures, namely us, then it is necessary for there to be the incarnation and even the death and resurrection of the son of God. The incarnation is glorious.

We celebrate it at Christmas. That's fine. We should take a cue from the Eastern Church and celebrate it more often than that.

The virgin birth. We move to another head. We have studied the pre-existence of the son of God, then the incarnation of the same, and now the virgin birth.

What method did God choose to bring his son into the world? He caused him to be conceived, as regards his humanity, in Mary's womb, supernaturally, and then to be born in this world as an infant, naturally. This is an amazing thing. The title is misleading, although we're not going to change it.

Certain theological titles are misleading. The inspiration of Scripture is certainly wrong. Inspiration is like this, breathing in.

2 Timothy 3:16 doesn't talk about breathing in. Theopneustos, all Scripture is breathed out by God. Parallel, Psalm 33.

God breathed out his creation. He spoke it forth. The God breathing of Scripture.

Scripture, as God-breathed, means it's God's product. He produced it, even as the breath of our mouths came from within us. So, God is the author of Scripture.

It is his product. It is his holy word. It's not really an in-breathing business.

We're not going to change that, though. In a similar way, the virgin birth is not really a virgin birth. Oh, some Catholic theologians thought it was a miraculous birth, and Jesus did not pass through Mary's birth canal.

Rome is thankful that it never became ensconced as a dogma. Dogmas cannot be changed, right? Theologians can have their opinions. If Rome makes something a dogma by either a promulgation of a pope or a statement of a council, that's fixed.

Even though American Catholics might pick and choose and believe what they want, that's wrong. According to Rome, they can't do that. Anyway, I'll leave Rome alone for right now.

Better, it's not the virgin birth. The birth is normal. We could ask Mary.

She would tell us that. It was painful. It was a virginal conception.

The conception of our Lord's humanity in Mary's womb was a miracle of God. Even as God created Adam from the dust of the earth and Eve from the side of Adam, so in this great moment, the greatest moment in redemptive history, I'm not taking away from the cross and empty tomb when I say this, but the incarnation is the essential prerequisite. No incarnation, no cross.

No empty tomb, no atonement. Am I saying the incarnation in itself saves? I am not saying that. I'm saying it, along with Jesus' sinless life, are essential preconditions for the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord.

We have two different passages that teach the virgin virginal conception. When I say virgin birth, I mean virginal conception. Luke 1, we have it from Mary's point of view.

Matthew 1, from Joseph's point of view. Luke 1, poor Mary. An angel appeared to her.

Maybe you've heard some foolish person say, boy, I would like for an angel to appear to me. I think you ought to be careful what you're wishing for, amigo or amiga. That is a very serious business because angels, let me say it more systematically: angels are not the main subject of the Bible.

Right? As a matter of fact, they're mentioned frequently, almost always with reference to God. Sometimes, they bring revelation. Sometimes they bring judgment.

Sometimes, they minister to the people of God. So, they really exist, but we don't have enough information to teach a complete doctrine of angels and angelology. Furthermore, God made everything good, so the bad angels, including Satan, were the result of some kind of primal revolt.

But we don't know anything about that either. It's not the purpose of the Bible. So, we don't have enough information to give a complete doctrine of Satan, Satanology, nor demons, demonology.

Nevertheless, they occupy the space, especially the good guys, the angels who wear those white hats. Pardon that bad pun. We have enough that we do study them with reference to other things always.

If God is the author and producer, the director and producer of the biblical story, and Jesus is the star, we are the co-stars by God's grace. The Holy Spirit is a supporting actor, and I like to call the angels whom I believe in. If somebody moves toward liberalism, the first thing to go is angels, by the way.

I'm not moving toward liberalism, thank God. The angels are like stagehands. They are a part of the production, but they're not women, and they're not these little chunky cherubs you see on Hallmark cards.

Many times, they appear as awesome male warriors that scare the jibbers out of people, and Mary doesn't think, oh, here's a lovely female, or Oh, look at that cute little cherub. No, she's scared to death. Luke 1:26, in the sixth month of Elizabeth's

pregnancy, John the Baptist's mommy, 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.

You're aware that the Jewish betrothal is more serious than ours. It involved a commitment. It did not yet involve sexual intercourse, but it had to be broken with a divorce, all right? Serious relationship going on here.

Commitment to each other. To a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary, and he, Gabriel, came to her and said, greetings, Mary, oh favored one.

Greetings, oh favored one, excuse me. The Lord is with you. But she was greatly troubled at this saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

What is going on? She does not understand. Angel said, don't be afraid, Mary. The presence, be careful what you ask for.

I don't think you really want to see an angel. Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God.

Here's a godly woman. I think we unfairly overreact to Rome's; I'll just be frank: false teaching. Even many Roman Catholics don't understand.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception does not say that Jesus was conceived free of original sin, which he was. It says that Mary was. Rome propounded that doctrine in order to explain the sinlessness of the Son of God in Mary's womb.

As a matter of fact, there's a problem with our understanding of the sinlessness of the Son of God in Mary's womb. This passage says he's sinless, so he is, but there are some false understandings out there, which we will examine forthwith. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus, which means the Lord saves or Savior.

He will be great. Mother wouldn't want to hear that one. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

The background for this language of sonship is royal. There are different uses of Son of God in the Old Testament. Israel is the Lord's son, the Lord says in Exodus, and he goes after Pharaoh.

You have abused my son, I'm going to take your son. You're firstborn. Pharaoh's not happy at all.

He abused God's son, Israel. There's a minor strain in the book of Proverbs of human beings being sons of God by grace through faith, but largely, as redemptive history moves along, God is Father, and David and his descendants are the sons of God. Even so, Son of God, with reference to Christ, is a royal title.

The difference is he's the God King. It's a divine title as well as a royal title. He'll be great and will be called the Son of God, the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father, David.

Here's the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant set forth in 2 Samuel 7. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom, there'll be no end. Wow, what overwhelming statements Gabriel makes to Mary. But there's one problem.

She's a virgin. Mary said to the angel, a very practical womanly response. She doesn't doubt.

She's not like Mary of old, who laughed at God when told she would be a mother in her old age. She's not even like Zachariah, John the Baptist, Papa, who didn't believe God when he was told she and Elizabeth would have a child in their old age, and he was struck mute until the baby was born. No, Mary's not doubting, but she doesn't understand.

It's an honest question. How will this be since I am a virgin, literally, since I have not known a man? It's the language of Genesis, Adam knew Eve. It's the language of the intimacy between a husband and wife in sexual relations.

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. To answer her question, God will do it.

This baby will not be the product of your and Joseph's love. My understanding is they had children later, and that was the product of that. This is a very special conception, a miraculous one.

Behold, your relative Elizabeth is in her old age and has also conceived a son, and this is a six-month with her who was called barren, for nothing will be impossible with God, including a virginal conception. I love Mary's response. Behold, I'm a servant of the Lord.

She doesn't understand this, but she believes in God. She's a godly woman and we should respect her at that and her place in redemptive history. Again, we've overreacted to Roman Catholic abuses and I didn't set them forth, did I? Yes, I started.

Immaculate conception says Mary was conceived free of original sin. The Bible knows nothing like that. As a matter of fact, right here in the Magnificat, verse 47, Mary says, my soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

By the way, see how soul and spirit are parallel. They're not different entities. Sometimes, scripture distinguishes them, but not as parts of our constitution.

Anyway, the main point now is that she rejoices in God, her Savior. No, she was not conceived free from original sin, my goodness, but she saved and she's a wonderful servant of God and we should respect her in that way. Should we direct veneration, a lesser worship than the worship of God toward her? No, absolutely not.

Should we pray to her? No, we should not. The Bible never says that. Should we regard her as the co-redemptrix along with the Son of God? No, no, no.

Should we teach that she was bodily assumed into heaven and didn't die? No. All those things that Maryology, I say with respect toward my fellow members of Christendom who are Roman Catholic, are false teachings contrary to God's Word, which may make people even question Catholic teaching as a whole. I understand that Roman, many Roman Catholics believe in the Gospel.

I rejoice in that, but it is not a good business to add to the teachings of scripture, even if they come from godly church fathers. No, all things must be tested by the Word of God, and if it doesn't teach something, we cannot teach it, and it does not teach those aspects of Maryology. We will continue on in our next lecture with this good teaching concerning the biblical teaching concerning the virgin birth of our Lord.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christology. This is session 11, Systematics, Incarnation Texts, Virgin Birth, Luke 2.