

The Holy Spirit and the Birth of Jesus Christ. Luke 1:26 – 38

In 2003, Dan Brown's novel '*The Da Vinci Code*' became a runaway best seller. A few years later it became a blockbuster movie starring Tom Hanks. At the heart of this story is a grand conspiracy theory that claims '*The Greatest Story Ever Told*' is really '*the greatest story ever sold*'. The Da Vinci conspiracy claims that the early Christian Church (in order to establish its divine authority) suppressed all the documents about Jesus that spoke of him as a human and replaced them with the writings that spoke of him only as the divine Son of God.

While it's important to recognise that '*The Da Vinci Code*' is fiction rather than fact, Brown's conspiracy theory¹ reveals a common misunderstanding about the true nature of Jesus Christ. According to the Bible, the fact that Jesus was born of a woman and became part of our human family is every bit as important as the fact that he is also God's eternal Son. Our quest to develop a right understanding of Christ's true nature must begin with one of the most important doctrines of the Christian faith: Christ's Virgin Birth. The opening chapter of Luke's gospel records the moment in salvation history when God's angel Gabriel announced to the virgin Mary that she would soon give birth to a child. When Mary asked with astonishment, '*How will this be?*' Gabriel answered, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*" (Luke 1:35, NIV)

1. Reflect upon this miracle of the Holy Spirit. How important is a literal understanding of The Virgin Birth?

John's gospel begins with this statement about Jesus' divine nature, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*" (John 1:1 – 2, NIV) Later John attests to Jesus' humanity when he writes, "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...*" (John 1:14, NIV)

2. What does it mean that Jesus is fully God and fully human?

3. Read the following passages from John's gospel. How is Christ's miraculous birth connected to our rebirth through the Holy Spirit?

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." (John 1:12-13)

[Jesus said,] "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3:6 – 8)

¹ For a fuller response to The Da Vinci Code see Chadd Hafer's article www.darlingst.org.au/resources/articles/davincicode/index.html