



Dr. Keith Walker

Minister-at-Large Christian & Missionary Alliance, Canadian Mid West District

Keith.Walker@Usask.ca; KeithDWalker.ca

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A. Apostles Creed:

- **Meaning:** Creed = “to place one’s heart,” beliefs, manifesto, confidence & trust
- **Purpose:** Concise Articulation of Core Christian Beliefs; Prevent and Correct Errors; Facilitate Christian Formation
- **Quadrilateral for beliefs:** Scripture, Reason, Tradition and Experience
- **Basis of belief:** Biblical record; Theological sensibility, Historic affirmation, Spirit’s illumination
- **Francis Schaeffer’s “upper and lower faith” stories**
- **Levels of beliefs:** Little, Wavering, Weak, Common, Rooted, Active, Strong

B. Apostles Creed as Theological Short-hand for Biblical Teaching

Mt 1:18-25 *This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be **pregnant through the Holy Spirit** . . . An angel of the Lord appeared to him [Joseph] in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because **what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit**.²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”*

Lk 1:26-38 . . . *God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a **virgin** pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. **The virgin’s name was Mary**.²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who **are highly favoured! The Lord is with you**.”²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. **You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus**. . . ³⁴ “**How will this be,**” Mary asked the angel, “**since I am a virgin?**”³⁵ The angel answered, “**The Holy Spirit will come on 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** . . .*

C. The Virgin Mary and the Virgin Birth

- a. **Mary's status:** Humble virgin (*"I am a virgin" had not had sexual relations*); pledged/engaged to Joseph
- b. **Mary's song of faith:** (Lk 1:46-56) *And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is His name.*
- c. **Angel's message:** [to Joseph] *"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."* [to Mary] *"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. . ."*
- d. **Mary's question** (Lk 1:34) **"How will this be":** Divine initiative and supernatural action in the miracle of incarnation: *"pregnant through the Holy Spirit;" "conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit;" "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."*
- e. **Historic affirmations and theological sensibilities:**

D. Scarlet Thread of Redemption

- a. **Prophecy:** Isaiah 7:14: *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.* Mt 1:22; Gal 4:4 (in fullness of time)
- b. **Awaited for Messiah:** *"I will be Your God; you will be My people."* (Ex 6:7; Jer 30:22; Lev 26:12; 1 Cor 6:16; Rev 21)
- c. **Conditions for Redeemer:** man/God/sinless; possible via virgin birth
- d. **God's direct action:** human mother; no human father; God incarnate 100% God (Deity of Christ) and 100% Man (humanity of Christ); Second Adam (1 Cor 15:45) without sin (2 Cor 5:21) *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* (1 Jn 3:5; 1 Pt 2:22)

E. Implications

- a. **Making room** for the supernatural interventions of God (miracles)
- b. **Taking steps** to receive the Gift of Salvation through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ
- c. **Pursuing a transformational friendship** with God through Jesus Christ His Son (John 1:1,14) *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.* (Heb 1:1-3)
- d. **Experiencing the presence of God** (*God with us*) and empathy of Jesus in your life experiences (Heb 4:15) *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin.*

F. Essence of Message: The virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is crucial, complementary and foundational Christian doctrine; this was the miraculous (supernatural intervention) means for the incarnation of Jesus Christ, His person, and His redemptive work. It is an essential part of God's initiative to demonstrate His **amazing grace and compelling love** for us.