

Scripture where the “conceived and bore” process is turned around, in the Psalm above and in Hosea 9:11, “Ephraim’s glory will fly away like a bird—no birth, no pregnancy, no conception.” In both cases it signals bad news. In Hosea God pronounces judgment upon His rebellious and whoring people. Things will be so bad there will be no births. Even worse, there will be no pregnancies because there will be no conceptions.

In Psalm 51, David is bemoaning his sins of adultery and murder. He progresses from admitting he is a sinner, to admitting he is sinful, to admitting he was sinful from birth, and, worse than that, he was sinful from the moment of his conception. Here we learn of the doctrine of original sin inherited from our parents Adam and Eve and deadly to all. But we also learn of our early humanity. Sin is a human condition. If we are sinful at conception, we are human at conception.

Still, the news is bad. Sinful from conception means hopeless and helpless from conception, subject to death the moment life begins. For there to be hope and help, we need a Savior from the moment of conception. Thanks be to God, we have one!

Womb Winner

“But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; you have

found favor with God. You will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give him the throne of his father David” (Luke 1:30-32).

Here we see the process again, “conceive” and “give birth to.” But this particular process reveals a miraculous difference. Mary conceived, not by procreative biology, but by the intervention of divinity. A holy embryo is conceived, a God-embryo taking our place from the moment of conception and passing through all the stages of our development to redeem our sinful beginning and development. Now there is help and hope from the moment of conception! Jesus would develop and be born and live and suffer and die and rise again and ascend into heaven. He wins!

When we leave the underwater world of the womb and are splashed in the waters of Holy Baptism, we live under water again—the waters of God’s grace in Jesus. Baptized into Christ, we share in His victory. In Him, we win! Now we can continue to grow, nourished by His umbilical cord of Word and Sacrament. Now we can value and uphold the sanctity of all life from conception, during pregnancy, at birth, and until death births us into eternity.

Biblical Biology?

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You were you from the moment of conception.

Let’s take a look at how we came to be through “Biblical Biology.”

No, the Bible is not a biology textbook. It is God’s revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ and the story of our salvation by grace and through faith in Him. God, however, does know about biology. He created it, including procreative biology. After the creation of Adam and Eve, God laid aside the “dirt and rib” method and established a biological process for new life. He gave the context for this process, the one-flesh union of man and woman in marriage. But that does not mean He has removed His creative hand from conception and development in the womb. Let’s examine a few passages.

Womb Weaving

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:13-14 NIV).

The Holy Spirit’s knowledge of procreative biology is evident throughout Scripture. The phrase “conceived and bore” is used frequently. Biblical people understood there was a process involved in procreation. The Holy Spirit, of course, understood the intricacies of the process. Perhaps that is best reflected in the verses from Psalm 139.

Rich in Hebrew idioms, these verses are likewise rich in meaning. The

King James Version helps bring out the idiom in the first phrase. **“For Thou hast possessed my reins.”** However, that doesn’t help us understand the original language. “Reins” is the Hebrew word for kidney. This was the last or “deepest” organ removed in the sacrificial process. Thus it became idiomatic for a person’s inner self or heart or “inmost being.” So first God creates us, our inmost being.

This is consistent with biology. Conception takes place in the fallopian tube when sperm and egg are joined. When that process was completed in your mother’s fallopian tube, you were you—male or female, tall or short, brown eyes or blue eyes, etc. You developed rapidly as you traveled to the uterus. There you attached yourself to the uterine wall, and the outside layer of your cells produced your placenta and umbilical cord. Meanwhile, other cells began to shift and change, forming your body.

That’s the flow we see in the Psalm. **“[Y]ou knit me together”** is literally translated to read: “you wove a covering for me.” So God creates us in the fallopian tube and then in the uterus knits or weaves a covering for us, our bodies! Therefore the Psalmist’s conclusion must be ours: **“I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”** And so is every human being, each of us a unique and valuable work of God’s hands.

Womb Leaping

“As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy” (Luke 1:44).

This leaping babe is John the Baptist. He is eleven to fourteen inches long and weighs just under two pounds. This is a busy time

of tactile stimulation for him, and exploring the inside of the uterus is grand entertainment. He touches his face, feet, umbilical cord, uterine wall, and anything else he can get his tiny little hands on! The inner ear bones have hardened, so listening to sounds becomes another fascination. He can recognize and remember his mother’s voice and dad’s too if dad talks to him. Of course John would have to wait to hear his dad’s voice as Zechariah was unable to speak until John’s birth (Luke 1:29).

But this day he hears a special greeting from Aunt Mary who had come to visit. And guided by the Holy Spirit, John understands much more. The Spirit had just conceived Jesus in her womb a few days ago (more on this below). He is present in Mary as a small dot the size of a pinpoint and probably busy snuggling into her uterine wall. John does not react like a “product of conception” or “viable fetal tissue.” He reacts like a little person with animated emotion, leaping for joy in the presence of his Savior whose way He would prepare. Ah, yes, Horton was right. “A person’s a person no matter how small.”

Womb Woes

“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5).

There are a couple of times in the

