

Luke 1:35, 37-38
Theoretically Impossible!
WRCoB 12.16.18

In my previous pastorate
I once taught a group of 4th—6th graders
During our Wednesday evening activities.

I had four kids in class.

I assumed no one would challenge me
On the basic doctrines of the Bible.

Boy, was I wrong!

Somewhere early in the lesson
This extremely intelligent 6th grader
Whose parents are both engineers at John Deere
Made the remark

That in his opinion the Bible was simply “unbelievable.”

Well, so much for that Sunday school lesson!

I asked him to elaborate.

He said there were events
The Bible claims to have happened
That were, “theoretically impossible.”

It led to an interesting conversation.

You know the kid is right!

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For instance, is it theoretically possible
For God to create the universe in six days?

Is it theoretically possible to create light
Before God created the sun?

Is it theoretically possible
For God to speak creation into being?
For God to part the Red Sea?
For an ax head to float?
For time to move backward?
For Balaam's ass to speak?

Is it theoretically possible,
For a virgin to conceive and give birth?
For God to enter the human condition as a baby?

For Jesus to be dead for three days and come back to life?

My friend said in the SS class
“After three days, his brain would have been mush!”

The answer to all these questions is . . . No!
They are theoretically impossible!

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And yet . . . according to the latest calculations
Based on the latest findings in physics

It is statistically and theoretically impossible
For life to form on this planet!

Depending on who you listen to
The odds of even a simple protein
Forming by chance is “theoretically impossible.”

According to one source it would be 1 in 10^{113} .

When it comes to the virgin birth
It too is theoretically impossible.

But here comes something called parthenogenesis.

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If you have your smart phones, take them out
And google parthenogenesis.

According to Google parthenogenesis is *reproduction from an ovum without fertilization, especially as a normal process in some invertebrates and lower plants.*

If you scroll down and see the box with the question
Can parthenogenesis occur in humans
Click on it:

Parthenogenesis in humans may seem far-fetched, but 50 years ago, no one suspected that parthenogenesis could occur in any vertebrate: now all-female species have been documented in fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds (all major orders of vertebrates except mammals). (Dr. Eric Pianka, U of Texas).

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Where once everyone knew the earth was flat
And the center of the universe.

Where once everyone knew
Earth's orbit was perfectly circular

We now know differently.

The earth is round.
The sun is the center of our solar system.
And the earth's orbit is elliptical!

Science continues to uncover the theoretically impossible
Making what was impossible, very possible!

Nevertheless, the vast and glorious things of God
Will remain beyond our scope of understanding.

Our Scripture Lesson is the Annunciation

When the angel Gabriel makes his announcement to Mary.

He says to her,

Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you.

As with all angel encounters recorded in the Bible

Mary is terrified.

Do not be afraid, Mary

For you have found favor with God.

You will conceive in your womb and bear a son

And you shall call his name Jesus.

Mary interrupts the angel

“But Gabriel, that’s theoretically impossible!”

And Gabriel’s response . . . ?

Nothing is impossible with God!

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A few years back I was visiting my parents

And went to SS with them.

The teacher, a retired professor of a religious college

Made a statement I continue to mull over.

He said that God ALWAYS works within the laws of nature.

He said that several times.

No one said anything

Finally, one retired minister said,

“But what about miracles?”

“How do we explain miracles?”

I don't remember the teacher's exact words,
But he said something to the effect,

*“Anything that seems theoretically impossible,
Either is theoretically impossible,
Or will eventually be explained by the sciences.*

Perhaps he's right.

Perhaps the 6th grader is right.

What do I know?

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Do I think the virgin birth is theoretically impossible?
Of course I do!

But isn't that exactly the point?

Can faith handle the unexplainable or the impossible?

George Muller, an early British evangelist, said this:

*Faith does not operate in the realm of the possible. There is
no glory for God in that which is humanly possible. Faith
begins where [humanity's] power ends.*

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The closing comments I made

To the 4th – 6th grade SS class is this:

If God could create the heavens and the earth . . .

From the complexities of a simple protein
To the intricacies of the human brain

From the vastness of the universe
To the tiniest of particles we know

Then it seems to me not too big of a problem
For God to conceive a child
In the womb of a virgin.

But hey, that's me, call me simple, call me sentimental.

I'll rest my faith on Gabriel's statement
That nothing is impossible with God.

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This is my rational for believing the unbelievable.

I believe because there is something
That resonates deep down within my very soul
That speaks truth to the story.

Does that make sense?

My mind will argue against it all day long!

But my spirit embraces this story of mystery and miracle!

It is within the soul we find the truth of the Incarnation.

The mystery of it all draws us into the story.

We never tire of hearing the Christmas story!

Mary giving birth to a son in such a humble place.

Where angels, and shepherds
Come to pay homage to the Savior of the world!

Where wise men from afar
Following a star to Bethlehem
And kneel before baby Jesus.

It is all so very moving!

I've seen tears come to the eyes of grown-ups
And witnessed the hushed, awed, silence of children

As they lean in on a live Nativity Scene
Taking in the peaceful and joyous occasion.

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We believe because it hits us here (heart),
Rather than here (head).

And so . . . to my 6th grade friend I say
And to the retired professor I say

You're right!

You are absolutely right!

All of it is theoretically impossible!
All so unbelievable!

Our faith rests on the impossible!

Amen.