

**“Belief in the Virgin Birth of Jesus Is Not Optional”**  
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Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

There is a scene in the recent hit movie, “Talladega Nights: The Legend of Ricky Bobby,” which is very illustrative of the have-Christianity-your way mentality that rules in our day and age. Ricky Bobby (played by Will Ferrell) is saying grace with his family and directing his prayer to the “8 pound, 6 ounce, newborn Baby Jesus.” Don’t ask me how he knows that Jesus weighed 8 pounds, six ounces at His birth. I have been studying theology for many years and have never stumbled across that little nugget of information. But, that’s not the point. As he continues his prayer, making several references to the Baby Jesus, his wife becomes irritated and interrupts him, saying, “You know, Jesus did grow up!” Ricky Bobby replies, “I like the Baby Jesus the best. When you say grace, you can say it to grown up Jesus or bearded Jesus or whatever Jesus you like.” Then the other characters sitting around the table get in on the act, stating which version of Jesus they like best – “ninja Jesus, rock-and-roll Jesus, etc.” After this deep theological conversation runs its course, Ricky Bobby resumes and concludes his prayer to the version of Jesus which is his personal favorite – Baby Jesus.

While this scene occurs in a comedy and is meant to be funny, it is actually a pretty accurate parody of how Christian theology is done today. The Bible is no longer confessed to be the inspired and inerrant Word of God by many who claim to be Christian today. It may have some truth in it which comes from God, but it is also filled with legend and myths made up by men, and it is up to us to decide which parts are fact and which are fictional. In other words, like the characters in “Talladega Nights,” we get to pick and choose which parts of the Bible we like best, which, of course, means that we get to construct Jesus in our own personal image.

This is great, isn’t it? We get to pick and choose! We get to decide for ourselves which version of Jesus we like best. And, the really cool thing about this new way of doing Christian theology is that everybody gets to be right. You get to pick your favorite version of Jesus and I get to pick mine and it doesn’t matter if my version is completely contradictory to yours, we both get to be right, because in this new way of doing Christian theology there are no absolute truths. Truth is relative. Truth is subjective, not objective. Truth is in the eye of the beholder. Whatever you believe about Jesus is just as true as what I believe.

This is how Christian leaders, like Rev. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, can make the claim that believing in such things as the virgin birth of Jesus is not necessary for one to be Christian. He made this statement last week during an interview, claiming that, while he personally believes in the virgin birth, he does not feel that it is a “hurdle” all those who wish to be Christian must leap over. And, according to the “theology of Ricky Bobby,” he is absolutely right.

But, according to true Christian theology, which is rooted in the belief that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God, he and Ricky Bobby, and all who believe like them, are absolutely wrong. I know it is unpopular and politically incorrect to tell people they are wrong today, but true Christianity never claimed to be popular or politically correct. True Christianity does not allow its adherents to pick and choose what they want to believe. There is no room within true Christianity for personal opinions and desires. You either believe what God says in His Word or you don’t. Period. There are no ifs, ands, or buts.

Thus, belief in the virgin birth of Christ is not optional. You certainly do not have to believe in the virgin birth. You just don't get to be a Christian if you don't. The same is true of all the chief articles of the Christian faith as confessed in the three ecumenical Creeds of Christendom (Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, and Athanasian Creed). If you do not confess what is contained in those Creeds to be true, you are not a Christian. Well, at least not a true Christian.

What is truly amazing is that such absolute and exclusive statements in our day and age is considered by most to be radical, while holding the belief that two contradictory views about something can be equally true is embraced as normal. Think about that for a minute. Let it sink in.

Now imagine that you and another person are both staring at a blue wall. There's no debating that the wall is blue. Blue paint was used. It's blue! You're thinking to yourself, "That's a really nice shade of blue there," when the other person chimes in and says, "I like that red wall." You say, "Excuse me, are you talking about that wall there, the blue wall?" "Blue?" the person replies, "that wall is red."

You tell me, which of the persons in that example is speaking crazy talk? Everyone in the world would agree it is the person who is staring at a blue wall and claiming that it is red. But, in the world of Christian theology today, it is the person who maintains that the blue wall is blue, for such a person is obviously intolerant and unloving, not allowing for the other person's belief to coexist as equal truth. So be it. I know that a blue wall is blue, not red. And, I know that Jesus Christ is "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God . . . and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man." How do I know? It's not because I like the virgin-born version of Jesus the best, it's because that's the only version of Jesus which exists. At least that's what my Bible says. Does yours say something different? I highly doubt it!

In Christ,

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