

Was Christ Born Of A Virgin?

No. 148

Introduction.

- I. Once Jesus raised the question, “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?” (Matt. 22:42).
 - A. In the religious world today there is great controversy over this question of Jesus.
 - B. There are many who maintain that Christ was the Son of God born of the virgin Mary.
 - C. There are others who deny this claim by arguing that Joseph or some unknown man was the father of Jesus.
 1. Some emphatically deny Jesus was God’s Son and affirm a virgin birth is impossible.
 2. Some of these are willing to acknowledge Christ as a great man, but not as the Son of God.
 3. Others, mostly religious people, insist that the virgin birth of Christ is not a significant matter and one can be saved without believing in it. They say it is a stumbling block to faith since no intelligent person could accept a virgin birth.
 4. C.E. Macartney in his book, **Twelve Great Questions About Christ**, stated:
“Many declare that the credibility and significance of Christianity are in no way affected by the doctrines of the Virgin Birth, and some go as far to say that the doctrine is a stumbling block to faith, and puts a barrier between Jesus and the race, and that the narratives of the Virgin Birth in the Gospels arose in much the same way as the old legends and myths about supernatural births of famous personages of the pagan world.”
- II. In contrast to the thinking of many people, the doctrine of the virgin birth is of utmost importance.
 - A. **Christianity stands or falls with this doctrine.** If Christ were not born of the virgin Mary, He was not the Son of God. If Christ were not the Son of God, He was an imposter since He claimed to be such. If Christ were an imposter, we are lost in our sins without hope. You can see why then I said Christianity stands or falls with the truth about the virgin birth.
 - B. Let’s carefully examine the scriptures to see what they teach on this vital matter.
- I. **Old Testament Prophecy** - The Old Testament contains prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ.
 - A. More than 700 years before Christ the prophet Isaiah spoke of the virgin birth. (Isa. 7:14).
 1. Isaiah foretold the Messiah would be born of a “virgin” and He would be called “Immanuel” (God with us).
 2. The Hebrew word “almah” translated “virgin” here occurs 7 times in the Old Testament. Every time it occurs the text clearly implies a chaste, unmarried girl. It is never used in the Old Testament with any other meaning.

3. **Martin Luther** said, “ If a Jew or Christian can prove to me that in any passage of scripture “almah” means a married woman, I will give him 100 florins (300 shillings) although God alone knows where I may find them.”

II. **New Testament Teaching** - The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in the New Testament.

A. Listen to this reading from the first chapter of Matthew. (Matt. 1:18-25).

MAT 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. **19** And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. **20** But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **21** "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." **22** Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, **23** "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." **24** And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took her as his wife, **25** and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

1. From this passage we learn that Mary and Joseph were betrothed. Betrothal was a much stronger relationship than our modern engagement. It lasted from 10 to 12 months during which time they lived separately. Those betrothed formed a legal contract. This contract was so binding among Jews that neither party could break it except by obtaining a divorce. At the end of the betrothal the actual ceremony took place. It was during the year of betrothal “before they came together” that Joseph learned that Mary was with child. His natural conclusion was that she had been unfaithful and according to the Mosaic law should be stoned to death. Even though he thought she was guilty of adultery, he still loved her very much and did not want her to be embarrassed and stoned. So in order not to make her a public example, he was going to put her away secretly without stating the reason for the divorce. While he thought on these things, an angel appeared to him in a dream and assured him Mary was chaste and had been faithful to her betrothal. He told Joseph Mary’s child was conceived by the Holy Spirit.
2. Matthew also says that the birth of Jesus was the **fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy**.
 - a. It is noteworthy to point out here that the Greek word “parthenos” translated “virgin” in verse 23 always means “a chaste” person.
 - b. Matthew also clearly states that Joseph “knew her not” (kept her a virgin) until after the birth of Jesus. (Matt. 1:25).

B. **Luke also records the birth story of Christ**. Luke gives us Mary’s side of the story whereas Matthew gives us Joseph’s side.

LUK 1:26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, **27** to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was

Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end. " 34 And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.

1. Mary asked the angel Gabriel how she could possibly give birth to a son seeing she had not known a man. Her question shows she was a virgin.
 2. The angel told her the conception of her son would be by the agency of the Holy Spirit and therefore, would be called the Son of God.
- C. The **gospel of Mark** gives additional support for the virgin Christ.
1. He does not explicitly discuss the virgin birth.
 2. This was not the purpose of his gospel. The purpose of his gospel was to emphasize the public ministry of Jesus and His supernatural powers.
 3. Even though he does not discuss it as Matthew and Luke did, he assumes it throughout his gospel. He attests to the virgin birth of Christ by his numerous references to Christ as the Son of God. (Mk. 1:10; 9:7).
- D. The apostle **John** also supports the virgin birth of Christ. (Jn. 1:1, 14).
1. According to John the "Word" (Christ) "became flesh" and dwelt among men.
 2. **How did the "Word" become flesh?** John says Christ was "begotten of the Father." If Jesus was born according to the ordinary course of nature, how could He be "begotten of the Father?" John, then, also affirms the virgin birth of Christ.
- E. The **other writers of the New Testament** confirm the virgin birth of Christ.
1. They do not give the details of the birth story of Christ, but they do refer to Him over and over again as the Son of God.
 2. They did not hold to the view that Jesus had a human father and was no more than a great teacher and personality. (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 1:4).

III. Further Evidence Of The Virgin Birth - There is even more evidence supporting the virgin birth of Christ.

- A. In the **genealogy** of Matthew he states. (Matt. 1:1).
1. After making this statement, Matthew uses the word "beget" 36 times in enumerating the descendants of Abraham. But when Matthew comes to the birth of Christ, he does not use this word. He does not say Joseph "begat" Jesus. (Matt. 1:16).

MAT 1:16 and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

2. Why this change of language if Christ were not born of a virgin?

B. Another evidence of the virgin birth of Christ was the **testimony of Doctor Luke**.

1. Luke was a physician. (Col. 4:14).

2. Luke was convinced Christ was born of a virgin and placed his accreditation on it.

3. **D.M. Blair**, a noted physician and scholar, stated:

“...but Luke was a product of the Greek medical school...and is recognized as having been imbued with a true scientific spirit. Diagnosis, in this school, meant logical deduction from careful observation...”

The fact Luke accepted the virgin birth is another powerful testimony in its favor.

C. Another evidence for the virgin birth was **Mary**.

1. Christ was put to death because He claimed to be the Son of God. If Joseph or some other man were truly the father of Jesus, why didn't Mary stop the crucifixion by naming His father and refuting the claim of her Son.

2. Those who reject the virgin birth say she did not speak up because she wanted to save her reputation. This is inconceivable. A mother would not let her son die to save her reputation.

3. Harry Rimmer, in the **Magnificence of Jesus**, states:

“The only explanation of the silence of Mary is that Jesus died for a fact clearly stated. He was the Son of God. Joseph or no other man had any remote connection with the birth of the man Jesus.”

D. Another evidence supporting the virgin birth of Christ was **His flawless character**.

1. Only the Son of God could live a perfect life as Jesus did. No mere man could live sinlessly.

2. **One time a Christian and a Jew** were discussing the virgin birth of Christ. The Jew asked, “If I should tell you that a child had been born in this city without a father, would you believe it?” “Yes,” replied the Christian, “if he should live as Jesus lived.”

3. Only of Jesus, the Son of God, could it be said. (1 Pet. 2:22).

E. Another evidence supporting the virgin birth of Christ was **His miracles**.

1. During the ministry of Christ, He performed many miracles. The apostle John states that there was one ultimate purpose behind the supernatural acts. (Jn. 20:30, 31).

2. John states that the miracles of Christ were recorded to convince us Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

IV. **Objections To The Virgin Birth** - It would be good to consider some objections commonly offered to the virgin birth of Christ.

- A. May object to the virgin birth by saying Jesus is **called the son of Joseph in the scriptures**.
1. It is true the scriptures sometimes call Jesus the son of Joseph. The reason for this is very simple.
 2. Joseph was the legal father of Jesus. He was not, however, his actual father.
- B. Another objection to the virgin birth is **many of the people who lived at the time of Christ believed He the son of Joseph**. (Lk. 4:22).
1. It is true many of the people of Christ's day did not believe in the virgin birth of Christ. These people were unwilling to examine the evidence and admit the truth of His Sonship.
 2. The fact that some headstrong people were unwilling to accept the Sonship of Christ does not disprove it.
- C. Others object to the virgin birth maintaining the story of Christ's birth recorded in Matthew and Luke was **not a part of the original manuscripts**.
1. They charge these accounts are an interpolation - an addition.
 2. There is not, however, a single unmutated manuscript of the gospels that leave out the account of the virgin birth.
 3. The oldest versions of the New Testament dating back to the days of the 2nd century contain the two accounts. They are in the Latin Versions, in all the Syraic Versions and in all the Egyptian Versions. Even Celsus, a bitter enemy of Christianity during the second century, gave much notice to these two accounts.
- D. Others object to the virgin birth by saying that if Isaiah did not use the **technical term for virgin** in his prophecy.
1. The technical term for "virgin" was "bethua". (Deut. 22:23, 28). Isaiah used the Hebrew word "almah."
 2. "Bethula" is indeed a more technical term for a "virgin", but this does not change the fact that "almah" is always used in the Old Testament to refer to a chaste, unmarried woman whereas "Bethula" was used one time of a bride lamenting her husband. (Joel 1:8).
- E. Others object to the virgin birth on the basis that it calls for a **biological miracle**.
1. It is evident that it calls for a biological miracle, but why stumble at this one miracle.
 2. The miracle of the virgin birth is not any more difficult than any of the other miracles of the Bible. The God who could create the heavens and earth, who could enable the 90 year old Sarah to give birth to a son, who could divide the Red Sea could surely bring about a miraculous birth.

Conclusion.

- I. We have seen, from this lesson, that there is abundant evidence for the virgin birth of Christ. We can be confident, we can be sure that our faith is built on a firm foundation.
- II. Since Jesus is the Son of God., will you give your life to Him? Will you confess your faith in Him and be baptized? Jesus promised to save those who will do these things. (Mk. 16:16). Will you come as we stand and sin the Lord's invitation.?

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