

## The Virgin Birth

The accepted (for centuries) Christian doctrine concerning Jesus' incarnation / birth is that he existed as a divine being prior to birth; he was equal to God, but not identical to God; that he was born of the virgin, Mary. But Matthew doesn't say that. Luke doesn't say that. Mark doesn't say anything at all about Jesus' preexistence or his virgin birth. Mark's gospel begins with Jesus as an adult, and he gives us no indication that there was anything unusual, remarkable, or miraculous about Jesus' birth. Doesn't that seem strange? Mark was the first gospel written, and therefore the events would be most fresh in his mind. Certainly those were important parts of the story, and not something that would slip Mark's mind. Certainly he would have understood their profound theological significance and spoken up about them had he been aware of them. And if the author was inspired by the holy spirit to produce god's infallible word, he certainly would have been aware of them.

Matthew tells us that Jesus was born of a virgin, but he isn't much concerned with the theology of it. Instead, Matthew is primarily focused on documenting that event (and many others) as fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Matthew 1:23:

**The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means “God with us”).**

Matthew is loosely quoting 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.**

But there are two problems with Matthew's claim. First, the Hebrew word *almah* translated here as *virgin* really means simply *young woman*. There was another Hebrew word for virgin. Second, this verse in Isaiah wasn't talking about some future messiah, but a birth that was to take place within a

few years. It was likely referring to the son born to Isaiah and his second wife, as told in Isaiah 8:3:

**Then I made love to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the Lord said to me, “Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz”.**

The name *Immanuel* was probably equivalent to *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz*.

Luke's version doesn't attribute the virgin birth to an OT prophecy, but to the Holy Spirit, which impregnates Mary, who gives birth to a son. But there is no hint in Luke or Matthew that Jesus existed prior to his virgin birth. That comes only from John, who says nothing about a virgin birth, but talks about the incarnation of a preexisting divine being, as set forth in one of the most controversial passages in the Bible. It may be a reference to the Genesis creation, but there are many other competing interpretations. It is not clear exactly what John meant in 1:1-18.

So, the prevailing Christian doctrine is a montage of Matthew, Luke, and John, and it is different than any one of them alone. Why would God leave so much of the story out of each of the gospels which purport to tell us the story of Jesus? Did God intend for there to be confusion, disagreement, and unanswered questions about such a fundamental aspect of Christianity? Isn't the purpose of the Bible to help man understand God? And is this the best the omnipotent, omniscient God could do?

We expect a witness under oath in a jury trial to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Should we expect any less from the omniscient, omnipotent Christian God? That is not what we get with the Bible.

1 Corinthians 14:33:

**For God is not the author of confusion . . .**

Then God is not the author of the Bible.