

Question: "Do you believe the Biblical account of the virgin birth of Christ?"

Answer:

Next to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth is the most contested event in His life. Near the turn of the twentieth century, theologians began to view the virgin birth as a sort of "litmus" test of a person's belief in the supernatural. They reasoned that if a person could believe that event, then they would probably accept the other miracles recorded in the Bible. The virgin birth, then, became a springboard to controversy over God's relationship to the world. Liberal theologians upheld the idea that God only works in the world through natural, ordinary means; while their more conservative counterparts stated that God has intervened, in the natural world, in a supernatural way to accomplish His will.

The debate is no less prevalent today. Modernists continue to challenge the accuracy of the Scripture, and, especially, the miracles recorded therein. By casting a shadow of doubt upon the virgin birth, they are in effect destroying faith in God and His word. As Peter warned, they "twist...the Scriptures...to their own destruction." Sadly, "many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed" (2Pet.3:16; 2:2).

While the terminology "virginal conception" more accurately explains our topic than does "virgin birth," the latter is more commonly used. So, let us define what we mean by the virgin birth. We are addressing is a singular event, a unique occurrence among human beings. The conception of Jesus (the Christ) in the womb of Mary was not the result of a sexual relationship, but of a supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon her. Joseph, to whom Mary was betrothed, "did not know her" until after she gave birth to Jesus (Matt.1:25). He was a "child...conceived in her of the Holy Spirit," said an angel of the Lord to Joseph (Matt.1:18, 20). Matthew adds, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us" (Matt.1:22-23; Isa. 7:14).

The doctrine of the virgin birth is based on two clear biblical references (see Matt.1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35). What follows is from the gospel of Luke:

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

There are several other New Testament passages which relate to this wonderful event (see John 1:1, 14; Rom.1:3; Gal.4:4; 1Tim.3:16; Heb.2:14; 1 John 4:2). In next week's article, we will document sensible reasons for believing in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

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