

Advent: Behold the Son

The Virgin's Son, The Lord Messiah

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King Ahaz

**Received a sign from
God**

**Received God's
deliverance**

Ignored the sign

**Spurned the
deliverance**

**Returned to his old
ways**

**Reaped the
consequences**



*“The Lord himself
will give you a sign”*

**The "you" is plural,
indicating that the sign is not
given only to Ahaz, but to
the entire house of David,
and perhaps to the nation.**



The meaning
of the word
in Isaiah
7:14

**Hebrew *'almah*: a young
unmarried woman who is past
puberty**

**The word conveys youthfulness
but is ambiguous about virginity.**

**Virginity for unmarried girls was
assumed in the culture.**

**The
opponents'
viewpoint**

Isaiah (8th c. BC) only saying that a young woman of marriageable age would soon marry, conceive, and bear a son.

He was not predicting a miraculous birth.

Therefore, this verse does not support the Christian belief in the virgin birth of Christ.

*Is that how we
should read
Isaiah 7:14?*





Isaiah 7:14: '*almah*

Never used in OT of a married woman

Appropriate word to indicate a virgin

**Translated in Greek OT in this verse
by *parthenos*, which specifically
refers to a virgin**

**Greek-speaking Jews of the first
century would be familiar with this
version of Isaiah**



Isaiah's
prophecy
became part
of sacred
Scripture
through
which God
continues to
speak to us.

Matthew's account

Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14 from the Greek translation of Isaiah.

He appeals to the text from Isaiah to show that the Scriptures predicted the birth of Jesus.

Why would he think that his appeal would make sense?

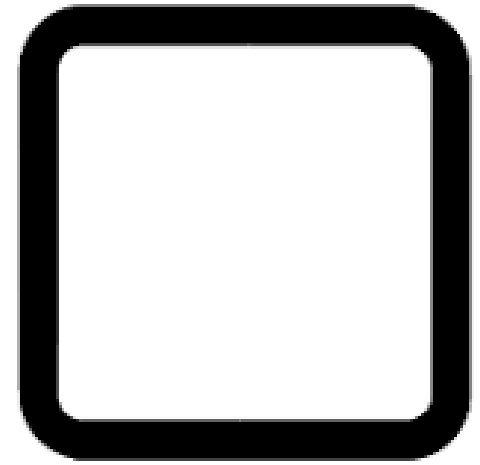


The common assumptions

Expectations of the Messiah assumed one of two possibilities:

- **He would be a heavenly being who would come down to rescue Israel from her enemies.**
- **He would be a godly Jewish man whom God would raise up to deliver Israel from her oppressors.**

In either case, Isaiah 7:14 appeared irrelevant.



Matthew's account

Isaiah's prophecy in context has clues that point to a future fulfillment.

But without additional information about Messiah's birth, it's still obscure.

Matthew has the information that makes its significance clear.



Luke's confirming witness

Luke provides an independent confirming witness that Mary was a virgin when she conceived Jesus in her womb.



Points of Agreement: Matthew and Luke

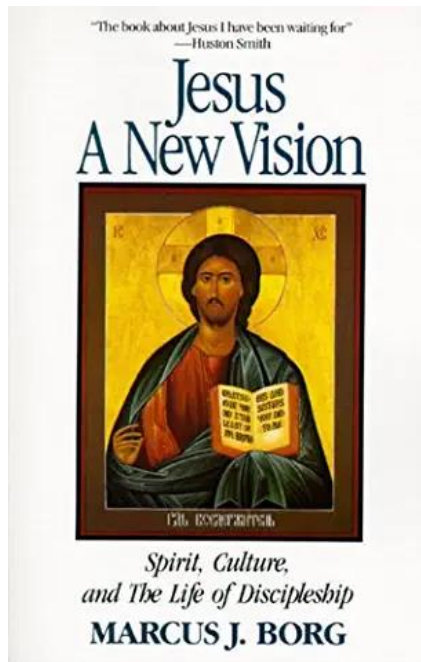
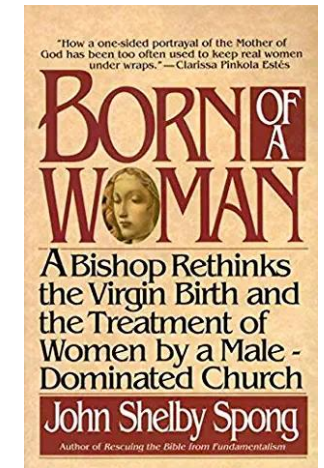
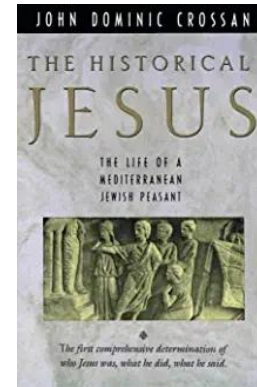
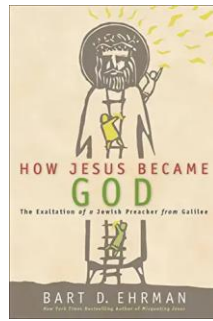
- **Mary was betrothed, not yet married to Joseph when she conceived.**
- **Mary was a virgin and remained so until Jesus was born.**
- **Her pregnancy was not due to sexual relations but to divine action.**
- **Angelic direction given to name the baby "Jesus."**
- **Both point out that her son's ultimate place involves saving his people (Matthew: save from sins; Luke: rule over David's kingdom).**
- **Both authors consider Jesus' birth an essential part of the gospel and the fulfillment of previous prophecies.**

Opposition to the Virgin Birth

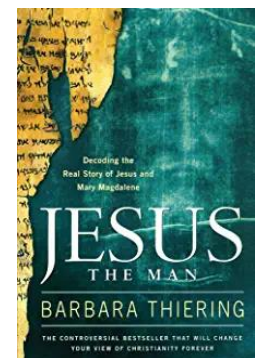
Unbelieving Jewish communities began spreading rumors that Mary had been impregnated by a Roman soldier (late first century).

Pagan philosophers (e.g., Celsus) scoffed at the idea of a virgin birth (second century onward).

Heretical off-shoots from Christian groups (Ebionites, Adoptionism) denied Jesus' deity and/or the virgin birth (second through fourth centuries).



Contemporary deniers





Why it matters

Denial of the virgin birth is a denial of the most basic of Christian beliefs—the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus.

Without this foundational truth we do not have a genuinely Christian faith.

Virgin Birth:
A necessary
plank in the
foundation of
our faith

- **It preserves the deity of Christ and thus the mystery of the Trinity, while also preserving the miracle and mystery of the Incarnation.**
- **It preserves the gospel: Jesus, truly and fully man, and therefore able to represent us before the Father; truly and fully God, and therefore able to offer a sinless sacrifice on our behalf.**



A Sentimental Journey—
to Christmas?



"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

A blackboard with white text and a decorative Christmas tree. The blackboard is mounted on a wall and has the text "O COME LET US ADORE HIM" written on it in white, spaced-out letters. To the right of the blackboard is a decorative Christmas tree made of woven straw or twigs, and there are green plants in the background.

O
COME
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