



Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14b

I suppose it is no surprise to many of you that there are those who claim that Jesus was not virgin born, that he actually had a human father. I will not bore you with the various theories concerning whom this father might have been. What we shall look at is why these theories are wrong.

If you look at the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (and some other translations as well) you will find Isaiah 7:14 translated as follows: *"Behold a young woman shall conceive . . ."* So, you see, according to this translation, she was a "young woman," not a "virgin." Is this wrong? Not necessarily.

The Hebrew word used here is עלמה (almah) which means, literally, "a sexually ripe woman, a maid or a newly married woman." Thus the RSV is correct, in part. Nearly all Old Testament prophecy had a "near fulfillment" and a "complete" or "far" fulfillment. The "complete" or "far" fulfillment was fulfilled at Christ's first coming or will be fulfilled at the end of the age. The "near" fulfillment was fulfilled, normally, during the prophet's own lifetime. In this case, the near fulfillment was when Mrs. Isaiah gave birth to Mahershalalhashbaz. *Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me, "Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz;*

Isaiah 8:3

But, the complete fulfillment was with the birth of Christ and, therefore, the word should be translated in this light. Matthew cites Isaiah when he writes, *"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."*

Matthew 1:23

Here the word is παρθένος (parthenos). The word has basically the same meaning as the Hebrew word did. So then, is it "virgin" or not?

Know this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

II Peter 1:20

It is wrong to attempt to interpret any single passage of Scripture without putting it into context with the rest of the Bible. If we turn to Luke, who was very particular about accuracy (Luke 1:1-4) we find:

Luke 1:26-35 *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.*

Luke 1:26-27

Luke continues with " *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.*

Luke 1:34-35

Luke uses the same Greek word for "virgin" as Matthew and then defines it with the above words. If this is not sufficient proof, you need only go to the first part of Matthew 1. *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:*

Matthew 1:1

Matthew begins with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and progresses through to verse 16 where we find, . . . *And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.*

Matthew 1:16

Note, in particular, what Matthew does not say. He does not say that Joseph begot Jesus. The only way that Joseph fits in, according to Matthew, is that he was the husband of Mary who begot Jesus. In other words, he says that Joseph was Jesus' step-father and, through this relationship, He was heir to the throne of David.

One of the real mysteries of Christmas is how Jesus Christ became both God and man in the same person.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

Wayne

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