

What Do You Think About the Virgin Birth?

There it was again. The online headline read: ***Nun receives death threats for suggesting Mary was not a virgin.*** The article told about the uproar caused when a Roman Catholic nun suggested that “Mary was in love with Joseph and that they were a normal couple—and having sex is a normal thing.” In a later interview she apologized for upsetting folks and added that she only wanted to say, “it wouldn’t shock me if she had a normal couple’s relationship with Joseph, her husband.”

One author suggested that the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus was a tiresome issue. He asked his readers *whether it would it really matter to them if Mary was not a virgin.*

The threats generated by the nun’s comment and the ambivalence shown by the author seem to represent extremes. So, is it just a tiresome doctrinal question that tends to cause arguments, or is it important to the Christian?

Before you answer, read this:

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. —Matthew 1:18

What can you concluded from the phrase ‘before they came together’? What does the context tell you?

Then, Matthew quoted from Isaiah:

“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.” (v. 23)

Clearly, Matthew intended for his readers to accept that Mary was a virgin. So, why all the fuss?

Some folks question whether Isaiah really meant *virgin*. Here are some reasons why:

- ◆ In Isaiah 7:14 the Hebrew term refers to a *young girl* and does not imply *virginity*.
- ◆ The Jewish rabbis did not view the prophecy from Isaiah to be a reference to the birth of their future Messiah.

Let’s think this through...

Isaiah’s prophecy was directed to an audience several centuries before Christ with an expected fulfillment *related to their current situation*. However, the prophecy had a second fulfillment, something the Jews did not expected, in Mary. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit Matthew clearly indicated a second fulfillment through a *virgin*. So, the argument based on the ‘technical meaning of the Hebrew word’ proves nothing.

As for the expectation of the Jewish rabbis; remember that the Jews expected the Messiah to rule an earthly kingdom. Yet Jesus said that His kingdom was *not of this world* (John 18:36). So, Jewish interpretation of Old Testament prophecy was not always reliable.

I have observed that those who question whether Mary was a virgin *generally* discount a virgin birth miracle, discount the inspiration of the Scriptures, and are sloppy with their comparison of the Hebrew text of Isaiah and the text of Matthew. Read Matthew 1:18-25. What do you think it says about Mary?

Perhaps the real question is about one’s attitude toward the Bible. After all, the Bible really settles the question about the virgin birth, that is, unless you don’t believe the Bible or don’t accept miracles. So, is the question of the virgin birth important? It is only as important as the validity of the Bible as God’s holy word!!