

BORN OF A VIRGIN.

Christianity, for the most part, believe that Jesus was born in a mysterious, miraculous way in some type of union between human and the divine. They teach that this miracle is beyond our comprehension. It is believed that a virgin, who never “Knew” a man, would conceive a son, not by human generation, but by the power and virtue of the Holy Ghost.

But is this true? Was Jesus born of a virgin? Was Christ’s father God, the Holy Ghost, or Joseph? According to scripture, his human genealogy was already established in prophecy. The Bible states that Jesus was made of the seed of Abraham. The following promise was given to Abraham: “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.” Paul clarifies who that seed was: “To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He saith not, And to his seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed who is Christ.” (Gen 49:9, Gen 22:18, Gal 3:16, Heb 2:16). This promise was reconfirmed to Jacob. (Gen 28:14) The family line was to continue through the tribe of Judah, Gen 49:9, Heb 7:14), and the house and lineage of David (2nd Samuel 7:8, 12-17, Ps 89:4-6, 19-38, Rom 1:3, 2nd Timothy 2:8, Isa 9:6+7, Luke 1:31-33).

The two apostles Matthew and Luke, have given the genealogy from Abraham to Joseph, the husband of Mary, for the special purpose of showing that in the male line Jesus Christ was a literal descendant of Abraham, Judah, and David. If the husband of Mary was not the literal father of Christ, for what purpose was the genealogy written? Jewish genealogies are always reckoned through the male line. It is interesting to note the Mary’s cousin Elizabeth, was of the tribe of Levi, which would seem to indicate that Mary was a Levite, and not of the tribe of Judah.

The misunderstanding of a virgin birth is compounded by a case of fraud and deception caused by an interpolation of a prophecy given in Isaiah, that was placed into Matthew. In the first chapter of Matthew, the angel tells Joseph to call the child’s name Jesus, and then two verses later he’s told to call him Emmanuel. The 23rd verse of first Matthew is identical to Isaiah 7:14, which has nothing to do with Jesus. Please note the verse which was taken from Isaiah and transcribed into Matthew:

“ Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” Matt. 1:23, Isa. 7:14.

If this prophecy was meant for Christ, why didn’t Joseph and Mary call the child Emmanuel? Scripture proves that it is a fact that when he was circumcised at eight days old, his parents named him Jesus- as they were directed to do by the angel of God (Luke 2:21). It is also a fact that during his entire life he was only known as Jesus.

And what about a virgin? Is it possible that Mary truly was a virgin? What does virgin mean?

Dictionary meaning: “A maiden; a woman, especially a young woman, who has never had sexual intercourse; AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A VIRGIN - chaste, modest, pure, clean.”

“Chaste: not indulging in unlawful sexual activity, pure...”

“Pure: bible use meaning undefiled.”

Therefore, according to our common dictionary usage, virgin has two meanings. 1. A

maiden who has abstained from sex. AND 2. A pure, modest young woman who does not indulge in unlawful sexual activity - in other words, within the bounds of marriage.

It is important to know that the Hebrew language uses two words as meaning virgin - Alma and Bethulah.

Bethulah: a virgin; an unmarried young woman, who has preserved the purity of her body.

Alma: chaste, a young woman whether she has kept her virginity or not.

The word Alma was the word used in Isaiah 7:14, and Joel 1:8. The word Bethulah does not appear in either text from which the translators made the King James Bible, nor does it appear in the Ebonite Old Testament which was found in the Essene Library from the Dead Sea Scrolls. (The Dead Sea Scrolls A Personal Account, John C. Grever, P. 168) Catholics and Protestants has misconstrued the word to be a literal virgin when in fact it simply meant a chaste, pure young woman of marriageable age.

Another example of the Hebrew word Alma, can be found in Joel 1:8: "Lament like a virgin girded in sackcloth for the husband of her youth."

So truly, Mary was a young married woman who was pure, chaste and who did not indulge in unlawful sexual activity. We as Latter-Day Saints, believe that Jesus was totally human, with human parents- Joseph and Mary. Let's explore the Bible and see if we can find any references concerning Jesus parenthood.

And they said, is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose Father and Mother we Know?" John 7:42.

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and Juda, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?..." Mark 6:3.

When teaching at the synagogue in Nazareth, the people wondered at Jesus words: "...And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" Luke 4:22.

If he were conceived by some miraculous manner, and Joseph was not his father - don't you think his countrymen would have known it? - after all, they were looking for the promised Messiah to come. The Bible also tells us that Jesus was made in **ALL THINGS** like his brethren. "For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in **ALL THINGS** it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Heb 2:16-17.

And to help clarify how he was made like his brethren, Paul states: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, which was made of the *seed of David according to the flesh.*" Romans. 1:3. Sounds to me like he was 100% human!.

It is a fact that Christ constantly spoke of himself personally as "the son of man". As the redeemer, he is expressly declared to be a "man". "For since by man cam death, by man came also

the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” 1st Cor. 15:21-22.

Jesus is again declared to be a man in the following verse: “Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, A MAN approved of God among you...” Acts. 2:22.

Paul constantly refers to Jesus as a man, please note: “There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the MAN CHRIST JESUS.” 1 st Timothy 2:3.

Paul also let us know that Jesus had human feelings, and was tempted - just like we are: “For we have not as High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Heb. 4:15.

“In that greatest treatise on Priesthood, the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is said that because he (Jesus) loved righteousness, (and of course not until he had done so) God exalted him in power above all others, Heb: 1:9; became a son of God by being made an High Priest by the oath of God, Heb. 5:5+6+21, and it was by the word of the oath, and not by the act of carnal generation, that he became God’s son, Heb. 7:28.” (Catholic Discussion #6, P. 20)

As for Jesus claiming God as his father, Luke. 2:49, it is no more than we all do, as often as we say, “Our Father, who art in heaven.”

Truly, Jesus is not the mythological being conceived by God on a woman he created. But James J. Strang did teach that the Holy Spirit had a role in the conception of Jesus, just as it did when children were born to Sarah, Rebekah, Hannah, and Elizebeth. All of these births were the result of human intercourse, and conception was made possible by God through the Holy Spirit. These births were not mystical, or Pagan, or unable to be comprehended. These children were promised to the women above quoted, and it was not any different with Mary.

If God, or the Holy Ghost would have been the literal father of Jesus, then God would have been breaking one of his own laws by committing fornication - and the child would have been illegitimate.

And if Christ was really truly a man, what hinders our believing he was begotten of Joseph, the husband of Mary, in the true lineage of David?.

It is curious to note that the Apostle Paul states that he had preached all of the Gospel unto the people at that time period:

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I go preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you *ALL the council of God.*” Acts 20:25-27.

This also disproves the Virgin Birth, for there is not one line of scripture to support this idea in any of the writings of Paul. The teachings of the Prophet James J. Strang concerning Jesus are indeed revolutionary if they are compared with the evolutionary teachings concerning Jesus which are believe by Christendom. It is a fact that laws, precepts, and traditions were changed from the days of Christ and the Apostles. The Christology that developed was modeled after Pagan religions and philosophies of the time. Bezan, writing in his book, Esoteric Christianity, makes this point:

“When the Gospel of Jesus first emerged, it was devoid of a mother-goddess. However,

since the ancient world was permeated with cults of Demeter, Cybele, and Isis, it was impossible for Christianity to conquer without filling the void created by their departure. And in this, as in everything else, the Catholic Church demonstrated the accuracy of its name: it was indeed all-inclusive." P. 180.

Joseph Smith brought forth many truths during his ministry, but according to Church History (Vol. IV, p. 478), Joseph was not allowed to change the virgin birth dogma because at that

time the church was not ready to accept new teachings. They were given new truths as they were able to receive them. They were given "Milk" Before "Meat" (see 1st Cor 3:1+2) Although he did give us a clue that the Virgin Birth was not correct by changing Matthew in the Inspired Version

of the Bible to read "As it is written the birth of Jesus was on this wise", instead of, "the birth of Jesus was on this wise."

In conclusion, the virgin birth is a subject which we, as Latter-Day Saints, might not understand had it not been for James J. Strang, prophet of the Most High God, who re-explained and brought forth the true nature of the birth and character of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Out of his inspired teachings, emerges a human Savior with whom we can identify and love.

TIMOTHY R. HANSEN.