

Isn't a Virgin Birth Inconceivable?

Of all the miracles the Bible attributes to God, it seems the virgin birth of Messiah arouses the most controversy, among Jews and non-Jews alike.

However, the same Bible that reveals who God is declares the virgin birth to be a historical fact. Some question whether it can be considered a scientific fact since it cannot be observed nor repeated.

But what miracle can be? The virgin birth of Messiah is simply another unique and miraculous work of God!

An Issue of Miracles

Miracles may be irrelevant for those who dismiss the possibility of God. But if God is even a possibility, then so are miracles. "Still," you might think, "the virgin birth is hard to believe." Actually, though, it depends on how big your God is! For the One who is the Creator of all, no miracle is too difficult, and thus, no miracle should be dismissed out of hand.

Moreover, for the Jewish people, miracles are the only rationale for our own existence. After all, if left to the preferences of the Egyptians and Pharaoh, the Persians and Haman, or the Nazis and Hitler, we Jews wouldn't be here at all! Yet while other ancient peoples have come and gone (do you know any Hittites?), the Jewish people remain. God promised to keep us as a people, and miraculously He has done it.

Miraculous births are a big part of our story. God decided to bless the world through a people by whom the Messiah would come (Gen. 12:3). God chose to use Abraham and Sarah, and as

the Scriptures teach us, Abraham was old, and Sarah was barren (Gen. 11:30). God purposely chose to begin a nation through this one elderly couple who couldn't even have children!

Far from being a problem, this was the point. If the promise of God would effectively bless the world, then it would take the power of God to make it happen. Miracle of miracles, Isaac was born. Isaac then married Rebecca. She too was barren, but again God intervenes (Gen. 25:21). And again with Jacob and Rachel, who was also barren (Gen. 29:31) For her, again, God miraculously provided a miracle birth (Gen. 30:22-24).

To recap, biblical history shows that the existence of the Jewish people is based upon miracle births from God. So rather than seem abnormal, it should be expected that the Jewish Messiah should have a miracle birth. After all, shouldn't we expect the most unusual Person in the universe to have a most unusual entrance into the world? His unique nature would actually require it!

The Prophecy of a Virgin Birth

Through the prophets, God told us to expect a virgin birth for the Messiah. Even at the very first Messianic prophecy, we see this same hope: "And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring ; he shall bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

God promised to remove that serpent of old, Satan, the father of lies and anti-Semitism, through the Redeemer, who would come from 'the offspring' of the woman. This is God's first attention-grabbing clue: a woman would be the instrument of Messiah's coming.

In the prophet Isaiah we read Messiah's prophetic birth announcement, first given to King Ahaz when he refused to answer God and ask Him for a sign:

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

Some say that the word ‘virgin’ is not an accurate translation of the Hebrew word here, almah. Yet in the Hebrew Scriptures, the word almah is used seven times (Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Prov. 30:18; Ps. 68:25; Song of Sol. 1:3; 6:8), each time speaking of young women who have not had sexual relations.

In the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek for the first time. According to tradition, this was done by seventy rabbis (which accounts for the name of the translation: Septuagint, meaning “70.”) These rabbis translated almah as parthenos, or “virgin.” This was centuries before Messiah and thus objective, rightly used by the New Covenant (Matthew 1:23). There is no solid ground for thinking ‘virgin’ to be an inaccurate reading of the Isaiah text.

What's in a Name?

But, why does the prophecy in Isaiah 7 say the Messiah's name will be “Immanuel” rather than “Yeshua”? The Hebrew Scriptures tell us many times about the Messiah, each revealing Him by a different “name.” In Isaiah 9:5(6), His name is called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince Of Peace.” In Jeremiah 23:6, He is called “the Lord our Righteousness.” In Isaiah 7:14 it is “Immanu El.” As opposed to a “given name,” each of these names describe some quality of God's nature or character.

Immanu El (two words) simply means “God is with us.” God will neither leave us nor forsake us in our sins, for Messiah, the hope of the House of David, will come.

We have, by faith in Messiah, the eternal relationship with God which our lives desperately need. For in Messiah Yeshua, “God is with us!”

Isaiah told wicked King Ahaz that “if you will not believe, surely you shall not be established” (Isaiah 7:9). The same is true for each of us. Let us have faith in the God of Israel’s greatest miracle, Messiah, that we may be eternally established before Him.

Dr. Sam Nadler is a Jewish believer in Jesus and has been in Messianic Jewish ministry for over 40 years. Sam is the president of Word of Messiah Ministries, which is bringing the Good News to the Jew first but not to the Jew only, and planting Messianic Congregations in Jewish communities worldwide. To encourage and equip the body of Messiah in our shared calling, Sam is invited to speak in churches across the country, and has written multiple books on Jewish evangelism, discipleship, and the Feasts of Israel. For more information and resources, or to invite Sam to speak at your church, visit: .