

PART 4 Typical Jewish Objections to the Gospel

“The virgin birth of Jesus is impossible!”

In our continuing study of Jewish objections we would like to consider the objection of many Jewish people that the virgin birth of Jesus is impossible.

In answering this objection it is best to begin with the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. "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."

The Hebrew word translated "virgin" here is *almah*. Many of today's rabbis say that this word *almah* does not mean "virgin" but "young woman." They quote from Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Izaaki - 1040-1105, who lived in France and is considered founder of modern school of Jewish interpretation). Rashi said *almah* should mean "young woman" in this passage; however, he didn't always translate *almah* as "young woman." This is evidenced in the Song of Solomon 1:3 and 6:8 where he says the same Hebrew word, *almah*, means "virgin." Jewish scholars of his time held that *almah* means virgin. Rashi was going against that traditional view of Isaiah 7:14 essentially trying to counteract Christian polemics when he translated *almah* as "young woman."

The Septuagint (LXX) (Greek translation of the Old Testament completed, as tradition teaches, by 70 Hebrew scholars in 250 BC) translated *almah* into the Greek as "parthenos", which in Greek clearly means "virgin."

Still another tack one might take in dealing with this objection is that miraculous births are common in the Bible. Religious Jewish people accept that God created Adam from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7), and that God created Eve from Adam's rib (Gen. 2:21-22).

The Rabbis also fully accept that the Scriptures speak truthfully concerning the miraculous nature of Isaac's birth (Gen. 18:11). Sarah, according to the Scriptures, could not have children. She is declared to be barren. In fact when she learned from the Lord that she would have a child at her age, she laughed (Gen. 18:15). There are many more examples of God's miraculously providing children to women who could not have them.

Therefore, the problem is not the impossibility of the virgin birth, but the individual's limitation on God who has created the world and sustains it. God can do anything, and clearly He has spoken that the promised child of Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6-7 was born miraculously and is the promised Messiah of Israel

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