

## Virgin Birth?

The virgin birth of Rabbi Joshua ben Joseph is mentioned only two places in the Bible and there are multiple problems with both of these accounts. In this paper we will examine the gospels of Matthew and Luke and the origins of the virgin birth myth.

### ***The Gospel of Luke***

The earliest version of the Gospel of Luke was in the Canon of Marcion (circa 140CE). Later critics would accuse Marcion of redacting Luke. It is more likely, however, that the Gospel of Luke was expanded and enhanced later with the addition of chapters 1, 2, 3 and 24 (which were not included in Marcion's edition).

### **Unknown to Paul**

Luke is purported to have been a disciple of Paul. It is hardly likely, therefore, that Luke would have believed in a virgin birth when his mentor did not. Paul's own belief was that [Jesus was] "declared the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Paul's writings precede the writing of the gospels. It is, therefore, odd that there is no mention of a virgin birth in any of Paul's writings. It is even odder that the virgin birth does not come up as a controversy in the first 15 chapters of the Book of Acts since this would have been a foreign concept to the Jews. It was clearly not a foreign concept to the Gentiles who had numerous demi-gods who had been born of virgins.

### **Spurious genealogy**

The next problem with the later versions of the Gospel of Luke is the inclusion of a totally bogus genealogy. This genealogy says that Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel and that Shealtiel was the son of Neri. How can this be when 1 Chronicles 3:17 tells us that Shealtiel was the son of Jeconiah? The genealogy in Matthew does get this relationship correct. Luke's genealogy says that Joseph's father was Heli, but Matthew's genealogy says that Joseph's father was Jacob. Luke's genealogy comes down through Nathan the son of David, but Matthew's genealogy comes down through Solomon the son of David. Luke's genealogy of Jesus is a clear attempt to tie him back to David and bypass the major problem which occurs in Matthew's genealogy. However, Luke's genealogy would disqualify Jesus from being the Messiah because the messianic line must come down through Solomon.

### ***The Gospel of Matthew***

The Gospel was originally written in Hebrew. This fact is testified to by **Papias** (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 3.39.16), **Irenaeus** (*Adversus Haereses* 3.1.1), **Origen** (Eusebius, *H. E.*, 6.25.4), **Eusebius** (*H.E.*, 3.24.6), **Epiphanius** (*Panarion* 29.9.4), and **Jerome** (*Epist.*, 20.5).

### **The Ebionite Gospel**

The Jewish followers of Rabbi Joshua ben Joseph (Jesus) were known as Nazarenes and Ebionites. According to Epiphanius, the Ebionites possessed the Gospel of Matthew written

in Hebrew but it did not have any birth account or genealogy. (*Panarion* 30.13) According to Epiphanius, the Ebionites removed the first two chapters of Matthew. It is more likely that the first two chapters of Matthew are later additions to the text – especially considering the problems with the genealogy.

### **Another Spurious Genealogy**

There are problems with the genealogy in Matthew on several levels. First there is a conflict in the use of “magic numbers” and the actual number of generations. Matthew lists three groups of fourteen generations. In the second group of fourteen, three generations are missing between Joram and Uzziah (Ozias). The second group is therefore seventeen generations and not fourteen. The third group says fourteen generations but only lists thirteen generations.

The problems do not stop there. This genealogy says that Jesus is the descendent of Jeconiah. If this is the case then he is disqualified from being the Messiah because Jeconiah’s line was cursed (Jeremiah 22:30).

### **Source of the Virgin Birth Myth**

From the time of Ishtar, the virgin mother, every idolatrous religion has had demi-gods who were born of virgins. The temple prostitutes of Babylon were called virgins even though they were clearly not. The virgin birth myth was prevalent in Mithraism, Zoroastrianism, and other religions of the first century. Christianity had to adopt this same myth in order to attract more followers.

### **Suggested Reading:**

[The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture](#) by Bart D. Ehrman, PhD

[The Inerrancy of the New Testament](#) by Dr. Robert Shiermeyer

[Origins of Our Faith](#) by Rick Richardson

Also read:

<http://bnai-el-chai.com/025Newsletter.htm>