

## ARE THE GOSPELS AS CLEAR AS WE THINK THAT JESUS HAD NO HUMAN FATHER?

Christianity assumes that Jesus Christ had no human father - he only had a mother. The language of conceived by the Holy Spirit in the creeds is supposed to be a poetic way of saying God was not his literal father but filled in for the absence of a male agent.

### MATTHEW DID NOT TEACH MIRACLE CONCEPTION

The Gospel of Matthew seems to say that Jesus had no father but the Holy Spirit and was born of a virgin. The Gospel of Mark has Jesus being referred to as the son of Mary by others. Matthew when revising Mark's material describes Jesus as having a mother called Mary rather than being called the Son of Mary and states that he is the carpenter's son. Compare Mark 6:3 with Matthew's parallel at 13:55. Is this not the carpenter the son of Mary says Mark. Matthew turns it into Is this not the son of the carpenter and is his mother not called Mary? Mark's version tells us that as the Jews had to call Jesus the Son of Mary it implies that he had an unnamed father.

Matthew starts off with a genealogy for Jesus Christ. It says that all the generations from Abraham to Jesus make up three sets of fourteen which is too incredible a coincidence to be right. The fact that Matthew puts four women in the genealogy who had been naughty sexually certainly hints that Mary had misbehaved with Joseph. The loose women are mentioned to show that Jesus had loose women as ancestors so his mother might have been a naughty girl too.

It calls Jesus, Jesus Christ. Christ means Messiah which means anointed one or king. Any king of Israel was a Messiah.

One of Jesus' ancestors was the infamous Jeconiah or Jehoiachin to whom the Lord God revealed that none of his descendants would be blessed by him and allowed to take the throne of Israel. Matthew made the mistake of giving information that Jesus was not the Messiah at all but a fraud. It is convenient that this blunder is not mentioned in Haley's Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible. Haley claims that Matthew left some kings out of the genealogy in which this man's name appeared because they were so wicked! An obvious lie!

Against the view that the genealogy was symbolic and not literal one has to ask what is the point of creating a non-literal and symbolic genealogy? The gospel writers believed in miracles so the three sets of fourteen might have been thought by Matthew to have been a miracle. You cannot take the sets as a hint that the genealogy was not to be taken seriously. If it was, then who is to say that anything in the gospel is meant to be taken seriously?

This is Matthew's story about Jesus' origin. Mary had just got betrothed to Joseph and was found to be pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit and Joseph being a fair person did not want to divorce her and shame her but to send her away quietly. And angel made him change his mind when he told him that the baby was by the Holy Spirit and the baby fulfilled a prophecy from Isaiah that a virgin shall conceive and bear a son called Emmanuel. Joseph did not have sex with her until she had a son who he called Jesus.

Joseph thought she had been with another man and got pregnant. But she could have come into contact with Joseph's sperm which would have meant the pregnancy was a marvel worked by the Holy Spirit though not a miracle in the magical sense.

The Holy Spirit has no sperm so he did not fertilise Mary. Making a sperm out of nothing to do the trick cannot amount to conception by the Holy Spirit.

Did he make Mary's egg multiply without a sperm?

So considering the options then the Spirit did not literally become Jesus' father so don't take the notion of Mary conceiving by the Holy Spirit too literally, it stands for something.

The doctrine is clear that the Holy Spirit is not Jesus' father in any sense. So conception by the Holy Spirit is definitely very vague. Conception by the Holy Spirit is a parable for what else could it be for it is obvious the Spirit cannot be Jesus' father and yet he must be.

It stands for an unusual conception but not necessarily a magical/miraculous one.

By "conceived of the Holy Spirit" Matthew might have meant a conception by a man without intercourse which certainly

can happen. The Holy Spirit was believed to have caused the pregnancy in the sense that it was so unusual and seemingly almost impossible. It is a miracle in the sense of a marvel. God had more to do with it than he would have even had penetration occurred. If X's sperm was put into Y's testicles and Y fathered a child with this sperm then it would still be true to say that Y's woman conceived by Y. You could also say that the conception took place by X too.

The angel told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife for she conceived what was in her by the Holy Spirit. This is a metaphor for saying that the Holy Spirit approved and assisted the conception. It does not exclude Mary for example having got pregnant accidentally or by sexual molestation. It does not exclude a human father. It is simply silent on the mechanics of the conception. The Holy Spirit is not a man and doesn't make sperm and Jesus is not the Son of the Holy Spirit. Conceived by the Holy Spirit just means that the child was a gift from God in some unique sense.

If Mary had committed adultery and got pregnant, that would not mean her child couldn't be a gift from God and the Son of God in the sense that he was God's top man. Adultery is not excluded at all. The sin was in the adultery not in having the child for the child was just the consequence of sin and that doesn't make having the child a sin.

Joseph decided not to part with Mary when an angel explained that the pregnancy was approved by God.

Even if the angel excluded adultery, that could be a hint that Joseph's sperm was used by God and the Holy Spirit made her pregnant by him without intercourse. It could be argued that even God has no right to make a married woman pregnant without her man.

The Gospel of Matthew alone seems to tell us that Jesus was conceived of a virgin, parthenos in the Septuagint which he used, by his quote from Isaiah. In the original Hebrew- and it is only the original that counts, the word translated virgin was *almah* which meant a young woman. But even the term virgin usually meant a sexually inexperienced female but not always (page 29, *The Womb and the Tomb*). In the NABs Biblical Dictionary and Concordance under VIRGIN it is admitted that every unmarried girl was called a virgin for brevity and out of habit (page 239). In Jewish Rabbinic tradition, a virgin could mean a girl who had had sex but was not fertile. Perverted marriages with minors were allowed in those days. The Rabbis actually held that if a child was born before a girl started to menstruate that the birth could be called a virgin birth and, obviously, the conception would be a virginal conception (page 27). It is nonsense to deny that Matthew could have meant that Mary was this kind of virgin. Some say there is no evidence that he did but then there is no evidence that he meant a literal virgin either. Toss a coin! Those who believe that it would not be as likely for Joseph to have married a minor who was therefore unlikely to be a literal virgin if he was a widower are also talking rubbish. A virgin who is raped is psychologically a virgin though not one physically. Was Mary raped? Some argue that God would not let the mother of his son be raped by her husband or anybody else when she was only a child herself. That is also an absurd argument. Look what God let the people do to Jesus.

Remember that Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, was considered a virgin even after Shechem had raped her (Genesis 34:2,3).

When Matthew used the Isaiah text though the original Hebrew did not have a virgin birth in mind it is a hint that he did not teach what Christians say he taught. It is the clue that shows that Jesus had a strange and godly origin but not a miraculous one.

You can say that a virgin shall conceive and give birth meaning the normal way. The woman is a virgin now but later she won't be and will give birth.

We are told that Joseph had no sex with Mary until she had her firstborn son. The Protestants argue that this until means that Joseph slept with her after she became a mother to Jesus. The Catholics claim that "Mary was a life-long virgin, until in the Bible does not necessarily mean what it means to us so the verse does not refute the Catholic position." But even so it would be a strange word to use if the Matthew author wanted to declare the virgin birth for what is the point of doing it ambiguously? It means Joseph had sex with her after she had Jesus. Also we see the Matthew author means until by until for he wrote that the Holy Family stayed in Egypt until Herod died. Mary and Joseph being husband and wife and not having sex would conflict with the early Christian doctrine that a couple didn't have the right to refrain from sex unless for a little while as a form of self-control (1 Corinthians 7). If Joseph and Mary didn't have sex then they didn't reflect this tradition. It is safe to assume that the early Church would not have created the tradition if Mary and Joseph had a celibate "marriage".

Matthew says that Joseph did not have sex with Mary until she gave birth to Jesus. The angel appears in a dream. Matthew doesn't actually state that he was sure the dream was a real vision. He only reports it. It follows that we are not obligated then to believe what the angel said. This observation is fatal to the silly tradition that Matthew taught the virgin birth. Matthew only says that it all fulfilled the words of Isaiah but these words say nothing about a virgin giving birth while still being a virgin. As a result of the dream, Joseph might have groomed Jesus to be a saviour. But still it could just have been a dream. He also said that in obedience to the angel of the Lord, Joseph took Mary as his wife. Does this mean the dream was

real? Does it mean he saw a real angel? You would speak of a revelation from an angel of the Lord even if the angel was not really an existing being but just something you saw in a dream.

Joseph didn't touch her. Matthew said that after the dream of the angelic visitation Joseph took Mary as his wife but didn't touch her until she gave birth to her firstborn son. It doesn't say he hadn't been having sex with her before the visitation. The idea that Mary was a virgin when she gave birth is not in the Bible but is just a Roman Catholic invention.

Mary must have told Joseph about the pregnancy but as Matthew says he noticed she was pregnant and decided to get rid of her so it must have been a surprise to her as well. She didn't tell him until after he noticed. He trusted a dream more than her when he was going to reject her. Her word wasn't good enough.

Joseph didn't touch her after learning of the pregnancy. We must not read anything into this for there are countless reasons why he might not have touched her. Yet it is supposed that it was because she gave birth in a holy and miraculous way making it wrong to touch her. But God commands sex for having children though he says the body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. If it was bad for Joseph to love Mary physically then all sex is evil and sinful and dirty.

The miracle of the virginal conception by God and not man would be unnecessary. Even by the standard of the Law of Moses which required two reliable witnesses we cannot believe in it for there is only Matthew's word for it as we shall soon see. Jesus accepted the Law fully implying that he was not virginally conceived for if he knew that Matthew alone would say it or if Mary alone would say it – for only she would know the truth – then it would be unacceptable. The miracle certainly does imply that sex is disgusting and unfit for bringing the saviour into the world though Matthew may not have meant it like that and stupidly thought that the miracle was needed for other reasons.

Though some scholars feel that Matthew distorted Isaiah to make a prediction about a baby, Immanuel, born from a young woman not necessarily a virgin centuries before Matthew did not teach the virgin conception. It is possible he did not teach the virgin birth as in literal virgin birth. They think he twisted the text to invent a miraculous virgin conception and birth. If so then he mined Isaiah to be able to get his new invention accepted as history.

Conceived by the Holy Spirit is best understood as saying, "We don't know. It was not normal that's all." In those days a girl getting pregnant by molestation rather than rape could have been described that way. The main idea is that the conception was arranged by God which does not necessarily imply there was no sperm. Conceived means sperm - period.

## LUKE DID NOT TEACH VIRGIN BIRTH

The Gospel of Luke mentions neither the virginal conception nor the virgin birth. Even if it mentions or indicates a Virgin conception it still doesn't say if Mary will be a Virgin when she gives birth. Perhaps she conceived as a Virgin and had sex during pregnancy. This indicates the observation of modern theologians that Luke cares mostly about showing Jesus came from God and was sent by him. He does not care how the conception happened - its not important.

Christians like to use the Luke story as evidence that Mary gave consent to get pregnant. But would a girl in her day and her age really understand enough to be able to give valid and informed consent? The Luke story is cosmetic. Mary makes her choice during a short conversation. That is not consent. Its manipulation.

Here's the Luke story.

The angel Gabriel tells the Virgin Mary that she will have a son.

She asks how this can happen when she is a virgin. She seems to think he meant she would get pregnant there and then and then he says that God will give her a baby reminding her that it is a future thing. We know that this is only an assumption of hers because the angel never said that she would get pregnant while they were talking.

Mary meant that she had no husband, legal sexual partner. The angel tells her that God WILL descend upon her help her to conceive his son. The will shows that the angel is correcting her for thinking that she was to have a conception there and then. This could mean will Mary have a baby without a man. It could mean she will get a man to father her son. It could mean she will conceive by sperm without loss of her virginity which is certainly possible.

The angel replies that God will descend upon her which is why her baby will be the Son of God.

The child will be the Son of God because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in Mary which makes the child a servant of God. But the Son of God could have been meant in the Jewish sense of a man being extra-close to God as evidenced by Luke 20:36. Mary asked how she could conceive without a man after the angel told her the baby would be the son of the Most High God. She knew the angel meant Son of God as in exceptionally holy prophet.

Then Gabriel tells her that her cousin Elizabeth has conceived. Some translations say conceived also which would imply that Mary had just conceived there and then.

The NAB rejects this word also. It appears in the Revised Standard Version and in the Amplified Bible. If it should be there then Mary was pregnant already. Luke never says the angel was exactly right in everything so he could have been mistaken when he said that Mary will conceive. The angel was sent to announce who the baby would be and about Elizabeth's pregnancy. Also can mean: "conceived like you will." This interpretation implies that Mary will conceive with a man like Elizabeth had done.

Also does not mean she conceived there and then because the angel uses the future tense for her conceiving and the also is said before she consents to become pregnant.

Also, conceived may have meant the seed starting off the process that makes a person or conceived could mean when the foetus becomes a person for at that point the person exists. Mary could have been pregnant before the angel came but not carrying a person yet and the angel is referring to the beginning of personhood when he tells her she will conceive. The ancients did not know what conception was and so used the word both for the origin of the body and/or the origin of the person. The Jews did not consider an early embryo to be a person as is obvious from Exodus 21 which does not prescribe a severe penalty for causing a miscarriage.

The angel tells Mary that Elizabeth despite being barren in her old age has conceived because nothing is impossible with God. The angel is saying that conception is down to God. But it does not exclude Elizabeth and her husband having had sex resulting in conception. Where the angel is unclear about Mary having a miracle conception, the angel is explicit that Elizabeth had one.

Mary agrees to the whole thing then.

Catholics note this: her consent is not asked for though she gives it and it could be that it was not up to her or the pregnancy had already started. Yet Catholics have the cheek to say that Mary is co-redeemer and co-mediatrix with God for her consent gave us our Saviour. This is nonsense. God gives many women babies without their consent. Mary could have got pregnant whether she wanted it or not. Given God's record, she would have been made pregnant without her consent. If Mary's consent was so important then God must have regarded her like some kind of goddess or equal. Catholicism has always tended to put Mary above God.

Luke does not say when Mary became pregnant. Elizabeth seems to say she was pregnant when she arrived at her house. The spirit-filled Elizabeth blesses the fruit of Mary's womb. She might have foreseen a pregnancy and used the present tense because she was seeing it. And you can say to a virgin, "Blessed is your baby", when you know she will have one when she will get married. Changing the tenses was in the prophetic tradition. Mary might have told her about Gabriel first.

Christians claim that Luke implied the miraculous virginal conception when he said that Mary was unmarried and a virgin (1:27) for that was an unnecessary emphasis for all knew that unmarried women were virgins. But perhaps he was answering or afraid of slanders against Mary or just giving details, in accidental emphasis, like some historians do? It is even said that Luke 2:5 implies that Mary was pregnant before the wedding to Joseph which it does not. All it says is that Joseph took his pregnant wife to be enrolled. What imaginations the Christians have! It is nonsense to say that it implies anything that it must be the virginal conception for it couldn't mean that Joseph made Mary pregnant before they wed. The gospels never suggest that Mary and Joseph were angels of chastity or that the former interpretation is right.

It seems Mary and Joseph were married not just betrothed when they went to Bethlehem for being engaged and travelling around for miles and days while being heavily pregnant would have been a source of scandal especially when Mary would have been little more than a child.

Later, Luke makes Mary say that Joseph was the father of Jesus (2:48). And Luke says that Jesus was the supposed son of Joseph (Luke 3:23). Luke is not totally convinced that Jesus was Joseph's son though he thinks that he was. Many say that the genealogy he gives for Jesus is Joseph's. If that is true then he is sure enough however to give Jesus' genealogy through Joseph.

Mary in Luke, if she conceived without Joseph who Luke says was her espoused (Luke 1:27) was no better than an adulteress when she got pregnant without his consent. And believers say banning adultery is about family values!

Take Luke 1 to be promising a Virgin conception. Then the statements that the conception will happen because the Holy Spirit will descend and the power of the Most High will cover her with its shadow resulting in the child being holy imply that the baby is sacred for it wasn't created through sex.

Note too that though the Angel was sent by God that does not mean what the angel said was infallible or correct. Visionaries report at times difficulty in seeing and hearing and getting the message from the entities they see. Mary was very unclear to St Bernadette at Lourdes. Luke wrote that when the angel appeared and said to Mary, "Rejoice O Highly Favoured for the Lord is with you" she was deeply disturbed by these words and didn't understand what this greeting could mean. She wasn't at all confident about her vision - note that this doesn't amount to her being unconfident about the angel but it may. She certainly did not think she was exceptionally favoured by God or had been sinless. And Jesus brought her nothing but suffering. The angel made a mistake. The story does nothing to justify belief in the virginal conception of Jesus Christ.

## CONCLUSION

The virgin conception thing speaks of a mystery but not necessarily a miracle. Conceived by the Holy Spirit seems to just mean "unexplained." That could simply be down to information lacking.