

Sunday Evening 13th December 2020

Virgin Birth

Luke 1:26-38

The Virgin birth, the idea that Jesus was the son of God and of a young woman called Mary is central to the Christmas story. Some people argue that virgin is a poor translation of what should read 'young woman', some believe that it is literal truth, others that it is simply an illustration of Mary's complete devotion to God, some are not sure. The bible gives us snippets of the story Luke gives us the passage we read today about the angel talking to Mary, Matthew tells us that an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said that the baby was from God, Mark and John in their gospels don't tell us anything about Jesus' birth at all.

Brandon Crowe a theologian at Westminster Theological Seminary said:

There were no other examples of virgin births and no reason for the early Christians to make this up if this is not the way that it happened. Some might think that this was a mythological addition to the Christian faith or something that was embellished over time, but when we look at other somewhat similar things in mythology, most all of them seem to assume some sort of a physical union of a god ... with a woman. This is not what we find in Christianity. The accounts are very simple, very understated, and very simply stated that this happened through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Of all the objections that can be raised to the virgin birth, we should point to the truthfulness of scriptures showing us that this was surprising to those in the first century. It would've been a hard thing for Mary to believe or a hard thing for Joseph to believe, but they trusted what God said by faith because it was an amazing thing for God to speak into this world and not just to speak but to send his own son. In fact, it was the most remarkable thing that had happened in human history to that point.

Should we not expect maybe something amazing to happen when God the Son comes to earth and takes the form of a child to rescue his people? This was a statement that was surprising to Mary and to Joseph and one that took faith on their part to believe. That's the same message that confronts us today and the same response as called for by us is a call of faith to believe that God has sent his Son in a supernatural way to redeem us from sin. (Christianity.com)

But others argue that after the start of Matthew and Mark the virgin birth isn't mentioned in the New Testament, Paul doesn't include it in the things that he makes so clear in his teaching - is that because it didn't matter to him or because it was so obvious to him that it wasn't worth mentioning? - we will never know the answer but if God could raise His Son from death to life, perhaps kick starting a pregnancy isn't such an unbelievable challenge.

While in the Church of England we don't venerate Mary in the way that our brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic church do, we do recognise that while she was pregnant and unmarried she gave us one of the most beautiful songs of praise to God, talking about how he would pull down the mighty from their thrones and lift up the lowly.

Luke 1:46-55 the Magnificat