

# Is the Virgin Birth a True Story?



An Accessible Apologetics Video Lesson

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## Lesson Overview

- The biblical narrative of Jesus' Virgin Birth was not copied from pagan myths.
- The biblical narrative of Jesus' Virgin Birth was not made up by the church.
- The biblical narrative of Jesus' Virgin Birth is a true story.



The Virgin Birth: Copied? Made up? Or Real?

## Lesson Objectives

- Students will learn that alleged pagan parallels to the Virgin Birth do not contain actual virgins giving birth.
- Students will explore three reasons why it is unlikely that the Virgin Birth narrative was fabricated.
- Students will discuss the problem with approaching the question of the Virgin Birth with an anti-supernatural bias.

## Scriptures in This Lesson

- **Luke 1:28-35 (Virgin Birth)**
- Mark 6:3
- John 8:41
- Philippians 2:6-7

## Time

- **Got 30-40 minutes?** This lesson will easily last the whole session.
- **Got 50-60 minutes?** Consider opening up with a student skit of Luke 1:28-35
- **Got less time?** Consider omitting the ancient evidence for the alleged pagan parallels and focus on the Scriptures.

## Preparation

- View the videos and read the leader's outline so you can review the main points and share in your own words.
- The less you're tied to this leader's guide, the better!

## Interactive Options

- Optional: Begin with a student skit of Luke 1:28-35
- Discussion time

## This lesson includes 2 videos:

1. **Introduction** (1 minute)
2. **Lesson** (8 minutes)

## Outline

### The Virgin Birth

- I. Was it copied from myths?
- II. Was it made up by the church?
- III. Discussion Time
- IV. Closing Thought

## How to Use this Resource

1. Welcome your students and pray for the session.
2. **Play video #1: "Introduction"**
3. Introduce the topic and define the Virgin Birth in your own words (see the definition on page 6).
4. Ask a couple of questions to get things started, for example:
  - What would you say if a friend asked you if the Virgin Birth was copied from other religions?
  - Why do many people have a hard time believing the Virgin Birth really happened?
5. Explain that you're doing a special focus on Jesus' birth today because many people have questions about it.
6. **Play the video #2: "Lesson."**
7. Review the main points, using this leader's outline as reference (see the PowerPoint file).
8. Have your students look up selected Scriptures which cohere with the Virgin Birth story.
9. Discussion time
10. Closing thought and prayer

**Note:** Discussing the Virgin Birth may be uncomfortable for some, as this topic is inherently sexual in nature. While Mikel's video does not contain any graphic descriptions, be aware that the conception stories of Horus and Augustus may be disturbing as described in the ancient sources. You know your group best. Use discernment as you discuss Jesus' virginal conception and alleged mythological parallels.

Lesson Part 1

**PLAY VIDEO 1: INTRODUCTION (1 Minute)**

**The Annunciation**



Painting: "The Annunciation" by Henry Ossawa Tanner (1898)

**FEMALE VOICEOVER:**

Selected text from *Luke 1:28-35 (NET)*

The angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you..."

Listen: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus...Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?"

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God."



*Students talk about seeing something about the Virgin Birth on YouTube*

## STUDENT INTERVIEWS:

- Girl:** Right before Christmas break, I saw something on YouTube about the Virgin Birth.
- Guy 1:** What's the Virgin Birth?
- Guy 2:** Jesus' mom never had sex before he was born?
- Guy 1:** Yeah, right.
- Guy 2:** Wasn't that story a copy of some other religion?
- Guy 1:** A total rip-off.
- Girl:** The video said that it was like, from Egypt or something. But I'm not so sure about that.

## YOUR TURN: GET THINGS STARTED

1. Introduce the topic and define the Virgin Birth in your own words (see the definition on page 6)

2. Ask a couple of questions, for example:

- What would you say if a friend asked you if the Virgin Birth was copied from other religions?
- Why do many people have a hard time believing the Virgin Birth really happened?

## Lesson Part 2

**PLAY VIDEO 2: LESSON (8 Minutes)****Is the Virgin Birth Real?**

Many people have heard that the story of the Virgin Birth was copied from older religious figures or from Greco-Roman mythology.

In this lesson, we'll see that three of the most common religious figures compared to Jesus do not have a virgin birth story at all. That's why there's no way the first Christians copied the idea of a virgin birth story from these myths.

We'll also see why it is unlikely that the first Christians made up the story of the Virgin Birth.

**YOUR TURN: REVIEW THE MAIN POINTS****Ancient Evidence**

After the video, reinforce the main points and introduce the evidence not mentioned in the video (use your judgment about how much of the evidence to share as some of the pagan myths are sexually graphic). Also, you can have the students look up 3 relevant Bible verses and ask them 3 discussion questions. End your lesson with a closing thought and prayer.

Leader's outline based on Mikel's teaching

**I. Was the Virgin Birth Copied from Myths? NO!**

- A. If you hear about a story that's supposed to be the same as the Virgin Birth, check out the actual story first—there are no pagan parallels with Jesus' conception.

**What is the Virgin Birth?**

Historically, the Christian belief that Jesus was miraculously conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary without sexual union with man ( Matt 1:18-25 ; Luke 1:34-35 ).

This doctrine is to be distinguished from the Roman Catholic belief in the "perpetual virginity" of Mary (i.e., that she remained a virgin throughout her life) and the "immaculate conception" (i.e., that she remained sinless throughout her life)...

*Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology.*

Read the full entry:  
<http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/virgin-birth/>

B. In fact, 3 common alleged parallels don't even have a virgin birth in the original story!

### C. Alleged Parallel #1: Horus was NOT born of a virgin

1. In Egyptian mythology:

- a. The goddess **Isis** was not a virgin when **Horus** was born.
- b. In fact, Isis was ***already married*** to a green god named **Osiris** before she gave birth to Horus.
- c. The best Egyptian account of the myth, *The Great Hymn to Osiris*—tells us that **Horus was not born of a virgin.**<sup>1</sup>
  - i. How was Horus created according to the myth?
  - ii. The direct answer is, “Isis and Osiris had sex so Isis was not a virgin.”

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<sup>1</sup> The Great Hymn to Osiris from Dynasty 18 (stela Louvre C 286): Isis “took in his seed and created the heir...Osiris’ son, Horus, stout of heart, justified, son of Isis, heir of Osiris.” Cited in Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*. P. 24-25. Assmann writes, “in the accounts of Diodorus and Plutarch, Isis recovered all the body part of the slain god except for his virile member, which had been swallowed by a fish. She was thus obliged to replace this member with an artificial one that she was able to make into an instrument of posthumous insemination” (25). This is from the Stela of Amenmose. Dynasty 18 is a period in Egyptian history from 1543–1292 BC. See also: Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume II: The New Kingdom*, p.81.

## Not copied from the Horus story



Isis “took in his seed and created the heir...Osiris’ son, Horus.”

*The Great Hymn to Osiris*  
Dynasty 18 (stela Louvre C 286)

Jesus in  
focus

*PowerPoint Slide: The Horus Story*

2. The idea that the church copied the story of Jesus’ virgin birth from Horus doesn’t work because **there’s no story about Horus being born of a virgin in the first place.**
3. A bird goddess getting together with a green god doesn’t look anything like how the Bible says Jesus was conceived.



**Pages 9 -15 are not included in this preview document**

**3. Ask: “What’s the problem with approaching the question of the Virgin Birth assuming that there is no God and miracles are impossible?”**

- i. The problem is that your mind is already made up even before you start to examine the evidence.
- ii. But if you don’t automatically assume God can’t exist, then you can examine the story of the Virgin Birth in light of the possibility that miracles can happen.
- iii. If there really is a God who was powerful enough to create the universe, then he could easily perform a miracle so that Jesus was conceived by a virgin.

**B. Ask: “What would it look like for Jesus to leave heaven and come to earth as a baby?”**

1. It would probably look something like a Virgin Birth.
2. Read **Philippians 2:6-7**
3. *“...who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature.*
4. Paul goes even further by saying that Jesus existed before his birth, and that he chose to come to earth as a human being. How does that happen? Again, he must have had in mind something like the Virgin Birth.

**C. Ask: “So what *would* you say if a friend asked you if the Virgin Birth really happened?” (Various answers)**

## **YOUR TURN: WRAP IT UP**

### **IV. Closing Thought: The Virgin Birth is a True Story**

**A. We can be confident that the Virgin Birth is a true story.**

- a. The church didn’t get the Virgin Birth story from somewhere else
- b. They didn’t create it out of theological reflection.
- c. That means—as unusual as it sounds—the Virgin Birth story must have come from a real event.

**B. In other words, if the Virgin Birth wasn’t copied from myths and it wasn’t made up, the remaining option is that the Virgin Birth is real.**

**C. Close in prayer.**



End of Lesson