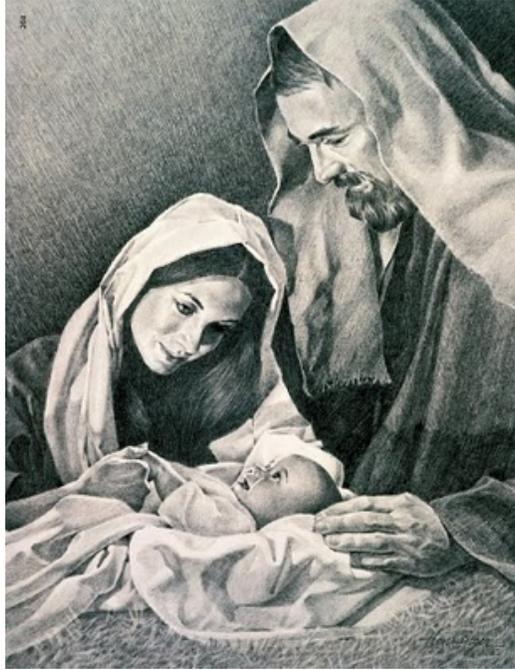


Virgin Conception (The Birth of Christ)

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.



Often during the Christmas season, Scriptures are looked at which apply to the birth of Jesus Christ. First let us turn to Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." We see that this prophecy is fulfilled in the Gospels.

In Matthew 1:18, we read, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Here is an Orientalism which people of the Western world do not understand. Westerners say that Mary and Joseph were engaged, but before they could be married, she was found with child. This is not so. The wedding customs of the East are such that the priest consults the stars and fixes a date for the couple to come together, sometime after the wedding ceremony has been performed. Easterners think it is important to have one's children born "under a certain star", and in this way they try to fix the future characteristics of children by causing them to be born at a certain time.

In this verse, we see the word "espoused", which means married, and we further see that in verse 20 of the same chapter, the phrase appears, "...fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife ..." These details are emphasized in the Scriptures so that we may be assured that the virgin conception is a fact and is a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

Bishop K.C. Pillai, D.D.