

"The Birth of Jesus by the Holy Spirit: A Tradition-Historical Approach"

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Outline of Lecture

Opening Remarks about the Unusual Circumstances Surrounding Mary's Pregnancy

Three main explanations concerning what 'really happened':

- (1) Jesus was from the 'Holy Spirit' (traditional view) – Mt. 1:18,20; Lk. 1:35; see further the *Protoevangelium of James* 14:2; 19:1.
- (2) Jesus was an illegitimate child, born out of wedlock to Mary who was raped or had sexual relations with a Roman soldier (Celsus in Origen, *Against Celsus* I.28 and 32; *Babylonian Talmud; Toledoth Yeshu*; etc.)
- (3) Jesus was fathered by Joseph before Joseph married Mary (cf. denial in Mt. 1:18,25)

Reasons for these explanations

Purpose of the Lecture

- (1) Earliest form of the birth tradition: Angelic annunciation of a special birth. Considerations from (a) Old Testament and Jewish tradition and (b) early Christian (i.e. Pauline traditions, esp. Romans 1:3 and Galatians 4:4)
- (2) Addition of 'Holy Spirit' to this tradition
Why? Four points:
 - accusations against Jesus, who was thought to be colluding with Satan (esp. Mark 3:22-30)
 - in order to emphasize that Jesus' origin is different from that of an evil spirit
 - myths and stories about demonic origin, which could have affected how Jesus' opponents might have understood/interpreted him?
 - Genesis 6:1-4 and early Jewish interpretation (1 Enoch, Jubilees, Book of Giants, Dead Sea Scrolls, Testament of Solomon, etc.)
 - Stories about suspicion of pregnancy from fallen angels: Genesis Apocryphon (Dead Sea Scrolls: 1Q20); 1 Enoch 106-107; see also 2 Enoch 71-72.
 - 'Holy Spirit' and not the angel