

## Believing Right: A Jewish Believer's Discipleship Guide

### Lesson 4

#### Miracles and the Birth of Jesus

*"I believe . . . in Jesus Christ . . . who was conceived by the Holy Ghost [Spirit], born of the Virgin Mary. . . ."*

As a result of studying this lesson, the student should:

- (1) trust God and see that he does miracles;
- (2) understand God's plan in bringing Y'shua through a virgin.

#### Born of a Virgin

##### Comment

The notion of the Immaculate Conception may confuse us. This is actually not a Jewish doctrine at all, but rather a Catholic teaching about the mother of Mary, Ann, being pure and spotless "enough" so that Mary could bear the pure and spotless Jesus. This Immaculate Conception is not a biblical doctrine. What we do know is that Jesus was born of a virgin. Although it stretches our mind and our theological perspective, nonetheless, Jesus' birth was supernatural. It shouldn't be hard for us as Jewish believers to grasp that since Abraham had Isaac when he was 100 years old, and God's doing of miracles overwhelms nature and laws of nature anyway. After all, it couldn't be a miracle if it were simply natural. But Ann didn't need to be pure; Jesus alone was pure!

##### Reading

The student should read Isaiah 7:10-25 and answer the following questions:

1. Who would bring the sign to the Jewish people? (verse 14)
2. What would be the name of the child born in the future?
3. What did Isaiah say about the mother of the child?

##### Reading

The student should read the Gospel of Matthew 1:1, 18-25 (the fulfillment of the Isaiah account) and answer the following questions:

4. Who fathered Mary's son, Jesus?
5. Who did Matthew say Jesus was?

##### Comment

Genesis 3:15 records the first prophecy of the messiah to come. He is called the "seed of the woman" rather than the "seed of the man and the woman" or only the "seed of man." By itself this says little, but when taken together with the rest of Scripture, this seems to point to a

virgin birth. Though there is much discussion over this question of the “virgin birth,” the text would indicate that the birth referred to in Isaiah 7 was of a miraculous nature; the child was to be a sign to the nation. The New Testament record (Matthew 1, also Luke 1 and 2) describes this birth without qualification or reservations. Messiah was born of a virgin.

Y’shua was supernaturally fully God and yet fully human. This means that, though subject to all the human temptations we face, he did not give in to those temptations. He was uniquely sinless (see Isaiah 53:9; 1 Peter 2:22).

### **What Will This Child Do?**

#### **Reading**

The student should read Isaiah 9. This prophecy of Isaiah continues the child motif of Isaiah 7, giving details of the ministry of this child born to a virgin. Then answer the following questions:

6. What is the virgin’s son to bring to those in darkness?
7. By what English names will this child be known? (If you are reading the Jewish Scriptures, the names in Isaiah 9:6 are not given in English but in Hebrew. For an English translation, see the “memory verse” at the end of this lesson.)

### **Jesus as Miracle-Worker**

#### **Reading**

The student should read the Gospel of John, chapter 4. The Samaritan people were racially mixed Jews who had married outsiders; generally, the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

8. What miracle did Jesus want to perform for the Samaritan woman?
9. What miracle did Jesus perform for a certain nobleman?
10. Though the nobleman asked for a miraculous sign, when did he act on his belief in Christ?

#### **Comment**

The healing of the nobleman’s son is one of several miracles by which Jesus supernaturally prolonged a life or raised the dead. Only the Creator of life can prolong life supernaturally, so when Y’shua healed the son of the nobleman, he demonstrated his deity. The nobleman took Jesus at his word, but then the confirming miracle increased the faith of the nobleman that much more. The man “believed,” as did his entire household.

#### **Reading**

The student should read the Gospel of John, chapter 6. Philip, Andrew and Simon Peter are close followers or disciples of Jesus. After reading the text, answer the following questions:

11. What had the crowd seen that caused them to follow Jesus?
  12. How did the crowd react after Jesus fed five thousand people with a few fish and loaves? What did those in the crowd want to do?
  13. Y'shua rebuked some of the Jewish leadership by telling them that they would not believe unless they saw what?
  14. Which of Jesus' claims made the men angry?
  15. What didn't these men know about Jesus' birth?
  16. If one eats of the bread of life, what does that person receive?
  17. Who did Simon Peter acknowledge Jesus as being?
- Opinion Question*
18. What miracle did Jesus really want the people to experience?

### **Comment**

In this chapter of John, you see the disciples depicted separately from "the crowds" that followed Jesus only because of the miracles that met physical needs of those in the crowd. The purpose of the signs or miracles of Jesus was to lead the people to faith in him as Lord (see John 20:30-31).

In lesson 3, you read John 20, where the disciple Thomas (later dubbed "Doubting Thomas") declared that he wouldn't believe unless he had seen with his own eyes. Contrasted with that, here in John 6, the Pharisees saw with their eyes, but doubted in their hearts. Though Thomas momentarily doubted, he remained in the fellowship of the disciples (see John 20:24-31). But the Pharisees separated themselves from Y'shua and his followers (see John 9:13-41). Though spiritually blind, they were boasting that they could see. Spiritual humility leads one to see God's miracles, while boasting leads to blindness and separation from God's people.

### *Opinion Question:*

When we doubt, what should our response be?

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 9:6**

*“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*