

As happened four years ago when I made a series of posts on the virgin birth stories in the NT, this time too I've received queries about whether the idea of a virgin birth was a common motif in antiquity; some "popular" books out there claim that other alleged sons of God were born of virgins. Is that true? Well, I don't think so. Here is how I responded before.

I have devoted several posts to the issue of Jesus' virgin birth, as recounted in Matthew and Luke. As I pointed out, there is no account of Jesus' virgin birth in the Gospel of John, and it appears that the idea is actually argued **against** (implicitly) in the Gospel of Mark. Several readers have asked me (or told me) about the parallels to the virgin birth stories in pagan texts, where a son of God, or demi-god, or, well, some other rather amazing human being is said to have been born of a virgin. Aren't the Christians simply borrowing a widely held view found among the pagans, that if someone is the son of God (e.g., Hercules, or Dionysus, or Asclepius, etc.), his mother is always thought to have been a virgin?

As it turns out, that's not the case at all.

I don't know of any parallel to ...

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