



Virgin Birth?: The Real Story of Mary and Her Son Jesus

Gerd Lüdemann

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What historical realities lie behind the birth of Jesus and the description of the Holy Family by the evangelists? In this book, controversial New Testament scholar Gerd Lüdemann investigates all of the references to Jesus' birth and the Holy Family in the writings of the earliest church and rival Jewish sources. He discusses what the New Testament Christmas stories set out to say, reconstructs the traditions used in them, and answers the question of what really happened at Jesus' birth. Anti-Christian polemic stigmatized Jesus as a child born out of wedlock and branded his mother a sinner. The Christian myth of the virgin birth, Professor Ludemann argues, maintains the structures of stigmatization, denying the right of women to sexual and cultural self-determination. Instead of taking Mary seriously as a woman of our time and therefore also taking seriously women in our time, he says, many churches today continue to ignore the often damaging consequences of the myth of Mary for believing men and women. Gerd Lüedemann is Professor of New Testament at the University of Gottingen.

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