

Dear Melissa,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio.

In your first question you wanted to know if Mary was still a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus. You wondered if Joseph and Mary consummated their marriage on their wedding night.

The answer is found in the first chapter of Matthew after an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream explaining that what was conceived in Mary was from the holy spirit (Matthew 1:20). "When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus." (Matthew 1:24-25) Therefore, Mary was still a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus.

In your next question you asked how old Christians think the earth is. You asked if we thought the earth was 6000 years old.

Christians, as well as scientists, have varying opinions as to how old the earth is. Some Christian fundamentalists may still think that the earth was actually created in six literal 24-hour days and, therefore, presume that the earth is approximately 6000 years old. We are not of that opinion. We believe that each creative day, or epoch, was a period of time. The scriptures do not tell us how long each creative "day" lasted or if each "day" was equal in length. They do tell us that "with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." (2 Peter 3:8) This scripture indicates to us that God's concept of time is very different from ours. For example, the first creative day may have been billions of earth years in length, while the second day could have lasted millions of earth years. We simply do not know how long each "day" was or exactly how old the earth is.

What we can determine from the Bible is that man has been on the earth for about 6000 years. For example, we can calculate that 1656 years elapsed from Adam to the end of the Flood (see Genesis 5:3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25, 28; 7:6; 8:13). Another 427 years passed before God made a Covenant with Abraham (see Genesis, chapter 11 to calculate the chronology). We can continue calculating all the way to the end of the kingdom of Zedekiah (the last king of Judah). It would be approximately 600 more years until Messiah was born. Therefore, doing all the calculations using the information found in the Bible, we have biblical proof that man has been on the earth for approximately 6000 years. The earth itself, however, is much, much older.

We hope we have answered your questions. Please write us again.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio