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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

The Brit Hadasha Series - The MEM Mystery

TEACHING SUMMARY

This teaching examines Isaiah 9:6–7 as a prophetic passage concerning the Messiah. The passage describes a child who is born and a son who is given, whose government rests on his shoulder and whose names include Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. It also describes an everlasting increase of government and peace on David's throne, accomplished by the zeal of YHWH.

The teaching explains that Isaiah 9:6–7 has been understood by Christians and ancient Jewish interpreters as referring to the coming Messiah. Matthew 4:14–16 connects earlier verses from Isaiah 9 to Yeshua, reinforcing the teaching's claim that the passage belongs in a Messianic context. The teaching also addresses the claim that Isaiah was speaking only about King Hezekiah.

A central objection discussed in the teaching concerns the Hebrew perfect verb forms in the statements “a child is born” and “a son is given.” Counter-missionaries use those forms to argue that the events had already occurred in Isaiah's time. The teaching explains, however, that Biblical Hebrew is organized around aspect—completed or incomplete action—rather than functioning exactly like English tense.

The teaching then points to the final phrase, “The zeal of the LORD [YHWH] of hosts will do this,” which uses the imperfect form and expresses future action. It presents this mixture of perfect and imperfect forms as an example of the Prophetic Perfect, an accepted prophetic idiom in which future events may be described as completed because they are guaranteed to happen. Isaiah 5:13, Amos 5:2, and Jeremiah 23:2 are offered as examples of this pattern.

The second major issue is the unusual closed mem in Isaiah 9:7. The word L'marbeh, meaning “of the increase,” contains a final-form mem in the middle of the word, even though the closed mem normally appears at the end of a word. The teaching connects this anomaly with rabbinic discussion, including Sanhedrin 94a, which links the closed mem to the question of Hezekiah and the Messiah, and with passages from the Bahir that use the mem and the imagery of a belly or womb.

Finally, the teaching connects the closed mem with Isaiah 7:14 and the virgin birth, arguing that Hezekiah does not fulfill that sign. It also presents Targum Jonathan and Derekh Eretz Zuta as Jewish sources that associate Isaiah 9:6–7 with the Messiah and peace. The conclusion is that the grammar, the closed mem, the Jewish interpretive sources, and the rejection of Hezekiah as the ultimate Messiah together support understanding Isaiah 9:6–7 as a prophecy of Yeshua's virgin birth, authority, and eternal reign.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Isaiah 9:6–7 describes a child, a son, government, David's throne, justice, righteousness, and an everlasting reign.
- Matthew 4:14–16 connects Isaiah 9 to Yeshua in a Messianic context.
- Biblical Hebrew verbs are discussed in terms of perfect and imperfect aspect rather than only English-style tense.
- The perfect forms in “a child is born” and “a son is given” do not automatically require a past-only interpretation.
- The closing statement about YHWH's zeal uses the imperfect form and points toward future action.
- The Prophetic Perfect can describe future events as completed because they are certain to occur.
- Isaiah 9:7 contains an unusual closed mem in the middle of L'marbeh.
- Sanhedrin 94a connects the closed mem with the Messiah and the question of Hezekiah.
- The teaching connects the closed mem and the Bahir's womb imagery with the miraculous birth of the Messiah.
- The teaching concludes that Isaiah 9:6–7 points to Yeshua's virgin birth and eternal reign.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK — BASIC

1. Isaiah 9:6–7 is presented as a prophecy concerning the _____.
2. Matthew 4:14–16 connects earlier verses in Isaiah 9 to _____.
3. Hebrew verbs are discussed as having perfect and imperfect _____.
4. The final phrase says, “The zeal of YHWH of hosts will _____ this.”
5. The unusual letter in Isaiah 9:7 is a closed _____ in the middle of a word.
6. The teaching connects the closed mem with the Messiah's _____ birth.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK — CHALLENGING

1. The Hebrew word containing the unusual closed mem is _____, meaning “of the increase.”
2. The prophetic idiom that describes future events as completed because they are guaranteed is called the Prophetic _____.
3. The Talmud passage discussed in connection with the closed mem is Sanhedrin _____.
4. The teaching says the closed mem points toward a miraculous _____ of the Messiah.
5. Targum _____ is presented as explicitly naming the Messiah in its paraphrase of Isaiah 9:6–7.
6. The teaching concludes that Yeshua is destined to reign on _____ throne.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the teaching explain the difference between Hebrew aspect and English-style tense?

2. Why does the imperfect form in the closing phrase of Isaiah 9:6–7 matter to the teaching's argument?

3. How does the Prophetic Perfect help answer the objection that Isaiah 9:6–7 must refer only to a past event?

4. What significance does the teaching assign to the closed mem in L'marbeh?

5. How do the Talmud, the Bahir, Targum Jonathan, and Derekh Eretz Zuta function in the teaching's argument?

6. According to the teaching, why does Hezekiah fail to fulfill the complete prophetic picture in Isaiah 9:6–7?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Messiah — Isaiah 9:6–7; teaching interpretation
2. Yeshua — Matthew 4:14–16
3. aspect — Teaching section on Hebrew verbal aspect
4. do — Isaiah 9:7
5. mem — Isaiah 9:7; teaching discussion of the closed letter
6. virgin — Teaching interpretation linking Isaiah 9:7 and 7:14

Challenging

1. L'marbeh (with a closed mem, ם) — Teaching discussion of L'marbeh
2. Perfect — Teaching section on the Prophetic Perfect
3. 94a — Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 94a, as cited
4. virgin birth — Teaching's symbolic interpretation of the closed mem
5. Jonathan — Targum Jonathan, as quoted in the teaching
6. David's — Isaiah 9:7

FACILITATOR DISCUSSION NOTES

Suggested responses follow the teaching. Invite discussion and personal application; these are not additional required answers.

1. The source explains perfect and imperfect primarily in terms of completed and incomplete action, rather than one-to-one English tense equivalents. Its point is that a perfect form alone does not force a past-only reading. Ask participants to explain that limited claim without reducing all Hebrew grammar to a single rule.
2. The teaching reads the final statement that YHWH will do this as forward-looking, alongside the opening completed-action forms. It uses the combination to support future fulfillment. Distinguish the grammatical observation from the further conclusion that Yeshua is the referent.
3. The teaching describes the Prophetic Perfect as speaking of an anticipated event as accomplished. Its argument is that completed-action wording can occur in prophecy and therefore does not by itself rule out future fulfillment. Participants need not settle every cited grammatical example to explain that argument.
4. The ordinary medial mem is ם; the closed final-form mem is ם. The source highlights the unusual use of the closed form within L'marbeh and connects it symbolically with miraculous birth. Be clear that the proposed virgin-birth significance is the teaching's interpretation of the anomaly, not the literal dictionary meaning of the letter.
5. Sanhedrin 94a links the letter with a discussion of Hezekiah and Messiah; the Bahir supplies belly and birth imagery. Targum Jonathan and Derekh Eretz Zuta are cited for Messianic interpretation and peace. The teaching combines these sources with Isaiah 7:14. Do not imply that each rabbinic work itself identifies Yeshua or independently teaches his virgin birth.
6. The teaching argues that Hezekiah does not fulfill the virgin-birth sign and everlasting reign it sees in Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6–7, and it cites the Talmud's account of his not becoming Messiah. Ask participants to distinguish the teaching's Christian/Messianic conclusion from the narrower rabbinic discussion it uses.