

119

GROUP STUDY GUIDE

The Brit Hadasha Series: The Virgin Birth

TEACHING SUMMARY

This teaching addresses the argument that the Messiah must have a human father and that Yeshua's divine conception would therefore disqualify him. It argues that the Torah and Prophets point in the opposite direction by presenting the expectation of a promised seed connected to a woman and by describing a sign involving a virgin conceiving and bearing a son.

Genesis 3:14–15 is presented as the foundation of the discussion. The passage speaks of enmity between the serpent and the woman and between their offspring, culminating in the woman's seed bruising the serpent's head. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan interprets the passage in relation to Torah-observant people and the days of the King Messiah.

The teaching also cites Genesis Rabbah 23:5, a commentary section discussing the naming of Seth in Genesis 4:25. It connects "another seed" with a seed arising from another source and with the King Messiah. The teaching uses these Jewish interpretive sources to support a Messianic connection with the woman's seed.

The teaching then examines Matthew 1:23 and Isaiah 7:14. It explains that the debate centers on the Hebrew word *alma* and the claim that Isaiah should have used *betulah* if he intended to describe a virgin. The teaching argues that *alma* refers to a young unmarried woman characterized by virginity and notes examples where the word is understood to refer to virgins.

Ancient translations are also examined. The Aramaic Peshitta uses *betultah* for Isaiah 7:14, and the Greek Septuagint uses *parthenos*. The teaching says both words mean virgin. It then examines the context of Isaiah 7, including the distinction between singular and plural forms of "you," arguing that the sign in verse 14 is not addressed only to King Achaz and is distinct from the child discussed in verse 16.

Finally, the teaching connects Isaiah 7:14 and 8:8 with the child described in Isaiah 9:6–7 and with the Messianic figure in Isaiah 11:1. It cites New Testament applications and rabbinic material concerning Isaiah 8 and Isaiah 9. The conclusion is that Yeshua's divine conception fulfills rather than disqualifies the Messianic expectation: he is presented as born of a woman, conceived by the Spirit of God, and identified with the promised Redeemer.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The teaching argues that divine conception does not disqualify Yeshua as Messiah.
- Genesis 3:15 speaks of the seed of the woman.
- Targum Pseudo-Jonathan connects the passage with Torah obedience and the King Messiah.
- Midrash Rabbah connects another seed arising from another source with the King Messiah.
- Isaiah 7:14 is presented as a prophecy of a virgin conceiving and bearing Immanuel.
- The meaning of alma is central to the debate over Isaiah 7:14.
- The teaching says alma describes a young unmarried woman characterized by virginity.
- The Peshitta uses betultah and the Septuagint uses parthenos for Isaiah 7:14.
- The teaching distinguishes the plural “you” in verse 14 from the singular address to Achaz.
- Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6–7, and Isaiah 11:1 are connected as Messianic passages.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK — BASIC

1. Genesis 3:15 speaks of the seed of the _____.
2. Matthew 1:23 points to Isaiah _____.
3. The Hebrew word debated in Isaiah 7:14 is _____.
4. The Aramaic Peshitta uses the word _____ for virgin.
5. The Greek Septuagint uses the word _____ for virgin.
6. The sign in Isaiah 7:14 is connected by the teaching to the virgin _____ of the Messiah.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK — CHALLENGING

1. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan connects Genesis 3:15 with the days of the King _____.
2. Midrash Rabbah discusses the seed that would arise from another _____.
3. In Isaiah 7:14, “you” is plural, while the address to Achaz in the surrounding verses is _____.
4. Isaiah 8:8–9:7 is used to connect the Immanuel figure with the child born in Isaiah _____.
5. Isaiah 11:1 describes a shoot from the stump of _____.
6. The teaching concludes that Yeshua’s divine conception is a divine _____ of his identity as the promised Redeemer.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Genesis 3:15 contribute to the teaching's argument about the Messiah's origin?

2. What do the Targum and Midrash Rabbah contribute to the teaching's interpretation?

3. Why is the distinction between alma and betulah important in the discussion?

4. How do the Peshitta and Septuagint affect the teaching's understanding of Isaiah 7:14?

5. Why does the teaching emphasize the singular and plural forms of "you" in Isaiah 7?

6. How does the teaching connect Isaiah 7:14 with Isaiah 8:8–9:7 and Isaiah 11:1?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. woman — Genesis 3:15
2. 7:14 — Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14
3. alma — Teaching discussion of Isaiah 7:14
4. betultah — Teaching quotation of the Aramaic Peshitta
5. parthenos — Teaching quotation of the Greek Septuagint
6. birth — Teaching interpretation of Isaiah 7:14

Challenging

1. Messiah — Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Genesis 3:15, as cited
2. source — Genesis Rabbah 23:5, as cited; Genesis 4:25
3. singular — Teaching's singular/plural comparison in Isaiah 7:11–17
4. 9:6–7 — Teaching's connection of Isaiah 7–9
5. Jesse — Isaiah 11:1
6. affirmation — Teaching conclusion

FACILITATOR DISCUSSION NOTES

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

1. Genesis 3:15 speaks of the woman and her offspring in conflict with the serpent. The teaching interprets this as the foundation of a Messianic expectation connected to the woman. Distinguish what the verse explicitly says from the teaching's further connection to a miraculous conception.
2. The Targum passage connects the woman's offspring, Torah obedience and the days of King Messiah. Genesis Rabbah 23:5 comments on the 'another seed' language in Genesis 4:25. These are interpretive witnesses used by the teaching; the commentary section number is not a citation of Genesis 23:5.
3. The teaching argues that alma describes a young unmarried woman characterized by virginity and compares it with betulah, using Genesis 24:16, 43 among its examples. Keep the answer tied to that presented argument rather than claiming one word alone resolves every question of interpretation.
4. The source cites betultah in the Peshitta and parthenos in the Septuagint as evidence of a virgin reading of Isaiah 7:14. Discuss how translations contribute to the teaching's case, alongside Matthew 1:23 and the context, rather than replacing the need to examine the Hebrew passage.
5. The teaching contrasts the plural address to the house of David in Isaiah 7:13–14 with singular addresses to Achaz. It concludes that the sign is not limited to him and distinguishes the child in verse 16 from the promised child. Present the latter identification as the teaching's contextual interpretation, not as something proved by pronoun number alone.
6. The teaching links Immanuel in Isaiah 7:14 and 8:8 with the child and Davidic throne of Isaiah 9:6–7 and the shoot from Jesse in Isaiah 11:1. It also cites New Testament applications and rabbinic commentary. Have participants locate the passages and trace the argument, keeping direct quotations, interpretations and applications distinct.