

119

MINISTRIES

“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”

The Brit Hadasha Series: The Virgin Birth

Jewish counter-missionaries often argue that the Messiah must have a human father, claiming that Yeshua’s divine conception disqualifies him as the Messiah. However, this argument misunderstands the Scriptures, particularly the Torah, which actually suggests the opposite. Let’s examine this claim in light of biblical evidence.

In the Torah, YHWH says this to the serpent.

Genesis 3:14-15

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

This passage makes a very surprising reference to not the seed of a man, but the seed of a woman.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan understands this account in Genesis 3 in this way:

“And it shall be that when the sons of the woman study the Torah diligently and obey its injunctions, they will direct themselves to smite you on the head and slay you; but when the sons of the woman forsake the commandments of the Torah and do not obey its injunctions, you will direct yourself to bite them on the heel and afflict them. However, there will be a remedy for the sons of the woman, but for you, serpent, there will be no remedy. They shall make peace with one another in the end, in the very end of days, in the days of the King Messiah.”

The interpretation of Genesis 3:15 as a Messianic prophecy has deep roots, even within Jewish

rabbinical thought. This verse, often referred to as the Protoevangelium (first gospel), describes enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between their respective “seeds,” culminating in the ultimate victory of the woman’s seed.

Interestingly, Jewish rabbinical literature provides significant insights into this passage:

The Targums on Genesis 3:15

The Targums, ancient Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Scriptures, offer a nuanced view. They interpret the “seed” of the woman as Torah-observant Israel—those who faithfully study and obey YHWH’s instructions. The Targums connect this obedience to the era of the “King Messiah,” suggesting that Torah faithfulness leads to peace and harmony under the Messianic reign.

This interpretation demonstrates that the rabbinic tradition understood a connection between the “seed of the woman” and the coming of the Messiah, associating Torah observance with the Messianic hope.

Midrash Rabbah on Genesis 23:5

The Midrash Rabbah, a collection of Jewish commentary on the Torah, explicitly ties the “seed” of the woman to the Messiah. Referring to Genesis 23:5 and the naming of Seth, it states:

*“And she called his name Seth: For God has appointed me another seed, etc. R. Tanhuma said in the name of Samuel Kozith: [She hinted at] **that seed which would arise from another source, viz. the king Messiah.**”*

(Genesis Rabbah 23:5)

Here, the “seed which would arise from another source” unmistakably points back to Genesis 3:15, identifying the Messiah as the promised seed of the woman.

This brings us to Matthew 1:23.

Matthew 1:23

*“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”*

Which is pointing to the prophecy in Isaiah:

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the LORD [YHWH] himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin [alma] shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Although we have seen rabbinical support for interpreting the prophecy in Genesis 3 as messianic in nature, and further support indicating that Genesis 3 reveals the Messiah would come from the seed of a woman rather than a man, counter-missionaries challenge the idea that this verse in Isaiah refers to a virgin birth. This challenge aims to undermine the credibility of Matthew 1:23.

The truth is that the evidence is overwhelming that this verse is a Messianic prophecy and does in fact refer to a virgin birth of the Messiah. This can be shown in three ways:

- 1) The first is the meaning of the Hebrew word “*alma*” and why it would be used here.
- 2) The second is the reading of the other ancient versions of Isaiah 7:14.
- 3) And the third is the overall context of this passage.

Now great controversy surrounds the Hebrew word “*alma*” in Isaiah 7:14.

It has been suggested that the Hebrew word “*alma*” simply means “young woman,” and that if Isaiah had intended to refer to a “virgin” he would have used the Hebrew word “*betulah*.”

So the question arises, what is an “*alma*?”

What is a “*betulah*” and why would Isaiah use the word “*alma*” rather than “*betulah*” if it were to be a virgin birth?

The word “*alma*” refers to a young unmarried woman one of whose characteristics is virginity. There is no instance where the word “*alma*” is used to refer to a non-virgin. In such passages as Genesis 24:43 compare Genesis 24:43 with 24:16 where “*betulah*” appears. (Song of Solomon 1:3; 6:8 “*alma*” clearly refers to virgins)

In fact, the Hebrew Publishing Company Translation of 1916 translates “*alma*” as “virgin” in Genesis 24:43 and in Song 1:3; 6:8.

Moreover, an ancient Ugaritic tablet was discovered which uses “*alma*” in synonymous poetic parallelism as the synonymous parallel to the cognate of “*betulah*.” For this reason, one of the world’s leading Semitists, the late Dr. Cyrus Gordon who was Jewish and did NOT believe in the virgin birth of Yeshua maintains that Isaiah 7:14 may be translated as “virgin” (Cyrus Gordon, “Almah in Isaiah 7:14,” JBR 21 (1953), 106).

Now, it has been proposed that Isaiah 7:14 refers to a birth by a “young woman” rather than a “virgin.”

In order to understand how this passage was understood anciently we should look at the other ancient versions of the book of Isaiah. Here’s how the Aramaic Peshitta TANAKH has it:

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;
Behold, a virgin (*betultah*) shall conceive, and bear a son,
And call his name Immanuel.

The Aramaic word “*betultah*” clearly means “virgin” and not simply “young lady.”

Now let’s look at the Greek Septuagint reading:

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;
Behold, a virgin (*parthenos*) shall conceive,

and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel.

The Greek “*parthenos*” means “virgin” and not simply “young lady.”

Thus both the ancient Aramaic and ancient Greek versions of Isaiah 7:14 understand *alma* here to refer to a virgin.

Finally, we want to examine the context of Isaiah 7:14. First let’s examine the immediate context of Isaiah 7 and then the broader context of this whole section of Isaiah.

Literal translation of Hebrew of Isaiah 7:14:

Therefore the Lord himself shall give to you(pl) a sign:
behold the “*alma*” will conceive and bear a son
and she will call his name Immanuel.

“You” in verse 14 is plural. By contrast King Achaz is singular “you” in verses 11 and 16-17.

In verses 16-17, the sign to Achaz was that before a child should know how to choose good from bad, the siege would end (16-17).

That child was NOT be the newborn child of verse 14, the child is Isaiah’s son Sh’ar-Yashuv from Isaiah 7:3. The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 is not addressed only to Achaz as is the rest of the prophecy.

How do we know this?

The following literal translation clears things up: (s)=singular (pl)=plural

7:3a Then YHWH said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet
Achaz, you(s) and Sh’ar-Yashuv your(s) son...

7:10 ...YHWH spoke again to Achaz saying:

7:11 "Ask a sign for yourself(s) from YHWH your(s) God;
ask it either in the depth or in the height above."

7:12 But Achaz said: "I will not ask, nor will I test YHWH"

7:13 Then he said: "Hear now, O House of David! Is it a small
thing for **you(pl)** to weary men, but will **you(pl)** weary my God
also?

7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give to **you(pl)** a sign:
behold the ALMA will conceive and bear a son and she will
call his name Immanuel.

7:15 Curds and honey He shall eat, that he may know to refuse
the evil and choose the good.

7:16 For behold before the child shall know to refuse the evil
and choose the good, the land that you(s) dread will be forsaken by both her kings.

7:17 YHWH will bring the King of Assyria upon you(s) and your(s) people and your(s) father's
house...

Notice the clear distinction to what is addressed to you(pl) and what is addressed to you(s) (Achaz) and how this creates a distinction between the newborn in verse 14 and the child in verse 16. Thus the birth in Isaiah 7:14 is not a sign to Achaz alone.

Isaiah 8:8-9:7 also speaks of this same “Immanuel” figure. Thus it is clear that the “Immanuel” of Isaiah 7:14 & 8:8 is also the child born in Isaiah 9:6-7.

Now the NT clearly applies these passages to Messiah Yeshua.

- Revelation 21:3 alludes to Isaiah 7:14 & 8:8, 10.
- 1 Peter 3:14-15 cites Isaiah 8:12-13 in regards to the Messiah.
- Romans 9:32 & 1 Peter 2 apply Isaiah 8:14 to the Messiah.
- Hebrews 2:13 applies Isaiah 8:17-18 to Messiah.
- Finally Mt. 4:15-16 and Luke 1:79 apply Isaiah 8:23-9:1 (9:1-2) to the Messiah.

Moreover the Talmud applies Isaiah 8:14 to Messiah:

*Judah and Hezekiah, the sons of R. Hiyya, once sat at table with Rabbi and uttered not a word. Whereupon he said: Give the young men plenty of strong wine, so that they may say something. When the wine took effect, they began by saying: The **son of David** cannot appear ere the two ruling houses in Israel shall have come to an end, viz., the Exilarchate, in Babylon and the Patriarchate in Palestine, for it is written, **And he shall be for a Sanctuary, for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both houses of Israel (Is. 8:14)**. Thereupon he [Rabbi] exclaimed: You throw thorns in my eyes, my children! At this, R. Hiyya [his disciple] remarked: Master, be not angered, for the numerical value of the letters of yayin is seventy, and likewise the letters of sod: When yayin [wine] goes in, sod [secrets] comes out.*

(b.San. 38a)

Moreover, Targum Jonathan on Isaiah applies Isaiah 9:6-7 to the Messiah as well.

*The prophet said to the house of David, For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and he has taken the law upon himself to keep it. His name is called from before Him who is wonderful in counsel, the mighty God who liveth to eternity — **the Messiah** whose peace shall be great upon us in his days. The greatness of those who do the law shall be magnified, and to those, that preserve peace. There shall be no end to the **throne of David**, and of his kingdom, to establish it and to build it in judgment and in righteousness from henceforth, even for ever. By the Word of the Lord of hosts this shall be done.*

https://www.sefaria.org/Targum_Jonathan_on_Isaiah.9.6

Finally, the figure in Isaiah 9:6-7 certainly seems to be the same as that in Isaiah 11:1.

Isaiah 11:1

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

This is important because EVERYONE agrees that Isaiah 11:1 refers to the Messiah.

Both passages reaffirm the Messianic fulfillment of God's covenant with David. Isaiah 9:7 directly mentions the throne of David, while Isaiah 11:1 portrays the Messiah as the continuation of David's line.

Thus, by examining the overall context of Isaiah 7:14 it becomes clear that Isaiah 7:14 is a messianic

prophecy which prophesies of the virgin birth of the Messiah.

Conclusion

The argument against Yeshua's Messianic qualification due to his divine conception overlooks the profound theological depth within the Scriptures, particularly the Torah and prophetic writings. Genesis 3:15 sets the foundation for a Messianic expectation rooted in the "seed of a woman," pointing to a miraculous birth, untainted by human intervention. Jewish rabbinical tradition, including the Targums and Midrash, aligns with this interpretation, recognizing the connection between the woman's seed and the coming of the Messiah.

The evidence from Isaiah 7:14, reinforced by the linguistic analysis of "alma" and its translation in ancient versions, strengthens the case for the virgin birth. The broader context of Isaiah, further supported by New Testament application and rabbinic commentary, unmistakably identifies this prophecy with the Messiah—Yeshua.

Rather than disqualifying Yeshua, his divine conception fulfills a foundational Messianic prophecy. This unique genealogy underscores the Messiah's dual nature: fully human, born of a woman, and fully divine, conceived by the Spirit of God. Thus, the virgin birth is not a disqualifier but a divine affirmation of Yeshua's identity as the promised Redeemer, fulfilling both Torah and Prophetic Scriptures.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net

TWITTER: [www.twitter.com/119Ministries#](https://twitter.com/119Ministries#)