BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION - HERMENEUTICS

Keep reminding people of this, and charge them solemnly before the Lord not to engage in word-battles. They accomplish nothing useful and are a catastrophe for the hearers! Do all you can to present yourself to God as someone worthy of his approval, as a worker with no need to be ashamed, because he deals straightforwardly with the Word of the Truth. But keep away from godless babbling, for those who engage in it will only become more ungodly, ... II Timothy 2:14-16

Especially among those professing to know the Lord Yeshua-Jesus as their personal Savior, it is most important to see what God has said in the Biblical text. Right?

I thought you would appreciate knowing the ancient Jewish four methods of working a text remembered by the Hebrew word “ParDeS,” an acronym formed from the initials of each method; it means “orchard” or “garden.”

1) **P’shat** (“simple”)—the plain, literal sense of the text, more or less what modern scholars mean by “grammatical-historical exegesis,” which looks to the grammar of the language and the historical setting as background for deciding what a passage means. Modern scholars often consider grammatical-historical exegesis the only valid way to deal with a text; pastors who use other approaches in their sermons usually feel defensive about it before academics. But the rabbis had three other modes of interpreting Scripture, and their validity should not be excluded in advance but related to the validity of their implied presuppositions. eg. Mattityahu/Matthew 1:23 (Yesha’yahu/Isaiah 7:14b), 2:6 (Mikhah/Micah 5:1)

2) **Remez** (“hint”)—wherein a word, phrase or other element in the text hints at a truth not conveyed by the p’shat. The implied presupposition is that God can hint at things of which the Bible writers themselves were unaware. eg. Mattityahu 2:15 (Hoshea/Hosea 11:1)

3) **Drash or midrash** (“search”)—an allegorical or homiletical application of a text. This is a species of eisegesis—reading one’s own thoughts into the text—as opposed to exegesis, which is extracting from the text what it actually says. The implied presupposition is that the words of Scripture can legitimately become grist for the mill of human intellect, which God can guide to truths not directly related to the text at all. eg. Messianic Jews/Hebrews 11:8-10

4) **Sod** (“secret”)—a mystical or hidden meaning arrived at by operating on the numerical values of the Hebrew letters, noting unusual spellings, transposing letters, and the like. For example, two words, the numerical equivalents of whose letters add up to the same amount, are good candidates for revealing a secret through what Arthur Koestler in his book on the inventive mind called “bisociation of ideas.” The implied presupposition is that God invests meaning in the minutest details of Scripture, even the individual letters. eg. Revelation 13:17-18 The name of Messiah in Greek, lēsous, equals 888; 7 is regarded as the perfect number; and triple repetition symbolizes absolute ultimacy (as in Isaiah 6:3, “Holy, holy, holy is Adonai of Hosts.”). Therefore 888 means that Yeshua is absolutely and ultimately beyond perfection, while 666 means that the beast in every respect falls short of perfection and is therefore absolutely and ultimately imperfect and evil.

The presuppositions underlying remez, drash and sod obviously express God’s omnipotence, but they also express his love for humanity, in the sense that he chooses out of love to use extraordinary means for reaching people’s hearts and minds. At the same time, it is easy to see how remez, drash and sod can be abused, since they all allow, indeed require, subjective interpretation; and this explains why scholars, who deal with the objective world, hesitate to use them.

May we all seek the pureness of God’s Word in His purposes for such and not deviate from expounding its truth and love. Let’s not have the Scriptures say what we want, but what God says.

Shalom and may God bless you, Isaiah 12:2-3, Pastor Re’uben

I appreciate your support of this front-line ministry!

**Truth vs. Error** 7 Biblical Fundamentals Compared to 12 False World Faith Religions. .... They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Acts 17:11 www.menorah.org/cults.html
Upon the rock of this declaration rests the second of the Thirteen Principles of Jewish Faith: "I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is a Unity, and that there is no unity in any manner like unto His, and that He alone is our God who was, is, and will be."

From where, then, comes the doctrine of the Trinity? A large part of the world, though professing to worship the God who is revealed in the writings of Moses and the prophets, nevertheless believes in God as a Trinity. Although it may be granted that the Christian's New Testament teaches that the term God may be applied to God the Father, to God the Son, and to God the Holy Spirit, the Christian should cease to claim that he worships the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Moses and the prophets, the God of the Torah, the Neviim, and the Ketuvim, unless there is found in the Tenach (Old Testament), indisputable evidence that God exists in more than one personality.

The first words of the Torah declare: "In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens (hashamayim) and the earth." It must be admitted that the word for God here is in the plural form, even as is the word for heavens, and that it is the same as used in the first commandment: "You shall have no other gods (Elohim) before me" (Exodus 20:3). Likewise in Deuteronomy 13:2 (v. 6 in Hebrew text): "If he (a false prophet) says, 'Let us follow other gods.'" Elohim is invariably a plural form. Additionally, when speaking of the act of creation performed in the beginning by Elohim the Triune God, Moses used a verb in the singular number, bara (created).

It is reasoned by some that the plural Elohim is the "plural of majesty," used to ascribe majesty to one who is never less a single individual, and that therefore the use of the singular verb would be entirely reasonable. But a singular verb is not invariably used with the plural Elohim. Readers familiar with the Hebrew text can check the plural verbs used in Genesis 20:13 and in Genesis 35:7. Plural adjectives are also used to describe this Elohim. For examples see Deuteronomy 4:7, Elohim krovim (God is near), and Joshua 24:19, Elohim kadoshim (a holy God).

The plurality of the name Elohim leads naturally to a consideration of the fact that other plural words are also used in referring to God. In Genesis 1:26 God said: "Let us make man in our image." In Genesis 3:22 God said: "The man has now become like one of us." And in Genesis 11:7 God said: "Come, let us go down and confuse their language." To whom, and of whom is God speaking with the use of these plural pronouns?

We have seen in Genesis 1:1 that Elohim (plural) created the heavens and the earth; and in the next verse we read: "And the Spirit of God (Ruah Elohim) was hovering over the waters." Was it speaking for himself and his Spirit that God (Elohim) said in verse 26: "Let us make man in our image?" Is this why Solomon said: "Remember your Creator" (plural, in the literal translation of Ecclesiastes 12:1)?

In Proverbs 30:4 the challenging question is presented to mankind: "Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his Son? Tell me if you know!" Does God have a Son?

In verse 7 Messiah steps forward to declare the decree by which his coronation shall be accomplished saying: "I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: "He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations (goyim) your inheritance.'"

Furthermore, in Psalm 2:11-12 we are solemnly instructed: "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son (nashqu bar), lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

The Hebrew for "kiss the Son" is nashqu bar. Even if this is translated, as some would have it, "Do homage in purity," the homage is to the Lord of verse 11 and to the Son of verse 7. The Tenach clearly indicates that there is a divine personality who is called the Son of God, who is worthy of homage, and if we put our trust in him, we are blessed.

In Psalm 110, the one who is in a future day to rule in Zion is addressed as a divine personality by another who is also deity. "The Lord says to my Lord," writes David the psalmist, "sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies" (Psalm 110:1-2).

Here is one who is "the Lord" speaking to David's Lord and telling him to sit at his right hand until the time comes for him to rule in the midst of some who are now his enemies. Surely the psalm is speaking of two divine personalities, one whom is yet to be Israel's King! "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:9). "At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the Lord, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts" (Jeremiah 3:17).

Does the Tenach indicate how a divine eternal personality can be a Son? Is this not a great problem, since being a son suggests the idea of generation and birth? The divine solution: deity becomes a Son by way of incarnation, God taking upon himself humanity. Hear the words of the prophet Isaiah:"For to us a child is born, called Wonderful Counselor,
"Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign (no ordinary birth, but something so unusual, remarkable, and miraculous as to constitute a sign): The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:13-14). Immanuel means "God with us," deity incarnate, dwelling with men!

Who are the three divine personalities Isaiah 48:11-18 (Yeshayahu Hanavii) speaks about? "Listen to me, 0 Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. (Only God is eternal.) My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens (the Creator is speaking)...and now the Sovereign Lord (one divine personality) has sent me (the speaker is eternal and the Creator, and therefore a second divine personality), with his Spirit (a third divine personality)."

"This is what the Lord says -- your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. (This divine personality, the sent one, calls himself the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; and he says that he and God's Spirit have been sent by the Sovereign Lord.) If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea." Not only has Israel failed to listen to him, but mankind generally has failed to heed the Redeemer; and until men turn to him wholeheartedly, there will be no peace.

Many Jewish people express the lament that if there is a God, he seems to have forgotten the Jews; but Israel's long night of suffering is not without purpose. God permits her hardship in order that Israel may be brought to acknowledge her rejection of her God and return to him. In Micah 5:2 (verse 1 in Hebrew text) we read: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

Thus we have corroboration of other predictions already considered concerning Messiah: 1) that he was to appear in human form; 2) that he was to be rejected (see Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22); 3) that he was to be born in Bethlehem (and every year the world celebrates the birth which took place there more than nineteen hundred years ago, before the dispersion of the Jewish nation); 4) this one is to be Israel's King; and 5) that he is deity, for his "origins are from of old, from ancient times."

But if three divine personalities are revealed in the Tenach, why does Moses speak of God as one? The second of the Thirteen Principles of Jewish Faith says: "The Creator, blessed be His name, is a Unity, and there is no unity in any manner like unto His."

The Hebrew word Maimonides used in the Principles of Faith for unity is the word yahid. The word yahid carries the thought of absolute oneness rather than unity. True, yahid always means oneness in the absolute sense. But the appeal of every honest seeker after truth is not to the Thirteen Principles of Faith, but to the Holy Scriptures, the Tenach. The seventh of those Principles states: "I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, peace be to him, was true, and that he was the chief of the prophets, both of those that preached and of those that followed him."

Therefore, to Moses we turn in Deuteronomy (Humesheh Devarim) 6:4, and read: "Shema Yisrael (Hear, 0 Israel): Adonai Eloheinu (the Lord our God or Gods), Adonai ehad (the Lord a unity; not yahid, an absolute one, an only, but ehad). Ehad is the word that Moses also uses in Genesis 2:24, when he says: "And they (husband and wife) will become one flesh (basar ehad). Ehad is the word that God uses when he tells Ezekiel: "Join them together into one stick so that they (the two sticks for Israel and Judah) will become one (ehad) in your hand" (Ezekiel 37:17).

Truly, "there is no unity in any manner like unto His," for the unity which is God's transcends all other unity. So unique is his unity, that the virgin born son, Immanuel, of whom we read in a former paragraph, is by the same prophet (Isaiah) called the Mighty God and Everlasting Father. So completely are the divine and timeless eternal personalities joined, that although one of them appeared in time as an incarnate Son, yet, being equally and eternally self-existent with the Father, he is said to exist eternally as the Son. At the same time he was, is, and ever will be one with the mighty God, the everlasting Father.

Is it not also a remarkable fact that the eternal one's appearance in time nineteen hundred [plus] years ago marks the focal point of all history, so that all the world reckons time as either before or after his coming, B.C. or A.D.? Jewish people may prefer the designations B.C.E. (before the common era) and C.E. (the common era), but the dividing point between the eras is the same. The careful and honest inquirer therefore comes to the conclusion that the Tenach teaches the Trinity as well as the Unity of God. God declared unto Moses: I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account (Deuteronomy 18:18-19).

"Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God (Eloheinu), for he will freely pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7).

AMF-Life In Messiah Int'l. Milton B. Lindberg www.lifeinmessiah.org

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Moses Called As Prophet And Priest
But Not Messiah

While Moses plays a most significant role as a chosen leader, he was not of the Messianic lineage. He was from the tribe of Levi whereas Messiah was to come from Judah. Nevertheless, Moses was a forerunner of the Messiah. In that respect, Messiah was to be like Moses in circumstances, character & calling.

The similarities between Moses and Messiah in circumstances are obvious. Moses began his career in Egypt. Messiah was to be called out of Egypt.(1) As an infant, Moses’ life was endangered by a Gentile king. This is also true concerning the Messiah.(2) Moses’ life was saved by God’s direct intervention, and this was the case with Messiah.(3) Moses was rejected and maligned by his own people, and responded in love by interceding on their behalf. This is Messiah’s modus operandi.(4) Finally, both Moses and Messiah are redeemers of their people.(5) Humility best describes the character of both Moses and Messiah. We read that Moses "was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth."(6) When the prophet Zechariah characterizes the Messiah, he portrays him as "lowly, and riding upon ... the foal of an ass."(7) In addition to their similarities in circumstances and character each had a special calling as prophet and priest.

Messiah As Prophet
Moses and Messiah were called to be prophets but, as Moses prophesied in the book of Deuteronomy: The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from among you, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.(8) Targum Pseudo-Jonathan amplifies this Deuteronomy passage by stating that the Prophet would have the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit): And a right Prophet (or Prophet of Righteousness) will the Lord your God give you, a Prophet from among you, of your brethren like unto me, with the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit), will the Lord your God raise up unto you; to him shall you be obedient.(9) God underrates Moses' prophecy saying: I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my word which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.(10)

Most Jewish commentators believe that Joshua and other prophets fulfilled the scriptural reference to the Prophet. However, Rabbi Levi Ben Gershon (RALBAG), of the 14th century, identified the Prophet as Messiah: ‘A Prophet from the midst of thee.’ In fact, the Messiah is such a Prophet as it is stated in the Midrash of this verse, ‘Behold my Servant shall prosper’ (Isaiah 52:13) ... Moses, by the miracles which he wrought, brought a single nation to the worship of God, but the Messiah will draw all peoples to the worship of God. The Midrashic passage that RALBAG cites, referring to Messiah as Prophet, states: It is written, ‘Behold, my servant shall deal wisely He shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high’ (Isaiah 52:13). It means, He shall be more exalted than Abraham of whom it is written, ‘I lift up my hand’ (Genesis 14:22). He shall be more extolled than whom it is said, ‘As a nursing father beareth the nursing child’ (Numbers 11:12). ‘And shall be very high’ that is, Messiah shall be higher than the ministering angels. ..."

Apparently, there were those in the first century who believed that the Prophet of Deuteronomy referred to the Messiah. That is why they asked Yochanan Ben-Z’kharyah (John the Immerser), who was calling the Jewish people to repent of their sins, "Art thou that Prophet?"(12) Since he denied it, "they asked him ‘Why are you immersing [people] then, if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, neither that Prophet?’(13) A few years later Simon Bar Yonah, speaking in the Temple, quoted the Deuteronomic prophecy to prove that God had, in fact, raised up that Prophet, the Messiah, from their midst.(14)

Messiah As Priest
Both Moses and Messiah were called to serve in a priestly role, although neither of them qualified as Temple High Priests, since they were not of the Aaronic lineage. Nonetheless, they were called to fulfill the priestly function of ministering salvation to their people. Moses saved Israel physically by leading them out of the oppression of Egyptian bondage. During their 40 years in the desert he also served as intercessor between God and the people whenever they sinned. For example, while Moses was on Mt. Sanai, the children of Israel made the golden calf. God then told Moses what the people had done, threatened to destroy them, and establish a new messianic line through Moses: And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may burn against them and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation.’(5)

Moses interceded by imploring God to forgive the people. He also pleaded with God to keep the lineage promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, rather than to start a new one beginning with Moses This prayer of Moses was accepted by God. Similarly, Messiah was called to serve in a priestly role. Of Him the Psalmist writes, “Thou art a priest forever.”(7) This priestly role would be manifest in Messiah’s work as Intercessor and Redeemer. Isaiah spoke of Messiah’s role as intercessor when he prophesied that Messiah “bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”(18) As Redeemer, He would save his people from their sins in the words of the prophet Isaiah: But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. ... [T]he Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. ... For he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. (19)

Jewish leaders were looking forward to this priestly Messiah and they were aware that there was a prophetic dimension to the ministry of the priests of the First Temple period. It appears that the Urim and Thummim worn by the High Priest in this breastplate were in some way connected with this prophetic ministry, whereby they discerned the will of the Lord and gave counsel. The Urim and Thummim, elements of the priestly garment, disappeared by the end of the First Temple era. From that period on many Jewish leaders looked forward to a priest who would fulfill the function of the First Temple
Moses Called As Prophet And Priest  
But Not Messiah

The era priest who employed the Urim and Thummim to communicate directly with God and to discern his will for the people. Thus, we are told in the book of Ezra: And the [Governor] said unto them, that they should not eat of the holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim & Thummim. (20)

Such a priest never arose during the Second Temple era. However, many looked forward to the Messiah who would incorporate the High offices of Priest and Prophet in himself. In this regard we read an historical account in the Book of Maccabees in the 2nd century B.C.E regarding the rededication of the Second Temple that had been profaned by the Greeks. They discussed what should be done about the altar, which had been profaned and very properly decided to pull it down ... and deposited the stones in a suitable place on the Temple hill to await the appearance of the Prophet who should give a ruling about them. (21) The Talmud teaches that, Moses our Master was a high priest. (22) The Prophet, therefore, whom God would raise up, in addition to the quality of being the Prophet, would also be the High Priest, "like unto Moses." The Talmud also teaches that, "All the prophets prophesied only for the coming of the Messiah." (23) Hence, the one who was to be the Prophet and the High Priest like unto Moses was also the Messiah. But instead of being from the lineage of Moses, he would descend from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and Jesse.

Isaiah 7:1-17 The Virgin Birth of Yeshua
The Messiah ... God’s True Hope and Deliverance

Chapters 7-12 of Isaiah constitute a single unit, sometimes referred to as "The Book of Immanuel" because the name "Immanuel" appears three times in the Hebrew text (7:4; 8:8; 10). The first prophecy which we will look at within this section of Scripture deals with the birth of Immanuel. In the Bible, when parents name a child, the meaning of the name shows the thinking of the parents. When God names the child, as here, the name shows the very nature of the child. Immanuel means "with us, God." The character of the child will be "God among us."

The Controversy
As mentioned in our discussion of Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:3-14 is a prophecy concerning the virgin conception and birth of the Messiah. This is perhaps the most controversial of the messianic prophecies and therefore requires a closer textual analysis than others. The exact meaning of this passage is disputed by rabbis, liberal theologians and even by some evangelical theologians. The passage talks of "a sign: The virgin will be with child..." There are two areas of controversy here:

1. The sign
Since the context of the chapter requires a short range prophecy - giving a sign to King Ahaz - how can this be applied to the birth of a child some 700 years later, as claimed in Matthew 1:22-23?

2. The Hebrew word "Almah"
Does it really mean a virgin, or simply a young unmarried woman? We will deal with both of these contentious issues before proceeding to discuss the passage itself.

Hermeneutics
Since Isaiah 7:13-14 requires an immediate sign to King Ahaz, many Evangelicals have taken this verse to be an example of "double fulfillment." This principle states that a prophecy may have more than one fulfillment. This verse may, accordingly, be both a sign for King Ahaz and the sign in Matthew 1:22-23 for the birth of Jesus. This author does not accept the principle of double fulfillment either here or in any other place in the Bible. If this principle were true, there would be no real need for the virgin birth at all. There is another, better principle of biblical interpretation which is "Double Reference." This principle states that one block of Scripture dealing with one person, one event, one time, may be followed by another block of Scripture dealing with a different person, place and time, without making any clear distinction between the two blocks. In short, the one block of Scripture is just another interpretation which is "Double Reference." This principle states that one prophecy can have two fulfillments. "Double Reference" states that the one piece of Scripture actually contains two prophecies, each having its own fulfillment. As will be explained later, Isaiah 7:3-17 contains two quite separate prophecies with different purposes, and having different fulfillments at different times.

The Hebrew Word Almah
The major debate, of course, is over the exact meaning of the Hebrew word a-mah, translated here as virgin. In describing a young woman, there are three Hebrew words which Isaiah could have used: 1. Na’arah Na’arah means "damsel" Isaiah 7:1-17 and can refer to either a virgin (as in 1 Kings 1:2), or a non-virgin (as in Ruth 2:6).

2. Betulah This is commonly considered to mean a virgin, exclusively. It is argued that if Isaiah had really meant to say a virgin, then he would have used this word. It is true that this word is often used to mean virgin, but not always. For example:
   i. In Joel 1:8 it is used in reference to a widow.
   ii. In Genesis 24:6, because the word does not exclusively mean "virgin" the writer adds the phrase "had never

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The northern Kingdom of Israel (or Ephraim), and the southern
Babylonian Empire. Among these smaller kingdoms was Syria (or Aram),
threatening the smaller kingdoms of the Middle East
unmarried women in His procession.

virgin, then God


The Signs of Deliverance - 7:10-17

God offers him a sign anywhere he wants - in heaven, on

to Heaven?

The Threat to the House of David - 7:1-2

At this point in history there was an empire arising which was
threatening the smaller kingdoms of the Middle East - the Assyrian Empire. Among these smaller kingdoms was Syria (or Aram),
the northern Kingdom of Israel (or Ephraim), and the southern

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known a man" in order to clarify what he means.

iii. Again in Judges 2:12 the phrase "had not known a man"
has to be added to give the precise meaning.

3. Almah Almah means "a virgin," "a young virgin," a "virgin of
marriageable age." This word is used seven times in the Hebrew
Scriptures and not once is it used to describe a married woman;
this point is not debated.

i. Genesis 24:43. In contrast to 24:6 mentioned above, verse
43 requires no additional qualifying remarks since the one word
alone is sufficient to mean "virgin." Furthermore, it is used of
Rebekah who was obviously a virgin at the time of her marriage
to Isaac.

ii. Exodus 2:8. Used in reference to Moses' sister Miriam,
who was a virgin.

iii. Psalm 68:25. Used in reference to the royal procession
of virgins. Since the King in this context is God Himself, absolute
virginity is required; it is unthinkable that God would allow un-
chaste, unmarried women in His procession.

iv. Song of Songs 1:3. The context here is purity in marriage.

v. Song of Songs 6:8. The word is used here in contrast to
wives and concubines who would obviously be non-virgins.

vi. Proverbs 30:18-19. The word is used in verse 19 in con-
trast to an adulteress in verse 20.

vii. Isaiah 7:14. Since all of the above six verses mean "a vir-
gin," what reason is there for making Isaiah 7:14 the only excep-
tion? Since everyone agrees that almah means an unmarried
woman, if the woman in Isaiah 7:14 were a non-virgin, then God
would be promising a sign involving fornication and illegitimacy.
It is unthinkable that God would sanction sin, and in any case,
what would be so unusual about an illegitimate baby that could
possibly constitute a sign?

As far as ancient Jewish writers were concerned, there was no
argument about Isaiah 7:4 predicting a virgin birth. The Septua-
gint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures made about
200 b.c.e./b.c., 200 years before the issue of Jesus' Messiahship
ever arose. The Jews who made this translation, living much closer
to the times of Isaiah than we do today, translated Isaiah
7:14 using the Greek word parthenos which very clearly and ex-
clusively means a virgin. There can therefore be no doubt that
the unique event which God is promising as a sign, is the miracu-
losous conception of a son by a girl who is still a virgin.

The Threat to the House of David - 7:1-2

At this point in history there was an empire arising which was
threatening the smaller kingdoms of the Middle East - the Assyrian Empire. Among these smaller kingdoms was Syria (or Aram),
the northern Kingdom of Israel (or Ephraim), and the southern

Kingdom of Judah. The kings of Israel and Syria joined forces
against their common enemy (verses 1-2), but still did not have
enough military might to withstand an Assyrian attack. They
invited Judah to join forces with them, but Ahaz, King of Judah,
refused. Israel and Syria then conspired, not only to dethrone
Ahaz, when they might have succeeded, but to depose the en-
tire House of David. This is the emphasis in verse 2. They would
then establish a new dynasty in Judah more favorable to an alli-
ance against Assyria. This, then, is a direct attack upon God’s
eternal covenant with David. It is therefore doomed to failure.
(The Davidic Covenant is discussed under I Chronicles 17:10b-14
in the section on The Writings.)*

The Message to Ahaz - 7:3-9

Ahaz is not a worshipper of the one true God, but has fallen
into idolatry and is very much afraid of the approaching attack
(verse 2). In verses 3-9 God gives a message to Ahaz. In verse 3,
Isaiah is commissioned to meet with Ahaz, who is inspecting
water supplies in preparation for a siege. Isaiah is also to take his
son with him. His son is called Shear-Jashub, meaning "a rem-
nant will return." The reason for taking his son is not explained
until verses 15-16. In verses 4-6 the message is given, describing
the plot and telling Ahaz not to be afraid. The plot consists of
overthrowing Ahaz and replacing him with the son of Tabeel.
Isaiah was a master of the Hebrew language and loved playing
word games. He does so here in verse 6. Tabeel means "God is
good." By altering the vowel pattern very slightly, Isaiah changes
this to mean "good for nothing." The one that means "God is
good" will prove to be "good for nothing." Because of the Da-
vidic Covenant, no conspiracy against the House of David can
ever succeed. God clearly states this in Isaiah 7:1-17 verse 7, and
in verses 8-9 God will judge the two kings involved in the con-
spiracy.

The Offer of a Sign - 7:10-11 Ahaz, however, is an idolater who
does not trust in God and has made his own arrangements. He
has sent letters and gifts to the Assyrian Emperor, asking for
assistance in his defense against these two kings. He has greater
faith in the Assyrian Empire than in the God of Israel. So, in verse
10, God speaks a second time. He offers Ahaz a sign - whatever
it takes to convince Ahaz not to fear, not to trust the Assyrians,
but to trust in God. Whatever it takes, let him ask for it and God
will do it for him. The word for "sign" does not of itself mean a
miracle; it could be a miraculous or a natural sign. Within this
context, however, it is clear that it will take a miracle to convince
Ahaz.

The Signs of Deliverance - 7:10-17

God offers him a sign anywhere he wants - in heaven, on
earth, under the earth -whatever it takes to

* The Davidic Covenant is discussed under I Chronicles 17:10b-14
in the section on The Writings. *
**THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF YESHUA**

**THE MESSIAH .... God’s True Hope and Deliverance**

Convince him.

The Rejection of the Offer - 7:12 In response, the idolatrous Ahaz suddenly becomes very spiritual. In verse 12 he refuses to “test” God or “tempt” Him. This is a reference to Deuteronomy 6:16, but he misapplies it. Nevertheless, it is evident that even in idolatry, Ahaz was not ignorant of the true God! Deuteronomy 6:16 warns against asking for a sign, but here God is offering a sign and Ahaz is invited to respond. Ahaz does not want a sign, lest it come to pass, and be forced to abandon his alliance with Assyria. Then come the crucial verses, 13 and 14.

The Sign to the House of David - 7:13-14 In verse 13, Isaiah turns from addressing Ahaz as an individual and addresses the entire House of David. The English language does not distinguish between “you” addressed to one person and “you” addressed to many people. In Hebrew there is a difference, and there is a clear change between the singular “you” of verses 9,11,16,17 and the plural “you” of verses 13-14. The sign therefore is not just for Ahaz, but for the whole House of David. This becomes clearer if we state the passage again with the singular [s] and plural [pl] words indicated: 7:9 “ . . . and the head of Ephraim is Samaria and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you [s] will not believe, you [s] surely shall not last.” 10 Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11 "Ask a sign for yourself [s] from the LORD your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven." 12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!” 13

Then he said, "Listen now, 0 house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you [pl] to try the patience of men, that you [pl] will try the patience of my God as well? 14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you [pl] a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. 15 "He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. 16 "For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings will be forsaken. “The LORD will bring on the house of Judah, and on your father’s house such days as have never come since the day that Ephraim separated from Judah, the king of Assyria.” (NASB, with comments added) In verse 14, the Hebrew word for “behold” is a word which draws attention to an event which could be past, present or future. However, grammatically, whenever "behold" is used with the Hebrew present participle, it always refers to a future event. That is the case here. Not only is the birth future, but the very conception is future. This is not referring to a pregnant woman about to give birth.

The text specifically says "the virgin" (the NIV and NKJV are correct at this point; the NASB like most translations says "a virgin," which is quite wrong). According to the rules of Hebrew grammar, when finding the use of a definite article (the), the reader should look for a reference in the immediate previous context. Having followed the passage from chapter 7:1, there has been no mention of any woman. Having failed with the immediate context, the second rule is the "principle of previous reference," something which has been dealt with much earlier and is common knowledge among the people. Where in Jewish Scripture or tradition is there any concept of “the virgin giving birth to a son”? The only possible reference is to Genesis 3:15. Contrary to the biblical norm, the Messiah would be reckoned after the Seed of the Woman. Why? Because He would have no human father; His would be a virgin conception and birth. The key point of this should not be missed. God is promising that the House of David cannot be deposed or lose its identity until the birth of a virgin-born son. Again, this requires that Messiah be born prior to the destruction of the Temple and its genealogical records in 70 A.D.

The Sign to Ahaz - 7:15-17 Having concluded that Isaiah 7:12-14 is a long range prophecy concerning the birth of Messiah, that still leaves a problem. What about Ahaz? An event 700 years in the future is of little significance to him. There is however a second sign in verses 15-17, and this time it is specifically for Ahaz. The "you" in verse 16 is again singular, meaning Ahaz. Before Isaiah’s son is old enough to make moral distinctions between right and wrong, the kings of Israel and Syria will be deposed and their threat removed. This was fulfilled within three years. Isaiah again uses the definite article before the term "boy." This time there is another boy mentioned in the context: Isaiah’s son. The boy of verse 16 cannot be the son of verse 14 but refers back to Isaiah’s son in verse 3. Why else was Isaiah commanded to take him?

**Summary of Isaiah 7:1-17** In Isaiah chapter 7, King Ahaz, the King of Judah, is under threat of attack. This threat is not only to him personally but to the whole House of David. Through the Prophet Isaiah, God tells King Ahaz to be at peace and to be unafraid. Two reasons are given, two signs which guarantee God’s promise of security. The first sign, in verses 13 and 14, is that no event to destroy the House of David will succeed until the birth of a virgin-born son. The term "virgin" is required both by the Hebrew vocabulary and the context. The second sign, in

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Isaiah's son, Shear-Jashub, reaches an age of moral maturity, the two enemy kings will cease to exist.

Isaiah 7:14 teaches that:

Messiah would be born of a girl who is still a virgin; the explanation of Genesis 3:15
Messiah will be the God-Man.
Messiah will be a king.
Messiah must be born prior to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E./A.D.

Messiah must be born prior to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E./A.D.

Menorah provides many opportunities to do this, on university campuses, on the streets, at public fairs through our tent ministry, the internet, a mission restaurant and even Facebook!

What a fun passion God has given Menorah and me personally. At 10 years of age God changed my heart and filled me with this passion to share His beautiful Gospel message with anyone who will listen. For 53 years He has kept me excited for His kingdom and the possibility that He would actually use me ally. At 10 years of age God changed my heart and filled me with this passion to share His beautiful Gospel message with anyone who will listen. For 53 years He has kept me excited for His kingdom and the possibility that He would actually use me if I remain willing to help grow His Kingdom, awesome😊!

Menorah provides many opportunities to do this, on university campuses, on the streets, at public fairs through our tent ministry, the internet, a mission restaurant and even Facebook!

David, a Jewish student on the Auraria Campus stopped to tell me he was spending the summer with cousins in Israel and, by the way, why does ‘Menorah’ have this table on campus? David was intrigued about hearing the Gospel for the first time. He asked if there are also people in Israel who actually believe this. David is now excited and planning to visit some of these Jesus Christians while in Israel this summer, especially Arie who can give him a special Messianic tour of the land, Eretz Israel!

Saed from Morocco spent time in Israel as part of a youth program to help build “bridges for peace.” Now attending an American university he often comes by our table to ask questions. Saed like other Muslims is asking good questions about the coming war with Israel, they know the Muslim Brotherhood has it planned. Saed is frightened by this and asked toward the end of another one of our Gospel conversations if he could come to Jesus even if he had fear. After all our conversations I was still surprised by this sincere question and his acknowledgment of his need and desire to repent and choose to walk this narrow path with the ‘real Jesus’!

Sueyog from Nepal sat at a table nearby to eat his hot dog. I’m thinking he wants to listen in on our conversations. We eventually started a Gospel conversation together and then I knew it was God who sat this thirsty soul next to us. Sueyog prayed the sweetest prayer of repentance in response to the Gospel and now has his first Bible and information about how to begin on this new path following Jesus! Praise the Lord!!!

Menorah is so grateful for all the help we receive from friends who provide Bibles, other materials, prayers and financial support so we can continue to freely give to the many hungry and thirsty hearts God brings to us! Thank you.

Staying excited about Jesus until the nets are full, Donn Drebenstedt

## Menorah Directory
- Campus-Street Ministry Director

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**Isaiah 7:1-17 The Virgin Birth of Yeshua The Messiah **...

God’s True Hope and Deliverance

verses 15 and 16, is given to Ahaz personally. God promises that the attack upon him by Israel and Syria will not succeed, and before Isaiah’s son, Shear-Jashub, reaches an age of moral maturity, the two enemy kings will cease to exist.

**Isaiah 7:14 teaches that:**  Messiah must be born prior to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E./A.D.

Messiah would be born of a girl who is still a virgin; the explanation of Genesis 3:15

Messiah will be the God-Man.

Messiah will be a king.

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