

What Does *Almah* Mean?

By William F. Beck

[March 3, 1970]

Historical Setting

Ahaz, after Rehoboam the tenth king of Judah (736-16), was one of its worst rulers. He worshiped idols and even sacrificed his son to Moloch.¹ God punished Ahaz by having Syria and Israel defeat Judah. (735-34 B.C.). Israel killed 120,000 men of Judah, including a son of the king, and took 200,000 women and children captive. The Edomites also came and defeated Judah, taking away captives, and the Philistines invaded the low hills in the southwest.²

Surrounded and beaten by these four enemies, Ahaz went for help—not to the Lord, but to Assyria. Tiglath-pileser came to help him but also to cause him additional trouble. Ahaz took the treasures of the temple, of his own palace and the palaces of his princes and with these tried to persuade Tiglath-pileser to give him better help. But this sacrifice, too, was wasted.³

In his despair, Ahaz called on—no not the Lord, but the gods of Syria. When the Syrians had defeated him, their gods had proved their superior power. Ahaz sacrificed to them to get their help, but they ruined him. Meanwhile Ahaz cut up the equipment of the temple and closed the temple.⁴

In 7:1-9. Isaiah tells us that when Syria and Israel came to attack Jerusalem and to give Judah a new puppet king, the Lord offered Ahaz, this ungodly ancestor of our Savior (Mt 1:10) the mercies of David from whom he was descended. All Ahaz had to do was to believe (Isa. 7:9), then those two firebrands of the north, the kings of Syria and Israel, now burning furiously, would go out.

A Sign

Whether a “sign” is natural like the blood on the doorposts and lintel of the Israelites when the angel of death passed over them (Ex 12:13), or supernatural like the miracles of the Exodus (Ex 4; 7:3), it is always unique and distinctive. The verses preceding Isaiah 7:14 prepare for something extraordinary. Ahaz should ask for a miracle, like that which later was given to Hezekiah. It may be “in the depth,” perhaps an earthquake, a flood from the ground, or water from a rock;⁵ or it may be “in the heights above,” perhaps a sudden storm, thunder and lightning, the sun standing still, manna from heaven, or fire from the sky.⁶ Here is a sweeping offer: Ask for a miracle of any size; God will do what Ahaz asks.

But Ahaz refuses. His way of refusing shows that he knows that a miracle is involved. He talks piously about not testing the Lord.⁷ He may already be trying to make a deal with Tiglath-pileser, with whom he used the same abject tone, “I am your servant and your son” (2 Ki. 16:7). He is perverse. Obeying God is not testing him. But his wicked heart does not know how to obey even when it is the only way in which he can be helped. When he is asked to reject human help and cling to the Lord, he rejects the Lord. This is the climax of his unbelief: He prefers Tiglath-pileser. And so the Lord turns away from him. In v.11 Isaiah still calls the Lord the God of Ahaz; there “you” is singular, referring to the king. In v.13, the Lord is the God of Isaiah, and in v.14 “you” is plural, including others. From the God of Armies, Ahaz could have had a smashing victory over all his enemies just for the asking, but when he pushes God aside, God will give a sign of his own choosing, which may mean doom for Ahaz.

While “sign” is without an article in vv. 11 and 14, and so the second sign is not the one which Ahaz might have asked, there is nothing in the text to suggest an abrupt anticlimax from a great miracle to just a name or just another pregnancy.⁸ God is giving something special. If it isn’t special, it is meaningless that God should

give it. God will prove his presence and accredit his prophet as the servant of the living God. The crescendo grows until it reaches its highest point in God-with-us: “Therefore—the Lord Himself—will give you a sign—Behold”; now nothing but a world-shaking act of God will satisfy the expectation which the Lord builds up in his promise.

The setting, particularly the Lord’s offer in v. 11, points to the future. “The Lord will give you a sign” and “behold” point to the future. The adjective *harah* and the participle *yoledeh* fit into the future picture (cp. Ge. 17:19). The Septuagint and the New Testament take this as future. All three—the conception, the birth, and the naming are in the future.

What is the sign? Is it the conception, the birth, the Son (Lk. 2:34), or the name God-with-us? Commentators can each take one of these four pieces, as the soldiers divided the Savior’s garments, and then each can assert his right to his own opinion because the truth is the truth even if it is only a part of it. Our exegesis is healthier when it lets the whole meaning of a text stand undivided and untouched. Then the sign will be all that is promised: The *almah* will conceive and have a son, God-with-us.

This sign, then, will be—

1. As a gift to “the house of David,” he will be a descendant of David.⁹
2. A miraculous person, God-with-us. He is God and King.¹⁰ He possesses the land of Israel and is the pledge of the survival of Israel.¹¹
3. This gift comes to us from the omnipotent Lord of heaven and earth.

He created the first Adam without a sexual process. When he comes to redeem us, the powers of nature are only a minor instrument in his hand.

In this textual setting we examine the meaning of—

Almah

The etymological meaning of *almah* is a sexually mature girl.¹² Most of the argument for the point that *almah* also means a married woman is based on etymology. This is the basis when anyone says *almah* means “virgin and non-virgin,” “unmarried and even married” and adds “whether biblical examples can be supplied or not is beside the point.” and when a commentator is praised for “sticking to ‘meaning’ (of word) rather than making concessions to ‘usage.’”¹³ But—

1. Sound exegesis does not base the meaning of a word on its etymology. When a member of our class in Messianic Prophecies argued for the etymological meaning of *almah*, our Korean, Mr. Oh, asked him, “You say ‘teaspoon.’ Do you drink tea with it?” In exegesis we use etymology only as a makeshift in emergencies where usage fails to help us establish a meaning. Etymology and context is all we have to define a *hapaxlegomenon*. And sometimes we have to resort to etymological meaning when all the available usage fails to give us a satisfactory meaning in a given context. But *almah* is not an *hapaxlegomenon*; and there is sufficient usage to establish its meaning in Is 7:14.
2. The etymology of *almah* in no way suggests or proves that it means also a married woman. A trained soldier doesn’t mean war. A sexually mature girl doesn’t imply sex relations. The etymology of *almah* implies a mature virgin and no more.

Almah is the feminine of *elem* which occurs twice in the Old Testament. In 1 Samuel 17:56, Saul called David, when he came back from fighting Goliath, an *elem*. He was then about twenty years old and unmarried; later Michal became his first wife. After that, David is never called an *elem*. In 1 Samuel 20:22, the boy who ran

to get Jonathan's arrows is called an *elem*. He is called "a boy" in 21:36-41 and "a little boy" in v. 35. Nowhere is *elem* used of a married man.

Almah occurs nine times in the Old Testament. In two places (Ps 46:1; 1 Chron. 15:20) we have the plural *alamoth*,¹⁴ it seems to mean a girls' choir, but since there is no evidence otherwise that there was such a choir in the temple, it may mean musical instruments tuned an octave higher than others. In both places the AV and RSV leave the word untranslated.

In Genesis 24:14, Abraham's servant is praying for success in getting a wife for Isaac. Before he sees Rebekah, he speaks of her as "the girl" (*hannaara*). In vv. 15-16 she appears before the servant with her water jar on her shoulder—"the girl is very beautiful, a virgin (*bethulah*) whom no man has known." He watches her go down into the well, fill her jar and come back up. Then he runs to meet her and asks her, "Please give me a little drink from your jar." "Drink, sir," she answered. And then he watched her as she eagerly carried up jar after jar and poured it into the trough for his thirsty camels until they turned away satisfied. When he had, with amazement, seen his prayer answered, he gave her a golden ring for her nose and two golden bracelets. She told him who she was and welcomed him and his men and his camels to her home. Then she ran to tell her mother and her brother Laban, and Laban came and took him to their home. Before he eats, he tells his story to Laban and Bethuel, Rebekah's father, and Rebekah also is mentioned as being present.¹⁵ With half an eye on Rebekah, he tells the men how Abraham had sent him to get a wife for Isaac. His first reference to Rebekah is when he tells about his prayer. The reference is as direct as it can be. With Rebekah vividly before him, he significantly changes "the girl" (*hannaara*) to *almah*. This was the finest purest term he could think of when he was asking for her to be Isaac's wife. If *almah* had any implications of sex relations, it would have been an insult, and the servant couldn't possibly have used it. It is equal to *bethulah* in v. 16, and so the Septuagint translates both terms in vv. 16 and 43 with *parthenos* and the Vulgate translates them with *virgo*.

In Exodus 2:8, a girl is watching her baby brother who is in a basket among the weeds of the Nile. Josephus calls her Miriam.¹⁶ Her "baby-sitting" by the river suggests that she was living in the home of her parents and most likely too young to do heavy work. The commentaries guess that she was ten to twelve years old. She is called *almah*.

In Proverbs 30:18-20 we have a comparison of five things: the flight of a bird, the crawling of a snake, the movements of a ship, the way of a man with an *almah*, and the way of an adulteress. The preceding context speaks of great wrongs: slander (v.9), pride (v.13), devouring the poor (v.14), greed (v.15), cursing and mocking parents, and the following context speaks of evils which the earth cannot endure. And the climax of vv. 18-20 is the woman committing adultery. She is like the vulture whose way in the air is beyond anyone's understanding and control,¹⁷ the crooked path of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship in the billows of the ocean. The adulterous woman is like a man with an *almah*. Now if this is taken to be a "young husband and young wife,"¹⁸ the comparison is pointless. A husband and his wife would be *ish beishto*. We don't have that here. Delitzsch says, "The wife *isha* ... cannot as such be called *almah*." A seductive adulteress is here like (*ken*) a vigorous man (*gibbor*) who is seducing an *almah*. The comparison suggests the chastity of the *almah*, which is violated just as marriage is violated by the adulterous wife.

According to Isaiah 54:1,5, the Lord is Israel's husband. In v. 4, two periods of Israel's life are contrasted, when she was an *almah*, that is, when she was in Egypt,¹⁹ and when she will be a widow in Babylonia. The Lord took Israel from Egypt to make her his youthful wife by his covenant of love given on Mount Sinai.²⁰ Before that she was an *almah* or an unmarried girl in Egypt.

Almah also occurs in Song 1:3: "The virgins love you"; there is nothing to suggest marriage here. In Song 6:8 three classes of women are distinguished: queens, concubines, and "virgins." If these virgins were married to the king, they would be either queens or concubines; they could not be listed separately. Only by being unmarried women at the court can they be classified apart from the queens and concubines. The Song of Songs is in many ways parallel to Psalm 45. The closest equivalent of *alamoth* in Song 1:3 is *bethuloth* in (Ps 45:15 (14).

From these instances we come to Isaiah 7:14 where the *almah* gives birth to God-with-us. She is a woman as far as sex is concerned: She conceives a child, gives birth to Him, nurses Him, and as a mother raises

Him. But just as all the evidence defines *almah* as being a virgin, so there isn't the least suggestion in Isaiah 7:71 that she is anything but that. The Hebrew has a habit of mentioning the father and sex relations with the conception and birth of a child.²¹ But here, every suggestion of a human father and of sex relations is emphatically lacking. Even with *ishah*, which can mean wife without the mention of a husband, the husband is quite regularly mentioned. Here, if an *almah* is to have a child by intercourse there is a special necessity of mentioning the father. But there is no man here to be the father of the Child or even to name him. Koenig's Lexicon says that an *almah* is "thought of as inviolate so that *parthenos* of the Septuagint in Isaiah 7:14 is not really wrong."

I have searched exhaustively for instances in which *almah* might mean a non-virgin or a married woman. There is no passage where *almah* is not a virgin. Nowhere in the Bible or elsewhere does *almah* mean anything but a virgin. Jastrow's dictionary shows that *almah* has no implication of marriage even in later Hebrew.

The maneuverings to get away from the clear evidence are varied and odd. The ICC on Isaiah 7:14 cites Proverbs 30:19 as evidence that the word does not mean virgin; and then the ICC on Proverbs 30:19 cites Isaiah 7:14 as the only proof that the word means a married woman. That's desperate.

It is frequently asserted that *almah* does not stress virginity.²² At our distance we are somewhat insensitive to the degrees of stress of a meaning in a word. The euphemisms of ancient days, for instance, clearly express facts which we can't sense at all. However, we must not deduce that what isn't stressed isn't there. When a layman calls his pastor "Bill," "Bill" is still a pastor. When Jesus calls Himself "The Son of Man," this does not eliminate His deity. When a father says, "My girl goes to high school," to suppose that she is no virgin because "girl" doesn't stress virginity is to insult the girl. We are in no way permitted by the degree of stress of virginity in *almah* (which may be underestimated) to conclude that it means anything but a virgin. For any lack of virginity we must have evidence.

There is a flanking movement resorted to by the statement, "But it could mean a married woman." That is a guess that goes beyond the evidence, and anyone has the right to guess the opposite. If you'll let me ignore usage, I'll prove the opposite meaning of any text in the Bible. Without usage as evidence, anything could be the meaning. *Almah* could mean an elephant. That isn't as far-fetched as it may sound; remember that *alluph* means "friend," "husband," and also "ox." How do we know that *almah* does not mean "elephant"? The only way we can eliminate "an elephant" from the meaning of *almah* is to go back to usage, which also eliminates "a married woman."

Then we have such statements as "It may be used of a virgin, but it does not mean a virgin."²³ This is a frank discarding of Scriptural usage and a substitution of human authorities, including lexica that go beyond the evidence. Among the many contradictory speculations of commentators, it isn't hard to find authoritative quotes for almost anything. A mass of opinions by so-called scholars, selected in such a way as to present a unanimous verdict, may convince men whose convictions depend on human authority. We may gather another mass of quotations to prove the opposite, and so convince others. But this is not a battle of quotes. A whole host of human opinions can be quite valueless. In our theological confusion, it is the specific genius of Lutheran exegesis that it remains unimpressed by any human authority and refuses to indulge in what-could-be speculations, but sticks to what is. This sober attitude has preserved us from the need of face-saving, which other interpreters must resort to whenever new manuscripts are discovered. God's truth, including the meaning of *almah*, does not depend on the guesses of men but on the power of God (1 Co 2:3-5). That is why we patiently search the Hebrew and Greek text for meaning. And we cannot ride roughshod over the meaning that is given there, asserting our own opinions or those of others. We need to come to His Word with a fine empathy, or we desensitize ourselves to it. If we'll search with an open mind, saying, "Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening," if we'll search with all our hearts, ready to believe whatever he tells us, he will speak to us!

We may still wonder, "Why did Isaiah use *almah* and not some other word?" Let us see what might be involved in the use of other terms.

If he had used *yaledhah*, the reader might think of a child. The same might be said of *naarah*, which, moreover, is so broad that it would be difficult to tell what it meant in the text. In Exodus 2-6, the three-month-

old Moses, weeping in his little basket, is called a *naar*. In Ruth 2:5-6, Ruth, a widow, is called *naarah*. The meaning of virginity is not distinct in *naarah*. In order to express clearly the idea of virginity, *naarah* has *bethulah* added to it six times.²⁴ In contrast, *almah* never has *bethulah* added to emphasize the meaning of virginity.

If Isaiah had used *bethulah*, those who want to have a young married woman in Isaiah 7:14 could cite Joel 1:8, where *bethulah* is used of a woman who has had “a husband”: “Weep like a *bethulah*, girded with sackcloth, for the husband of her youth.” Some commentators make her a virgin widow, but the term for “husband” most naturally implies sex relations. Jeremiah²⁵ uses *bethulah* several times of Israel as the wife who has gone astray, which makes the meaning of “virgin” doubtful in these instances. Twice when the biblical narrative wants to express very clearly that the *bethulah* is really a virgin, it adds, “who had not known a man.”²⁶ Such an expression need not be tautology; the writer wants to make it very clear that these girls were really virgins. In 7:14, Isaiah did not use *bethulah* because he wanted to avoid any possible ambiguity. *Almah* alone seems to insure the thought that this is an unmarried woman.

Then, too, Isaiah wanted to state that this would be a young virgin. *Bethulah* could possibly mean a child of three years or a woman of sixty, beyond the child-bearing age.²⁷ In order to keep the *bethulah* young, the Hebrew text adds *naarah* to it six times.²⁴ But *almah* means “a young virgin” without adding a word expressing youth.

Most of the argument for “a young woman” rests on a contrast of *almah* with *bethulah*. But the production of meaning by such a contrast of synonyms is precarious. Here’s a simple example: Ice is different from snow; ice is cold; therefore snow must be warm. Compare the parallel argument in regard to *almah*: *Bethulah* is different from *almah*; *bethulah* means “virgin”; therefore *almah* does not mean virgin. But the Old Testament never contrasts *bethulah* with *almah*. Any contrast which is to yield legitimate meaning must have usage to back it. If there is any contrast at all, it is between a *bethulah*, which in rare instances is used for a married woman and an *almah* which is never used for a married woman. The contrast which makes *bethulah* a virgin and *almah* a married woman is an invented and false contrast, and it yields an invented and false meaning. Genesis 24:16,43 uses both *bethulah* and *almah* as synonyms with no distinguishable difference of meaning.

The real contrast is between *ishah* and *almah*. We see this contrast in Genesis 24, where, over against the three terms for the unmarried girl, *ishah* is used eleven times and always for Isaac’s wife which Rebekah is to be, and *ishah* is always translated *gune* in the Septuagint. Throughout the Old Testament it is an *ishah*, a married woman, who “conceives and bears.”²⁸ And now the text in Isaiah 7:14 by every previous wording prepares for something new and wonderful—not an *ishah* but an *almah* (believe it or not) will, in the picture of the prophetic perfect, conceive and have a Son. In the future a woman who is an *almah* will at the same time be pregnant, and so the Child will be *pele*, “wonderful” (Is 9:5).

If *almah* means any married woman, there is no miracle and no prophecy of the virgin birth of God-with-us. Then Isaiah 7:14 has been watered down to fit any one of countless women giving birth to a child. And so the RSV has the indefinite article “a” in the text of Isaiah 7:14, in the footnote, and in Matthew 1:23 in spite of the fact that the text in Isaiah 7:14, Hebrew and Greek, and in Matthew 1:23 has “the” virgin. In Isaiah 11:6-8, the Hebrew terms for the animals are all without an article with the exception of “ox” in v. 7, which has an article given to it by the masoretic pointing. These nouns are indefinite and in idiomatic English may well be translated “a wolf,” “a lamb,” etc. But the RSV translates all these animal names with an article, “the wolf,” “the lamb,” “the leopard,” “the kid,” “the calf,” “the lion,” “the asp,” “the adder.” In view of these articles, the translation of *haalimah* and *he parthenos* with a “virgin” is a rather crude twist of grammar.

While no two languages agree in their idiomatic use of the article, we are not permitted to ignore its meaning.

Haalimah cannot mean any woman in general. A pregnant woman isn’t a generality. Only a specific woman, conceives and gives birth to a child. The meaning of the article before *almah* is clearly stated in Gesenius-Kautzsch:

Peculiar to Hebrew is the employment of the article to denote a single person or thing (primarily one which is as yet unknown, and therefore not capable of being defined) as being present to the mind under given circumstances. In such cases in English the indefinite article is mostly used.... Isaiah 7:14, *the* particular *maiden*, through whom the prophet's announcement shall be fulfilled, we should say *a* maiden.²⁹

When this grammar approves of “a,” it is no more a Hebrew grammar but an English grammar, pointing out the deficiency of our English idiom. While “the” may not be smooth English, “a” is incorrect here and expresses neither the Hebrew nor the English meaning of the text. The Hebrew article often has much of its original demonstrative force, as we have it in “this day,” meaning “today,” and in “this night,” meaning “tonight.” It points to persons or objects which are unique: *the* high priest, *the* sun, *the* earth, or *the* God, meaning the one true God. In Hebrew an object may have the article in anticipation of its functions: the book (Nu. 5:23), the cord (Joshua 2:15). “The virgin” could have no antecedent, but she is a fixed entity in the Lord's mind and in Isaiah's vision, an anticipated center in the complex of coming events, and so she is regarded as defined.³⁰ Chrysostom says this article means *episemon kai monen*, a conspicuous and distinct person. She is one particular girl whom the Lord has selected to be the mother of “God-with-us,” the mother of “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).

Other Semitic Languages

On the Syrian coast of Ras Shamrah a tablet was unearthed, which is almost seven hundred years older than Isaiah 7:14. It contains an account of the celebration of two deities, Nikkal and Yareh. Nikkal is the *glmt* (*almah*). Before the marriage takes place, it is announced that the girl will have a son: “A *bethulah* will bear-behold: an *almah* will bear a son.” Both words refer to the same unmarried goddess. This virgin gives birth to a child who is the child of a god. Young says:

Glmt is never used in Ras Shamra of a married woman.

Nowhere in the Keret text is the word *glmt* applied to any but an unmarried woman. The new evidence from Ras Shamra ... lends no support to those who claim that *almah* may be used of a married woman.³¹

And Mowinckel concludes, “Thus there is something in the old translation of ‘the woman’ as ‘the virgin.’”³²

In Aramaic, the masculine *ulim* is used of the baby Moses in the ark and of the boy David when he was feeding the flock and when he was going to fight Goliath.³³ The feminine *ulaima* or *ulemta* is used in Onkelos of Rebekah in Genesis 24:14, 16, 43 (*almah*), of Miriam in Exodus 2:8, for *bethulah* in Deuteronomy 32:25, of Esther before she married Xerxes (Esther 2:2), of the other virgins who waited for Xerxes to make his choice, and of the seven girls who waited on Esther, and for the *almah* in Isaiah 7:14.³⁴

Some negative evidence is referred to in the International Critical Commentary:

The corresponding term (or terms) is used in Aramaic of persons certainly not virgin, as, e.g., in *T* JDC. 19:5 of a concubine who had proved unfaithful; in Palmyrene it is used of harlots, and in a bi-lingual inscription *alumta* apparently corresponds to (*he*) *tairo* (*n*); see Cooke, North-Semitic Inscriptions, pp. 330, 335, 340.³⁵

While such evidence needs a careful examination, its significance would have to be demonstrated. Originally the targumim were oral and there were many divergencies. No carefully transmitted text of the targumim has ever existed. In the present form there is no Aramaic targum which is older than the fifth century A.D. Most of these materials are much later. The targum on Judges has a provenance similar to that of the Jerusalem targumim

which are from the fourteenth century A. D. It may be possible to trace some elements to the first century A.D. But some of the quotations in the targum Jonathan on the prophets (which includes that on the Judges) refer to Joseph bar-Chija who died 333 A.D. All the targumim, show theological tendencies. Now, evidence that comes from a time after the Jews had begun to slander the Virgin Mary as an adulteress can hardly be significant.³⁶

The Syriac has a special Semitic sensitivity to Hebrew meanings. The Peshitta Old Testament, probably made by Onkelos or other Jews of the second century, and the Harklensian Syriac have *bethulah* for *almah* in Isaiah 7:14. The Syriac uses the same term *bethultah* in Matt. 1:23, and in Luke 1:26-27 Gabriel is sent to a *bethultah*. In his *Thesaurus*, Payne Smith defines *bethultah* as meaning “one who has not taken a wife” or as equivalent of *bethulo*, “virgin.”³⁷

The Arabic has the same usage.

Lane in his Arabic dictionary defines *ghulam* as “a male child from the time of his birth until it attains the period of the seventeenth year” or “a little son,” i.e., “one who has not attained puberty.” ... The Koran does not contain the feminine form of this noun; but it is evident that the masculine did not mean a “young married man.” Van Ess of Bosrah assures me that the feminine never means “young married woman” in modern Arabic.

The feminine noun is not found in the Koran; but the masculine is used of the as yet unborn Isaac and John the Baptist, and of Jesus, the son of the virgin Mary, of Joseph in the pit, and of two young men who are expressly said to have been killed before they had reached the age of puberty.³⁸

Thayyab is the most proper Arabic, word for “young married woman.” It is never used to translate *almah*.³⁹

The Septuagint

Orlinsky calls the Septuagint “an authorized translation of the Bible into Greek, the work of Jewish scholars.”⁴⁰ Their translation of Isaiah 7:14 is an excellent one. In this translation, two hundred years before Christ, long before the Jewish bias against Christ, “seventy” Jewish scholars translating for Jews, living twenty-two hundred years closer to *almah* than we do, translated it with “virgin,” *parthenos*. Whatever difficulties they may have experienced with the text and its historical setting, they were convinced that *almah* means “virgin.” This *parthenos* was kept in their Bible and read there by the Jews for three centuries. Not until 130 A.D., a hundred years after Christ, did they change it. The RSV, which often prefers the Septuagint to the Hebrew text, excluded its rendering from its translation, but on the basis of the Septuagint added “or virgin” in a footnote. When Weigle was asked about this footnote, he said, “We wouldn’t put anything in a footnote that was remote from the truth.”⁴¹

In Genesis 24, the Septuagint translates *naarah*, *bethulah*, and *almah* with *parthenos*. This does not mean that *parthenos* is used loosely for virgin or non-virgin. In this chapter all three terms are used of a girl who “has not known a man” (v. 16), and all three terms imply virginity, which the Septuagint expresses by *parthenos*.

In Genesis 34:3, the Septuagint calls Dina a *parthenos* after she has been ravished. This is used to prove that *parthenos* does not mean “virgin.” But what should she be called? An *ishah*? She was no married woman. Or a *porne* (v. 31)? She was not a prostitute. Dina was a violated *parthenos*, “*ein vergewaltigtes Maedchen*.”⁴² A broken circle is not a circle, and a broken marriage is not a marriage; and so a violated virgin is not a virgin. Such a usage does not disprove the essential meaning of *parthenos* as “virgin.” In 2 Sam. 2:2, Abigail, who is at this time David’s wife, is called Nabal’s wife. Once she was Nabal’s wife, but now she is David’s wife. This does not change the meaning of “wife.” In Isaiah 1:3, God calls Israel “My people,” even though they have rejected the Lord. Are they God’s people? By God’s choice, yes; by their breaking of the covenant, no. In Isaiah 1:21 Jerusalem is called “the faithful city” which “has become a prostitute.” So Dina was supposed to be a virgin, but she had been wronged.

In classical Greek there are “virgins” who have children. Sometimes these children were the result of intercourse with the gods, Ares, Hermes, Apollo, Poseidon.⁴³ There *parthenos* may still retain the meaning of a lack of relations with a human father. There are also instances where *parthenos* changes its meaning from “virgin” to “unmarried girl or mother.”⁴⁴ But such rare exceptions in no way throw doubt on the fact that *parthenos* is the regular word for “virgin,” just as the rare instances where *bethulah* means “a widow” do not change its regular meaning of “virgin.”

Matthew 1

In our day when we are in exegesis drawing heavily on all the linguistic and archeological sources of antiquity for evidence, we cannot exclude testimony found, not in the specific context under consideration, but elsewhere in the Bible, simply by calling it “theology.”⁴⁵ We have such evidence in Matthew 1:22-23.

But those who want a non-virgin in Isaiah 7:14 try to make Matthew’s quotation irrelevant. Weigle does this in his statement:

The difference between Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23 is a difference between the Hebrew of Isaiah and the Greek text of Matthew. —The Hebrew text of Isaiah 7:14 uses the word *almah*, which means ‘a young woman of marriageable age.’ This word does not either assert or deny the virginity of the young woman.... In Matthew ... the word at 1:23 is *parthenos*, which is the Greek word for virgin.⁴⁶

This separation of Isaiah 7:14 from Matthew 1:23 is supported by the argument that Matthew’s quotations are not exact.⁴⁷ There are difficulties in the New Testament quotations from the Old Testament, but these difficulties are not nearly as significant as this argument makes them. In Matthew they are not of the sort that we can say that Matthew either did not know or did not care. In most cases the differences are mere trifles which have no relation to the point which the New Testament writer wants to make. Often they are misrepresented by men who do not carefully examine the Hebrew text, the Septuagint, or the New Testament quotation. When we carefully examine the text, many of the difficulties vanish. When for instance, the Septuagint in Isaiah 29:13 and Matthew in 15:9 take the *yodh* to be a *wau* (which it becomes by a little lengthening of the stem), and so the Septuagint and Matthew get the meaning “in vain” that is not a careless translation of the Hebrew text.

While Luke and the writer to the Hebrews follow the Septuagint, Matthew is the one who quotes more directly from the Hebrew, independently of the Septuagint. Plummer says, “Only in a few cases are the quotations in Matthew taken from the LXX. ‘The greater number are based on the Hebrew.’”⁴⁸ Where the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew text is too incorrect to serve his purpose, Matthew rejects the Septuagint rendering and makes his own from the Hebrew. The Septuagint, for instance, translates *cholyenu* (Isaiah 53:4) with “our sins,” but Matthew correctly translates it “our sicknesses” (8:17).⁴⁹ In three passages which have been used to show Matthew’s inaccuracy, I find the following: In 12:18, Matthew improves the Septuagint at three points; in 4:15 he has five improvements; and in 4:16 he has two improvements.

Matthew shows a remarkable accuracy in his translation of the verb “call” in Isaiah 7:14. The dictionary identifies the masoretic form of the verb as an archaic third feminine, “she will call.” But none of the versions agree with the dictionaries; nor does Matthew. By changing the masoretic pointing we get *qaratha*, “you will call.” This agrees with the Septuagint of B and A and with Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotus; D and also the Old Latin (plural) have this reading in Matthew 1:23. But the regular text of Matthew still does not agree. And now we have the Dead Sea scroll which gives us the oldest reading, the third person singular masculine; this would have an impersonal meaning, “one will call His name God-with-us” (cp. Gen. 16:14). The Septuagint of Aleph agrees with this, also the Syriac and the Vulgate. Matthew has the same impersonal expression, but in the plural, “they will call,” because the Greek idiom prefers the plural.⁵⁰

The quotation from Isaiah in Matthew 1:23 could be spoken by the angel or it could have been added by Matthew. Irenaeus, Chrysostom, Weiss-Meyer, Zahn, and the Espositor's Greek Testament believe that the angel cited these words from Isaiah to encourage Joseph. This angel, speaking Aramaic to Joseph, used the Aramaic form of *almah*. According to Papias, Irenaeus, Origen, and Eusebius, Matthew first wrote his Gospel in Aramaic.⁵¹ Then Matthew used the Aramaic form of *almah* in 1:23 for the Virgin Mary. When he translated his Gospel into Greek, Matthew, writing as a Jew for Jews, translated *almah* with *parthenos*.

If the virgin birth were a peripheral and insignificant element in Matthew 1, we might have to give some serious attention to those who claim that v. 23 is an inexact rendering of Isaiah 7:14. But the virgin birth is central and even pivotal in Matthew 1:16, 18-25. Matthew wants to tell his fellow Jews that Jesus was born of a virgin. That is the critical point of this event. Joseph was deeply troubled about Mary because he was convinced that she was guilty of adultery. What other explanation was there? Only one—a holy creation. To tell Joseph that, the angel had come down from heaven. “That which is born in her is of the Holy Spirit,” he says. There is nothing wrong with Mary. And more than that, the Lord has planned this. He predicted it in Isaiah 7:14: The *almah* will conceive and bear a child. What the Lord said is now a concrete fact: Jesus is born of a virgin. Many a person may have puzzled about the *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 (cp. 1 Pe. 1:10-12), but when Joseph, Luke, Matthew, and the other Apostles saw the historic fact, they understood Isaiah 7:14: Jesus was born of an *almah*. The miracle of the *almah* is given in Isaiah and made absolutely necessary by Isaiah; it is not added by Matthew.

Luther says,

If they make the claim that the Hebrew text does not state a virgin is with child, but rather: an *almah* is with child, but *almah* is not supposed to mean virgin but *bethulah* means a virgin, whereas *almah* means a young maiden, ... in the case of Christians, the answer is easy from St. Matthew (1:22-23) and Luke (1:31), both of whom apply the passage in Isaiah to Mary and translate the word *almah* “virgin,” whom we believe rather than the whole world. For God the Holy Spirit speaks through St. Matthew and St. Luke, of whom we firmly believe that He understands the Hebrew language and words.⁵²

Ledhato, Isaiah 7:15

The last noun in Isaiah 7:14 and the first in verse 15, *el* and *chemlah*, God and curds, stand in a sharp contrast, like *logos sarx* in John 1:14. The mighty God eats simple human food. Some commentators insist that curds and honey are a luxury. But the contrast with the dainties of the royal table indicates a primitive food, and according to verses 22-25 they are the products of a devastated land. When grainfields and vineyard are gone, there will still be places where a cow can graze and produce milk and curds and where bees can produce wild honey. And so God-with-us will come after enemies have overrun the country, and He will live, not in the Temple or the palace, but in some ordinary place, sharing the lowliness of a lowly people.

This is followed by *l* with the construct infinitive of *yadha*. Septuagint gave this *l* a temporal sense and translated both the *l* in verse 15 and *beterem* in verse 16 with *prin e* “until,” yielding a parallelism which is not given in the Hebrew terms. The Septuagint also offers the strange rendering, “Before he knows or prefers evil, he will choose the good.” Our modern English versions reject the forced parallelism and the odd translation of the Septuagint, but they do give a temporal meaning to *l* and translate it as “when.” To prove such a temporal meaning of *l*, the commentaries cite instances where *l* occurs with some expression of time, such as “morning,” “day,” or “year.” Such expressions do not show that *l* has a temporal meaning with other words any more than the phrase “for a night” makes “for” a temporal preposition in other phrases. I have found only one instance where *l* with the infinitive has a temporal meaning without the use of a special term expressing time (2 Sa 18:29), and that instance seems odd enough to suggest that the temporal meaning may be an inference from a more basic meaning.

According to Mandelkern, *l* with the infinitive construct of *yadha* occurs forty times in the Old Testament. Omitting Isaiah 7:15 for the moment, *ledhaath* expresses purpose 27 times, result 6 times, and the object 6 times. (Result and object are by their direction closely related to purpose.) Lexica and grammars agree: “With an infinitive ... *l* denotes ... most commonly the end or purpose of an action.”⁵³

Ledhaath never means “when he knows.” What reason can there be for adopting such an unhebraic meaning other than this—that it fits more snugly into a less-Messianic interpretation of the text? The purposive meaning is very difficult for anyone who does not see the Messiah here. But we cannot let his difficulty change the Hebrew meaning for us. The clear-cut meaning of *ledhaath* is purpose, “in order to know.” This Hebrew meaning was expressed by Jerome as “*ut sciat*,” by Luther, “*dass er wisse*,” and by the AV, “that He may know.”⁵⁴

Yadha means to learn⁵⁵ or to “know by experience.” After the Lord had led Israel from one conquest to another, Joshua tells Israel, you know or have learned by experience how the Lord has kept every promise that He made to you.⁵⁶ *Yadha* means to experience thoroughly; this is illustrated by its use for sex relations. Similarly Isaiah says, “We know our sins” (59:12). A parent “knows” the loss of children (47:8; cp. 5:19). Experience with self-discipline results in skills, such as hunting (Ge. 25:27), using a language (Ps 81:6), playing a lyre (1 Sa 16:16), professional mourning (Am 5:16), sailing a ship (1 Ki. 9:27; 2 Chron. 8:18); all these are expressed by *yadha*.

And so this God in God-with-us, on whom rests the Spirit of knowledge (11:2), will know by human experience. God-with-us eats curds and honey in order to learn how to reject the evil and choose the good. These words may have little meaning for those who switch off the light of the New Testament. But we should notice that the Messianic meaning is not imported from the New Testament and injected into a meaningless text; this is the simple meaning of the Hebrew text. Yet it matches the New Testament absolutely. In his training period when he ate curds and honey, God-with-us grew in wisdom (Lk. 2:40,52) by which he distinguished between good and bad, righteousness and sin, truth and falsehood. He did this for thirty years. His learning to reject the evil and choose the good is called a testing in Heb. 4:15, by which He is enabled to sympathize or “experience” (cp. Gal 3:4) with us. By his experience he learned obedience (Heb. 5:8), that is, the rejection of evil and the choice of the good. The goal of such a training according to Hebrews (2:10; 5:8) was to be a perfect High Priest. The heart of his experience is given in Isaiah 53. According to verse 3 (where the Dead Sea scroll gives us the active participle of *yadha*) he experiences pain for our sins. By his experience of our sin and its punishment, of righteousness and its attainment, he finished his work. According to Isaiah 53:11 it was by his experience, *bedhato*, of sin’s punishment that he made the many righteous. And so the Father entrusts to Him the judgment, the rejection of the evil ones at his left and the glorification of the righteous at his right. This is the amazing identity of Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfillment, which assures us that we have the real meaning embedded in the Old Testament and in the New Testament by the divine Author of both.

Ki, Isaiah 7:16

The Messianic prophecies stand out in their context. When sound exegetes insist on maintaining this relief, they are often accused of ignoring the historical setting. In this section of Isaiah the neglect of the context is on the other side. The exegetical literature tangles with remarks about glosses and fragments; these are ways of getting rid of parts of the context which do not agree with the interpreter’s pattern of thought. Smith-Irwin say, “Vs. 15 is here omitted as a gloss.... The verse interrupts the close connection between vs. 14 and 16.”⁵⁷ A loyal observance of the context requires that we take verse 15 as an intended intrusion between verses 14 and 16. When Gray in the I. C. C. treats this section as a confusion, that also is disrespect for the context. He says that between verses 16 and 17 “there is no organic connection.” “It is particularly between v.16 and v.17 that the lack of connection is most conspicuous. *G* feeling this supplied *alla* at the beginning of v.17” (But *alla* may express a very close connection.) Gray decided that verses 17-25 are no part of Isaiah’s speech.⁵⁸ Such a rejection of a large section of the context can easily give us a meaning not intended by the writer. In order to keep the meaning

unhurt by human intrusions, we take a section just as it is until the text itself suggests intrinsic divisions. We shall find that the division given in this text is not between 16 and 17, but between 15 and 16, and that 16-25 form a unit.

This is the situation. In verse 11 God offers Ahaz a miracle to rescue him. In v. 12 Ahaz refuses. In v. 13 the Lord expresses his disgust. In v. 14 the Lord gives a sign of His own choosing—God-with-us. This is a reversion to the covenant. While a special sign would bring only temporary relief, the real hope for the idolatrous and tottering dynasty of David was in the covenant, where the vilest sinner might find pardon and a rescue. It required only faith. If you won't believe, you won't have the strength to go on" (v. 9).⁵⁹ "In verse 14, *lakhen*, "therefore," (as in 28:16ff.) offers God's mercy to believers but at the same time, God's curse to unbelievers. Ahaz' rejection of the covenant does not annul the covenant but it makes his own doom a certainty. We must expect in the rest of the chapter a statement of the coming destruction. We have exactly that in verses 16-25. Verse 16 grants Ahaz a temporary relief, but 17-25 announces destruction. Any hope that Ahaz may build on verse 16 must turn to bitter disappointment as he listens to 17-25.

This gives us the exact and close relation between verses 16 and 17. It is: Yes, you will be delivered temporarily, but (LXX: *alla*) destruction is coming. "Yes ... but ... " is the same as "although." "Yes, it is raining, but I will not take my umbrella" is the same as saying, "Although it is raining, I will not take my umbrella." *Ki* in the beginning of verse 16 is then concessive. It is commonly translated "for" as though it explained something in verse 15. But *ki* explains nothing in the preceding verse. The simplest meaning of *Ki* here is "surely" or "yes, of course," as in verse 9. And so *ki* is concessive (as in 8:19; 12:1; 54:10; Ps 23:4). As a concessive it introduces verse 17, and verses 18-25 are an expansion of verse 17.

Koenig's Interpretation⁶⁰

Koenig takes verses 14-16 as referring exclusively to the Messiah. The most cogent reason for this is perhaps the identity of five words in verses 15 and 16, "He will know how to reject evil and choose good." Such an identity suggests the identity of the subject in both verses. The "Son" in verse 14 is the "Boy" in verse 16: "Before the Boy will know how to refuse evil and choose good, the country whose two kings you dread will be deserted." Koenig believes that the Messiah was to come immediately. But God changed his mind, postponed his coming, and the prophet Isaiah was mistaken in regard to the time of his coming. Such an error makes Koenig's interpretation unacceptable to anyone who believes in the inerrancy of Scripture.

The Typical Interpretation⁶¹

The typical interpretation tries to solve the problem by an immediate fulfillment in verse 16 and a remote fulfillment seven hundred years later. There are two births. The first in verse 16 is the lower, natural, typical birth. The second is the higher, supernatural, antitypical birth in Bethlehem. This makes possible an immediate historical application to Ahaz and a later one to his Messianic descendant.

A similar typical interpretation seems to fit Matthew 2:15 (Hosea 11:1; cp. Ex. 4:22) and 2:18 (Jer. 31:15-18). Is this the natural interpretation of Isaiah 7:14, or does it change the meaning of the text?

Who would be the type? The Jews claimed that the *almah* was Queen Abijah (2 Chron. 29:1), the wife of Ahaz, and that Hezekiah was God-with-us.⁶² This is also the interpretation of James, one of the RSV translators.⁶³ According to Thiele's figures,⁶⁴ Ahaz ruled from 736 to 716, and Hezekiah began to rule in 716 at the age of twenty-five (2 Kings 18:2). Then Hezekiah was five years old when Ahaz began to rule and a few years older when the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 was given. The Queen and Hezekiah do not fit. We may add that this application of the prophecy to Hezekiah seems to have arisen in the first century A.D. in opposition to the historical fact of the virgin birth.

The second suggestion is that the *almah* is Isaiah's wife, the prophetess in 8:3-4; which seems parallel to 7:14-16. But then there is something clumsy about this prophecy. Why doesn't Isaiah say that the *almah* is "my

wife” or “the prophetess.” Isaiah had two sons. He called the first Remnant-will-return (7:3) and the second Quick-spoils-fast-prey (8:1-4). When Isaiah spoke the prophecy of 7:14, his wife’s first child was with him and could not be the new sign. God-with-us would have to be Isaiah’s second son. But he is called Quick-spoils-fast-prey and is never referred to by name or by meaning as God-with-us. The clash in the two names makes their use for the same child unlikely. Gesenius identified the *almah* with a woman about to become Isaiah’s second wife. But that adds polygamy, and the whole speculative picture lacks convincing elements. Isaiah’s son never became king, and yet according to 8:8 Judah will be the kingdom of God-with-us. —And there is no other child that in any way fits the prophecy. Resorting to fiction will satisfy only those who like fiction.

Most serious of all is the fact that the typical interpretation changes the meaning of *almah* to include “a married woman,” since the first fulfillment is a natural birth. Then what comfort could such a passage offer to Joseph who was troubled about Mary’s conception when once before it had been fulfilled by natural intercourse? It would prove to him that Mary had been unfaithful to him. Or what real assurance could such a quotation have for any reader of the Gospel of Matthew?

We’ll certainly grant a type wherever Scripture clearly presents it, but to establish a type where it is not clearly given may create more difficulties than it solves:

1. In most cases the type is a speculation, and then the search for the type becomes argumentative, pedantic, and fruitless.⁶⁵ The type is no Savior. Practically speaking, it hurts no one to neglect the type in exegesis and to concentrate on the Messianic meaning.
2. In trying to establish a type, we must not yield to those to whom the type is primary and the Messianic meaning is secondary. One commentary speaks of Isaiah 7:14 as being fulfilled nine months after it was given and then of Matthew applying it to Jesus’ birth.⁶⁶ The New Testament does not apply specific passages to Christ; it sees him predicted there. Jesus and the Apostles do not add the Messianic meaning to the prophecy, but they find it there.
3. The greatest difficulty created by some typical interpretations is that they cut down the meaning of the Messianic prophecy to the human size of the type, and then these shrunken words will not fit Christ any more. Such exegesis denies that the prophecy directly testifies to Christ. If we reduce a Messianic prophecy to the level of its context and explain it in terms of its historical setting, the result may be that the prophecy never rises above that historical setting and we have lost the Messianic meaning.

God spoke in human language and brought to us the glory of heaven in human terms. Such human language particularly fitted the Savior because he was to be one of us, God-with-us, a real human being with thoughts and feelings, joys and pains like ours. But the coming Savior was to be much more. And how was God to express that great Plus? The highest and noblest terms of an Israelite were those in which he spoke of his king and his high priest. God used these terms in the Messianic prophecies, expanded them to fit the infinite, and so pictured the coming Messiah for us. But if we insist on seeing only human terms, we lose God’s intended meaning.

The integrity of the meaning of Messianic words, phrases, and passages is involved. There are terms which are general enough to be used of opposites. A “human being,” a “child,” or an “adult” may refer to males and females. But “husband” cannot be used for “wife,” and “wife” cannot be used for “husband.” Similarly “son of man” can mean Ezekiel or Jesus. Also “seed” of Eve, of Abraham., and of David., as a linguistic term could refer to an ordinary human being or to Jesus. And so there are in the Messianic prophecies terms that can fit both a type and the Messiah.

From the terms which can be used of both man and God we must distinguish those which cannot be transferred: God, eternity, omnipotence, universal rule, endless rule, salvation.

If, then, the typical interpretation of Psalm 2 forces us to make the universal rule of the Messiah a hyperbole that fits David or Solomon, then the same terms can no more mean that Christ will rule the world. If “God” in Ps 45:7 is only the “divinity” of kings, it cannot mean the deity of Christ. And if we grant such a cutting down of the precise meaning of Scriptural terms we’ll need only to be consistent to find our way completely into the modernist camp.

Almah also is a unique term which cannot be transferred. If it means a married woman, then it cannot be the Virgin Mary.

The principle, “*Sensus Scripturalis unus est*,” may sometimes have been applied too arbitrarily. But if we free ourselves from its difficulties only to let a typical interpretation circumvent the meaning of the text or tyrannize over it, we have gained nothing.

It is easy to charge Luther, Stoeckhardt, Fuerbringer, and Walter A. Maier, who opposed the typical interpretation of the Messianic prophecies, with dogmatism. We would not criticize them so sharply if we understood them better. I myself find in them an intense love of the truth and of the Savior which we need today. They felt the violence which the typical interpretation can do to a Messianic prophecy and to the Savior who is pictured there, and, sensing that, they spoke fearlessly for the Scriptures. If we must differ from these men of God, let us do it altogether on the basis of Scripture and not by being tossed by the winds blowing from the RSV translators. We have a faithful Word (Titus 1:9); let us be faithful to it.

Luther, G. Stoeckhardt, L. Fuerbringer, W. A. Maier

Luther, Stoeckhardt, Fuerbringer, and Maier applied the whole passage in Isaiah 7 to the Messiah. Then *beterem* in verse 16 expresses an interval of seven hundred years. Many have found this interval an obstacle in arriving at the Messianic meaning of the passage.

A Messianic prediction involves an interval of time between the prophecy and its fulfillment. In most cases the length of such an interval is not given in the prophecy, but only in its fulfillment. How long is the interval in Isaiah 7:16?

Is. 7:16-17 reads:

Yes, before the boy will know how to refuse evil and choose good, the country whose two kings terrify you will be deserted, and (the Dead Sea Scroll has *w*) the Lord will bring on you, your people, and your father’s family such a time as has not been since Ephraim left Judah, namely the king of Assyria.

If we check the history of Judah carefully, we find that “such a time as has not been since Ephraim left Judah” refers to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. This point stands out with particular clarity when we see this prophecy on its background of the first twelve chapters of Isaiah. In this whole section God warns Jerusalem and Judah (1:1; 2:1), not against any minor national setbacks, but against the destruction that came in 586. There we have the threats of the terror of the Lord before which people will hide in the dust and crawl into holes in the ground (2:10, 19, 21). The destruction that is coming is an annihilation (1:7, 24-31; 3:1-8, 17-26; 5:5-6, 14-17, 25; 9:12-21; 10:3-4). Judah is called Sodom and Gomorrah (1:8-10). The two chapters preceding our prophecy (5:13, 26-30; 6:11-13) clearly speak of exile. Later a remnant will return from exile, also from Babylonia (10:20-22; 11:11-12, 15-16). The section ends with the happy song of the exiles coming home (chapter 12).

The fall of Jerusalem, in 586, was 158 years after the prophecy came to Ahaz. This interpretation takes 16a as the protasis, and 16b-17 (and 18-25 is an expansion of 17) as the apodosis. 16b-17, covering 158 years, precede the coming of God-with-us. Now if *beterem* can cover 158 years, it can cover 700 years.

It is argued that an event 700 years later than Ahaz cannot be a sign to him. The text clearly tells us that this isn’t a sign only for Ahaz, but for the dynasty of David or for a people addressed in the plural. The time when it would happen in the future is not given here. Some who would expect it to happen within a few months

might be heartbroken. This prophecy could be fulfilled in the very distant future. Hertrich says, “This ‘behold’ which the prophet speaks extends the horizon into the unheard-of distance.”⁶⁷

And why shouldn’t this prophecy look into the distant future? The coming of Assyria was only the first part of the chain: Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome. Then, too, God’s covenant was an everlasting covenant and every other sign or help from God was subsidiary to that of God-with-us. He was the only basis for any kind of help of God. What is our first help in any pain and trouble? Isn’t it this: “In Christ I am God’s own.”

The distance of this sign has a parallel in the story of Moses. God gave him many signs but the crowning one was that Israel would worship at Sinai where His glory would move Israel to say, “God is with us” (Ex. 3:12). This sign may have meant little to Moses, but it told him that the Lord knew the future and he had all of it well in hand. Here the sign is a future event which in the present seemed impossible. There were more immediate signs: the overthrow of Rezin and Pekah (8:1-4); then the destruction of Sennacherib (8:8-10; 10:5-34); later there was the capture of Babylon (44:26-45:4). But here is one sign that is vastly higher and deeper than all these intermediate actions of God, the all-inclusive proof of God’s love in God-with-us. In Him all the promises of God are yes and Amen (2 Co 1:20). He was the star of hope for every believer who during the passing centuries trusted in the covenant of his God. He was the only help for a Davidic dynasty, centrally involved in the covenant, but now by its cursed ways committing suicide. He was the goal of the teleological development, beginning in Eden and offering every sinner salvation.

Another Possibility

Calvin⁶⁸ offered a different solution. He referred *hanaar* in verse 16, not to God-with-us, but to children in general. He seems to neglect the article.

There is an alternative in which the article of *hanaar* comes to its rights. Isaiah has his little child Remnant-will-return with him. God wanted him to be there for a special purpose (v. 3), and yet he appears in no special way in the rest of the chapter. The article in *hanaar* may be demonstrative, and, as Isaiah is speaking, he may be pointing to the only child actually present. If we keep in mind the Hebrew indifference to antecedents, we need not identify *ben* of verse 14 with *hanaar* of verse 16, especially since there is no identification of name, mother, or age given in the text. Then why not let God-with-us in the background and let *hanaar* refer to the child held in Isaiah’s arms.

In these prophecies the personality of God-with-us should be kept distinct in spite of efforts to blur it. The Chicago translation renders Isaiah 9:6: “Wonderful Counselor is God Almighty, Father forever, Prince of Peace.” Stoeckhardt said of a similar rendering, “*Das ist eine halsbrechende Construction.*” Bewer, an RSV translator, defines *el* in 9:6: “God-like hero, i.e., a hero with extraordinary superhuman power due to the indwelling Spirit of God.” And yet God-with-us stands by himself in these chapters. Though he is of the house of David (7:13; 9:5-7; 11:1), and yet he is in no way identified with any present descendant of David. Since he is a sprout of the stock of David, he cannot be a son of the prophet. He’s not one of Isaiah’s sons also because each of these has a father (7:3; 8:3) and a married mother. The names of these two boys are essentially different from all the names given to God-with-us. In this section there are three distinct children spoken of with distinct names, parenthood, and purpose. Two in name and purpose fit the immediate situation. One by birth, name, and purpose transcends the immediate situation. They are in one prophetic context, and as the predictive meaning of the names of Isaiah’s boys were confirmed by history, so is that of God-with-us. They are in one setting, but only the one is Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Jews or Christians

Jesus told the high priest under oath that He was the Son of God. So the high priest condemned him for blasphemy.⁶⁹ This verdict implied the Jewish conviction that Jesus had a human father. The charge that Mary was an adulteress and that Jesus was an illegitimate child is said to have arisen in the decade before the destruction of

Jerusalem, and this slander may already have been in the background when Matthew was writing his first chapter to the Jews. All four Gospels and those who preached them continued to proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God. The word *parthenos* in Matthew 1 and Luke 1 must have been central in speaking of the origin of Jesus. In discussing this point with Jews, Isaiah 7:14 with its *parthenos* must have been basic. This *parthenos* served the Christians so well that the Jews have accused the Christians of putting it into their Septuagint.⁷⁰ Orlinsky, a Jew by religion and one of the RSV translators, repeated this accusation in the official RSV literature, claiming that Christians had substituted “virgin” for “young woman.”⁷¹ He has more recently retracted his accusation.⁷² In his Septuaginta, Rahlfs insists that “The Christians justifiably maintained that this rendering originated from the old Jewish translators themselves.”⁷³

Those who cite Aquila for “young woman” as the rendering of *almah* don’t know what they are doing. Aquila was “violently opposed to the Christians.”⁷⁴

Having seen the professors of the Christian religion work many miracles, he became a convert to it, probably on the same ground with *Simon Magus*. Refusing to quit the practice of magic and judicial astrology, he was excommunicated by the Christians, on which he went over to the Jewish religion, became a proselyte, and was circumcised.⁷⁵

Jerome tells us that Aquila became a pupil of Rabbi Akiba. Orlinsky tells us that “he incorporated the kind of Jewish interpretation which was current in his day, and he avoided the Christological elements which had been introduced in the Septuagint text,” and pursuing this anti-Christian purpose he changed “virgin” to “young woman.”⁷⁶ He eliminated *Christou* from Daniel 9:26.⁷⁷ Aquila finished his translations in 128 A.D. Symmachus (170 A.D.) and Theodotion (185 A.D.), “all probably renegades from Christianity,”⁷⁸ also had “young woman” instead of “virgin.”

We may find in this substitution of *neanis* for *parthenos* a triple testimony to “virgin” as the meaning of *almah*. These three translators did not use *ishah*, which means a married woman, but *neanis* which could also mean a “virgin.” The change in translation also implied that the Septuagint translators, by their use of *parthenos*, absolutely meant that *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 is a “virgin.” And then too, the change implied that Matthew, by using *parthenos*, expressed an inspired conviction that *almah* means “virgin.”⁷⁹

Trypho, a Jew, argued for “young woman” against Justin Martyr (100-165 A.D.). Justin complained about the partiality of the Greek translators in rendering *almah* with *neanis* (which does not necessarily include the idea of virginity), accusing the Jewish writers of wishing to neutralize the application of Isaiah 7:14 to the Messiah. To Justin, Isaiah 7:14 meant the virgin birth of Christ.⁸⁰ Irenaeus also tells us that *neanis* was substituted directly in opposition to the Christian meaning of Isaiah 7:14:

So God became man, and the Lord Himself saved us, giving us the sign of the virgin, but not as some of those who now dare to translate Scripture, saying, “Behold the young woman will conceive and bear a son,” as Theodotion from Ephesus and Aquila from Pontus have translated. They are both Jewish proselytes whom the Ebionites follow, stating that He was a son of Joseph.⁸¹

The Jews continued their fight against the virgin birth. Celsus, an enemy of Christianity who wrote about 176 A.D, introduces a Jewish Rabbi as opposing Christianity and declaring that the mother of Jesus was repudiated by her husband for adultery with a soldier by the name of Pandera as father.⁸² Pandera is a corruption of *parthenos* and means a panther, which was sacred to Bacchus, in whose cult sexual sin was prominent. So Jesus was called “Son of Pandera” and “Son of Stada.” “Stada” means unfaithful and used of Mary accuses her of adultery. A variant form of “Stada” is listed today in Jastrow’s dictionary as the “surname of Jesus of Nazareth.”⁸³

While this slander was embodied in the Talmud, it arose in full strength earlier in the second century. In the targums, the oldest of the rabbinic literature, the Messianic hope is rich and strong,⁸⁴ and somehow its antiquity seems to have preserved it. But the rest of the Jewish literature must have passed through some brain-washing during the second century. None of it was written down until shortly before 200 A.D. The Palestinian Talmud was completed at Tiberias in 350 A.D.; the Babylonian Talmud was completed in 550 A.D. The strong opposition to Christ in the first two centuries explains why the Jewish interpretation of a passage may fail to yield a Christian thought. And throughout history the Jews as the enemies of Christ have maintained a “hatred toward Jesus which never slumbered.”⁸⁵ Their interpretation must be viewed historically and not authoritatively. Over against Jewish opposition, the Christian church of all ages insisted that Isaiah 7:14 announces the virgin birth of Christ. The I. C. C. says:

Henceforward down to the 16th century, and in the main for yet another two centuries, Jewish and Christian exegesis remained totally opposed; Christians affirmed and Jews denied that Isaiah spoke of the birth of the Messiah from a virgin mother; Jews affirmed and Christians denied that Isaiah spoke of a birth which was to take place in his own age of the son of a human father and a woman not virgin.⁸⁶

When Luther first wrote about the virgin in Isaiah 7:14 in 1523, he used no strong terms with the Jews. He pleaded with them on the basis of the Isaiah passage to accept the virgin-born Savior.⁸⁷ He wanted to win the Jews. But by 1543, twenty years later he had found the Jews hopeless, “*stock-stein-eisen-teufel-hart*.”⁸⁸ And so he denounces them. He says,

Now whom should we believe? God says: “This should be a sign that the *almah* is pregnant.” The Jew says, “Oh no, God lies, that is no sign, because the prophet has made the *almah* pregnant.” So we have here two texts. Isaiah’s text stands here clear and simple: God will give you a sign, behold the *almah* is pregnant etc. But the text of the Jews is this: Behold, the virgin has a man and is pregnant by the prophet... Holy Scripture does not belong to the Jews or to the Gentiles, or to angels, much less to devils, but it is God’s; he alone has spoken and written it. He alone, too, should interpret and explain it where it is necessary: Devils and men should be disciples and hearers.⁸⁹

Luther’s confidence was exclusively in the Word. “Luther’s bias”⁹⁰ in translating *almah* four times with “virgin” happens to be Scripture. And so he could challenge anyone to prove him wrong:

“Behold,” says Isaiah, “the virgin is with Child,” etc. Here we have the word *almah*, of which many others, and also I, have written, that it means a virgin or maid, who is still inviolate and has not become a wife. And if a Jew or a hebraist could prove to me that *almah* could possibly mean a married woman in the Scripture, he shall get a hundred gold coins (Gulden) from me (God knows where I’ll find them).⁹¹

Stoekhardt, who quotes this statement of Luther, adds: “Since then Hebrew philology has made great strides; but, if Luther lived today, he could still make that challenge without losing any money.”⁹² Stoekhardt says about “virgin”: “That, according to the evidence is the only meaning,”⁹² and Hertrich⁹³ agrees. And Robert Dick Wilson’s scholarly conclusions may be neglected but cannot be refuted:

I have undertaken in the following pages to give a resume of the evidence which I have collected upon the subject. Whatever else this evidence shows, it seems to afford no support for the view that the word means ‘young married woman.’

Finally, two conclusions from the evidence seem clear; first, that *almah*, so far as known, never meant ‘young married woman’; and secondly since the presumption in common law was, and is, that every *almah* is a virgin and virtuous, until she is proven not to be, we have a right to assume that Rebecca and the *almah* of Isaiah 7:14 and all other *almahs* were virgin, until and unless it shall be proven that they were not. If Isaiah 7:14 is a prediction of the Conception and if the events recorded in Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38 are true and the Holy Spirit of God really overshadowed the virgin Mary, all difficulties are cleared away.⁹⁴

The fact that *almah* means “virgin” is reflected in all the ancient versions:

None of the ancient languages or versions gives any evidence to show that *almah* ever meant ‘a young married woman.’

Jerome, who studied Hebrew under the Jewish rabbis of his time (about A.D. 400), still thought it possible to render *almah* by *virgo* in Genesis 24:43 and Isaiah 7:14.

All the versions of the Greek *parthenos*—Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Harklensian, Syriac and Arabic—render the word in both Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23 by the best word for ‘virgin’ which they possess.⁹⁵

The history of the translation of *almah* is then as follows: *Almah* was translated “virgin” by the Septuagint (200 B.C.), the Vulgate (400 A.D.), Luther (1534-46), the King James version (1611), the British Revision (1881-85), and the American Standard Version (1901). Now the RSV (1952) translates, “a young woman.”

Now the Jews have won. After the RSV appeared, Rabbi Brickner of Temple Sinai, Washington, D. C., is reported to have said:

I am delighted to know that, at last, this great error of translation has finally been corrected and that at least some elements of the Christian world no longer officially maintain that Isaiah 7:14 is a prediction that Jesus was to be born from the virgin Mary.⁹⁶

The RSV

Robert Dick Wilson tells us: “The language itself is not the difficulty. The great and only difficulty lies in disbelief in predictive prophecy and in the almighty power of God; or in the desire to throw discredit upon the divine Sonship of Jesus.”⁹⁷

Weigle answered the charge that the RSV translators deny the virgin birth by saying, “As to the statement that we deny the virgin birth or are against it, that is utter nonsense.”⁹⁸ It would have been so easy for him to say, “The translators of the RSV believe in the virgin birth” if that were true. And if all the RSV translators believed in the virgin birth, we may be certain that we would never have had any trouble with Isaiah 7:14.

But Grant believes there was nothing about the virgin birth in the original Gospel and that it is a story which was later inserted in Luke 1.⁹⁹ Bowie says that the story of the virgin birth was added by Luke when he edited his material.¹⁰⁰ He says: “There is no valid historical evidence in the earliest Christian writings that Jesus thought of Himself as having been miraculously born.”¹⁰¹

Bowie tells us that to modernists Joseph is the real father of Jesus in those passages where he is referred to as his legal father.¹⁰² By some strange reasoning Craig cites the pre-existence of Christ as held by Paul and John as an argument against the virgin birth.¹⁰³

Craig and Goodspeed declare that the idea of a virgin birth sprang up in the late Greek circles.¹⁰⁴ For Bowie and Goodspeed it is the beautiful writing of poets. Bowie says:

There were traditions among the world's religions of saviors who had been virgin-born. Then why not Jesus: Once the question had been asked, or once within the Christian fellowship the wondering suggestion had started and had begun to spread, belief in it sprang up instinctively like a flame. Among the Christians of that age, uncritical and naive, their thought of what thus appropriately might have been became the conviction of what was. Like many other unspoiled people, they were poets, and it is the poetry of worship which is singing in the lovely stories of the virgin in the introductions of the Gospels of Matthew and of Luke.¹⁰⁵

Goodspeed: "Later devotion though angels must have sung above his manger, and astrologers must have offered him gifts and homage."¹⁰⁶

Moffatt put into his own translation of Matthew 1:16 that Joseph was "the father of Jesus."¹⁰⁷ When the RSV appeared in 1952, it had a footnote at Matthew 1:16: "Other ancient authorities read *Joseph ... was the father* of Jesus." "Other ancient authorities" creates the impression that some fine ancient Greek manuscripts have this rendering. It is not found in any Greek manuscripts but only in one translation which is in Syriac. This reading could rate even a footnote only on a bias. Grant says that this reading is "more probably due to a later heretical tampering with the text."¹⁰⁸ In its first edition of 1946 the RSV omitted this reading; in 1952 it added it; and in 1953 it again dropped the reading.

The Tendenz of the translators can be seen in their translating the article in Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23 with "a." Their "theology" can be seen in their rendering of *almah*. Four times it is translated "maiden,"¹⁰⁹ and once, "girl" (Ex 2:8). These five translations express virginity without stressing it. There are only two places where the RSV translates *almah* with "young woman"; they are Isaiah 7:14 and Genesis 24:43. Why did they select these two passages? The Genesis passage offers the best evidence that *almah* means "virgin." Now no layman can from the "young woman" of Genesis 24:43 in the RSV prove that "young woman" in Isaiah 7:14 is wrong.

Weigle insists, "'Young woman' was used simply because that's what the Hebrew means"; and, "the people are hollering over one word in the Old Testament. They are hollering because we have given the true meaning of it."¹¹⁰

The difficulty with "young woman" is its double meaning. It means—1. A mature unmarried girl. Mary was young and a woman. What could be wrong with that? Young woman also means—2. A young married woman.

If we could limit "young woman" exclusively to the first meaning, there might be no mistranslation involved. But we cannot use "young woman" in Isaiah 7:14 without implying the second meaning, "a young married woman." The RSV translators have clearly stated that by "a young woman" they mean "a young married woman." Orlinski says "The young woman in Isaiah 7:14 is already pregnant when the prophet speaks."¹¹¹ James, an RSV translator says "The Hebrew word means 'young woman,' not 'virgin.'"¹¹² Bewer says, "Heb., a *young woman* of marriageable age, not necessarily a virgin."¹¹³ He also says:

This is the sign: the young woman (The Hebrew does not say a virgin but a young woman of marriageable age) who now becomes pregnant shall in her hour of crisis cry out in glorious joy Immanuel – with us is God,' and call her new-born baby thus.¹¹⁴

Inasmuch as "young woman" implies a married woman, it is incorrect to translate *almah* with young woman because *almah* does not mean a married woman. Koenig says, "Rendering the term with 'young woman' ... is in no way according to the facts expressed above."¹¹⁵

In the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah a little strip has been worn away at 7:14. But there on the brittle margin stands *haalimah* untouched. May that be a sign to us. And may this amazing discovery of the Isaiah manuscript, as it wipes off the blackboard of modern comment a whole host of speculations, be a proof to us that "the grass dries up and the flower withers, but the Word of our God will stand forever," Isaiah 40:8.

In His Word God has defined *haalimah* as “the virgin.” We may wither, but that will stand!

Endnotes

(Where a reference consists of number-colon-number, the first number indicates an earlier number in these notes where the complete reference may be found. The second number indicates the page.)

¹ 2 Ki 16:1-4, 10-18; 2 Chron. 28:1-4, 22-25; cp. Is 8:19.

² 2 Ki 16:5-6; 2 Chron. 28:5-19.

³ 2 Ki 16:7-9; 2 Chron. 28:16, 20-21. In 738 Menahem had tried to buy Assyria’s help, 2 Ki 15:19. An Oriental proverb says: The tiger agreed to protect the flock without any pay.

⁴ 2 Ki 16:10-18; 2 Chron. 28:22-25.

⁵ Ge. 7:11; 19:25; 1 Ki 19:11; Amos 1:1; Zec. 14:5.

⁶ 1 Sa 12:16-18; Jdg. 6:17-21.12.

⁷ Ex 17:2,7; Dt. 6:16.

⁸ Luther said, “Now we know very well (a cow almost ought to know this) that it is no sign when a young married woman is pregnant.” *Saemmthliche Schriften*, ed. by J. Walch, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1881-1910, XX, 2095.

⁹ Is 7:13; 8:8; 9:5-7; 11:1-10.

¹⁰ Is 9:6-7; 10:21; 11:1-9; Mic. 5:2-5.

¹¹ Is. 8:8, 10; cp. Mic. 5:2.

¹² Jerome and Calvin believed that *almah* comes from the root meaning “conceal,” and *almah* meant one who did not uncover herself for a man.

¹³ A. Katt, *Isaiah 7:14: Almah*, mimeographed, Shaker Heights, Ohio 1956, pp. 3, 27.

¹⁴ Robert Dick Wilson, “The Meaning of *Almah* (A. V. Virgin) in Isaiah VII. 14,” *The Princeton Theological Review*, 1926, p. 308 (308-16): “Where the plural is used, it is not certain that the singular is *almah*.”—In Ps. 68:25, the *alamoth* play on tamborines.

¹⁵ Genesis 24:33, 50, 53. In v. 51 *lephanekha* expresses both the bodily presence (cp. 23:12) and the availability (cp. 13:9) of Rebekah.

¹⁶ *Antiquities*, II, 221, 226.

¹⁷ Cp. 8:2092.

¹⁸ 13:27.

¹⁹ Jer 2:2; Hos. 2:15.

²⁰ Jer 2:2; Eze. 16:60.

²¹ Ge. 4:1,17; 16:3-5; 19:33,35; 21:2, 25:21; 29:23; 30:4-5,16-17; 38:2-3,18,24-25; Ex 2:1-2; Ru. 4:13; 1 Sa 1:19-20; 2 Sa 11:4-5; 1 Chron. 7:23; Hos. 1:3.

²² Cp. E. Koenig, *Ras Buch Jesaja*, Guetersloh: C. Bertelmann, 1926, p. 108.

²³ 13:26.

²⁴ Dt. 22:23, 28; Jdg. 21:12; 1 Ki 1:2; Est 2:2-3.

²⁵ Jer 18:13; 31:4,21.

²⁶ Ge. 24:43; Jdg. 21:12.

²⁷ 8:1804.

²⁸ Ge. 4:1, 17; 16:3-4; 17:15,19; 18:10; 21:2; 30:4-5; Ex 2:2; 21:22; Jdg. 13:2-3; Ru. 4:13; 1 Sa 1:19-20; 4:19; 2 Sa 11:5; 2 Ki 4:17; 1 Chron. 7:23; Hos. 1:2; Ge. 25:21.

²⁹ *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, revised by E. Kautzsch and A. Cowley, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910, par. 126 qr. See also 22:109-111. A. Briggs (*Messianic Prophecies*, N. Y.: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1886) says it is impossible to make *haalimah* an indefinite young woman. Margolis (*Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1912, p. 140) says that the generic article is altogether impossible here.

³⁰ Cp. S. Driver, *Books of Samuel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913, notes on 1 Sa 1:4; 19:13.

³¹ E. Young, “The Immanuel Prophecy—Isaiah 7:14-16,” *The Westminster Theological Journal*, May, 1953, pp. 121, 123 (97-124).

Cp. C. Gordon, “Almah—Isaiah 7:14,” *The Journal of Bible and Religion*, April, 1953, p. 106.

³² S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, translated by G. Anderson, N.Y.: Abingdon Press, after 1951, p. 114.

³³ Ex 2:8; 1 Sa 16:11; 17:55. Cp. 14:313.

³⁴ 14: 313, 315.

³⁵ G. Gray, *The Book of Isaiah. The International Critical Commentary*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912, p127.

- ³⁶ H. Liddell and R. Scott, (*A Greek-English Lexicon*, 2 vols., revised by H. Jones, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940, I, 700) lists *hetaira* as meaning the opposite of a prostitute, but the term seems to have been a euphemism for a prostitute; and the moral cultured *hetaira* is a product of modern imagination. See *Lexicon der Frau*, 2 vols., Zuerich: Encycloios Verlag Ab., 1953, I, 1392-93.
- ³⁷ 14:309-10, 312, 315. *The Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, Syriac*, London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1913. *The New Testament in Syriac*, London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1950.
- ³⁸ 14:312, 315.
- ³⁹ 14:314.
- ⁴⁰ *The Biblical Archeologist*, May, 1946, p. 22.
- ⁴¹ C. McIntire, *The New Bible*, 1952, p. 3.G. Kittel, editor, *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1932-present, V, 831.
- ⁴² G. Kittel, editor, *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1932-present, V, 831. *Iliad*, II, 512-15; XVI, 179-85; Euripides: *Ion*, 1472, 1486-91; Pindar: *Olympian Ode*, VI, 31.
- ⁴³ *Iliad*, II, 512-15; XVI, 179-85; Euripides: *Ion*, 1472, 1486-91; Pindar: *Olympian Ode*, VI, 31. Pindar: *Pythian Ode*, 3, 34; Sophocles: *Trichiniai*. 148. Aristophanes, *The Clouds* 530. Strabo, 6.3.2 Also an illiterate papyrus from 200 A.D. in J. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950, p. 494.
- ⁴⁴ Pindar: *Pythian Ode*, 3, 34; Sophocles: *Trichiniai*. 148. Aristophanes, *The Clouds* 530. Strabo, 6.3.2 Also an illiterate papyrus from 200 A.D. in J. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950, p. 494.
- ⁴⁵ *An Introduction to the RSV of the Old Testament*, N. Y.: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952, p. 14.
- ⁴⁶ From a special mimeographed statement.
- ⁴⁷ 13:30-31. A. Souter (*A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953) says: "In Matt.1:23 *PARTHENOS* is an inaccurate translation." A. Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, London: Robert Scott Roxburghe House, 1915, p.17, n.1.
- ⁴⁸ A. Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew*, London: Robert Scott Roxburghe House, 1915, p.17, n.1. For similar instances see 2:15; 10-36; 11:10; 26:31; 27-9.
- ⁴⁹ For similar instances see 2:15; 10-36; 11:10; 26:31; 27-9. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, Goettingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943, par.130:2.
- ⁵⁰ F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, Goettingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943, par.130:2.
- ⁵¹ Eusebius, *Church History*, III, 39,16; V, 8, 1-2. T. Zahn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Leipzig: A. Deichert 1906, II, 258-76. Dr. W. Arndt (*New Testament Introduction*, St. Louis: mimeographed, n.d., p. 36) believed that Matthew originally wrote his Gospel in Aramaic.
- ⁵² 8:1802. F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, N. Y.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1906, p. 517. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, revised by E. Kautzsch and A. Cowley, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910, par. 114.
- ⁵³ F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, N. Y.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1906, p. 517. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, revised by E. Kautzsch and A. Cowley, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910, par. 114. See also V. Hertrich, *Der Prophet Jesaja, Das Alte Testament Deutsch*, Goettingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1950, p. 132.
- ⁵⁴ See also V. Hertrich, *Der Prophet Jesaja, Das Alte Testament Deutsch*, Goettingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1950, p. 132. Isa. 19:21; 29:11-12; 38:19; 40:13.
- ⁵⁵ Isa. 19:21; 29:11-12; 38:19; 40:13.
- ⁵⁶ Jos. 23:14; cp. Ge. 29:5; Ex 1:8. J. Smith and W. Irwin, *The Prophets and their Times*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1941, p. 92.
- ⁵⁷ J. Smith and W. Irwin, *The Prophets and their Times*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1941, p. 92. 35:137, 136, 131. Luther reproduces the Hebrew paronomasia: "Glaebet ihr nicht., so bleibet ihr nicht."
- ⁵⁸ 35:137, 136, 131. Luther reproduces the Hebrew paronomasia: "Glaebet ihr nicht., so bleibet ihr nicht." 22:114.
- ⁵⁹ Luther reproduces the Hebrew paronomasia: "Glaebet ihr nicht., so bleibet ihr nicht." 22:114.
- ⁶⁰ 22:114.
- ⁶¹ See M. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, N. Y.: Hunt & Eaton, 1891, pp. 331-34. *The Pulpit Commentary*, X, 129-30.
- ⁶² *The Pulpit Commentary*, X, 129-30.
- ⁶³ F. James, *Personalities of the Old Testament*, N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939, p. 253. E. Thiele, "The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, July, 1944, p. 184.
- ⁶⁴ E. Thiele, "The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, July, 1944, p. 184.
- ⁶⁵ Stoeckhardt says, "The modern typical conception dissolves into the mist and fog of which it was born." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1885, p. 225). Referred to in G. Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1950, pp.12-13.
- ⁶⁶ Referred to in G. Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1950, pp.12-13.
- ⁶⁷ 54:129. J. Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, tr. by W. Pringle, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948, p. 250.

- ⁶⁸ J. Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, tr. by W. Pringle, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948, p. 250. Mt 26:63-66; Mk14:61-64. The statement of His enemies in John 8:41 may suggest that Jesus was illegitimate.
- ⁶⁹ Mt 26:63-66; Mk14:61-64. The statement of His enemies in John 8:41 may suggest that Jesus was illegitimate. Hoelscher, *Geschichte der israelitisch-juedischen Religion*, 1922, par. 47:5. H. Swete, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, 1914, pp. 30, 469.
- ⁷⁰ Hoelscher, *Geschichte der israelitisch-juedischen Religion*, 1922, par. 47:5. H. Swete, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, 1914, pp. 30, 469.
- ⁷¹ 45:30. Also H. Orlinsky., "The Use of the Versions in Translating the Holy Scriptures," *Religious Education*, July-August., 1952, p. 253 (253-59).
- ⁷² 13:12. A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, Stuttgart: Priv. Wuerth. Bibelanstalt., 1935, p. XXIII.
- ⁷³ A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, Stuttgart: Priv. Wuerth. Bibelanstalt., 1935, p. XXIII. B. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions*, Cardiff: U. of Wales Press, 1951, p. 122.
- ⁷⁴ B. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions*, Cardiff: U. of Wales Press, 1951, p. 122. J. M'Clintock and J. Strong, *Cyclopedia*, N. Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1894, "Aquila." Cp. 74:123.
- ⁷⁵ J. M'Clintock and J. Strong, *Cyclopedia*, N. Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1894, "Aquila." Cp. 74:123. 45:30.
- ⁷⁶ 45:30. 74:122.
- ⁷⁷ 74:122. 14:315.
- ⁷⁸ 14:315.
- ⁷⁹ Rahlfs says of Aquila's translation: "The Jews, however, held this translation in the highest esteem, and they came to use it for centuries, employing it even in their religious services" (72:XXVI). But later the Jews learned to rate the Septuagint as the best. Orlinsky says, "None of the four primary versions which were made subsequent to the Septuagint has the authority that the Septuagint has" (45:31). And the *Jewish Encyclopedia* says (III,186): "The oldest and most important of all versions made by Jews is that called 'the Septuagint.'"
- ⁸⁰ *Early Christian Fathers*, translated and edited by C. Richardson, London: SCM Press Ltd., 1953, p. 263. See Justin's Dial. 43, 48, 66-71, 77-78, 84.
- ⁸¹ *Patrologiae Patrum Graecorum*, J. P. Migne, v. 7. p. 946. Eusebius, *Church History*, V, 8, 10. Cp. 45:30; 42:V, 83. Eusebius has an elaborate treatment of the difference introduced into Isaiah 7:14 by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion in *Demonstr. Evang.*, ed. by W. Dindorf, Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1867, pp. 424-31. For more information on the conflict see Irenaeus, *Haer.* iii., 21:1-6; Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* iii, 13, iv, 10, *Adv. Jud.* 9; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, I, 34f.; Eusebius, *Dem. Ev.* vii, 1; Cyril Yier. *Cat.* xii; Basil, *Comm. in Is.*; Cyril Alex. In *Is. Origen: Contra Celsum*, tr. by H. Chadwick, Cambridge: U. Press, 1953, pp. 31-34. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, N. Y.: The Christian Literature Co., 1890, IV, "Origen against Celsus," chapters 28, 32, 33.
- ⁸² *Origen: Contra Celsum*, tr. by H. Chadwick, Cambridge: U. Press, 1953, pp. 31-34. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, N. Y.: The Christian Literature Co., 1890, IV, "Origen against Celsus," chapters 28, 32, 33. H. Laible, *Jesus Christus im Thalmud*, Berlin: H. Reuther, 1891, pp. 10, 24-25.
- ⁸³ H. Laible, *Jesus Christus im Thalmud*, Berlin: H. Reuther, 1891, pp. 10, 24-25. 74:205-6.
- ⁸⁴ 74:205-6. 83:8.
- ⁸⁵ 83:8. 35:134-35.
- ⁸⁶ 35:134-35.
- ⁸⁷ 8:1793-1807. 8:2091-2109.
- ⁸⁸ 8:2091-2109. 8:2093-2103.
- ⁸⁹ 8:2093-2103.
- ⁹⁰ 15:34.
- ⁹¹ 8:2091-93.
- ⁹² G. Stoeckhardt, *Der Prophet Jesaia*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1902, p. 84.
- ⁹³ 54:127-128.
- ⁹⁴ 14:308, 316.
- ⁹⁵ 14:314, 315, 316.
- ⁹⁶ Reported in "The Trumpeter for Israel," Winter, 1953
- ⁹⁷ 14:316.
- ⁹⁸ UP, Nov. 24, 1952.
- ⁹⁹ F. Grant, *An Introduction to New Testament Thought*, N. Y.: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950, p. 230.
- ¹⁰⁰ W. Bowie, "Exposition of Luke 1-6," *The Interpreter's Bible*, N. Y., 1952, VIII, 36 (26-127).
- ¹⁰¹ W. Bowie, *The Master*, N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, p. 34.
- ¹⁰² 100:59.
- ¹⁰³ C. Craig, *The Beginning of Christianity*, N. Y.: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943, p. 207.

¹⁰⁴ 103:203-4, 208. E. Goodspeed, *A Life of Jesus*, N. Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1950, p.29.

¹⁰⁵ W. Bowie, *The Renewing Gospel*, N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935, pp. 95-96.

¹⁰⁶ 104 (Goodspeed):28.

¹⁰⁷ J. Moffatt, *The New Testament*, N. Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1935.

¹⁰⁸ 99:232.

¹⁰⁹ Ps 68:26; Pr 30:19; Song 1:3; 6:8. It also translates *bethulah* with "maiden" in Ps148:2; La 1:4; Zec. 9:17.

¹¹⁰ 41. UP, November 24, 1952.

¹¹¹ 13:13.

¹¹² 63:252, footnote on 7:14.

¹¹³ J. Bewer, *The Book of Isaiah*, N. Y.: Harper Brothers, 1950, on Is. 7:14.

¹¹⁴ J. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, N. Y.: Columbia U. Press, 1938, p. 105.

¹¹⁵ 22:108-9.