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### **The Brit Hadasha Series: The Virgin Birth**

Jewish counter-missionaries who teach against the Brit Hadasha (New Testament) often claim that Messiah must have a human father, and that Yeshua’s alleged lack of a human father, supposedly disqualifies him from being the Messiah. Not only is this not true, but the Torah implies that Messiah would not have a human father at all. We read in the Torah:

The Lord God (YHWH Elohim) said to the serpent,

#### **Genesis 3:14-15**

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

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

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

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

The Targum Yerushalami interprets as follows:

*“And it shall be that when the sons of the woman study the Torah diligently and obey its*

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

We found it important to point to some of the Jewish rabbinical thought as it relates to Genesis 3:14-15. Both of these targums interpret the “seed” of the woman as those who study the Torah and obey it, however in doing so they “make peace with one another” and these are described as “the days of King Messiah.” Thus the Targums identify Torah Observant Israel with the Messiah in this passage as the “seed” of the woman.

What is even more interesting is that Midrash Rabbah makes this identification of the “seed” of the woman as the Messiah clear in its comment to Gen. 23:5 referring to the naming of Seth it says:

*“And she called his name Seth: For God has appointed me another seed, etc. R. Tanhuma said in the name of Samuel Kozith: [She hinted at] that seed which would arise from another source, viz. the king Messiah. ” (Genesis Rabbah 23:5)*

There can be little doubt that the “seed which would arise from another source” here is Eve’s “seed” mentioned in Genesis 3:15, the seed of a woman, the Messiah.

Thus we may see from the Torah itself that Messiah would not have a human father, but would instead be the “seed” of a woman. Even rabbinical thought agrees with this interpretation.

This brings us to Matthew 1:23.

### **Matthew 1:23**

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

Which is pointing to the prophecy in Isaiah:

### **Isaiah 7:14**

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

Despite the fact that we just read rabbinical support for the Genesis 3 prophecy being messianic in nature. And we also read rabbinical support that points to the fact that Genesis 3 reveals that the messiah would come from not the seed of a man, but the seed of a woman, anti-missionaries challenge the application of this verse in Isaiah as a virgin birth. This is done to challenge the credibility of Matthew 1:23.

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

The first is the meaning of the Hebrew word “*alma*” and why it would be used here.

The second is the reading of the other ancient versions of Isaiah 7:14.

And the third is the overall context of this passage.

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

It has been suggested that the Hebrew word “*alma*” simply means "young woman" and that if Isaiah had intended to refer to a "virgin" he would have used the Hebrew word “*betulah*.” SO the question arises, what is an “*alma*?” What is a “*betulah*” and why would Isaiah use the word “*alma*” rather than “*betulah*” if it were to be a virgin birth?

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

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

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

Now it has been suggested that Isaiah 7:14 refers not to a birth to a "virgin" but to a birth to a "young woman".

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

#### **Isaiah 7:14**

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

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

Now lets look at the Greek Septuagint reading:

#### **Isaiah 7:14**

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

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

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

to a virgin.

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

**Literal translation of Hebrew of Isaiah 7:14:**

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

"You" in verse 14 is plural. By contrast King Achaz is singular “you” in verses 11 and 16-17. The sign to Achaz was that before a child should know how to choose good from bad, the siege would end (16-17).

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

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

7:3a Then YHWH said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Achaz, you(s) and Sh'ar-Yashuv your(s) son...  
7:10 ...YHWH spoke again to Achaz saying:  
7:11 "Ask a sign for yourself(s) from YHWH your(s) God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above."  
7:12 But Achaz said: "I will not ask, nor will I test YHWH"  
7:13 Then he said: "Hear now, O House of David! Is it a small thing for you(pl) to weary men, but will you(pl) weary my God also?  
7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give to you(pl) a sign: behold the ALMA will conceive and bear a son and she will call his name Immanuel.  
7:15 Curds and honey He shall eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.  
7:16 For behold before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you(s) dread will be forsaken by both her kings.  
7:17 YHWH will bring the King of Assyria upon you(s) and your(s) people and your(s) father's house...

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

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

Now the NT (Brit Hadasha) clearly applies these passages to Messiah Yeshua.

Revelation 21:3 alludes to Isaiah 7:14 & 8:8, 10.

1 Peter 3:14-15 cites Isaiah 8:12-13 in regards to the Messiah.

Romans 9:32 & 1 Peter 2: apply Isaiah 8:14 to the Messiah.

Hebrews 2:13 applies Isaiah 8:17-18 to Messiah.

Finally Mt. 4:15-16 and Luke 1:79 apply Isaiah 8:23-9:1 (9:1-2) to the Messiah.

Of the 5 surviving fragments of the ancient Netzarim Midrash on Isaiah, three of them fall in this section of Isaiah and all three apply the passages to Yeshua.

Moreover the Talmud applies Isaiah 8:14 to Messiah:

*Judah and Hezekiah, the sons of R. Hiyya, once sat at table with Rabbi and uttered not a word. Whereupon he said: Give the young men plenty of strong wine, so that they may say something. When the wine took effect, they began by saying: The son of David cannot appear ere the two ruling houses in Israel shall have come to an end, viz., the Exilarchate, in Babylon and the Patriarchate in Palestine, for it is written, And he shall be for a Sanctuary, for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both houses of Israel (Is. 8:14). Thereupon he [Rabbi] exclaimed: You throw thorns in my eyes, my children! At this, R. Hiyya [his disciple] remarked: Master, be not angered, for the numerical value of the letters of yayin is seventy, and likewise the letters of sod: When yayin [wine] goes in, sod [secrets] comes out. (b.San. 38a)*

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

Finally, the figure in Isaiah 9:6-7 certainly seems to be the same as that in Isaiah 11:1. This is important because EVERYONE agrees that Isaiah 11:1f refers to the Messiah.

Thus, by examining the overall context of Isaiah 7:14 it becomes clear that Isaiah 7:14 is indeed a messianic prophecy which prophecies of the virgin birth of the Messiah.

Now that is established, another critique usually presents itself. If Yeshua is only the seed of a woman, then how is Yeshua's prophetic genealogy established?

## **THE GENEALOGY OF MESSIAH**

For years there have been a number of teachings going around, which allege that the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3 are both those of Joseph and in some versions of the teaching, that Mary was a Levite.

It is a simple matter to show that the two genealogies given of Yeshua in Matthew and Luke cannot be through the same parent (or step-parent).

A quick look at the genealogy shows that the names are the same until we get to King David, then they diverge completely:

<b>Matthew 1</b>	<b>Luke 3</b>
Abraham	Abraham
Isaac	Isaac
Jacob	Jacob
Judas	Juda
Phares	Phares

Esrom	Esrom
Aram	Aram
Aminadab	Aminadab
Naasson	Naasson
Salmon	Salmon
Boaz	Boaz
Obed	Obed
Jesse	Jesse
David	David
Solomon	Nathan
Roboam	Mattatha
Abia	Menan
Asa	Melea
Josaphat	Eliakim
Joram	Jonan
Ozias	Joseph
Joatham	Juda

This list clearly shows that one genealogy follows a line that passes from David to his son Solomon and then to the line of kings. The other line passes through another of David's sons: Nathan. Both genealogies cannot be for the same parent, and both trace back to the Tribe of Judah.

Anti-missionaries love to attack the genealogy of Yeshua. The reason is that the genealogy of the Messiah is critical, and Yeshua fit these criteria perfectly.

The TANAKH gives the following criteria for the genealogy of Messiah.

First off Messiah must be "seed" of Abraham:

**Genesis 17:19**

God (Elohim) said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.

And he must descend from Jacob:

**Numbers 24:17**

I see him, but not now;  
I behold him, but not near:  
a star shall come out of Jacob,  
and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;  
it shall crush the forehead of Moab  
and break down all the sons of Sheth.

And he must be of the Tribe of Judah:

**Genesis 49:10**

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,

nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
until tribute comes to him; (*until "Shiloh" comes\**)  
and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

*\*By a slight revocalization; a slight emendation yields (compare Septuagint, Syriac, Targum) until he comes to whom it belongs; Hebrew until Shiloh comes, or until he comes to Shiloh (show onscreen)*

Who is this "Shiloh" ?

This Gemara also asks "What is Messiah's name?"

Rabbi Shila offers the answer:

*"His name is Shiloh, for it is written, 'until Shiloh comes.'" (b.San. 98b)*

The Targums (Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan and Yerushalmi) all have "until Messiah comes" in place of "until Shiloh comes" .

Whether or not one places any value on gematria, or numerical values of Hebrew letters, there is something worth mentioning here on that subject.

The word "Shiloh" has a gematria (numerical value) of 345 which is the same as the value of "HaShem" ( "the name" ) and El Shaddai.

The phrase "Shiloh comes" has a gematria of 358 which is the same as the gematria for "Messiah and "Moses" (because the Messiah is "the prophet like Moses" (Deut. 18:18) This is because "the name" of the Messiah is imbedded in the phrase "until Shiloh comes."

The Zohar says of Gen. 49:10:

*...the scepter" referring to the Messiah of the House of Judah,  
and "the staff" to the Messiah of the House of Joseph.*

*"Until Shiloh comes" , this is Moses, the gematria of Shiloh  
and Moses being the same [358]. (Zohar 1:25)*

*The word Shiloh, here, is spelt with both a yod and a he,  
to allude to the holy supernal name, Yah,  
by which the Shekinah shall rise ... (Zohar 1:237)*

Thus the Zohar teaches us that in Genesis 49:10 we have the two Messiahs (or the two comings of Messiah) represented as a "scepter" and a "staff" which are one "Shiloh" and that the one "Shiloh" has Yah within him.

We do not cite rabbinical positions as a demonstration of authority or that rabbinical insight is always valid, but we simply wish to demonstrate historical messianic connections made by rabbis of the past that so many anti-missionaries now find it convenient to dismiss in their critiques of Messiah Yeshua.

Messiah must also be an heir to David's throne:

**Isaiah 9:5-7**

For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.  
For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD (YHWH) of hosts will do this.

Anti-missionaries have argued that Yeshua was not heir to David's throne if he was not actually Joseph's son (of course the claim of the Gospels is that Yeshua was born to Mary without any earthly father).

This is actually a false claim, the throne can very clearly be passed by inheritance regardless of physical blood line.

In fact, David himself inherited the throne from Saul without being of Saul's bloodline. David was the legitimate heir to Saul's throne, by way of his covenant with Jonathan (1 Samuel chapters 18-20) which was how David legitimately obtained the throne.

Many anti-missionaries try to attack Yeshua's genealogy by claiming that the genealogies in Matthew and Luke contradict one another.

In fact, Matthew 1:1-18 gives Yeshua's genealogy through his step-father/adopted father Joseph, while Luke 3:23-38 gives his genealogy through his mother Mary.

We know this because the genealogy in Luke begins with "*Joseph, the son of Heli*" (Luke 3:23)

The Jerusalem Talmud mentions a certain Mary who, in context, appears to be the mother of Yeshua, who is said to be the daughter of "Eli." (j.Hag. 77d & j.San. 25c)

The Aramaic "*bar*" like the Hebrew word "*ben*" normally means "*son of*" but is very ambiguous and can also refer to a "*son in law a step son a servant a student or a follower.*"

An example of this can be found in Matthew 1:16, Joseph was the son of Jacob. The Greek has only "of" which is why the KJV has "son of" in italics, thus the Greek can also refer to a son-in-law).

Matthew gives the genealogy of Yeshua through his “supposed” father meaning his stepfather and adoptive father Joseph, to establish Yeshua’s legal right to the throne of David, through Solomon.

Luke, on the other hand, gives Yeshua’s genealogy through his mother Mary, showing Messiah to also be the “seed of David” through David’s son Nathan (Luke 3:23-38).

This resolves the problem of the “curse of Jeconiah” (Jeremiah 22:24 – 29) though it may also be argued based on Haggai 2:23 that this curse had been reversed.

Anti-missionaries have claimed that the presence of Jeconiah in Yeshua’s genealogy disqualifies him from being Messiah due to the supposed “*curse of Jeconiah*” as we read in Jeremiah:

### **Jeremiah 22:24-29**

“As I live, declares the Lord (YHWH), though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off and give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. But to the land to which they will long to return, there they shall not return.”

Is this man Coniah a despised, broken pot,  
a vessel no one cares for?  
Why are he and his children hurled and cast  
into a land that they do not know?  
O land, land, land,  
hear the word of the Lord (YHWH)!

If we look in the Book of Haggai we find that Elohim appears to have reversed this curse:

### **Haggai 2:23**

On that day, declares the Lord (YHWH) of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, declares the Lord (YHWH), and make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you, declares the Lord (YHWH) of hosts.”

Note the use of the term “signet ring” in each passage.

The Talmud even seems to agree with this concept that the curse was reversed. It says:

Rab Judah said:

*Exile makes remission for three things, for it is written, Thus saith the Lord etc. He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword and by the famine and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out and falleth away to the Chaldeans who beseige you he shall live and his life shall be unto him for a prey. R.*

Johanan said:

*Exile atones for everything, for it is written, Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days, for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah. Whereas after he [the king] was exiled, it is written, And the sons of Jeconiah, — the same is Assir — Shealtiel his son etc.<sup>33</sup> [He was called] Assir,<sup>34</sup> because his mother*

*conceived him in prison. Shealtiel, because God did not plant him<sup>36</sup> in the way that others are planted. We know by tradition that a woman cannot conceive in a standing position. [yet she did conceive standing. Another interpretation: Shealtiel, because God obtained [of the Heavenly court] absolution from His oath. Zerubbabel [was so called] because he was sown in Babylon. But [his real name was] Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.*

Footnotes:

33. I Ch. III, 17. Notwithstanding the curse that he should be childless and not prosper, after being exiled he was forgiven.

34. Which He had made, to punish Jechoniah with childlessness.”  
(Sanhedrin 37b – 38a, Soncino Talmud Edition)

Also the Midrash Rabba says:

*...they made the Calf and deserved to be exterminated, and I would have thought that He would curse and destroy them, yet, no sooner had they repented, than the danger was averted, And the Lord repented of the evil (ib. XXXII, 14). And so in many places. For example, He said about Jekoniah: For no man of his seed shall prosper (Jer. XXII, 30) and it says, I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations . . . In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, My servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet (Hag. II, 22 f.). Thus was annulled that which He had said to his forefather, viz. As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim King of Judah were the signet upon My right hand, yet I would pluck thee thence (Jer. XXII, 24).*

(Numbers Rabbah XX:20)

Also we read

Midrash Pesikta Rabbati says:

*R. Joshua ben Levi, however, argued as follows: Repentance sets aside the entire decree, and prayer half the decree. You find that it was so with Jeconiah, king of Judah. For the Holy One, blessed be He, swore in His anger, As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakhim king of Judah were the signet on a hand, yet by My right – note, as R. Meir said, that is was by His right hand that God swore – I would pluck thee hence (Jer. 22:24). And what was decreed against Jeconiah? That he die childless. As is said Write ye this man childless (Jer. 22:40). But as soon as he avowed penitence, the Holy One, blessed be He, set aside the decree, as is shown by Scripture ’ s reference to The sons of Jeconiah – the same is Assir – Shealtiel his son, etc. (1 Chron 3:17). And Scripture says further: In that day . . . will I take thee, O Zerubbabel . . . the son of Shealtiel . . . and will make thee as a signet (Haggai 2:23). Behold, then, how penitence can set aside the entire decree!*

(Pesikta Rabbati, Piska)

Anti-missionaries also attack Yeshua’ s genealogy in Matthew because three names are omitted in Matthew 1:8.

In Matt. 1:8 we read “*Joram the father of Uzziah*”

Here the names of three kings are omitted. These are added back in Old Syriac, however they are clearly not part of the original text of Matthew, since verse 17 in Old Syriac still counts only fourteen names.

Once again Jewish anti-missionaries fail to use equal weights and measures, judging the Gospels by a stricter criteria than that what is applied to the TANAKH. The truth is that it was not unusual for ancient

Hebrew genealogies to be abbreviated and omit names. For example if we compare the genealogy of Ezra as given in Ezra 7:1-5 with that given in 1 Chronicles 6:4-15 we find that the later genealogy given in Ezra also has omitted names.

While anti-missionaries seek to attack Yeshua's genealogy, the truth is that Yeshua was the heir to the throne of David through Solomon by way of his stepfather Joseph as we see in Matthew 1 and was also the physical descendant of David through Nathan by way of his mother Mary. These genealogies demonstrate that Yeshua was in fact uniquely qualified as fulfilling the genealogical prophecies regarding the Messiah.

When confronting the misguided teachings of Jewish anti-missionaries, we encourage putting more effort into research and testing than they have put forth. In doing that, the answers will be apparent.

We hope that you have been blessed by this teaching, and remember, continue to test everything. S

Shalom.

*For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

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

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