

EXCERPT OF VOLUME 2
ABOUT ISAIAH 7:14-16

By Kenneth Greifer

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ISAIAH 7:14-16 (VIRGIN)

In ISAIAH 7, ISAIAH the prophet and his young son come to Ahaz, the king of Judah, to tell him not to worry about the two kings that are coming to attack Jerusalem because G-d is going to protect Jerusalem. ISAIAH tells the king to ask for a sign from G-d as a proof, but the king refuses to ask for one, so G-d says that the house of David (which Ahaz is part of) is tiring Him, so He will give them a sign.

ISAIAH 7:14

USUAL TRANSLATIONS

"For thus will give My L-rd Himself to you (plural masculine) (the House of David) a sign."

"Behold, the young woman (virgin?) is pregnant, and she is begetting (present tense feminine) (she will beget) a son, and she is calling (present tense feminine) (she will call) his name 'G-d is with us'."

Or: "Behold, the young woman (virgin?) is pregnant, and you (masculine singular) (Ahaz) will beget a son, and you (masculine singular) will call his name 'G-d is with us'."

ISAIAH 7:15

USUAL TRANSLATION

"Curd and honey he will eat for his knowing **יָדַע** hating (rejecting) (infinitive) **וְשָׂא** evil and choosing **וְבָחַ** good."

ISAIAH 7:16

USUAL TRANSLATION

"Because (but) before the youth will know (knows) hating (rejecting) evil and choosing good, the land that you (singular masculine) fear will be abandoned from the presence of her two kings."

ISAIAH 7:14: PART OF THE PROPHECY ABOUT THE "ALMAH"

ISAIAH 7:14 "ALMAH" PART

USUAL TRANSLATIONS

"Behold, the young woman (the virgin?) (the young woman who is a virgin?) (the almah) **is pregnant...**"

PRESENT OR FUTURE TENSE?

ISAIAH 7:14 has a present tense verb "is pregnant", but some commentators say the present tense can have a future meaning. Other commentators translate the verb as past tense "has conceived", but it is not past tense because the past tense is spelled differently (הֵרָה instead of הָרָה).

PRESENT TENSE?

"Behold, the young woman (or virgin?) (almah) **is pregnant** (present tense) הֵרָה, and **she is begetting** (present tense) יָלְדָה a son, and **she is calling** (present tense) וְקָרָא his name..."

FUTURE MEANING?

"Behold, the young woman (or virgin?) (almah) **will conceive**, and **she will beget** a son, and **she will call** his name..."

Some commentators say that the present tense

can have a future meaning.

If almah meant virgin and the present tense verb could be used to say she will become pregnant, then it could mean the virgin will become pregnant. At that time she could be a virgin, but later she could become pregnant and have a son. It would not have to mean she will be a virgin in the future when she conceives.

ISAIAH 7:14 PART AFTER "ALMAH" ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION

"Behold, the young woman (virgin?) **is pregnant**, and **you (singular) (Ahaz) will beget** (future tense) תָּדַלַּךְ a son, and **you will call** תִּקְרָא his name..."

The verbs translated as the feminine singular present tense "is begetting" and "is calling" can also be translated as "you will beget" and "you will call" in this quote. The Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation) says "and you will beget a son..."¹

ISAIAH 7:15

¹ Brenton, Sir Lancelot. "English Translation of the Greek Septuagint Bible." 1851. (Online)

USUAL TRANSLATION

"Curd and honey he will eat for his knowing תו
לדל hating (rejecting) (infinitive) טונו evil and
choosing ובו good."

I think curd tastes sour, so it would represent evil to the child, and honey is sweet, so it would represent good.

ISAIAH 7:16

USUAL TRANSLATION

"Because (but) before the youth will know (knows) hating (rejecting) evil and choosing good, the land that you (singular masculine) fear will be abandoned from the presence of her two kings."

BACKGROUND

In 2 KINGS 14:28, a king of Israel took over Hamath and Damascus, so Israel ruled over Aram, so I think Aram had two kings. In 2 KINGS 15:27, it says Pekah, the son of Remaliah, began his reign over Israel that lasted for twenty years. 2 KINGS 16:1 says Ahaz became the king of Judah in the seventeenth year of

Pekah's reign, so Pekah only ruled another three years after that. 2 KINGS 16:5 says Rezin, the king of Aram, and Pekah, the king of Israel, went to take over Jerusalem during Ahaz' reign. Ahaz hired the king of Assyria to help him, and the king of Assyria captured Damascus and sent it into exile, and the king of Assyria also killed their king Rezin (2 KINGS 16:5-9).

These events had to happen within the first three years of Ahaz' reign because Pekah was the king of Israel during that time, so the child in the sign had to be two or three years old or less when the sign was fulfilled.

FULFILLMENT OF ISAIAH 7:14

NON-MIRACULOUS SIGNS

Some commentators say that ISAIAH 7:14 predicts a miraculous virgin birth because a normal birth would not be an impressive sign, but signs given as part of prophecies were not always miraculous. In 2 KINGS 19:29 the sign is that the people will eat from certain crops. In JEREMIAH 44:29-30 the sign is that the king of Egypt will be given into the hand of his enemies. EZEKIEL 4:1-3 and 1 SAMUEL 2:34 also describe signs that are not miraculous.

ISAIAH 8:3-4 is important non-miraculous sign because it is similar to ISAIAH 7:14-16. In ISAIAH 8:3-4, the prophet ISAIAH has a son with a prophetic name who is a sign. Before the son will know how to call “my father” and “my mother”, the land of Damascus will be taken into exile by Assyria. ISAIAH 8:3-4 does not specifically say the son is a “sign”, but ISAIAH 8:18 says that ISAIAH and his children are “signs” in Israel.

Signs are not only used in prophecies. Some signs that are not miraculous are used for other things. For example, in 1 SAMUEL 14:10, which might be a prophecy, the sign is that someone will say something to certain people. In EXODUS 31:13 and 17 the sabbath is a sign between G-d and Israel, and in GENESIS 17:11 circumcision is a sign of the covenant that G-d made with Abraham.

WHO IS THE PREGNANT WOMAN?

Some commentators say the pregnant woman in ISAIAH 7:14 had to be the wife of Ahaz or ISAIAH the prophet, but kings then had many wives and concubines who could be pregnant.

DOUBLE PROPHECY

Some commentators who believe *almah* means virgin say ISAIAH 7:14 is a double prophecy that happened more than once. First, they don't show any proof from the Hebrew Bible that some prophecies can be double prophecies. They show other examples of quotes they think are double prophecies, but they can't prove that they are double prophecies. They just assume they are. Second, if the prophecy could happen twice, they would have to believe two virgins had babies.

TWO PROPHECIES

I have heard another unusual explanation about ISAIAH 7:14. Some commentators say that two prophecies and two signs are given. One prophecy is to the house of David about a virgin giving birth to a son called "G-d is with us", and the other is to Ahaz about the land with two kings being taken away before ISAIAH's son "A remnant will return" will know how to choose honey over curd. (ISAIAH 7:3 mentions ISAIAH going to Ahaz with ISAIAH's son.) I think they believe the two prophecies are given without explaining that the sign changes from a child called "G-d is with us" to ISAIAH's son "a remnant will return" being the sign.

ISAIAH 7:14 mentions G-d giving a sign and not

two signs like their explanation describes. In their explanation, the first sign is the child called "G-d is with us" who would be born to a virgin at some later time, possibly even hundreds of years later. I am not sure exactly what he would be a sign of in the prophecy because they believe that ISALIAH's son is a second sign. They say that ISALIAH's son is the one who will eat curd and honey, and that before he knows good and evil, the land of two kings will be forsaken.

ISALIAH's son's name, "A remnant will return", does not fit the sign given in ISALIAH 7:14-16 because the prophecy is not about a remnant of the people returning.

Most commentators don't see a reason for G-d to tell ISALIAH to bring that son with him, if he is not part of the prophecy. I think ISALIAH was told to bring his son because he might have been the same age as the child in the prophecy, so people could see what ISALIAH meant about how old the child would be when the prophecy is fulfilled.

Some commentators say that ISALIAH probably pointed to his son or touched him, so people would know that his son was the one who would eat curd and honey to fulfill the rest of the prophecy. If ISALIAH's son was part of the prophecy, ISALIAH could have simply mentioned his son's name in the prophecy as the child

who will eat the curd and honey, so people would know it. Their belief that he pointed to his son or touched him would mean that only people who were there and saw ISAIAH say the prophecy would understand it. According to their explanation, anyone who would read the prophecy later would misunderstand it.

Some of them also say that the child described in ISAIAH 7:16 had to be there at the time because the prophecy says “the youth.” If that was true, then the young woman or virgin would also have to be there at that time because ISAIAH 7:14 says “the young woman” or “the virgin”, depending on how you decide to translate the word “almah.”

Their belief about a second child as a sign is not written in the Hebrew Bible, so it is hard to disprove. I would have to find a written proof that their unwritten belief is not true, but they would not have to prove their unwritten belief, except to say it is true.

If you want to believe what the prophecy in ISAIAH 7:14-16 literally says, you would have to believe that it is about one child that will be born around that time.

G-D IS WITH US

The expression "G-d is with us" can mean that G-d is with the people and is helping them in some situation, so the child's name "G-d is with us" fits the prophecy that G-d will help Judah against their enemies. ISALIAH 7:6 mentions a plan by their enemies that ISALIAH 8:8-10 says won't work out because G-d is with us.

"G-d is with us" and similar sayings are used in many quotes to show that G-d will help Israel. Here are a few examples. HAGGAI 2:4, 2 CHRONICLES 32:7-8, JOSHUA 1:5 and 9, NUMBERS 14:43, NUMBERS 14:9, JUDGES 6:12-13, ISALIAH 8:10, and GENESIS 28:15.

Some commentators say that the child prophesied in ISALIAH 7:14 was born then because G-d spoke to the child called "G-d is with us" in ISALIAH 8:8 because it says "...your land, G-d is with us." For some reason, some commentators say that the child can't be a regular person because it says "your land". They say it has to be about a king or some great person.

"Your land" is used about regular people in ISALIAH 1:7, GENESIS 12:1, LEVITICUS 19:9, LEVITICUS 25:9, LEVITICUS 25:45, LEVITICUS 26:1, JONAH 1:8, "my land" is used in GENESIS 24:4, MICAH 5:5 says "our land", and ISALIAH 13:14 says "his land." I think there are many more quotes like these.

Maybe ISALIAH 7:15 says "he will eat curd and

honey" or "cream and honey for his knowing" rejecting bad and choosing good. I think one tastes better and represents the good.

FULFILLMENT HUNDREDS OF YEARS LATER

Some commentators says this prophecy was fulfilled hundreds of years before the birth of the actual child mentioned in the prophecy when Assyria took Israel and Aram into exile (2 KINGS 16:5-9) and (2 KINGS 14:28).

It would not make sense for a prophecy to specifically mention an event taking place before a child eats curd and honey, if the prophecy would be fulfilled hundreds of years before the child was even born. If the predicted event could happen hundreds of years before the child was even born, the prophecy would take place before every event of that child's life and not just it's eating curd and honey.

The prophecy only makes sense if the child was born around the time ISAIAH said the prophecy.

A BETTER WAY OF STATING THE PROPHECY?

I would like to know what the prophecy would have to say in order for them to believe that it could

have happened at that time with only one child.

CHILDREN OF PROPHETS AS SIGNS

ISAIAH 8:18 says that ISAIAH and his children are signs in Israel. ISAIAH 7:3 mentions his son “A remnant will return” coming with ISAIAH to King Ahaz, and ISAIAH 8:3-4 mentions his other son being born. In ISAIAH 8:3-4, G-d tells ISAIAH to call him a certain prophetic name “because before the youth knows the calling of ‘my father’ and ‘my mother’, He (G-d) will lift up the wealth...” of Damascus before the king of Assyria who will take Damascus into exile.

This prophecy is similar to the one in ISAIAH 7:14-16 because it also says something will happen before a child reaches a certain age.

Some commentators say that ISAIAH never mentions the fulfillment of the prophecy in ISAIAH 7:14-16 taking place, so it didn’t take place then, but ISAIAH did not mention the fulfillment of the prophecy about his son saying “my father” and “my mother” in ISAIAH 8:3-4 either.

Some commentators also say that ISAIAH mentioned the birth of his son in ISAIAH 8:3-4, but not the birth of the child in ISAIAH 7:14-16. They say that

shows the child in ISAIAH 7:14-16 would be born many years later. The prophecy in ISAIAH 8:3-4 was given after his son was born, but the prophecy in ISAIAH 7:14-16 was given before that child was born, so he didn't mention it's birth. It doesn't have to mean it was born many years later.

I think the important thing is that the prophecy about Damascus (Aram) came true within a short period of time and not that a child ate curd and honey or another child said "my father" and "my mother" after Damascus was taken into exile by Assyria.

Maybe the child in ISAIAH 7:14-16 was a sign to the house of David which included King Ahaz that Damascus would be taken into exile by Assyria soon, and the son of ISAIAH was a sign for the people of Israel of the same thing.

In HOSEA 1:2-8, Hosea was also told to give his three children prophetic names, and they were not miraculous prophecies either.

FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECIES

I don't think the fulfillment of every prophecy was announced by prophets after they gave a prophecy, but the fulfillment of some prophecies are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. I think people usually just saw them

come true.

“BEHOLD” IN PROPHECIES

Some people say that the sign and prophecy in ISAIAH 7:14-16 are more important and miraculous because the prophecy says “behold” at the beginning. I don’t think that is true. The word “behold” הנה is used in many quotes. There are prophecies that say it, and prophecies that don’t say it. I don’t think it has a special prophetic meaning.

In 1 KINGS 13:1-5, a prophet used the word “behold” with a sign and with a prophecy about the birth of a future king called Josiah. I don’t think the sign or the prophecy are about the biggest miracles in the Hebrew Bible, even though the prophet said “behold” before he announced them.

1 KINGS 13:2

USUAL TRANSLATION

The prophet said to the altar:

“...Altar, altar, thus says the L-rd: **Behold**, a son is born to the house of David. Josiah is his name, and he will sacrifice upon you the priests of the high places who are offering upon you and bones of men will be

burned upon you.”

This prophecy which isn't about a totally miraculous event came true many years later in 2 KINGS 23:15-18.

1 KINGS 13:3

USUAL TRANSLATION

“...And he gave in that day a sign to say (saying), ‘This is the sign that the L-rd has spoken: **Behold**, the altar is torn (broken) and is poured out the fat (fat ash of sacrifices) that is upon it.’ “

In 1 KINGS 13:5, the sign, which is not a major miracle, came true right after the prophet spoke these words.

MORE ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATIONS

ISAIAH 7:14 FIRST PART

USUAL TRANSLATION

"For thus will give my L-rd (G-d), He (Himself), a sign to you (plural)."

There are other quotes that have "He", translated as "himself", written after the subject of the verb. See NUMBERS 35:19, JOSHUA 22:23, and 1 SAMUEL 30:31.

ISALIAH 7:14 FIRST PART

UNLIKELY ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATIONS

"For thus He (G-d) will give my master (Ahaz or his son), he is a sign to you."

The "you" plural is the house of David, and I am not sure if the verb means "will be given" or "He will give."

"For thus let be told (pual of ת נ ה) my master, Ahaz, he (Ahaz) is a sign for you (plural) (the house of David)."

"For thus let my L-rd tell, He (G-d) is a sign to you" or "he (Ahaz) is a sign to you."

ISALIAH 7:14 FIRST PART

REGROUPING THE LETTERS

"For thus will give my L-rd your being foolish ם
כ ל א ה ו a sign."

This could mean Ahaz was foolish to not ask for a sign from G-d. The verb "to be foolish" has the root letters ל א ך, and the infinitive of the verb has the plural "your" ending.

ISAIAH 7:2 mentions the house of David and not just Ahaz being worried about being attacked by their enemies. The house of David might have been mentioned by ISAIAH because some of them were there and not because a second prophecy was given to them instead of Ahaz.

REGROUPING THE LETTERS UNLIKELY TRANSLATION

"For thus my L-rd will give ו ה, alas, to you (plural) ם כ ל א a sign, behold..."

Normally "to you" (plural) has a ך in it, but not always. The letter ך is not used in "to you" (plural) in DEUTERONOMY 1:9 and 20 and in "to them" in NUMBERS 28:2 also, and probably more quotes too.

"For thus, let my L-rd tell (ה ת נ as ת ך), alas ו ה, to you a sign."

ISAIAH 7:9

I have read another possible explanation for ISALIAH 7:14. ISALIAH 7:9 might say "if you will not believe, then (indeed) › ɔ you will not be confirmed (you will not be established)." The commentator who said this meant that the sign would not happen if they did not believe, so the miracle birth did not happen then like the prophecy supposedly predicts. Instead, it would happen at a later time, although the prophecy does not say this.

In my opinion, the prophecy does not say it will happen at a later time, if it is not believed by Ahaz, and it should have happened during Ahaz' time. ISALIAH 7:9 could have other explanations too.

DOES ALMAH MEAN “VIRGIN” OR “YOUNG WOMAN”?

ISALIAH 7:14: PARTHENOS (GREEK TRANSLATION)

Some scholars say that the word parthenos does not always mean virgin in certain ancient Greek writings. A Greek-English dictionary called the LSJ by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott said there are four quotes where parthenos is used for women who are not virgins. The quotes are HOMER'S ILIAD 2:514, PINDAR, ODES 3.34, SOPHOCLES, TRACHINIAE

1219, ARISTOPHANES, CLOUDS 530. Some commentators say the word used to mean an unmarried girl or woman, and not just virgin.

Even if the word parthenos meant only "virgin" in Greek when the Septuagint was written, that would not mean that almah meant "virgin" also, because the translator or translators of the Septuagint could have just translated the word wrong. The exact meaning of the word almah might have been forgotten over the hundreds of years since ISAIAH said the prophecy in ISAIAH 7:14.

ISAIAH 7:14: ALMAH (VIRGIN OR YOUNG WOMAN?)

The word "almah" is used only seven times in the Hebrew Bible. It is translated "parthenos" in the Septuagint in GENESIS 24:43 and ISAIAH 7:14. Parthenos meant virgin in Greek, but might have also meant "young woman" or maybe "an unmarried person." Almah is also translated five times as a different Greek word that means "young woman" in SONG OF SONGS 1:3 and 6:8, EXODUS 2:8, PROVERBS 30:19, and PSALM 68:26.

Some commentators say that the word "almah" means "virgin" or "a young woman who is a virgin"

because the word is only used for virgins in each quote. First of all, most young women in the Hebrew Bible might have been virgins, so that does not mean that the word "young woman" (almah) means "virgin", even if it was always used about virgins. Second, I don't think they can tell for sure if each quote is about virgins or just young women (virgins or not virgins). Third, I don't think the word is used enough to know all of its possible meanings. Fourth, they can't say that the Greek translation definitely only meant "virgin."

They say that almah is never used for a woman who is not a virgin, but ISAIAH 7:14 could be the proof that it was used for women who are not virgins, because it is about an "almah" being pregnant. This word is not used very much in the Hebrew Bible, so there aren't many examples of it being used for women who are not virgins, but that does not mean it can't be used this way.

MASCULINE FORM OF ALMAH

King David was called the masculine of "almah" "elem" when he was young in 1 SAMUEL 17:56, and Jonathan's young servant was called this word in 1 SAMUEL 20:22. The Septuagint (the Greek translation) has the word translated as "young man" and not "virgin" like the feminine form in ISAIAH 7:14. (1

SAMUEL 17:56 is not in the Septuagint.) Maybe the Septuagint was translated from a different Hebrew text and had a different Hebrew word in these quotes or maybe the word did not mean "virgin."

THE WORD "YOUTH" SIMILAR TO ALMAH

The word "almah" אַלְמָה is similar to a masculine plural word for "youth" in Hebrew "alumim" אֲלֻמִּים. This plural word meaning "youth" in Hebrew might show that "almah" could mean "young woman," and not "virgin."

The plural Hebrew word "alumim" is used in JOB 20:11, JOB 33:25, PSALM 89:46, and ISAIAH 54:4, but the Greek Septuagint only translates it as "youth" in JOB 20:11 and JOB 33:25. The other two Septuagint translations are words that have to do with time, but not are not "youth" or "virginity." Some commentators say that the Septuagint might be a translation of a different Hebrew text, so the word "youth" might have been another Hebrew word that means "youth."

THE ROOT MEANING OF ALMAH

Some commentators say that almah comes from a verb with the root letters אָלַם that means "to be

hidden or unknown." They say that virgins were hidden away until they were ready to be married, or that virgins were not known to men. The verb "to know" was used for marital relations sometimes like in GENESIS 4:1 Adam "knew" his wife, and she became pregnant.

It is also possible that young people or just the young women or girls were kept hidden, so the word "hidden" might be the root of the word that meant "young person" instead of being the original meaning of the word "virgin."

You can't know if the word "almah" meant "virgin" or "young woman" based on the the original meaning of the word, even if it really meant "hidden" because young people or virgins might have been kept hidden.

The word "almah" might not even come from that verb. Just because the words are spelled similarly, does not mean they are connected to each other. The word that means "eternity" or "world" עולם is spelled like the verb that can mean "to be hidden, to be unknown", but it has a different meaning, although some commentators say that the word can mean an unknown, long period of time, so that is why it is from the root "to be unknown." Other commentators say that this is not true. Also, I have read that words don't

always have the same meaning as their root word, so you can't be sure that almah has the same meaning as the verb, even if it is its root word.

PROVERBS 30:19

PROVERBS 30:19 says the way of a man "in" or "with" a young woman (almah). The Septuagint translates almah in this quote as young woman. Some commentators say that the next quote PROVERBS 30:20 about an evil woman is connected to PROVERBS 30:19, but it might be a separate saying and not be connected to PROVERBS 30:19.

GENESIS 24 AND THE MEANING OF THE WORD "ALMAH"

In the next few quotes, I discuss what some quotes in GENESIS 24 say, but I am not writing out every word. I am just looking at how a few words are used in these quotes.

GENESIS 24:14 "NAARAH"

Abraham's servant asks G-d to let the young woman (**naar**) (naarah) who offers him and his camels

water be the future wife of Isaac.

The word naar is the masculine form. A lot of quotes have this form of the word that means “young person”, but the feminine form of the noun “young woman” naarah should have been used.

GENESIS 24:16 “NAARAH” AND “BETULA”

Rebekah comes to him and offers to get water for him and his camels. She is called “naarah” (young woman) and “betula” (virgin) in the quote.

This quote also has the masculine word “naar” instead of the feminine “naarah” (young woman).

GENESIS 24:43 “ALMAH”

Abraham's servant tells her father and brother that he asked G-d to let the young woman (or virgin?) (**almah**) who offers him and his camels water be Isaac's future wife.

Some commentators try to prove that the word “almah” means “virgin” based on these three quotes in GENESIS 24.

First, they point out GENESIS 24:14 which says

a young woman (naarah) would bring water to the servant. Then GENESIS 24:16 says that Rebekah brought water to the servant and that she was called a young woman (naarah) and a virgin (betula). Then, finally, in GENESIS 24:43, the servant says that the almah that would bring him water would be the wife for his master's son.

They assume that "almah" must mean "virgin" because GENESIS 24:43 and GENESIS 24:16 are similar, and GENESIS 24:16 calls Rebekah a virgin. They ignore the possibility that almah could mean "young woman" because GENESIS 24:14 and GENESIS 24:16 both call the young woman who brings the water the word "naarah", which means "young woman."

I don't think you can determine the meaning of "almah" from these three quotes because Rebekah is called a young woman (naarah) and a virgin (betula) in GENESIS 24:16, so "almah" could have the same meaning as either word in GENESIS 24:43.

NAARAH IN THE SEPTUAGINT

The Greek Septuagint translated "young woman" (naarah in Hebrew) as "parthenos" in GENESIS 24:14, 16, and 55, and in GENESIS 34:3. This could show that the translators thought that "naarah" meant "virgin" or

that the word "parthenos" could mean young woman and not just virgin. Some commentators say that the Septuagint was a Greek translation of a different Hebrew text that might have had different words in these quotes than the Masoretic text.

In GENESIS 34:3, Dinah was called a young woman (naarah) in Hebrew and parthenos in Greek after she had been attacked and raped. Some commentators say the translators used parthenos to show that she was still considered a virgin because she had been forced, but the Masoretic Hebrew text does not call her a virgin after she was attacked. It is possible that the translators might have used a different Hebrew text or that the Greek word parthenos can mean young woman and not only virgin.

NAARAH AND ALMAH

The words "almah" and "naarah" (young woman) could have both meant "young woman" and both could have been used about virgins without actually meaning "virgin."

THE WORD "YOUTH" SIMILAR TO NAARAH

The Hebrew word "naar" נער means "a young

person (masculine)." This word is similar to the Hebrew masculine plural word "neurim" "youth" נְעוּרִים. The Septuagint also translates the plural Hebrew word as "youth." For examples, see GENESIS 8:21, GENESIS 46:34, ISAIAH 54:6, and JEREMIAH 32:30.

The feminine form of the noun "naar" (youth) is "naarah."

ISAIAH 7:14 BETULA (VIRGIN)

The word for "virgin" in Hebrew "betula" is used around fifty times in the Hebrew Bible.

THE WORD "VIRGINITY" IS SIMILAR TO "BETULA"

The Hebrew word "betula" virgin also has a masculine plural form "betulim" בְּתוּלִים that means "virginity." It is interesting that the word "virginity" is related to the word "betulah" and not the word "almah" in Hebrew. The plural word is also translated "virginity" in the Septuagint. For examples, see LEVITICUS 21:13, DEUTERONOMY 22:14, and DEUTERONOMY 22:15.

EZEKIEL 23:3 AND 8

EZEKIEL 23:3 and EZEKIEL 23:8 describe certain

body parts of virgins who are having marital relations for the first time. The quotes use the Hebrew word for "virginity", but some commentators say these quotes show that the Hebrew word for virginity does not really mean virginity because in these quotes the young women had marital relations. They seem to ignore that the Septuagint also translates the word Hebrew word for "virginity" in these quotes as "virginity" in Greek.

CLAIMS THAT "BETULA" DOES NOT ONLY MEAN VIRGIN

Some commentators say that betula in Hebrew does not mean virgin only, but also a married or widowed woman.

"WHO DID NOT KNOW A MAN"

Some commentators say betula (virgin) is used with the expression "who did not know a man" because "betula" might not always mean a virgin, and this way people know when it means "virgin." ("To know a man" could mean to have marital relations with a man.) It could just be a repetition which can be found in other quotes too.

GENESIS 24:16

USUAL TRANSLATION

"And the young woman is very good-looking, a virgin, **and** she did not know a man", or "...**and** a man did not know her", or "...**and** she was not assigned (appointed) a man (husband)" if the pual form of the verb ׁוּׁטַר is used.

Or: "And the young woman is very good-looking, a virgin **that** did not know a man."

Sometimes the word "and" is translated "that."

JUDGES 21:12

JUDGES 21:12 says that they found "...four hundred young virgins that did not know a man..."

LEVITICUS 21:3

LEVITICUS 21:3 mentions a priest's virgin sister "that was not to a man (that was not a man's) (that did not belong to a man)..."

This could be a way of repeating that she was a virgin because she did not have a husband, or it could possibly mean that she was a virgin that was not

engaged to a man, although it probably would have said that she was not engaged to a man then.

EXAMPLES OF REPETITION

I think that GENESIS 24:16 says that she was a "...virgin (betula), and she did not know a man" as a repetition that she was a virgin, and not because the word virgin (betula) needs the explanation that she did not know a man. Some commentators say that the word "betula" (virgin) does not always mean "virgin", so that is why it says "...a virgin, and she did not know a man." I have read that there are many quotes that use repetition to say the same thing in more than one way.

GENESIS 25:8 says Abraham "expired, died, and was gathered to his people." He was "in good old age" and also "old" and "satisfied." I don't think it had to say he died using two or three different words for dying, and that he was old using two different words for "old". I think these are examples of unnecessary repetitions using different words to say the same thing.

Also see GENESIS 25:17 "expired" and "died", DEUTERONOMY 1:45 "the L-rd did not hear your voice and He did not give ear to you." DEUTERONOMY 17:1 "a defect, any bad thing", NUMBERS 19:2 "...a perfect red cow that has no defect in it." 1 CHRONICLES 23:1,

JOB 42:17 "old" and "full of days."

LEVITICUS 11:41 and 42 say not to eat "creeping things (swarming things) that creep (swarm) on the earth...", and LEVITICUS 11:43 says not to eat "creeping things (swarming things) that creep (swarm)."

DEUTERONOMY 9:25 says "...I fell down before the L-rd the forty days and the forty nights that I fell down..." LEVITICUS 19:22 "...his sin that he sinned..." (Also, more quotes like this one are in LEVITICUS 4:3, LEVITICUS 4:28, LEVITICUS 5:6, LEVITICUS 5:10, NUMBERS 12:11, and 2 KINGS 21:17). NUMBERS 1:49 says not to count the tribe of Levi and not to take their sum. EXODUS 1:7 says the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased, multiplied, and became many using a few words that mean the same thing.

JUDGES 13:2 says "...his wife was barren, and she did not give birth..." JUDGES 13:3 says "...you are barren, and you have not given birth..."

Some commentators say that the word "barren" could refer to someone who never had a child or someone who had children, but later stopped being able to have children. They say that these two quotes show that the woman was unable to have children, and did not have any children, so it is not really a repetition of the same idea.

I think the word "barren" עָקָרָה was only used

for women who did not have any children, so the quotes are a repetition of the idea that the woman did not have any children, but because the word is not used enough in the Hebrew Bible to show that it was only used this way, I can't prove what I am saying.

There are a few other quotes that mention barren women who did not have children. For example, GENESIS 11:30, says Sarai was barren, and she did not have a child. Also, see JOB 24:21 and ISAIAH 54:1.

JOEL 1:8

BETULA NOT VIRGIN?

JOEL 1:8-9 says that the priests will mourn like a virgin (betulah) mourning the death of the husband of her youth. I think the quote means that the priests will mourn that there won't be any meal offerings and drink offerings because the crops will be destroyed by bugs (JOEL 1:4).

The virgin in the quote could be a young woman who was engaged to a man who died before they could have marital relations and be really married. Some commentators say that the young woman could not be a virgin because she had a husband in her youth, but they know that once a woman is engaged to a man, the man is considered to be her husband. The woman can

even be considered guilty of adultery just like a married woman (DEUTERONOMY 22:23-24).

They also say that the word husband in Hebrew in JOEL 1:8 לַיָּמִן can't be used for a man engaged to a woman, but only to a man that is already married to a woman. I think they are assuming this without proof, because there are not enough quotes to check if this is true or not.

The usual word for husband is אִישׁ and can mean "man" or "husband." This word is used for "husband" around seventy times, and the word לַיָּמִן is used for "husband" between ten and fifteen times.

I could only find two quotes that mention a woman engaged to a man or husband. LEVITICUS 19:20 says "...a female servant betrothed (engaged) to a man (or husband) אִישׁ..." and DEUTERONOMY 22:23 says "...a virgin betrothed (engaged) to a man (or husband) אִישׁ..." I think the word "man" fits the quotes better than "husband", but some translations say "husband."

I don't think these two quotes are enough proof that only the word אִישׁ should be used as "husband" for a betrothed woman because these two quotes might not even say "husband", and two quotes might not be enough proof anyway.

On the other hand, JOEL 1:8 might be proof that

the word לַעַב was used as "husband" to an engaged woman, but they have already decided that it can't be "husband" in this situation.

JOEL 1:8

USUAL TRANSLATION

"Wail יָלַע like a virgin (betula) girded with sackcloth about the husband of her youth."

"Meal offering and drink offering is cut off כַּרְתָּהּ from the house of the L-rd, (they) have mourned the priests, the ministers of the L-rd..."

It doesn't really say "is cut off."

JOEL 1:8

ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION

"Wail יָלַע like a virgin (betula) is girding a sackcloth about the husband of her youth being cut off (niphil infinitive)."

"Meal offering and drink offering from the house of the L-rd (they) have mourned, the priests, the ministers of the L-rd."

Or: "To Me (to me) (my G-d) יָלַע like a virgin

(betula) is girding a sackcloth about the husband of her youth being cut off (niph'al infinitive), meal offering and drink offering from the house of the L-rd (they) have mourned, the priests, the ministers of the L-rd."

JOEL 1:13 says the priests should mourn because the meal-offerings and the drink-offerings are being withheld from the house of G-d. JOEL 2:17 says the priests should mourn from near the altar in the house of the L-rd.

DEUTERONOMY 22:19 BETULA NOT VIRGIN?

Some commentators say DEUTERONOMY 22:19 shows that the word "betula" does not mean "virgin" because a woman can be called "betula" after she is with a man. It says that the reputation of a "betula" was damaged by her husband who said that she was not a virgin (betula) when he married her, even though she really was one. The quote could mean she was a virgin (betula) when her reputation was damaged, and not that she is still called a virgin (betula) after she was with her husband.

The Greek Septuagint translated betula as parthenos in this quote, so they would have to say that

the Greek word parthenos also does not mean virgin in this quote.

ESTHER 2:19
BETULA NOT VIRGIN?

They say that ESTHER 2:19 show the concubines were called virgins in Hebrew after they lost their virginity. The concubines were first gathered at the house of women in ESTHER 2:9 and then later at the house of concubines ESTHER 2:14. No one can be sure that the king was physically with each woman one night (ESTHER 2:13-14). They might have still been virgins. Also, the quote in ESTHER 2:19 could say "and when were gathered virgins a second time" meaning a second group of virgins was gathered or the same group a second time. ESTHER 2:19 is not in the Septuagint, so they can't check the Greek translation.

ISAIAH 47:1 AND ISAIAH 47:8-9

Some commentators say that ISAIAH 47:1 and 47:8-9 also prove that the word "betula" in Hebrew does not mean "virgin." Babylon is called "the virgin daughter of Babylon" (the usual translation) or "the virgin of the daughter of Babylon" in ISAIAH 47:1. In

ISAIAH 47:8-9, G-d says that Babylon thought it would never be a widow or lose any of her children, but she will be a widow and lose children in one day. These commentators say that the word can't mean virgin, because a virgin can't have a husband and children.

First of all, Babylon is one of many places or nations called that expression. For example, ISAIAH 37:22 calls Zion "the virgin daughter of Zion" or "the virgin of the daughter of Zion." I don't think the word is meant as literally when it is used for a place or nation. Second, at that time, Babylon might have been compared to a virgin, but in the future, it might be compared to a woman who loses her husband and children in one day, although not meant literally.

The word "betula" (actually "betulat" meaning "virgin of") in ISAIAH 47:1 is translated as "parthenos" in the Greek Septuagint, so the word "parthenos" could mean "virgin" or "young unmarried woman" in this quote. The translators of the Septuagint didn't seem to be affected by the prediction that Babylon would lose her husband and children in the future according to ISAIAH 47:8-9.

LAMENTATIONS 1:15 AND 2:13

LAMENTATIONS 1:15 mentions "the virgin

(betula) daughter of Judah”, and LAMENTATIONS 2:13 mentions “the virgin (betula) daughter of Zion.” LAMENTATIONS 1:19 then mentions Zion’s lovers, and LAMENTATIONS 2:19 mentions her young children.

Some commentators say the word “betula” in these two quotes can’t refer to a virgin because the virgin has lovers and children. I think that they shouldn’t take these quotes literally since they are about places that aren’t literally virgins with lovers and children.

Also, the Greek Septuagint uses the word “parthenos” for “virgin” in both quotes. The translators either translated the word wrong, or the word “parthenos” did not mean “virgin” only. Somehow, they did not notice that Zion had lovers and children because they used the word “parthenos” anyway.

DID VIRGINS WEAR SPECIAL OUTFITS?

Maybe the word virgin in Hebrew “betula” לַהּ בְּתוּלָה could mean “in red” לַהּ בְּתוּלָה with one different letter, and young man “bachur” could mean “in white linen” if people who were virgins or not married wore certain color outfits.

The virgin daughters of King David wore special

outfits according to 2 SAMUEL 13:18. Maybe virgins who were not daughters of the king also wore certain outfits, so people knew they were virgins.

SIMILAR WORDS IN UGARITIC

Some commentators point out words that are very similar to *almah* and *betula* in Ugaritic and other ancient Semitic languages. They have quotes with these words in ancient writings, but I don't think that people can say for sure what their meanings are from these quotes.

I read that one ancient poem in Ugaritic says that a virgin will beget a son, and that a young woman will have a child using the Ugaritic words that are similar to *betula* (virgin) and *almah* (young woman) in Hebrew. Some commentators say this quote shows that both words have the same meaning (virgin) in Ugaritic, but they are assuming the meaning of the word like *almah* in Ugaritic. It might have meant "virgin" or "a young woman". Even if both Ugaritic words meant "virgin", that would not prove that both similar words in Hebrew meant "virgin" too.

