The Virgin Birth:
Isaiah 7:1-25

Isaiah 7:1-16
Now it came about in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not conquer it. When it was reported to the house of David, saying, “The Arameans have camped in Ephraim,” his heart and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind. Then the Lord said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller’s field, and say to him, ‘Take care, and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted because of these two stumps of smoldering firebrands, on account of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram, and the son of Remaliah. Because Aram, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has planned evil against you, saying, “Let us go up against Judah and terrorize it, and make for ourselves a breach in its walls, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,” thus says the Lord God, “It shall not stand nor shall it come to pass. For the head of Aram is Damascus and the head of Damascus is Rezin (now within another 65 years Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no longer a people), and the head of Ephraim is Samaria and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you will not believe, you surely shall not last.’” Then the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!” Then he said, “Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken. The Lord will bring on you, on your people, and on your father’s house such days as have never come since the day that Ephraim separated from Judah, the king of Assyria.” And it will come about in that day, that the Lord will whittle for the fly that is in the remotest part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. And they will all come and settle on the steep ravines, on the ledges of the cliffs, on all the thorn bushes, and on all the watering places. In that day the Lord will shave with a razor, hired from regions beyond the Euphrates (that is, with the king of Assyria), the head and the hair of the legs; and it will also remove the beard. Now it will come about in that day that a man may keep alive a heifer and a pair of sheep; and it will happen that because of the abundance of the milk produced he will eat curds, for everyone that is left within the land will eat curds and honey. And it will come about in that day, that every place where there used to be a thousand vines, valued at a thousand shekels of silver, will become briars and thorns. People will come
there with bows and arrows because all the land will be briars and thorns. And as for all the hills which used to be cultivated with the hoe, you will not go there for fear of briars and thorns; but they will become a place for pasturing oxen and for sheep to trample. (NASB)

Introduction

I. This passage contains a "multiple reference." A multiple reference exists when one passage of Scripture contains two or more prophecies, each having its own fulfillment, but with only one fulfillment for each prophecy. While these prophecies may be related to each other regarding their subject matter, they are nonetheless two distinct prophecies. A passage containing a multiple reference must be interpreted with extreme care, for there may be neither a clear distinction between the prophecies, nor an indication that there is a gap in time between the fulfillment of each prophecy.

II. "Multiple reference" should not be confused with "multiple fulfillment." Whereas multiple reference asserts that a passage of Scripture may contain two or more separate prophecies, each with its own fulfillment, multiple fulfillment asserts that a single prophecy may have more than one fulfillment. Multiple reference is a sound principle of hermeneutics. Multiple fulfillment is not a sound principle of hermeneutics, for it violates the hermeneutical principle that every passage of Scripture has but one interpretation.

III. The dating of the kings in this study refers to the beginning and end of their reigns, not to the beginning and end of their lives.

Historical Background

IV. Ahaz was a son of Jotham and the eleventh king of Judah, (c.735-715 B.C.E.) (2 Kings 15:38; 16:1-20). The reign of Ahaz probably overlapped the reign of his father Jotham and possibly the reign of his own son Hezekiah. His age when he became king was 20 and he reigned for 16 years (beginning c. 735 B. C. E.).

V. Ahaz was an ungodly king. He made molten images for the Baals, burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom, and burned his sons in fire like the ungodly nations the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel. He also "sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree" (2 Chronicles 28:1-4).
VI. During Ahaz’s reign the Assyrian Empire, ruled by Tiglath-Pileser II (c. 745-727 B.C.E.) was gaining power and was threatening the smaller kingdoms of the middle east including Israel, Judah, and Syria (also translated Aram or Mesopotamia, a country northeast of Israel). Rezin, the king of Aram and Pekah king of Israel made an alliance and joined forces against their common enemy, Assyria (2 Kings 15:37; 16:5). However, even together Israel and Aram were not powerful enough to overcome Assyria (Fruchtenbaum p. 35).

VII. In order to increase their power, Rezin King of Aram and Pekah King of Israel asked Ahaz King of Judah to join forces with them. When Ahaz refused, Rezin and Pekah conspired to conquer Judah, overthrow Ahaz, and set up the Son of Tabeel as a puppet king whose regime would be agreeable to an alliance against Assyria. The form of the name Tabeel (Tabhe’el), suggests that he was an Aramian. Thus, the son of Tabeel was probably a pawn in the hands of Rezin King of Aram.

VIII. Instead of trusting in the Lord his God, King Ahaz looked to the might of Assyria for help. King Ahaz requested assistance from Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria, offering him much silver and gold from the House of the Lord's treasury and his own treasury. At first the plan worked, and Assyria invaded Israel and Syria (2 Kings 15:29). Ultimately, however, King Tiglath-Pilser III turned against Ahaz in spite of the excessive tribute he offered him. The plan fell apart, and Tilgath-pillneser III came against Ahaz and afflicted him instead of strengthening him (2 Chronicles 28:20).

IX. The overthrowing of the Davidic dynasty would jeopardize the Davidic Covenant, and would have grave messianic implications. According to the Davidic Covenant the Messiah, who was to be the final, permanent king of Israel, was to come from the house of David. If the Davidic dynasty were overthrown; the kingly line of Messiah would cease to exist. This God would not allow.

The Passage

The threat against the House of David: verses 1-2

X. Rezin King of Aram and Pekah King of Israel "went up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not conquer it." The Aramian's then camped in Ephraim, a city near the wilderness northeast of Jerusalem. The threat to Jerusalem and the house of David was still very real.
XI. The threat made by the Aram/Israeli alliance caused King Ahaz, the House of David, and the people of Judah to become terrified. In verse two the House of David is personalized (refers to) King Ahaz, for he was part of that kingly line.

God's message to King Ahaz: verses 3-9

XII. To alleviate the fears of Ahaz, the House of David, and the people of Judah God sent the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz with words of assurance.

A. God told Isaiah to meet King Ahaz "at the end of the conduit (aqueduct) of the upper pool, on the highway to the fullers field," just outside the walls of Jerusalem. The conduit was a reservoir that held water from the Gihon spring near Jerusalem. Perhaps Ahaz was there to inspect the city's water supply in anticipation of an attack by Aram and Israel (Martin p. 1,047).

B. God told Isaiah to bring his young son Shear-jashub with him (verse 3). As we shall soon see, the presence of Isaiah's son was significant to Isaiah's message to King Ahaz. (The name of Isaiah's son, Shear-jashub, which means, "a remnant shall return," illustrated the prophet's message: Neither Aram, Israel, nor any other enemy would bring an end to the people of Judah nor the House of David.

C. Isaiah and his son met King Ahaz. God, through the prophet Isaiah, told Ahaz not to be afraid of Rezin and Pekah's plan to "go up against Judah and terrorize it, and make for ourselves a breach in its walls, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it." The Lord God declared that this plan "shall not stand nor shall it come to pass." (verse 7)

D. Isaiah told King Ahaz that the reason the plan to overthrow the Davidic dynasty would not succeed was that both Israel and Aram were headed by mere men. Like "two stubs of smoldering firebrands" (verse 4), their lives would soon end and the threat would be gone. Mere men cannot thwart the plans of God.

1. Ironically, and possibly as a sign of disrespect, Isaiah referred to Pekah by name only once (verse 1). Four other times he called him "the son of Remaliah" or "Remaliah's son." He and Rezin could not upset God's plans.
2. Rezin was soon killed in a battle with the Assyrians and was Aram's last king. Pekah lost half his kingdom in the ensuing battles, became an Assyrian vassal c.733 B.C.E., and was killed by Hoshea son of Elah one year later (2 Kings 15:30). He was the next to the last king of Israel. The word of the Lord through Isaiah was fulfilled as predicted.

Isaiah 2:22
Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed? (NASB)

E. Isaiah then made a startling prophecy (verse 8): "within another 65 years Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no longer a people."

1. After Jeroboam II, the thirteenth King of Israel died (c. 793-775 B.C.E.), Israel had become increasingly weak. Its weakness and Isaiah's prophecy of its soon demise made them no real threat to Judah. (Here, as in Hosea 4:17; 5:3, 5, 9-14) Ephraim, Israel's largest tribe, represented the entire nation of Israel)

2. Isaiah made this prophecy in 734 B.C.E., so sixty five years later was 669 B.C.E. When Assyria conquered Israel in 722 B.C.E., many Israelites were deported to other lands by Assyria and foreigners were brought into Samaria (2 Kings 17:24).

3. However, in 669 B.C.E. many more foreigners were transferred to Samaria by Ashurbanipal King of Assyria (669-626 B.C.E.) (Ezra 4:10). This "shattered" Israel, making it impossible for her to unite as a nation ("a people"). Like all biblical prophecy, Isaiah's prophecy was literally fulfilled in its appointed time.

F. In verse nine Isaiah challenged King Ahaz to believe what God was saying to him. Although Ahaz would not be alive sixty five years later, he could have faith that God would fulfill both both of Isaiah's predictions: 1) in Ahaz's day the northern confederacy (Aram and Israel) would not overpower Judah and 2) Israel would be shattered sixty five years after Isaiah's prophecy. Isaiah warned King Ahaz that if he would not believe those predictions (i.e. trust in the Lord), he "surely would not last" (i.e. his dynasty would come to an end).
The offer and rejection of a sign to Ahaz: verses 10-12

XIII. God then offered to give King Ahaz a "sign" (an attesting miracle). The King could choose any sign he wanted. He could ask for a sign as "deep as Sheol" or high as heaven" (from the deepest depths to the highest heights). (verse 10).

A. This was a figure of speech, a merism, which mentioned two extremes with the intention of including all of the areas in between them. It was an expression of the wide latitude God was giving to King Ahaz in offering him a sign (Martin p. 1,047).

B. With God performing a miracle of Ahaz's choosing, Ahaz would have visible confirmation that Isaiah's words were from God, and he could count on the fact that the Aram/Israeli alliance would not overthrow the house of Judah.

XIV. Ahaz, an ungodly king, put on a "cloak" of spirituality and refused the offer the sign, saying, "I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!" (verse 12). Although his answer sounded pious, it was probably not genuine.

A. Ahaz knew that if he asked for a sign and it came to pass, he would then be pressured to renounce his alliance with Assyria, which he did not want to do.

B. Also, he did not want Isaiah to be affirmed as God's spokesman, because Isaiah had been prophesying about the eventual destruction of Judah if her people did not repent and return to the Lord.

C. By rejecting the offer of a sign from God's messenger Isaiah, King Ahaz was in effect rejecting the One who sent the prophet to speak to him.

Luke 10:16
"The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me" (NASB).
God's response: verses 13-14a

XV. Though King Ahaz rejected God's offer of a sign that would have confirmed the truth of Isaiah's message, God gave him two signs, and also gave a sign to the House of David.

A. The signs given to the Ahaz and to the House of David were all prophetic; that is, they would take place in the future. These prophecies form the "multiple reference" discussed earlier.

B. Though the prophecies are different (e.g. whereas the sign to the House of David would take place in the distant future, the signs to King Ahaz, would take place in the more immediate future), there are also important similarities between the signs:

C. All three signs involve predictive prophecy. Additionally, as we shall see, two of the signs (the one to the House of David, and one of the signs to King Ahaz were given to assure the recipient(s) of those signs that the Aram/Israelí plot to depose Ahaz would not succeed, and God's promise to David in the Davidic Covenant (that his kingdom would be established forever through his "seed") would come to pass.

XVI. It will be helpful at this point to differentiate between the House of David, the House of Ahaz (also referred to as your [Ahaz's] father's house), and the people of Judah (Ahaz's people) (see verse 17).

A. The House of David includes all of the descendents of David who, by virtue of their lineage, are in the kingly line. The one exception is Jehoiakim. Because of his wickedness God, through the prophet Jeremiah, declared that "no man of his (Jehoiakim's) descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah." (Jeremiah 22:30)

B. The house of Ahaz is a branch, or subset, of the house of David, including those who are descendents of both David of Ahaz.
C. The people of Judah are all of the inhabitants of Judah living under the reign of Ahaz. The people of Judah includes the House of David and the House of Ahaz.

D. The House of David, the House of Ahaz, and the people of Judah all feared the overthrow of the Davidic dynasty. However, the House of Ahaz was also terrified at the prospect of this resulting from the overthrow of their own house by Pekah and Rezin.

The sign to the House of David: verse 14b (*prophecy #1*)

XVII. In verse 13, Isaiah stopped addressing Ahaz as an individual and addressed the entire House of David.

A. The English language does not differentiate between "you" addressed to one person and "you" addressed to many people. In Hebrew there is a difference.

B. In the Hebrew there is a clear change between the singular "you" of verses 9, 11, 16, and 17 (i.e. Ahaz) and the plural "you" of verses 13 and 14 (i.e. the entire House of David) (Fruchtenbaum, p. 36). In this context "the House of David" refers not to all of David's descendents, but to all those kings of Judah who would descend from him.

XVIII. In verse fourteen, the Hebrew word translated "behold" (*Heneeh*) is in the present participle, indicating that it refers to a future event (Fruchtenbaum, p. 36). That is the case here – the prophecy of the virgin birth is a prophecy that, from the perspective of the House of David in Isaiah's time, would take place in the distant future.

A. The prophecy states that the virgin's Son (not "a" virgin as the *NASB translates* it) would be called "Immanuel."

1. "Immanuel" translates into the English, "God is with us." Thus, the child born of the virgin would be the God-man anticipated by Eve in Genesis 4:1.
2. This distant descendent of David would be God incarnate, the "seed" of David who would rule on David's throne forever.

B. This prophecy is a promise by God to the House of David that it cannot lose its identity until the virgin conceives and gives birth.

1. In 70 C.E. the Romans destroyed the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and with it all of the genealogical records of Israel. Thus, in 70 C.E. the House of David lost its identity (to man but not to God).

2. This requires that the Messiah, a descendent of David, be born before 70 C.E. in order that his Davidic lineage might be verified.

C. Although the members of the House of David alive during Isaiah's time would not live to see the fulfillment of this prophecy, they would see the fulfillment of the prophecies given to King Ahaz and his house. The fulfillment the prophecies given to King Ahaz and his house would validate Isaiah as a spokesman for God, thereby validating Isaiah's "distant" prophecies (e.g. the prophecy concerning the virgin birth).

The signs to King Ahaz: verses: 15-25 (prophecies #2 & #3)

XIX. Isaiah presents his prophecies to Ahaz and the House of David and in an interesting way: reverse chronological order.

A. He first records the most distant prophecy in verse fourteen: the prediction of the virgin birth.

B. Then, in verse fifteen Isaiah records a "short-term" prophecy directed to Ahaz and his house that will be fulfilled "at the time he knows enough to refuse evil and choose good." As we shall see shortly, "he" is Isaiah's son. This prophecy is explained and expanded on in verses 17-25.
C. In verse sixteen, Isaiah records another prophecy directed to Ahaz and his house that will be fulfilled even before the "short-term" prophecy in verse fifteen is fulfilled: “before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good…” (Note: “before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good…” (verse sixteen) chronologically precedes “at the time he knows enough to refuse evil and choose good” (verse fifteen).

D. We have already discussed the distant prophecy in verse fourteen concerning the virgin birth, a sign to the House of David. For the sake of clarity, we will discuss the remaining two prophecies chronological order, that is, in the order in which they are fulfilled.

XX. The first of these two short term prophecies to be fulfilled is found in verse sixteen:

Isaiah 7:16

"For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken."

A. The "you" in verse sixteen is again singular (Fruchtenbaum, p. 37), meaning that God is once again speaking to King Ahaz. In verse sixteen, God gives King Ahaz a sign that will assure him that the threat imposed on his dynasty by Rezin King of Aram and Pekah King of Israel will not succeed.

B. The "boy" in verse sixteen is the "boy" mentioned in the context of the passage: Isaiah's young son. The prophecy states that before the boy grows to sufficient maturity to "know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose kings you dread will be forsaken." In other words, before Isaiah's son reached moral maturity, the alliance between Rezin and Pekah would be broken. The reason Isaiah was told to take his son along with him when he spoke to King Ahaz now becomes clear: the boy was used as an object lesson for King Ahaz.

C. The prophecy that the two king alliance against the House of David would fail was fulfilled in King Ahaz's time, for within three years the kings of Israel and Aram were deposed and the threat they imposed upon the House of Ahaz ended.
XXI. The next short term prophecy to be fulfilled is found in verse fifteen and explained in verses 17-25. This prophecy is given to Ahaz, but is directed to Ahaz ("you") the people of Judah ("your people") and Ahaz's house ("your house").

_Isaiah 7:15_
"He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good."

A. We must first confirm to whom the pronoun "he" in verse fifteen refers: does it refer back to the son (Messiah) in verse fourteen, or forward to the boy (Isaiah's son) in verse sixteen? There are two reasons that we should conclude that the pronoun "he" in verse fifteen is the "boy" in verse sixteen:

1. Verse sixteen begins with the word, "for." For is an "explanatory." An explanatory connects that which precedes it with that which follows it. Specifically, that which follows the word "for" explains that which precedes the word "for." Thus, verses fifteen and sixteen form a unit, and the "he in verse fifteen is the "boy" in verse sixteen.

2. Also, in both verses fifteen and sixteen, the subject of the sentence ("he" in verse fifteen, "boy" in verse sixteen) is described as knowing "enough to refuse evil and choose good." That precisely the same things is said about each sentence lends additional weight to the conclusion that they are one and the same person (Isaiah's son).

B. The prophecy states, "He (Isaiah's son) will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good." The key to understanding the meaning of this prophecy is found in verses 17-25. Especially relevant to this prophecy is verse twenty two.

1. Verses 17-25 indicate that Isaiah's son would be raised in a time of national calamity. God would judge King Ahaz, his house, and the inhabitants Judah for forsaking Him by trusting in the might of Judah instead of the Lord their God.
a. These would be the worst enemy attacks since the ten Northern tribes (here called Ephraim) broke from the two Southern tribes in 931 B.C.E.

b. From Ahaz's day on, Judah was troubled by the Assyrian Empire, the very empire to which it paid tribute and in which it trusted, forsaking the Lord their God (Martin, p. 1,049).

2. In verse fifteen Isaiah's son is described as eating curds and honey. Verse twenty two, part of the passage describing the distress that would come upon Judah, expands on this, stating that "everyone that is left within the land will eat curds and honey.

a. The abundance of milk was a distressful thing, not a good thing. With many animals dying, a farmer's young heifer and two sheep (verse 21) would have no young to nurse, and so the milk they produced (and the curds from it) would be plentiful for the people.

b. Honey would also be plentiful because wild flowers would grow in the desolate fields, attracting swarms of bees that would pollinate them and produce an abundance of honey.

3. Based on the foregoing discussion we may conclude that verse fifteen and verses 17-25 predict a distressful time for Judah and for the house of Ahaz. The Assyrian army would attack Judah, and the land would be devastated.

4. This prophecy was dramatically fulfilled. Assyrian invasions devastated the land in the time of Ahaz's successor Hezekiah (chapters 36-37).

Conclusion

I. Isaiah seven contains four separate prophecies, each having its own fulfillment:
A. The prophecy that "within another 65 years Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no longer be a people" (verse eight).

B. Three additional prophecies that form a "multiple reference."

1. A distant prophecy given to the house of David predicting the virgin birth of Messiah, Son of David, and giving the House of David assurance that the promises contained in the Davidic covenant would be fulfilled (verse 14).

2. A "short-term" prophecy given to Ahaz that the plot of the kings of Aram and Israel to overthrow the Davidic dynasty would fail (additional assurance that the Davidic covenant would be fulfilled) (verse 16).

3. A "short-term" prophecy given to King Ahaz that God would judge Ahaz, his people, and his father's house for forsaking him and trusting in the might of Assyria. God would use the Assyrian king to judge them. His army would attack and devastate the land of Judah (verses 15; 17-25).

II. All of these prophecies are significant. However, the prophecy concerning the virgin birth is especially significant for two reasons:

A. As we shall soon see, it is one of the most controversial messianic prophecies in the Tenach.

B. It's fulfillment is an extremely important aspect of God's plan of redemption. It is through the miracle of the virgin birth that God the Son became incarnate, the sinless Messiah who alone was qualified to give his life for the sins of the world.
I. As we mentioned earlier, the prophecy of the virgin birth is one of the most controversial prophesies in the Tenach. The controversy focuses on the correct translation of the Hebrew word *Almah* in Isaiah 7:14.

A. Bibles published by publishing houses operated by believers (e.g. NASB, NIV, NKJV) translate the word Hebrew word *Almah* in Isaiah 7:14 "virgin." Born again scholars also believe that the word *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 should be translated virgin. However, Bibles published by non-believing Jewish publishing houses (e.g. The Jewish Publication Society) translate the word *Almah* "in Isaiah 7:14 "young woman" or "maiden." Furthermore, modern day Rabbis and some liberal theologians teach that the word *Almah* in Isaiah should be translated "young woman" and not virgin.

B. Determining the correct meaning of the Hebrew word *almah* is extremely important. In his gospel, Matthew recorded as a literal historical event the miracle (sign) of the virgin birth, and claimed that it fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of the virgin birth in Isaiah 7:14 (Luke 1:19-23). Luke's wording is clear in the Greek language in which he wrote. When translating Isaiah 7:14, Luke translated the Hebrew word *almah* into the Greek word *parthenos*, which can only refer to a virgin.

1. If Luke was wrong and *almah* does not refer to a virgin, then the *Brit Haddashah* contains an error. This would mean that the *Brit Haddashah* is neither inerrant, inspired by God, nor authoritative. The plan of redemption set forth in the *Brit Haddashah* would be invalid, *Yeshua*’s Messiahship would be baseless, and believers in *Yeshua* would still be in their sins.

2. Conversely, if Luke was right, and the Hebrew word *almah* does refer to a virgin, then the integrity of the *Brit Haddashah* remains intact. It is the inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word of God, its assertion that *Yeshua* is the Messiah is valid, and believers in *Yeshua* are saved from the penalty of their sins.

III. Because of the importance of this issue, we will study the Hebrew word *almah* from a number of perspectives, that we may confidently determine Isaiah's intended meaning of the word when he wrote it in Isaiah 7:14. We will begin our study by looking at all of the
uses of the word *almah* in the Tenach, and determining what various authors of the Tenach (and God) intended the word *almah* to mean.

A. If these authors all intended that *almah* have the same meaning, we may reasonably conclude that the meaning of *almah* intended by these authors was the meaning of *almah* to their original readers, the ancient Jewish people.

B. This being the case, we could further conclude that Isaiah intended the word *almah* to have the same meaning as it did to the other prophets who used it: the meaning of *almah* to his original readers, who were also the ancient Jewish people. This is an application of the hermeneutical principle, "God intended that the Scriptures be understood by those to whom it was written."

1. *Genesis 24:43*

   *Behold, I am standing by the spring, and may it be that the maiden (almah) who comes out to draw, and to whom I say, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar"* (NASB)

   In this passage, Abraham's servant is seeking a wife for Isaac. The word Almah is used to describe Rebekah, who was clearly a virgin when she married Isaac, for Genesis 24:6 says of her:

   *Genesis 24:6*

   *And the girl was very beautiful, a virgin, and no man had had relations with her; and she went down to the spring and filled her jar, and came up.*

2. *Exodus 2:8*

   *And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden (ha almah) went and called the child's mother* (NKJV).

   In this passage *Almah* refers to Moses' young sister Miriam, who was a virgin.
3. Psalm 68:25

The singers went on, the musicians after them in the midst of the maidens (almah) beating tambourines (NASB).

In this passage, the maidens are part of the royal procession who sang, danced and played tambourines before God the King. Almah is the only word in the Biblical Hebrew language that unequivocally signifies an unmarried woman (Young, vol. 1 p. 88). Thus, children born to an almah would be illegitimate. Because the King in this context is God, it is required that the maidens be virgins, for God would not allow immoral, unmarried women in His procession. Therefore, the word almah in Psalm 68:25 must refer to a virgin.

4. Song of Solomon 1:1-3

The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. Your oils have a pleasing fragrance, your name is like purified oil; therefore the maidens (almah) love you. (NASB)

One of the important themes in the Song of Solomon is purity in marriage (Fruchtenbaum, p. 34). Because the word almah refers to an unmarried woman (see #3 above), it is reasonable to conclude that the maidens who loved the bridegroom were pure (i.e. virgins).

5. Song of Solomon 6:8

There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and maidens (almah) without number (NASB)

In this verse the word almah is contrasted with queens and concubines, who would be non-virgins. Therefore, the almah here are virgins (Fruchtenbaum, p. 34).

6. Proverbs 30:18-20

There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden (almah). This is the way of an
adulteress: She eats and wipes her mouth and says, "I've done nothing wrong." (NIV)

"The way of a man with a maiden (almah)" refers to a man's affectionate courtship of an unmarried woman. (Remember, almah always refers to an unmarried woman.) Whereas verse nineteen describes "the way of a man with a maiden," verse twenty describes an immoral woman's way with men (Buzzel, p. 970). Thus, "an adulteress" in verse twenty is contrasted with almah in verse nineteen. This contrast, consistently applied to the passage, indicates that, whereas the adulteress in verse twenty is not a virgin, the almah in verse nineteen is a virgin.

7. Isaiah 7:14
   Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (NKJV)

As we can see from the above study of all of the verses in the Tenach that contain the Hebrew word almah, the authors of the Tenach consistently intended that the word almah refer to a virgin. Using the hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, and based on the reasonable conclusion that, in the ancient Israel of the prophets the word almah was understood to mean "virgin," we may conclude that God, who inspired the Scriptures and intended that we understand them, intended that the Hebrew word almah in Isaiah 7:14 refers to a virgin.

IV. There are two other words Isaiah could have used to describe the woman in 7:14. One is the Hebrew word betulah, and the other is nar'ah. Some Jewish Rabbis assert that one of those words, betulah, can only mean virgin, and that if Isaiah intended to emphatically assert that the young woman in 7:14 would be a virgin, he would have chosen that word. We shall now evaluate the Rabbis' argument.

A. The Rabbis assert that, had Isaiah been referring to a virgin in Isaiah 7:14, he would have used the word betulah and not the word almah. However, as the following passages illustrate, betulah can refer to either a virgin or a non-virgin.
**Genesis 24:16**

And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin (betulah), neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. (KJV)

1. In Genesis 24:6, because the word does not exclusively mean "virgin," Moses adds the phrase "neither had any man known her" in order to clarify that he is referring to a virgin.

**Judges 21:12**

They found among the people living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young women (betulah) who had never slept with a man, and they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan. (NIV)

2. In Judges 21:12, the author also clarifies that he is referring to a virgin by adding the words, "who had never slept with a man."

**B.** Based on the above passages of Scripture, the word betulah can refer to either a virgin or a non-virgin. The Rabbis' assertion that Isaiah would have used betulah if he was referring to a virgin in Isaiah 7:14 is not valid.

**C.** Like the word betulah, nar'akah can either refer to a virgin or, as in the case of Ruth 2:5-6, a non-virgin.

**Ruth 2:5-6**

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, "Whose damsel (nar'akah) is this?" And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said," It is the Moabitish damsel (nar'akah) that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab." (KJV)

The damsel Boaz inquired about was Ruth, who at the time was a widow and therefore was not a virgin.
D. Based on the forgoing study of the two other words that may be translated virgin, we can conclude that both may mean either a virgin or a non-virgin. Thus, the Rabbis' assertion that Isaiah would have chosen a word other than *almah* if he intended that the "damsel" in Isaiah 7:14 refer to a virgin is not valid.

V. In attempting to determine Isaiah's intended meaning of the word *almah*, it will be helpful to see what the ancient Rabbis who lived before the time of *Yeshua* believed Isaiah's intended meaning of the word *almah* was in Isaiah 7:14. These Rabbis lived before the controversy over *Yeshua's* Messiahship existed, so their opinion would not be affected by a religious or historical bias.

A. The Septuagint (sometimes abbreviated LXX) is the name given to a Greek translation of the Tenach. It has its origin in Alexandria, Egypt and was translated by seventy scholarly Jewish Rabbis c. 300-200 B.C.E.

B. These Jewish Rabbis translated the Hebrew word *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 into the Greek word *parthenos*, which can only mean virgin. Therefore, before the controversy over *Yeshua's* Messiahship existed, these Jewish Rabbis believed that Isaiah intended that *almah in Isaiah 7:14 referred to a virgin*.

VI. Because *almah* always refers to an unmarried woman, if the *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 was not a virgin, then God would be promising a sign involving fornication and immorality. It is unthinkable that God would sanction such a sin (Fruchtenbaum, p. 34). Accordingly, the word *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 must refer to a virgin, not to a non-virgin.

VII. In Isaiah 7:14, the prophet said, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign (an attesting miracle). For a non-virgin to give birth would not necessarily be a miracle, but for a virgin to give birth would. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 means "virgin."

VIII. Some Jewish Rabbis claim that Isaiah could not have been predicting a virgin birth because it is impossible for a virgin to give birth. This view results not from a study of the text, but from a presupposition that such miracles cannot happen.
A. It is often effective to ask one of these Rabbis if they believe the story of Isaac's birth. Most Rabbis will answer affirmatively. The Rabbi can then be challenged thusly: "according to the Bible Abraham was one hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety nine years old when Isaac was born. Is not that impossible?"

B. Rabbis will often respond to this challenge by saying, "God did a miracle!" The believer's response should then be, "I agree. God performed a miracle in enabling Abraham and Sarah to have a child when they were well beyond the age of childbearing. In the same way, God performed a miracle when he caused Miriam, a virgin, to conceive and give birth to a child. Is anything too difficult for God?"

Conclusion

Luke was correct in asserting that the virgin birth recorded in his gospel was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in 7:14. "Virgin" was Isaiah's intended meaning of the word almah in Isaiah 7:14, and accurately reflects the intended meaning of God, who inspired the Scriptures.

The English word "virgin" correctly translates the Hebrew word almah in Isaiah 7:14. Like many other passages in the Bible, Isaiah 7:14 (compared with Luke 1:19-23) affirms that there are no errors in the Brit Hadashah, which is in fact the inspired, authoritative Word of God. Yeshua is, as the Brit Hadashah claims, the Messiah, and those who receive Him as their Savior are forgiven for their sins.
The Birthplace Of The Messiah
Micah 5:2

I. Historical background.

A. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, but he ministered in a different part of Judah than Isaiah. He prophesied c. 738-690 B.C.E during "the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Micah 1:1).

B. During Micah's ministry, Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonian army. In 597 B.C.E., while Jehoiachin was King of Judah, the Babylonians conquered Judah, laid it waste, and destroyed its Temple. They also led the people of Judah into captivity in Babylon (2 Kings 25:21).

C. From the human perspective, it was the might of Babylon that brought this calamity on Judah. However, the prophets make it clear that it was not the might of Babylon, but the Jewish peoples' disobedience to God that led to their downfall.

II. There can be no doubt that Micah 5:2 talks of the Messiah. The predictions that He will come forth from God, be ruler in Israel, and that "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" can only apply to the Messiah.

III. The word, "but" in Micah 5:1 sets up a contrast between verses one and two. Whereas verse one speaks of the imminent degradation of the Judge (i.e. King) of Israel, verses two and following predict the coming mighty Leader who will restore the Jewish people to their homeland, and be their Shepherd and their peace (verse 2-5).

IV. Micah 5:2 gives us five important pieces of information about the Messiah.

A. The birthplace of the Messiah.
B. The humanity of the Messiah.

C. The Kingship of the Messiah.

D. The deity of the Messiah.

V. The birthplace of the Messiah.

A. In verse two, Micah predicts that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. Ephrath is the ancient name of Bethlehem (Gen 35:16, 19; 48:17; Ruth 4:11). Bethlehem means "House of Bread" and Ephrathah comes from a root meaning "fruitful." Both names refer to the fertility of the region (Feinberg, p. 94).

B. "Bethlehem Ephrathah" distinguishes the Bethlehem about which Micah writes from other towns Named Bethlehem, such as the one in Zebulun (Joshua19:10-15). Bethlehem Ephrathah was about six Roman miles southwest of Jerusalem. (A Roman mile is 1,618 English yards, and thus 142 yards less than the English statute mile.)

C. The Messiah, who would deliver his people, was to be born in an insignificant, small town (not even mentioned in the list of towns in Joshua 15 or Nehemiah 11) where the clans of Judah lived. This conforms with the lowly status of David, who was also born in Bethlehem Ephrathah (1 Samuel 17:12), and also the lowly status of the Yeshua and his family.

VI. The humanity of the Messiah.

A. The Scriptures teach that God the Son would come forth from heaven:
Proverbs 30:4
Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know! (NASB)

B. In Micah 5:2a, Micah refers to the humanity of the Messiah. Like all human beings, he would "come forth" from an earthly birthplace.

VII. The Kingship of the Messiah (verse 2c).

A. The One who would come forth from Bethlehem Ephrathah would be "ruler in Israel."

B. The expression "go forth" (verse 2c) primarily means "to conduct one's activities." (McComiskey, p. 427). Here God, (through Micah), expresses the fact that King Messiah will minister on behalf of Him. He will "go forth" and accomplish the purposes of the Father.

C. Bethlehem was often referred to as the "city of David," because it is where David was born. Messiah's birth in the city of Bethlehem Ephrathah indicates that he was from the tribe of Judah, for Bethlehem Ephrathah was located on the parcel of ground allotted to the tribe of Judah when the land was divided among the tribes (Joshua 15:1-12). Long after the land was divided, members of the tribe of Judah still occupied Bethlehem Ephrathah.

D. Being from the tribe of Judah was a requirement for being the Messiah. This, along with the genealogical records in the Temple, confirmed that Yeshua was from the tribe of Judah (and also a descendent of the Judahite King David, another requirement for being the Messiah (2 Samuel 7:12-16; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14).
VIII. The Deity of the Messiah.

A. Although the ruler comes from Bethlehem and "from time" in his humanity, it is also said of him that "his goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2b, NASB)

B. The above phrase contains the strongest possible statement of infinite duration in the Hebrew language. The Scriptures are clear: only God is eternal. Micah 5:2b is a clear assertion of Messiah's deity.

Isaiah 43:11-13
"I, even I, am the Lord; and there is no savior besides me. It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, and there was no strange god among you; so you are My witnesses," declares the Lord, "And I am God. Even from eternity I am He; and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?" (NASB)

1. Messiah's "goings forth are mentioned twice in Micah 5:2, once in regard to his humanity ("One will go forth for me who is to be ruler in Israel") and once in regard to his deity (his goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity). In this verse, the incarnation is implied in beautiful Hebrew parallelism.

2. Messiah, as the perfect Son of his Father, would go forth and obediently accomplish all his Father's will.

3. Messiah the Son of God was an active participant in ancient times and in eternity in the purposes of God (Feinberg, p. 95).
The Nature And Rule Of The Messiah

Isaiah 9:6-7

Isaiah 9:6-7
For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

I. Historical Background.

A. Isaiah prophesied c. 739 B.C.E. to 681 B.C.E. during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, all kings of Judah (1:1).

B. These years in Israel's history were a time of great struggle both politically and spiritually (Martin, p. 1029).

1. The northern kingdom of Israel was deteriorating politically, spiritually, and militarily, and finally fell to the Assyrian empire in 722 B.C.E.

2. The southern kingdom of Judah looked as though it would also collapse and fall to Assyria, but it was able to withstand Assyria's army.

3. During this time of political struggle and spiritual decline, Isaiah was raised up by God to deliver a message to the people. They should not rely on Egypt or any other nation to protect them; rather, they should trust in the Lord God who had promised them a glorious kingdom through Moses and David. The Lord was the only One who could protect them, and was the only protection they would need.
4. Isaiah's prophecy in 9:6-7 was made during the reign of Ahaz. Ahaz was an ungodly king who led his people astray. His decisions (e.g. to forsake God and worship the Baals, to rely on foreign powers for safety instead of God) brought ruin to the people of Judah.

B. In chapter 9:1-5, Isaiah prophesied that a time would come when the doom an darkness Judah was experiencing would be a thing of the past. In contrast with the unwise leadership of Ahaz, whose foolish council had resulted in suffering and calamity, a "wonderful counselor" (the Messiah) would come and would lead the people from spiritual darkness into light (verse 2).

C. When the Messiah came, the weapons of warfare would be destroyed (cf. verse 6) because His in His reign of universal peace implements of war would not be needed.

The Passage

II. The first phrase of Isaiah 9:6 contains antithetic (contrasting) parallelism:

(Isaiah 9:6a
For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us... (NASB)

A. "Child" in the first line contrasts with "son" in the second line, and "born" in the first line contrasts with "given" in the second line.

B. Both the humanity and the deity of the Messiah are expressed in this beautiful Hebrew poetry.

C. In his humanity, the Messiah would have a beginning. He would be born like any other child (line one).
D. However, in his deity Messiah, the Son of God, had no beginning. He is eternal. Therefore, in line two the prophet does not say, "a son will be born to us," indicating a beginning of existence; rather he says "a son will be given to us," indicating preexistence. The contrast between born and given is a beautiful poetic expression of the incarnation – God taking on human flesh.

III. It is significant that in both lines Isaiah used the phrase, "to us." Here Isaiah was identifying with his people, and asserting that the child, a son, was to be born as one of the covenant people.

IV. Isaiah declares that the child who will be born to us (the Jewish people) shall be a King: "the government will rest on His shoulders" (verse 6b).

A. The government will rest on his shoulders figuratively refers to the Kingly robe worn by the Messiah.

Revelation 19:16
And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (NASB).

B. In the ancient Jewish culture, a person's name often summed up his character. The wise, wonderful nature of the son's rule is expressed in the four names given to him in verse 6b. "His name shall be called:

1. Wonderful counselor.

a. There are words in the Hebrew which are only used of God and never of men. One example is barah, which means, "to create." Barah is only used of God and what God does, never of man and what man does. Another Hebrew word that is reserved exclusively for that which is divine is pele, which translates into the English word, "wonderful (verse 6b) (Fruchtenbaum, p.39).
b. Thus, the fact that *pele* ("wonderful") is one of the names given to the son is clear evidence that the son is divine.

c. This use of the word *pele* is found in Judges 13:

*Judges 13:17-23 (NASB)*

And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, "What is your name, so that when your words come to pass, we may honor you?" But the angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?" So Manoah took the kid with the grain offering and offered it on the rock to the Lord, and He performed wonders while Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came about when the flame went up from the altar toward heaven, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground. Now the angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah or his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of the Lord. So Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God." But his wife said to him, "If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have let us hear things like this at this time."

d. *Pele* is the nearest word to Hebrew has to the idea of "supernatural" (Motyer, p. 89). The son would possess wisdom far above any human wisdom. His wisdom would even surpass the wisdom of Solomon, for although Solomon was the wisest man on the earth, his wisdom was earthly and thus inferior to the heavenly wisdom of the son.

*I Kings 3:11-12 (NASB)*

And God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you."
e. In the Kingdom, many people will desire to hear Messiah's wonderful council. This wonderful time is beautifully described in Isaiah 2:2-3.

*Isaiah 2:2-3 (NASB)*

*Now it will come about that In the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. 3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

2. Mighty God.

a. The repetition of this title in 10:21, referring to the Lord Himself, establishes Isaiah's meaning here. The son would be God.

*Isaiah 10:21*

*A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.*

b. Some have suggested that this simply means "a godlike person" or hero. Such translations are linguistically faulty, and ignore the implication that the Tenach looked forward to a Divine Messiah. The son would be God himself, incarnate in human flesh.

3. Eternal Father.

a. Many people are puzzled by this title because the Bible clearly distinguishes between God the Son and God the Father. Several things must be noted in this regard (Martin, p. 1053).
1/ The God of the Bible is *echad*, which translates "unity." He is one God with one set of attributes. However, God exists as three distinct persons who share equally in the essence, attributes and character of God.

2/ The Messiah, being the second person of the triune God, is in his essence God. Therefore he has all the attributes of God including eternality.

3/ The title "everlasting Father" is an idiom used to describe the Messiah's relationship to time, not to his relationship to the other members of the Godhead.

4/ Because God the Son is eternal, He is said to be everlasting, just as God the Father is called "the Ancient Of Days" (Daniel 7:9).

5/ Perhaps Isaiah had in mind the promise to David (2 Samuel 7:12-16) about the "foreverness" of the kingdom which would come through David's line. The Messiah, as descendent of David, will fulfill this promise for which the nation of Israel has been waiting.

b. Isaiah's use of "Father" as a title of the Son speaks of His concern for his people, His protection of His people, and His care for and loving discipline of His people.


a. The Son is the Prince of Peace, the One who will usher in and maintain the time of millennial peace when the nation of Israel, as well as all the nations, will be properly related to the Lord.

b. Peace is personal fulfillment, well-being, harmony, and peace with God. The verb, *salem*, ("peace") means to be "whole" or "complete." "Prince" corresponds
C. Messiah's reign will reflect the holiness and righteousness of God, and will be guaranteed by the passionate commitment, truthfulness, and sovereignty of the Lord.

V. Like Messiah, who as God is immutable (unchanging), Messiah's rule will be unchanging in its character (peace). His rule, and the peace it brings will be without end in space and time (verse 7).

A. Messiah's reign as King will fulfill the promise God made to David that "your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever (2 Samuel 7:16, 1 Chronicles 17:4).

B. Unlike many of the unrighteous kings of Israel and Judah, Messiah’s reign on the throne of David will be established and upheld with justice and righteousness. Also, unlike the kings of Israel and Judah, who's reigns were temporary, Messiah's reign will be "from then on and forevermore (verse 7).

C. The rule of King Messiah will be accomplished by the "zeal" of the Lord of hosts. Zeal is a passionate commitment. The fulfillment of this prophecy rests not only on the faithfulness and sovereignty of God, but also on God's passionate commitment that that His purposes and promises come to pass.

D. It is God's sovereign will that this prophecy (and all biblical prophecies) be fulfilled, and as God himself has said; "I act and who can reverse it?" (Isaiah 43:13). The fulfillment of the prophecy is certain.
The Forerunner Of The Messiah
Isaiah 40:3-5

Isaiah 40:3-5
A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." (NASB)

I. Like other prophets, Isaiah was given visions, but he also heard words. In this passage, an unidentified voice calls out to Isaiah and through Isaiah to the Jewish people. The voice tells them to prepare the way for the Lord and His glory.

II. All four gospel writers applied Isaiah 40:3 to John the Immerser (Matthew 3:1-4; Mark 1:1-4; Luke 1:76-78; John 1:23). John was a desert prophet who prepared the way for the Messiah, and who made a highway for him in the wilderness.

Matthew 3:1-4
Now in those days John the Immerser came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!'" Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. (NAS)

III. Isaiah 35:8-10 had spoken of a highway for the exiles returning from Babylon, implying perhaps that it would traverse the desert (Isaiah 35:1). However, in the Tenach, the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and their returning to God often go hand in hand.

A. While God would not allow any obstacle to prevent the return of the Jewish people to their homeland, there was yet another return to be accomplished, with its own set of obstacles. In Isaiah's day the entire nation was in a spiritual wilderness, and each Jewish person had to get ready for the appearing of the Lord and His glory.
1. Thus, whereas the Jewish people would traverse a physical highway in returning to their homeland to wait for the Messiah, they also had to traverse a spiritual highway in order to be ready for Him when he came.

2. The Lord would use Cyrus, who allowed the Jewish captives to return to their homeland in Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:2-3), as his "tool" to build the highway on which the Jewish people would return to their homeland. He would use John the Immerser as his "tool" to build the spiritual highway, a highway of repentance, which His people would traverse in making themselves ready for Messiah's coming.

B. Lifting up the valleys, making every mountain and hill low, and letting the rough ground become a plain (verse 4) refers to workmen smoothing out the roads on which a dignitary would travel when he came to visit an area.

1. In Isaiah's day, he was calling the Jewish people to be "smoothed out" (i.e. repent) so that the Lord could come to Israel and rule.

2. Thus, the geographical features in Isaiah 40:1-3 symbolize the arid lifelessness of the unrepentant soul. The hills may represent the carnal pride of the sinner, and the valleys his moods of carnal hopelessness and self pity (Archer, p. 636).

IV. The glory of the Lord would be revealed through Cyrus' liberation of the exiled Jewish people from the Babylonian captivity and their restoration to the land of Promise, and especially through their liberation from the bondage of sin through the work of their Messiah.

V. When Isaiah wrote, "Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together." (verse 5, NASB), he had in view the millennial kingdom when the Lord will be revealed in his glory; that is, when his unique splendor will be evident everywhere.
A. Elsewhere, Isaiah wrote about Messiah's suffering and glorification; however, like the other authors of the Tenach, Isaiah did not recognize the time interval between Messiah's first coming to suffer and his second coming to rule.

B. Though the disciples saw Yeshua's glory (John 1:14), "all flesh" has not yet seen it. However, they will see it in the Millennium. This is certain because the mouth of the Lord has spoken it (verse 5).

Summary

VI. Isaiah 40:3-5 predicts the coming of a forerunner who would clear the way for the coming of the Messiah by turning the hearts of the Jewish people back to God so that they might be prepared for his coming.
The Nature And Rule Of The Messiah
Jeremiah 23:5-8

I. This passage relates primarily to Messiah's second coming. However, it does reveal some important things about Messiah that apply to both his first and second comings.

II. Historical Background

A. In Jeremiah's day, the Kings were likened to "shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture" (23:1).

B. They were ungodly, and were leading the people away from their God. God said that He would judge (attend to) them for their evil deeds (23:2).

Events related to the second coming

III. "The days are coming" is a messianic formula which Jeremiah uses to direct special attention to what is stated. The phrase is used fifteen times in the Book of Jeremiah, and when it is, the reader should pay special attention to what follows it (Feinberg, p. 518).

IV. The key idea in this passage is that in contrast to the troublesome times of Jeremiah's day, there will be a time of blessing ahead. The promise is focused on David and the promise made to him in the Davidic covenant that "your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." (2 Samuel 7:16, NASB).

V. The following events, recorded in the passage, relate to Messiah's second coming.

A. The evil Kings would one day be removed, and God Himself would "gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture (i.e. Israel); and they will be fruitful and multiply." (23:3, NASB)
B. God would then "raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing." (23:4, NASB).

C. In verse five, God describes the reign "chief shepherd" who would accomplish what the ungodly Kings could not do. During His reign, "Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely 23:6, NASB)."

D. The prophecy goes on to say that during the reign of the "chief shepherd" they will no longer say, "As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt," but, "As the Lord lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them. Then they will live on their own soil" (23:7-8. NASB).

1. The Exodus was the greatest event recorded in the Tenach. To the Jewish people, the Exodus had a very special meaning. It was the time when God set them free from the bondage of slavery, destroyed their enemies, and made what was a large company of people into Israel, God's chosen people.

2. However, in this passage Jeremiah tells us that an even greater day was coming. God would once again bring his people to the land promised to their forefathers, but this time He will not merely lead them from Egypt to Israel; rather, He would gather them all of the distant nations to which He had scattered them, and they would live on their own soil, in Israel (23:8, NASB).

VI. The nature and office of the Messiah.

A. While the events described in the passage relate primarily to Messiah's second coming, the passage does give us important facts about the Messiah that are eternally true. Therefore, these facts relate to the first as well as the second coming of the Messiah.

B. "Branch" (verse 5) is a messianic title, indicating that the One being spoken of here is the coming Messiah (Zechariah 3:8-10; 6:12). The precise wording in Hebrew of the term
righteous Branch is tsadiq Tsemach, which could mean a "Righteous Shoot," or "a true shoot of David's line" in contrast with the ungodly kings preceded him.

Zechariah 3:8-10
Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch. For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. "Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,” declares the Lord of hosts, "and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day,” declares the Lord of hosts, "every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.” (NASB)

Zechariah 6:9-13
The word of the Lord also came to me saying, "Take an offering from the exiles, from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah; and you go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have arrived from Babylon. And take silver and gold, make an ornate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Then say to him, Thus says the Lord of hosts, Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.” (NASB)

C. We have seen previously that Messiah would be a descendent of David (2 Samuel 7:12-16; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14) and that no descendent of Jehoiakim would sit on David's throne (2 Kings 23:34-37; Jeremiah 22:29-30).

D. This passage tells us that God would raise up another descendent of David who would be a King unlike Jehoiakim or any other King of Judah. In contrast with Jehoiakim, whose ungodly ways were condemned by the Lord (22:21-30), this King would be a righteous branch of David who would "act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land" (23:5, NASB).

E. This King would be the final King of Israel, who would fulfill the promises made to David and his people. He would be the Messiah, God's "righteous Branch."
VII. The key phrase in this passage concerning our study of Messiah’s first coming is found in verses five and six.

A. As we shall see, verse five affirms Messiah’s humanity, and verse six affirms His deity. We have already affirmed the humanity and deity of Messiah at his first coming (e.g. Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2). The fact that this passage, which refers primarily to Messiah’s second coming, also expresses Messiah’s deity and his humanity indicates that Messiah’s humanity and deity are permanent.

B. Verse five reiterates what has been said about the Messiah in a number of passages we have looked at thus far (e.g. 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 11:1-5). As a descendent of David, he would be a human being, a man. This is true of Messiah at his first coming, his second coming, and forever, for the incarnation is permanent. Throughout eternity, Messiah will be fully human (and fully God).

C. The permanence of Messiah’s humanity is affirmed in the Brit Hadashah.

1. In 1 Timothy, Paul describes Messiah as being human after his resurrection, ascension, and as he is seated at the right hand of the Father:

   *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Messiah Yeshua…*(1 Timothy 2:5, NASB)

2. The permanence of Yeshua’s humanity is also expressed in the Book of Revelation:

   *"I, Yeshua, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star"* (Revelation 22:16, NASB)
Yeshua will forever be the root of David, an expression of his pre-existence and deity. Consistency dictates that he will also forever be the offspring of David (an expression of his humanity).

D. Verse six affirms the deity of Messiah. As we have seen previously, in ancient Israel a person's name often revealed something about his character. Here the Messiah is named, "The Lord Our Righteousness" (Hebrew Yehovah Tsidqenuw), an expression of Messiah's deity.

1. One argument presented by modern Rabbinic Judaism to refute the teaching that the name, "The Lord Our Righteousness" in verse six indicates deity is to point out that throughout the Tanach there are names of people who are obviously not God that contain the name of God. For example, Jeremiah means "Yehovah will establish," and Isaiah means, "Yehovah is salvation." Thus, modern Rabbinic Judaism denies that the name of God is being given to the One spoken of in Jeremiah 23:6, and in some cases the rabbis deny that the passage speaks of Messiah at all.

a. However, none of the names of people in the Bible (aside from the Messiah) contain all four Hebrew letters that comprise the name Yehovah (YHVH). Some names contain two of the letters; some contain three, but nowhere are all four letters of the name of God used in the name of a human being (the one exception is the name of the Messiah, which contains all four letters that comprise the name Yehovah).

b. That the name of God was given to the Messiah was not disputed the ancient rabbis, who always interpreted Jeremiah 23:5-8 as messianic passage. It is only in relatively recent times that rabbis have argued otherwise. For example the Midrash, a compilation of rabbinic teachings on the Bible c. 200-500 B.C.E., says this on Proverbs 19:21:

Rabbi Hunah said, "Eight names are given to the Messiah which are: Yinnon, Shiloh, David, Menachem, Yehovah, Justi de Nostra, Tzemmach, Elias." The fifth name listed, Yehovah, is the name of God. This is based on the words of Jeremiah 23:6. The seventh name is Tzemmach, or "Branch." This is based on Jeremiah 23:5 (Fruchtenbaum, p. 62).
c. The ancient Jewish people understood the name in 23:6 to be that of the Messiah. The Targum, an Aramaic translation of the Tanakh written or compiled from the Second Temple period until the early Middle Ages (late first millennium), reads, "The Messiah of Righteousness." (Feinberg, p. 519)

2. The name of the Messiah here is a word play on the name of King Zedekiah, a contemporary of Jeremiah. Zedekiah's Hebrew name was Tsidqiyah, which translates into the English, "My Righteousness is Yehovah." In contrast with King Zedekiah, the coming King would live up to his name as Israel's righteous ruler (Dyer, p. 1158).

3. Thus, the righteous Ruler that God would raise up in place of the unrighteous Kings that have preceded Him would be the Messiah, God in the flesh. In contrast with the Kings who came before him, King Messiah will rule righteously, and during his reign (in the Millennium) Israel will live in the land promised to their forefathers, will live in peace and safety, and the promise that God made to David in the Davidic covenant will be fulfilled.

Conclusion

I. Jeremiah 23:5-8 is a messianic prophecy that looks forward to the day when God will gather the Jewish people back to the land of Israel, and Messiah will rule righteously as King on David's throne, bringing peace and security to His people.

II. Jeremiah 23:5-8 affirms that the Messiah will permanently be both human and divine. He is and will forever be "the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." (Revelation 22:16, NASB)
The Priesthood Of The Messiah
Psalm 110:1-7

A Psalm Of David

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet." The Lord will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies." Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of Thy power; in holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Thy youth are to Thee as the dew. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. He will drink from the brook by the wayside; therefore He will lift up His head. (NASB)

Authorship

I. The titles of the Psalms (e.g. Psalm 27: "A Psalm Of David," Psalm 83, "A Song, A Psalm Of Asaph") are part of the inspired text, and usually identify the author. (This does not include descriptions of the Psalms provided by the translators, usually placed above the title.)

A. As we shall see, the title of Psalm 110 is important. It identifies David as the author of the Psalm (see the title of Psalm 110 above).

B. That David was the author of Psalm 110 is confirmed by Yeshua in Matthew 22:41-46:

Matthew 22:41-46
Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Yeshua asked them a question, saying, "What do you think about the Messiah, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "The son of David." He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet'?" If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question. (NASB)
Introduction

II. Psalm 110 encompasses the entire redemptive career of the Messiah.

A. Like Jeremiah 23:5-8, this prophecy relates primarily to events that occur after the first coming of the Lord. The events recorded in Psalm 110 begin after Messiah's ascension, include events that take place during the tribulation, and culminate with Messiah's earthly Millennial rule...

B. However, the statement, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet" (verse 1) presupposes Messiah's first coming and his rejection by his people (i.e. the Jewish people).

C. Conversely, at Messiah's second coming his people (verse three, the Jewish people) will receive him as their Messiah and be his willing volunteers.

III. Psalm 110 is a royal psalm that was used at the coronation of a king. In the psalm, the psalmist expressed a divine revelation with the authority of a prophet. (Note: David, the author of the psalm, was a prophet).

A. The psalm consists of two divine speeches, which would be recited by a priest or prophet (verses 1 and 4), and the congregational response to each of these divine speeches (verses 2-3; 5-7).

B. *Yeshua*'s use of verse one in Matthew 22:41-46 (above) signifies that the psalm has a wider significance than the primary meaning of the psalm in David's time. (Yates Jr., p. 536)

IV. In Psalm 110, David received an oracle (a divine revelation from God) about the exaltation of his Lord and Messiah, and of the this King-Priest-Messiah's rule and victory over all the nations (Ross, p. 873).
Verse one: the exaltation of the Messiah

V. The word translated, "says" in verse one is the Hebrew word nium, which is often used to depict an oracle or a revelation. The oracle that David received in this Psalm is about the exaltation of his Lord.

VI. The English translation does not clearly reflect what is written in the original Hebrew. In verse one, the first appearance of the word, "Lord" is the Hebrew word Yahweh. The second appearance of the word Lord is the Hebrew word Adonai.

A. What David heard was a heavenly conversation between two individuals: the Lord (Yahweh) and David's Lord (Adonai). That is, David heard a conversation between God the Father and God the Son, the Messiah (Ross, p. 873).

B. David, who wrote this Psalm, was King over all of Israel, and had also established a Jewish empire over the surrounding nations. Thus, David had no human lord. The only authority over David was God himself (Fruchtenbaum, p. 88).

1. Yet, in verse one David addresses Adonai (the Messiah) as "my Lord." This means that Messiah is not only David's descendent, but is also a King, a King of even greater authority than David.

2. The Kingship of the Messiah is confirmed by the Father's words to him, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet" (verse one).

a. Only an equal could sit at the right hand of a king (1 Kings 2:19). In the ancient Middle East when one king visited another king, he would sit at his host's right hand. Because Messiah is invited to sit at God's right hand, he must be equal with God. This implies that Messiah will be the God/man (Fruchtenbaum, p. 88)
b. To make one's enemies a "footstool" is an ancient Middle Eastern metaphor for absolute control. Originally the victorious king placed his feet on the necks of his vanquished foes (see Joshua 19:24; 1 Kings 5:3). From this practice arose the idiom to make one's enemy one's footstall (VanGeneren, p. 697).

3. Verse one, in which God the Father invites God the Son (the Messiah) to sit at His right hand was fulfilled at Yeshua's ascension, after he had completed his earthly work and sat down at his Father's right hand.

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high... (Hebrews 1:3, NASB)

And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet (Hebrews 10:11-13, NASB)

C. Yeshua will be seated at the Father's right hand until the consummation of the age, when he returns to vanquish his enemies and rule over the entire earth. It is at that time the Father will make his enemies "a footstool for your feet."

D. The absolute victory of the Messiah has been achieved by his death on the cross, and is now waiting to be realized. His absolute victory and rule is expressed in 1 Corinthians 15:23-26:

But each in his own order: Messiah the first fruits, after that those who are Messiah's at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. (NASB)
Verses two and three: the rule of the Messiah.

VII. Verse two indicates that Yehovah will give strength and authority to his king, the Messiah. This is symbolized by Yehovah "stretching forth Your (Messiah's) strong scepter from Zion." Yehovah will extend the authority of His King so that his enemies will have to acknowledge him, as was the case to some extent during the reigns of David and Solomon (VanGemeren, p. 698).

VIII. Verse three speaks of the warriors (people) who will "volunteer freely" to accompany the king in the day of his victorious battle.

A. "Volunteer freely" may be rendered "be free will offerings." The warriors are completely faithful to their king, and are willing to offer up their life in his service.

B. The king's warriors will be dressed in "holy array." Just as the Israelites had to consecrate themselves to the Lord before going into battle, so at the consummation of the age they, as well as all believers must be holy (Ross, p. 873).

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! (2 Peter 3:10-12, NASB)

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless... (2 Peter 3:14, NASB).

C. Speaking of the Messiah/King's people, the psalmist says:

"Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of Thy power; in holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Thy youth are to Thee as the dew" (verse 3, NASB).
1. We may infer from the military language used here that the royal troops are numerous. They come voluntarily on the day of battle, as in the days of Deborah (Judges 5:2,9).

2. The Messiah/Kings people consecrate themselves, are fully prepared, and place themselves at the service of the King. They will be as abundant as the dew at the womb (beginning) of the dawn (see 2 Samuel 17:12).

"So we shall come to him in one of the places where he can be found, and we will fall on him as the dew falls on the ground; and of him and of all the men who are with him, not even one will be left" (2 Samuel 17:12, NASB).

3. The King/Messiah's people are youthful and are therefore strong and valiant for battle. His army is prepared, strong and numerous ((VanGemeren, p. 698).

Verse four: the priesthood of the Messiah

IX. Verse four is extremely important. In it, God declares that the Messiah is "a priest forever according to the order of Melchizidek."

A. It will be helpful at this time to discuss the biblical concept of a "type."

1. The key concept here is "likeness." A type is a symbol of something to come. For example a person or event in the Tenach may bear significant similarities another person or event in the Brit Hadashah. The person or event in the Tenach is called the "type," while the fulfillment of the type in the Brit Hadashah is called the "antitype."

2. Types generally find their fulfillment in the person and ministry of Messiah, but they sometimes relate to God, His people, or some other reality.
3. Examples of types in the Bible.

a. Romans 5:14 tells us that Adam was a type of Messiah. Thus Adam through whom death reigned, foreshadowed Messiah, through whom life would come. Adam and Messiah were alike in that they both represented man before God when their obedience to Him was tested.

   Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (Matthew 5:14, NASB)

b. Yeshua indicated that the bronze serpent in the wilderness was a type of Messiah. The serpent and Messiah were similar in that just as those who had been bitten by serpents were healed if they looked upon the bronze serpent which was lifted up on a pole by Moses, "even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life." (John 3:14-15, NASB)

4. Unless the Brit Hadashah clearly indicates that something is a type, we must be very careful when asserting that an event or person in the Tenach a type. Before calling something in the Tenach a type, we should either affirm that the Brit Hadashah indicates that it is a type, or clearly demonstrate that there is a strong correspondence between the type and the antitype.

B. In verse four, such a correspondence between Melchizedek is asserted. As we shall see, this correspondence is affirmed in the Brit Hadashah.

C. Some background concerning the priesthood and the kingship of Israel will also be helpful.

1. Under the Mosaic Law, a man could not be both a king and a priest.
2. This is because whereas kings had to be from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10) and a
descendent of David (2 Samuel 7:16), priests had to be from the tribe of Levi and a
descendent of Aaron (Numbers 18:1-8).

D. However, Melchizedek was both a king and a priest (Genesis 14:18). This was acceptable
because the events in Genesis 14 took place before the Mosaic Law was given. Where
there is no law, there is no violation.

E. We have seen that Messiah would be a king (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Psalm 110 tells us that
he will also be a priest "after the order of Melchizedek." Two questions should be
answered at this point: 1) how can Messiah, who came from the tribe of Judah, also be a
priest, who must come from the tribe of Levi? And 2) In what ways is Messiah a priest
according to the order of Melchizedek? We will answer these questions in turn.

1. Messiah did live when the Mosaic Law, requiring that priests be from the tribe of
Levi, was in effect. Thus, the only way for Messiah to be a priest was for there to be a
change in the Law. This change in the Law took place when Messiah died, putting an
end to the Mosaic Law and instituting a new Law, a law of Messiah (Luke 22:19-20;
1 Corinthians 9:20-21).

Luke 22:19-20
And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. (NASB)

1 Corinthians 9:20-21
And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Messiah, that I might win those who are without law. (NASB)
2. This change in the Law was prophesied in the Tenach and conformed in the Brit Hadashah:

Jeremiah 31:31-33
"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

Hebrews 7:11-19
Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of Him "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. (NASB)

a. It should be noted that Israel has not yet entered into the New Covenant relationship with their Messiah.

/1/ This will take place when Yeshua returns and national Israel recognizes and receives him as their Messiah (Zechariah 12:10; 13:1-2).

"And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me
whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born (Zechariah 12:10, NASB)

In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. "And it will come about in that day," declares the Lord of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land." (Zechariah 13:1-2, NASB)

/2/ However, because Messiah's death has fulfilled the Law, believers today, both Jewish and Gentile, may experience the blessings of the New Covenant (2 Corinthians 3:5-6; Hebrews 9:15-28; 12:22-23).

b. It should also be noted that the union of the offices of priest and king was prophesied in Zechariah 6:12-13.

Zechariah 6:12-13
And take silver and gold, make an ornate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Then say to him, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.'" (NASB)

3. There are a number of similarities between Melchizedek and the Messiah.

a. There is no record in the Tenach of Melchizedek's genealogy, nor is there a record of his birth or his death. Figuratively, he had no beginning and no end. This typifies the eternal nature of the Messiah and the permanence of His priesthood.
Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually. *(Hebrews 7:3, NASB)*

b. As the above passage declares, both Melchizedek and Messiah would be priests perpetually. This agrees with Psalm 110 verse four, which states that the Messiah would be "a priest forever." All of the Levitical priests anticipated the coming of the last, greatest, permanent Priest, the Messiah.

c. Because Melchizedek's death was not recorded, he figuratively had an indestructible life. This was literally true of Messiah after his resurrection.

*Hebrews 7:15-16*

*And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. (NASB)*

d. Melchizedek received tithes from Abraham. Now, Messiah receives tithes from the body of Messiah.

*Genesis 14:17-20*

*Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tenth of all. (NASB)*

e. Melchizadek was King of Salem. Salem is usually identified with ancient Jerusalem, or Jebus, the Jebusite city captured by David and turned into the capital city of the nation of Judah (1 Chronicles 11:4-9). When the Messiah returns, he will be seated on David's throne in Jerusalem.
Verses five to seven: the victory of the Messiah

X. Until now, the scene has been in heaven. The Messiah has been seated at the right hand of the Father, signifying equality and leadership. Now, the scene changes to earth, to the final battlefield. When Messiah goes out to war, the Father supports him by being at his right hand.

\[I \text{ have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken (Psalm 16:8, NASB).}\]

XI. There is a day of judgment coming, the "day of his wrath. On that day, the Messiah will "judge the nations" (verse 6) causing a great defeat for the hostile nations, symbolized by their corpses (verse 6, VanGemeren, p. 669).

\[\text{Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it (Isaiah 13:9, NASB).}\]

\[\text{I will gather all the nations, and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land (Joel 3:2, NASB)}\]

\[\text{And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:15-17, NASB)}\]

A. The vivid language and the and the prophetic perfect tenses in verses 5-7 are designed to show clearly the certainty and completeness of the victory (Yates, Jr., p. 537).
B. The Messiah's "drinking by the brook by the wayside" figuratively pictures his renewed vigor after the battle, and lifting up his head speaks of his being exalted (Ross, p. 874).

C. According to the Brit Hadashah, these events will take place when the Messiah, accompanied by his saints, will return to judge the world and establish his kingdom on earth.

Note

XII. There were three offices in ancient Israel:

A. The King, who ruled the nation on behalf of God.

B. The priest, who represented the people before God.

C. The prophet, who spoke to the people on behalf of God.

XII. There are some people in the Tenach who held two of the three offices. For example, Moses functioned as both a prophet and a priest, and David was both a King and a prophet. However, no one in the Tenach held all three offices, and no one held both the offices of King and priest (as we have seen, the King and the priest came from two different tribes, making such a thing impossible).

XIII. Messiah alone holds all three offices. He is the King of Israel, our great High Priest, and, because all of the words he spoke were the words of God, he was also a prophet.
King

Now Yeshua stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And Jesus said to him, "it is as you say." (Matthew 27:11, NASB)

Priest

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession (Hebrews 4:14, NASB).

Prophet

"No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15, NASB).
The Messiah's Proclamation Of The Gospel

Isaiah 61:1-2a

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn… (Isaiah 61:1-2, NASB)*

Introduction

I. This passage is an example of the two comings of Messiah foretold in the same passage with no indication of any gap in time between them.

A. Isaiah 61:1-2a refers to the first coming of the Messiah, when the gospel (good news) would be preached and Messiah's ministry would involve healing the afflicted and bringing freedom to those who are captive to sin.

B. Right in the middle of a sentence (verse 2b) the topic shifts to the second coming, when the Messiah's ministry would involve the vengeance of God upon an unbelieving world.

C. Between verses 61a and 61b is the long period of time referred to as the Church age, or the Age of Grace. This is not revealed in the text, nor is it revealed in any other passage in the Tenach, for the Church age is a mystery, that is, truth that is not revealed in the Tenach but is revealed in the Brit Hadashah.

D. The fact that verse 61a pertains to the first coming and verse 61b refers to the second coming is affirmed in Messiah's reading of the text at a synagogue in Nazareth and his commentary on that text:

*And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,*
because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21, NASB)

1. All that Yeshua read from the book of the prophet Isaiah pertained to his first coming, which was in progress. Therefore, he could proclaim that what he read was fulfilled in the hearing those in the synagogue.

2. However, the remainder of the last sentence (verse 2b, which Yeshua did not read) says, "and the day of vengeance of our God..." Yeshua could not read that portion of the passage and proclaim it fulfilled in the hearing of those who were in the synagogue because "the day of vengeance of our God" pertains to Messiah's second coming, which was not to come for many years and was not yet fulfilled when Messiah read the passage.

E. Although Yeshua did not read the remainder of verse 2, his abrupt stop in the middle of a sentence discussing the work of the Messiah shows that his work would be divided into two comings. What is not revealed in Isaiah 61:1-2 nor in Yeshua's commentary on the passage is the interval of time between those two comings.

II. Messiah's preaching ministry, an essential aspect of his work, is highlighted in this passage. He will "bring good news to the afflicted," "proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners" (verse one) and "proclaim the favorable year of the Lord" (verse two). Yeshua's ministry during his first coming included a large amount of preaching about the gospel, the Kingdom of God, and other topics essential to salvation and godliness.

The Passage

II. It is significant that all three persons of the triune God are mentioned in verse one (the Lord God, who is the Father, the Spirit of God, and "Me," who is the Messiah. This indicates that all three persons of the Godhead are involved in God's work of redemption,
and that, as verse one indicates, the Messiah's ministry would be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

A. There are three factors that indicate that "Me" in verse 61:1 refers to the Messiah (Martin, p. 1116):

1. The association of the Holy Spirit with the anointing of the one referred to as Me" points to the Spirit's anointing of the Messiah.

   a. After being anointed with oil, Israel's first two kings, Saul and David, were blessed with the Spirit's ministry (1 Samuel 10:1,10; 16:13). Similarly, Messiah was anointed by the Holy Spirit to be Israel's King (Matthew 3:16-17).

   b. The Hebrew word for Messiah (Mashiach) means "the anointed One," and Christ, a transliteration of the Greek word Christos, from chrio, "to anoint" is the equivalent of Mashiach.

   c. Isaiah 61:1 reaffirms Isaiah 11:2 and 42:1. Messiah will be anointed by the Holy during his ministry.

2. As we saw in the introduction, part of this passage (Isaiah 61:1-2a) was read by the Messiah (Luke 4:18-19) in reference to himself.

3. The mission of the Anointed One was precisely that of Yeshua: to preach good news, to heal and free (Isaiah 42:6-7), to proclaim favor and vengeance, and to comfort.

Isaiah 42:6-7
"I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people,
as a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who dwell in darkness from the prison." (NASB)

B. At Yeshua’s first coming, he did the things mentioned in Isaiah 61:1-2a. At Yeshua’s second coming he will do the things mentioned in verses 2b-3. When he returns he will bring judgment on unbelievers (Micah 5:15).

Micah 5:10-15
"And it will be in that day," declares the Lord, "That I will cut off your horses from among you and destroy your chariots. I will also cut off the cities of your land and tear down all your fortifications. I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you will have fortunetellers no more. I will cut off your carved images and your {sacred} pillars from among you, so that you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands. I will root out your Asherim from among you and destroy your cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath On the nations which have not obeyed." (NASB)

C. However, when he returns he will also comfort Israel, for she will have undergone great persecution, the Great Tribulation, in the preceding years. (Jeremiah 30:7; Isaiah 40:1-2) (Martin, p. 1116)

Jeremiah 30:7
Alas! for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob’s distress, but he will be saved from it (Jeremiah 30:7, NASB).

Isaiah 40:1-2
Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins."(NASB)

III. Throughout the book of Isaiah, a portrait of the Messiah as both a Servant (Isaiah 42:1) and a King (Isaiah 32:1-4) is presented. That union Servant and King is clearly presented in Isaiah 61:1-2.
Isaiah 42:1
“Behold, My servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations (Isaiah 42:1, NASB).

Isaiah 32:1-4
Behold, a king will reign righteously, and princes will rule justly. And each will be like a refuge from the wind, and a shelter from the storm, like streams of water in a dry country, like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land. Then the eyes of those who see will not be blinded, and the ears of those who hear will listen. And the mind of the hasty will discern the truth, and the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak clearly. (NASB)

IV. In Isaiah 61:1-2a, Messiah was prophesied to do four things:

A. "Preach the gospel (good news) to the afflicted." Afflicted (nawiym) may be translated humble, lowly, needy or poor. Messiah did this at the Sermon on the mount:

Matthew 5:3-4
"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (NASB)

B. "Bind up the broken hearted." Every act of healing and all of Yeshua's words of comfort to those who were downtrodden or in need of God's forgiveness fulfilled this mission. Especially noteworthy is Yeshua's raising Lazarus from the dead, which brought tremendous spiritual healing to Lazarus' sisters, who were broken hearted over his death.

C. "Proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners." Yeshua's preaching contained the key to release from the bondage of sin. This is dramatically illustrated in his words in John 8:31-36.
John 8:31-36
Yeshua therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You shall become free'?" Yeshua answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." (NASB)

D. Proclaim the favorable day of the Lord." From the beginning of his ministry, Messiah proclaimed the gospel, the good news that God through Messiah extends to man his favor and grace.

Matthew 4:23
And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. (NASB)

Conclusion

I. Isaiah 61:1-2a prophesies that all three persons of the Godhead would be involved in bringing about man's redemption.

II. Isaiah 61:1:2a prophesies that the Messiah would be anointed by the Holy Spirit during his ministry.

III. Isaiah 61:1-2a prophesies that the Messiah would have a significant preaching ministry.
The Humble King
Zechariah 9:9

Background

I. The Prophet Zechariah.

A. Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo was a Levite, and was a postexilic prophet born in Babylon. Thus, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel before him, Zechariah was both a prophet and a priest. Zechariah’s name means “the Lord remembers.”

B. Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai the prophet, Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest (Ezra 5:1-2; Zechariah 3:1; 4:6; 6:11). He returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with almost fifty thousand other Jewish exiles. Zechariah was probably a young man at the beginning of his prophetic ministry.

II. Historical background.

A. The fall of Jerusalem to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E. marked the end of the kingdom of Judah. Most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were deported to Babylon for a period of seventy years as prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah.

B. During this exile the prophet Daniel received the revelation that Gentile kingdoms would be dominant over Israel and Judah and Israel until God set up his Kingdom on earth under the rule of the Messiah (Daniel 2:7). Yeshua referred to this period as “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24).

C. When the Babylonian Empire fell to the Persian Empire in 539 B.C.E., Cyrus the Great decreed that the Jewish people could return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple (Ezra 1:2-4). However, only about a small minority of about fifty thousand Jewish people, including Haggai and Zechariah, returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest (Ezra 2).
D. Levitical sacrifices were soon reinstituted on a rebuilt altar (Ezra 3:1-6), and in the second year of their return the foundation of the temple was laid (Ezra 3:8-13; 5:16). However, external oppression and internal depression deferred the rebuilding of the temple for about sixteen more years until the rule of the Persian king Darius Hystaspis (522-486 B.C.E.).

E. In the second year of the reign of Darius (520 B.C.E.) God raised up Haggai the prophet to encourage the Jewish people to rebuild the temple (Ezra 5:1-2; Haggai 1:1). Haggai preached four sermons in four months and then disappeared from the scene.

F. Two months after Haggai gave his first sermon, Zechariah began his prophetic ministry. (Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 1:1). He encouraged the people, who had been spiritually apathetic, to spiritual renewal and motivated them to rebuild the temple by revealing to them God’s plan’s for Israel’s future. With this prophetic encouragement the people completed the reconstruction of the temple in 515 B.C.E. (Ezra 6:15). The undated prophecies of Zechariah 9-14 were probably written much later in his ministry. (Lindsey, pp. 1545-1546)

**Zechariah 9:9**

III. The “daughter of Zion” and the “daughter of Jerusalem” are personifications of the inhabitants of Jerusalem who, representing the whole nation of Israel, were exhorted to welcome the coming King not with fear but with glad rejoicing.

A. The reason for this exhortation is an invasion of Israel by a foreign king prophesied in verses 9:1-8. Alexander the Great fulfilled these verses. In contrast to this invading Gentile king, is the reference to a future Jewish king, the Messiah. Verses 9-10). Israel is told to rejoice because your king (Israel’s king) is coming (not against you but to you). The reason Jerusalem is to rejoice is because, unlike Alexander, their king will be:

1. *Just:* Israel’s king is characterized by righteousness, a point also made in Jeremiah 23:5-6.
Jeremiah 23:5-6
"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land." In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.' (NAS)

2. Offering salvation: In contrast to Alexander, who came to conquer, destroy, and kill, Israel’s King would bring salvation to his people.

3. Lowly and humble: lowly here has the sense of being brought low through oppression. Whereas Alexander came with pomp and power, the Messiah was indeed oppressed.

   He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7). (NAS)

B. Also, in contrast with Alexander the Great, riding on a white steed, Israel’s King would come riding on a donkey. However, Israel’s King, who would be god in the flesh, would exhibit his control over all of His creatures by riding a foal of a donkey – a creature not yet broken which had never been ridden before. (Fruchtenbaum, p. 65)

IV. Yeshua fulfilled this prophecy with his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of the last week of his life (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-36; John 12:12-15). Yeshua’s triumphal entry was his official presentation to Israel as their messianic King.

The Rabbis and Zechariah 9:9

V. The ancient rabbis viewed Zechariah 9:9 as being a messianic prophecy.
A. In the *Talmud*, in *Sanhedrin 98b-99a* Rabbi Hillel said, “Israel can expect no Messiah because they consumed him in the days of Hezekiah.” The retort “When did the time of the Second Temple prophesied and said, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

B. *Pisikta* (*Piska 53*) states: This (Zechariah 9:9) refers to Messiah. He is called *anee* (lowly) because He was oppressed all these years in prison, and the sinners of Israel denied him. For the merits of the Messiah, the Holy One, blessed be He, will protect and redeem you. (*Pisikta* is a collection of homilies on the Pentateuchal and prophetic lessons. It was composed around 845 CE and probably called "rabbati" (the larger) to distinguish it from the earlier *Pesita*.

C. In the *Talmud* (*Sanhedrin 98a*) it says: Rabbi Joseph the son of Levi objects that it is written in one place “Behold one like the son of man comes with the clouds of heaven,” but in another place “lowly and riding upon an ass.” The solution is, if they be righteous he shall come with the clouds of heaven, but if they not be righteous he will come lowly riding upon an ass. (Fruchtenbaum, p. 66)

D. In “C” above rabbi Joseph the son of Levi attempts to explain the two lines of messianic prophecy, one viewing Messiah as a lowly servant and the other as a conquering King. However, the *Brit Hadasha* makes it clear that both lines of prophecy will be fulfilled by two comings of the Messiah: a first coming to serve, save, and die; and a second coming to conquer, rule and judge.
The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel
Daniel 9:24-27

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

The Purpose Of This Article

The primary purpose of this article is to show both Jewish and Gentile people that the time of Yeshua’s (Jesus’) death was predicted by the prophet Daniel with extreme accuracy more than five hundred years before it happened.

Introduction

The contents of the Book of Daniel indicate that a Jewish prophet named Daniel wrote the book in the sixth century B.C.E. Daniel lived during the events recorded in the book. Critics of the Bible reject this early date for the writing of the Book of Daniel mainly because they reject the amazing predictive prophecies recorded in the book. The book contains details concerning the history of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Details recorded in Daniel 11:5-35 were fulfilled in the fourth to the second centuries B.C.E. Critics insist that a man named Daniel who lived in the sixth century B.C.E. could not have foreknown these things, and that someone other than Daniel wrote the book in the second century B.C.E. and used his name.

However, the fact that manuscript fragments from the Book of Daniel were found in Qumran, Israel, the settlement nearest to the hiding place of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and written perhaps in the second century B.C.E., preclude the idea that Daniel was written in 165 B.C.E. as many critics suggest. Not enough time would have been available for the book to reach the Essene
community at Qumran and for it to be copied there. Also, the fact that the Jewish people accepted the Book of Daniel as part of the Scriptures bears witness to its authenticity.

The critical objection regarding the early dating of Daniel runs deeper than a denial of one man’s ability to foreknow the future. Rather, it is founded upon a denial of the miraculous, and the presupposition that the Scriptures were not inspired by God, who "declares the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10). The overwhelmingly compelling evidence that Yeshua’s resurrection was an actual historical event, and not a matter of faith as the critics claim, affirms the fact that Yeshua is who he claimed to be: the Son of God. Because Yeshua is the Son of God, who cannot lie, his assertions in the Brit Hadashah (New Testament) that the Tenach (Old Testament) is an authentic work of God are true (see for example Luke 24:44). The Qumran documents and Yeshua’s confirmation that the Tenach is authentic validate the authenticity of The Book of Daniel and affirm that Daniel did write his prophecies centuries before they were fulfilled.

One of these prophecies is found in Daniel chapter nine. In this chapter God, through the prophet Daniel, foretells information concerning the coming Messiah and other significant events with such detail and accuracy that the prophecy is nothing short of miraculous. In this article we shall study Daniel's prophecy in chapter nine, "the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel." Our study will confirm that Yeshua is the Messiah predicted by Daniel and the other biblical prophets, bolster our faith in God and His Word, and give us important information contained in Daniel’s prophecy, including the time of Messiah’s death.

The Rabbis’ Views On Daniel Chapter Nine

Before beginning our study of Daniel chapter nine, it will be enlightening to see what Jewish rabbis have to say about the passage. The vast majority of rabbis, while not believers in Yeshua, are men who have undergone long periods of study to attain their position, are dedicated to their work, and are men of integrity who are dedicated to serving the Jewish people. Therefore, if we disagree with their interpretation of a passage of Scripture, we should focus on the passage and what it says, and, although we may disagree with the rabbis, we should interact with their views on the passage rather than attacking them personally.

Rabbi Maimonides, the preeminent medieval Jewish philosopher and one of the greatest Torah scholars of the Middle Ages, said this about Daniel 9:24-27 – “Daniel has made known to us the knowledge of the end times. However, since they are secret, the wise rabbis have barred the calculation of the days of Messiah’s coming so that the untutored populace will not be led astray when they see that the End Times have already come but there is no sign of the Messiah” (Igeret Teiman, Chapter 3 p.24.)

Apparently, Maimonides believed that Daniel did accurately predict in advance events related to the “end times,” including the date of the coming of the Messiah, but believed that they were “secret,” or not understandable, and thus believed it best that the rabbis not teach Daniel chapter nine to their congregants lest they be dismayed if they believed they saw these events happening and the Messiah did not appear.
A Sage said: "May the curse of heaven fall upon those who calculate the date of the advent of the Messiah, and thus create political and social unrest among the people." (Sanhedrin, 97b.)

Sanhedrin, 97b is an excerpt from the Babylonian Talmud, a collection of ancient Rabbinic writings containing the basis of religious authority in Orthodox Judaism (the religion of those Jewish people who adhere most strictly to traditional Jewish beliefs and practices). Concerning Daniel chapter nine, Sanhedrin, 97b indicates that many rabbis believed that calculating the date of the coming of the Messiah might cause political and social unrest among the Jewish people, and thus thought it best not to perform the calculation. In fact, they felt so strongly about this that they pronounced a curse on anyone who calculated the date of Messiah’s coming.

“Rabbis after the time of Christ have pronounced a curse on anyone who would attempt to calculate the dates of this chapter.” (Talmud Sanhedrin 97b, Soncino ed., p. 659.)

Talmud Sanhedrin 97b implies that some rabbis did recognize that Daniel chapter nine predicted the time of Yeshua’s (Jesus’) death, and were so concerned that this might cause Jewish people to recognize Yeshua as the Messiah that they pronounced a curse on those who calculated the dates revealed in Daniel chapter nine.

Background

The Life And Times Of The Prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah was a prophet of God who ministered in Judah during the reigns of Kings Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. His ministry began in approximately 627 B.C.E. during the thirteenth year of King Josiah and lasted for about sixty years – through the very last days of the nation of Judah when the capital city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E.

During the ministry of Jeremiah, Judah and its kings were disobedient to the Lord and did not walk in His ways as commanded in the Law of Moses. Jeremiah's ministry was a "ministry of doom." His messages to Judah were often judgmental, warning its kings and inhabitants that because of their disobedience God would judge their sin with harsh discipline. For the Jewish people living under the Mosaic Law, blessings for obedience would include dwelling in the land promised to their forefather Abraham, a safe haven for them. Disobedience for sin and rebellion
could mean temporary expulsion from the land where they would face the dangers of living in the anti-Semitic nations that surrounded them.

Jeremiah is often called "the weeping prophet" because he wept openly about the sins of his nation (Jeremiah 9:1). He was also discouraged at times about the futility of his message. As the years passed and his words of judgment went unheeded, he lamented his unfortunate state: "O Lord, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; everyone mocks me" (Jeremiah 20:7).

**Judgment Is Pronounced**

One of God's attributes is "forbearance." God's forbearance is his longsuffering patience regarding sin. He often gives people far more time than they deserve to repent of their sins before he judges them. However, God is holy and His forbearance does have an end. Eventually, if repentance is not forthcoming, God's judgment becomes sure and swift. Such was the case with Judah. The Jewish people had ignored Jeremiah's warning for forty years, and finally God, through Jeremiah, pronounced judgment upon Judah:

**Jeremiah 25:4-11**

"And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear, saying, 'Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds, and dwell on the land which the Lord has given to you and your forefathers forever and ever; and do not go after other gods to serve them and to worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands, and I will do you no harm.' "Yet you have not listened to Me," declares the Lord, "in order that you might provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm. "Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Because you have not obeyed My words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares the Lord, 'and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, and against its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them, and make them a horror, and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. Moreover, I will take from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. And this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."

As the above passage states, the discipline God would bring upon Judah would be the devastation of their land and a seventy-year exile in Babylon. However, God's justice is
tempered with mercy. At the end of the seventy-year captivity the Jewish people would return to their homeland; Israel’s discipline would have been completed.

One may ask why God chose a period of seventy years for the Babylonian captivity. The number seventy in this context does not have a deep symbolic meaning, nor is it part of an alleged "Bible code." In the Mosaic Law, God commanded the Jewish people:

"Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, but during the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath rest, a Sabbath to the Lord; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. Your harvest's aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year" (Leviticus 25:3-5).

According to the commandment, every seventh year the Jewish people were to cease from their agricultural pursuits and give the land a year of rest, a sabbatical year. The Jewish people failed to obey this commandment for four hundred ninety years, thus "owing" the land seventy sabbatical years. The seventy years the Jewish people would spend in Babylon would enable the land to enjoy its Sabbaths. This is confirmed in 2 Chronicles 36:20-21:

2 Chronicles 36:20-21
"And those who had escaped from the sword he (Nebuchadnezzar) carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept Sabbath until seventy years were complete."

God's Judgment Falls On Judah

King Jehoiakim, who ruled Judah from 609-598 B.C.E., chose a path of idolatry and self-reliance. Upon his death his son Jehoiakin became king. Like his father, Jehoiakin did evil in the sight of the Lord. The people of Judah followed him in his rebellion against God. Because of their refusal to repent, God's judgment fell upon the Jewish people living in Judah. In 605 B.C.E. Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, who controlled the area that included Judah, sent his army to invade Judah and bring it securely under his control. At that time he took some captives to Babylon including Daniel and others.
Because Jehoiakin resisted Babylonian control, Nebuchadnezzar sent more troops against Jerusalem. Then, in 597 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar himself invaded Judah. He took many captives to Babylon, including King Jehoiachin. Nebuchadnezzar also took all the treasures of the Temple and palace including the gold articles that remained from Solomon's days. "He led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land" (2 Kings 24:14). In all, 10,000 people were taken captive, including the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1-3).

Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah king over those remaining in Judah, and changed his name to Zedekiah. For several years Zedekiah submitted to Nebuchadnezzar. But finally, under pressure from nationalists in Judah, he rebelled. In January of 588 B.C.E. Nebuchadnezzar once again besieged Jerusalem. On July 16, 586 B.C.E. the Babylonians broke through the wall of Jerusalem. Judah was defeated, and Zedekiah was taken captive. About four weeks after the breakthrough of the city, on August 16, 586 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar had Nebuzaradan, the commander of his imperial guard, enter the city of Jerusalem and destroy it.

Daniel was a teenager when he was taken captive into Babylon. He was a godly man who loved the Lord, and the Lord caused him to prosper in Babylon and made him a prophet. During more than 60 years of his life in Babylon, Daniel faced many challenges. However, throughout all of those years, Daniel grew stronger in his commitment to God.

Daniel Chapter Nine

Daniel's Devotional

Years passed, and Daniel grew from a young man to an older man who was respected by both the Jewish people and the Kings of Babylon. Like all godly men Daniel spent time each day with God, praying and reading the Scriptures. One day during his quiet time, Daniel was reading the book of the prophet Jeremiah. He "observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years" (Daniel 9:2).

Daniel reached back into his memory, and realized that the time for the captivity to end was drawing near. Immediately, Daniel began to pray. He began with prayer of confession, acknowledging that the Jewish people had rebelled against God, and that God was just in disciplining them.

Daniel told the Lord, "Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of
God, for we have sinned against Him. Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem.” (Daniel 9:8-12)

Daniel then changed his prayer from one of confession and repentance to a prayer of supplication, saying to God, "O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name” (Daniel 9:18-19).

Daniel realized that the end of the seventy-year captivity proclaimed by Jeremiah was drawing near, so he prayed that God would restore the Jewish people to their homeland. Daniel's prayer is a beautiful example of praying in the will of God, for praying according to God's Word always receives a positive response.

God's Response To Daniel's Prayer

God's Response to Daniel's Prayer was somewhat unexpected. Because of Daniel's faithfulness to his God, God sent the angel Gabriel to Daniel with an important message. This message, contained in Daniel 9:24-27, is the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel.

Daniel 9:24-27 - The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel

Verse Twenty-Four

Daniel 9:24
"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place."

It is important to note that, according to verse twenty-four, the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 has to do with Daniel's people and Daniel's city; that is, the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. The prophecy does not refer to the church or the Gentiles. The fact that this prophecy foretells events that are still in the distant future (e.g., making an end of sin, bringing in everlasting righteousness) affirms that God is not finished with Israel. God has a purpose and a plan for the Jewish people that is still in effect and will find its fulfillment in the future.

There are two important differences between Daniel's prayer and the beginning of Gabriel's message in verse twenty-four. Firstly, whereas Daniel's prayer focused on the end of the seventy
year captivity, a careful reading of Gabriel's message reveals that it focused on events that would take place in the far more distant future than the restoration of the Jewish people to their homeland. In fact, bringing in everlasting righteousness, sealing up vision and prophecy, and anointing the most holy place (verse 24) are events that will take place at the end of human history as we know it, when Messiah returns and begins his rule in Jerusalem.

Secondly, whereas Daniel's prayer focused on a time period of seventy years, Gabriel's message focused on a time period of seventy weeks. It is important that we know the meaning of "weeks" in Gabriel's message.

The Meaning Of "Weeks" In Daniel 9:24

The Hebrew word translated "weeks" in Daniel 9:24 is shabua, which literally means "seven." Shabua was used by the Jewish people to refer to seven days and also to seven years. What these "sevens" are in Daniel chapter nine must be determined from the immediate context and from another use of the word shabua in the Book of Daniel. There are several reasons to believe that the "seventy sevens" of Daniel refer to seventy sevens of years, or 490 years (70 weeks x 7 years in a week = 490 years).

1. Daniel had been thinking in terms of years, not days. In fact, Daniel was thinking in terms of an exact multiple of seven years (7 years x 10 = 70 years, Daniel 9:1,2).

2. Daniel knew that the length of the Babylonian captivity had been based on Israel's violation of the law of the Sabbatical year. As we saw earlier in 2 Chronicles 36:20-21, Israel was removed from the land so that it might rest for seventy years, indicating that the Sabbatical year had been violated for 490 years, exactly seventy sevens of years. It was appropriate that at the end of the judgment for these violations, the angel should be sent to reveal the start of a new era of God's dealings with Israel that would last for the same number of years.

3. The context of the prophecy demands that "seventy sevens" be understood in terms of years. If we make them "sevens of days," the whole period would be 490 days. It is unlikely that all of the events that were to take place during this interval could take place in just over one year (the city rebuilt and once more destroyed, vision and prophecy sealed up, etc.).
4. *Shabua* is found in one other passage in Daniel, where the prophet says that he mourned and fasted “for three entire weeks” (10:2,3). There, Daniel is referring to weeks of days, and the Hebrew literally reads, "three sevens of days." If, in chapter nine, Daniel also wanted us to understand that the seventy sevens are composed of days, why did he not use the same form of expression as he did in chapter ten.

The Three Divisions Of The Seventy Weeks

As the chart below illustrates, the seventy weeks (490 years) of Daniel’s prophecy would be divided into three periods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Weeks in the period</th>
<th>Years in the period (7 years times the number of weeks in the period)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Period: 7 weeks</td>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td>7 weeks x 7 years = 49 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Period: 62 weeks</td>
<td>62 weeks</td>
<td>62 weeks x 7 years = 434 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Period: 1 week</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>1 week x 7 years = 7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>70 weeks</td>
<td>49 years + 434 years + 7 years = 490 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will discuss each of these periods and their significance to Daniels prophecy.

"Universal" Time Versus "Prophetic" Time

It is important to note that the nature of time in which we live and have our being ("universal time") is somewhat different from time as measured in the prophetic Scriptures ("prophetic time"). Both forms of time move forward at the same pace, but whereas universal time is relentless (it never stops moving forward), prophetic time may begin, then stop, and then start again. A professional football game provides us with a good illustration of the concept of prophetic time.

A football game is one hour long (four fifteen minute quarters). However, anyone who has ever watched a football game has noticed that the game takes longer than one hour to complete. This due to the fact that during a football game there are "time outs," during which the "universal" clock continues to run, but the "game" clock stops running for a while. When the time out is over, the game clock begins to run again.
This illustration from American football applies to many other sports throughout the world. So it is with the time period of the seventy weeks (490 years) of Daniel's prophecy. As we shall see, the prophetic clock measuring the seventy weeks stops running at a specific point in time; then, after a while it begins to run again.

Verse Twenty-Five

Daniel 9:25
"So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

The Beginning Of The Seventy Weeks

Our next task is to determine when Gabriel's "prophetic" clock begins to mark off time. That is, when will the seventy weeks begin? Verse 25 tells us that the seventy weeks will begin with the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. This decree is recorded in Nehemiah 2:7-8:

Nehemiah 2:7-8
And I (Nehemiah) said to the king (Artaxerxes), "If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city, and for the house to which I will go." And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me.

Artexerxes issued this decree in the Jewish month of Nisan, 445 B.C.E, most likely on the first of the month (March 14, 445 B.C.E. on our calendar). Thus, it is logical to conclude that the seventy weeks of Daniel began on the first of Nisan, 445 B.C.E., which corresponds to March fourteenth, 445 B.C.E. on our calendar. Accordingly, from March 14, 445 B.C.E. (the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem) until "Messiah the Prince" "seven weeks and sixty two
weeks," or 483 years would pass (a chart calculating the number of years that would pass from March 14, 445 B.C.E. until “Messiah the Prince” is found in the footnote).  

We have seen in the chart above that in verse twenty five there is first a period of seven "sevens" (49 years), and then a period of sixty-two "sevens" (434 years). Then in verse twenty-seven there is a period of one “seven (7 years), for a grand total of total of 490 years (49 years + 434 years + 7 years = 490 years). We will now discuss each of these periods and their significance.

The First Period:  7 “weeks” or 49 years

The first "seven" (49 years) refers to the time in which the rebuilding of Jerusalem, permitted by Ataxerxes' decree, would be completed. Beginning at 445 B.C.E., the date of the issuing of the decree, and moving forward in time forty-nine years brings us to 396 B.C.E. (445 – 49 = 396). Though Nehemiah's wall construction project took only fifty-two days, many years were needed to remove the city's debris, to build adequate housing, and to rebuild the "plaza and the moat" (Daniel 9:25). Thus, we may reasonably conclude that, as we mentioned above, the first seven "sevens" (49 years) refers to the time in which the rebuilding of Jerusalem, permitted by Ataxerxes' decree, would be completed.

The Second Period: 62 “weeks” or 434 years

The first two time periods of the 70 weeks - the 7 sevens (49 years) and the sixty two sevens (434 years) ran consecutively with no time between them. As we saw above, this totals 483 years. Therefore a period of sixty-nine weeks or 483 prophetic years reckoned from March 14, 445 B.C.E. should, according to verse twenty-five, close with some event that satisfies the words "Messiah the Prince."

As we shall see when we calculate 483 years from March 14, 445 B.C.E. and compare that calculation with the biblical data, that event is the Triumphal Entry of Yeshua into Jerusalem (The triumphal Entry is prophesied in the Tenach in Zechariah 9:9. Its fulfillment is recorded in Brit Hadashah in Matthew 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38 and John 12:12-15). Before doing this analysis, we should take note of the fact that the biblical (Jewish) calendar used by

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1 The amount of time that would pass from March 14, 445 B.C.E. until Messiah the Prince (7 weeks and 62 weeks) calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Years in a week</th>
<th>Total Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 weeks x 7 years = 49 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>62 weeks x 7 years = 434 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total weeks = 69 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total years = 49 years + 434 years = 483 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Daniel, unlike our Gregorian calendar containing 365 days in a year, contains 360 days in a year. (The evidence that a biblical year contains 360 days is found in the footnote). 2

Because the calendar used by Daniel contains 360 days, when we calculate the number of days from the beginning to the end of the first sixty-nine weeks we should use a 360-day year in our calculation. We will now proceed with our calculation, and then compare our calculation with the biblical data. To be completely accurate, we shall first calculate the number of days in 69 “weeks” of years.

According to the biblical (Jewish) calendar, the number of days in 69 “weeks” is 173,880 days:

\[
(69 \text{ weeks} \times 7 \text{ years per week} = 483 \text{ years}, \text{and } 483 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days per year} = 173,880 \text{ days})
\]

173,880 days from Artaxerxes’ command on March 14, 445 B.C.E., a period of 476 years and 24 days on our Gregorian calendar, is April 6, 32 C.E. (the first and last days being included, as required by the language of the prophecy and in accordance with Jewish practice).

Thus, the period from March 14, 445 B.C.E. (the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem) to April 6, 32 C.E. is equal to the sixty-nine prophetic weeks of Daniel 9:25. We may conclude that an event described as "Messiah the Prince" took place 173,880 days from March 14, 445 B.C.E., which is April 6, 32 C.E. on our calendar, and Nisan 10, 32 C.E. on the biblical calendar.

Now let us see if this calculation reasonably corresponds with the biblical record regarding the timing of the Triumphal Entry. Having established that 483 years from the going forth of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until "Messiah the Prince" takes us to Nisan 10, 32 C.E., we observe the following:

In 32 C.E. the Jewish Passover was eaten on Nisan 14, a Thursday. In accordance with Jewish custom, Yeshua went up to Jerusalem "six days before the Passover," stopping first in Bethany (John 12:1). Six days before the Passover would have been Nisan 8, a Friday. Yeshua must have

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2 The number of days in a biblical year

The flood began on the seventeenth day of the second month (Genesis 7:11), and ended on the seventeenth day of the seventh month (Genesis 8:4), a period of exactly five months. We are also told that this period was 150 days long (Genesis 7:24; 8:3). Therefore, a month was thirty days in length (150 days divided by five months = 30 days in a month). Twelve months (a year) would contain 360 days (12 months x 30 days = 360 days).

Also, Daniel 9:27 mentions a period of Jewish persecution that is to last for a half of a week, or 3 1/2 years (1/2 of a 7 year week is 31/2 years). In Revelation 12:6 this same period is described as lasting 1,260 days. The chart below demonstrates that this yields a biblical year that is exactly 360 days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in the period of persecution (Daniel 9:27)</th>
<th>Days in the period of persecution (Revelation 12:6)</th>
<th>Days in a biblical year (The days in the period of persecution divided by the number of years in the persecution)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 ½ years</td>
<td>1,260 days</td>
<td>1,260 days divided by 3 ½ years = 360 days in a biblical year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
spent the Sabbath, therefore, at Bethany; and on the evening of the ninth, after the Sabbath had ended, He attended a supper given at Martha's house (John 12:2). On the following day (Sunday, Nisan 10), Yeshua made his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem as recorded in the Gospels (John 12:12-15). Thus, we may reasonably conclude that the sixty-nine weeks of Daniel’s prophecy began with the decree to "restore and rebuild Jerusalem" and ended with Yeshua’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.

It is significant that the presenting of the Passover Lamb on the first Passover (the eve of the tenth plague on Egypt) took place on Nisan 10 (Exodus 12:1-3). This identifies Yeshua with the Lamb whose blood was shed and placed on the doorposts and lintel of Jewish homes on that Passover, so that God’s judgment would pass over them. Yeshua’s blood was also shed so that when we apply his blood to the “doorposts and lintel” of our hearts; that is, when we receive him as our Savior, God’s judgment passes over us.

Verse Twenty-Six

Daniel 9:26

"Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined."

We now arrive at verse twenty six, which is extremely important, and which relates to the purpose of this paper: to show both Jewish and Gentile people that the time of Yeshua’s (Jesus’) death was predicted by the prophet Daniel with extreme accuracy more than five hundred years before it happened.

Our journey through God’s message to Daniel has shown us that the first sixty nine weeks of the prophecy began with the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and ended with Yeshua’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Verse twenty six begins by saying, “after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing.” The Hebrew word translated “cut off” (karath) is used of executing the death penalty of a criminal. Yeshua’s death fulfills this prophecy, for although he was accused of crimes he did not commit, he died a criminal’s death during the very same week as his Triumphal Entry. Yeshua’s death shortly after the first sixty nine weeks of Daniel’s prophecy confirms that he is the Messiah spoken of in Daniel chapter nine.

Ironically, the critics of the Bible are right about one thing that they say. A man named Daniel who lived in the sixth century B.C.E. could not have foreknown these things. Only God knows all things in advance, and it was God who revealed these things to Daniel. Thus, Daniel chapter nine confirms that the Bible is the Word of God, and that Yeshua is in fact the promised Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world.
Verse twenty-six then continues, saying, "the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined." This describes the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army in 70 C.E.

We noted at the beginning of our study that "prophetic" years may not run consecutively; they may take a "time out" during which the prophetic clock stops running for a time. The seventy weeks (490 years) of Daniel's prophecy are prophetic, and they do contain a "time out," or a "gap." Because the seventy weeks of Daniel apply exclusively to Israel, and because God has been working through the church and not Israel since the death of Messiah, the “prophetic” clock stopped with the period of time commencing after Messiah’s death; a "time out" was taken.

The prophetic clock will begin marking time again when this period ends and God's purpose for the church will have been fulfilled. At that time the seventieth, or final week of Daniel's prophecy will commence, and God will once again turn His attention to the Jewish people. Just as there was an event that signaled the beginning of the seventy weeks, there will be an event that indicates the beginning of the seventieth (last) week. This event is recorded in verse twenty-seven.

The Gap Between Verses Twenty-Six And Twenty-Seven

The transition between verses twenty-six and twenty seven may appear somewhat awkward. It reads as though something is missing between the two verses, there is a "gap" in the information being given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel. In order to understand this gap, it is necessary to become familiar with the concept of a "mystery" in the Bible.

According to the writings of the apostle Paul, a "mystery" is something that was not revealed in the Tenach but is now revealed in the Brit Hadashah. Many such mysteries exist, as we can see in the chart below.

Mysteries in the Brit Hadashah

1. The existence of this present time, which was to interrupt God's established program with Israel, is a mystery (Matthew 13:11).

2. That Israel was to be blinded so the Gentiles might be brought into relation with God is a mystery (Romans 11:25).
3. The forming of the church, made up of Jewish people and Gentile people, is a mystery (Eph. 3:3-9; Col. 1:26-27; Eph. 1:9; Rom. 16:25).

4. The whole program of God that results in salvation is a mystery (1 Corinthians 2:7).

5. The relation of Messiah to people in redemption is a mystery (Colossians 2:2; 4:3).

6. The incarnation itself is a mystery, not as to its fact but as to its accomplishment (1 Timothy 3:16).

7. The development of evil, culminating in the man of sin, is a mystery (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

8. The development of the great apostate religious system is a mystery (Revelation 17:5, 7).

9. That there would be a new method by which God would receive people into His presence is a mystery (1 Corinthians 15:51).

The reason these "mysteries" were not revealed in the Tenach is that the Tenach concerns itself primarily with the Jewish people and with Israel. During our day, God is working through the church, not Israel; so these mysteries, which refer to events occurring primarily during our present time, are relevant to the church and not to Israel. Thus, they are not mentioned in the Tenach. God will once again focus on Israel during the seventieth week, which, as we shall see, takes place after our present time.

One of these mysteries is the “season” during which we live which, as we have said, is something of a “time out” for Israel. It was not unusual for a Hebrew Prophet to write a prophecy that moves from the first coming to the second coming of the Messiah with no indication that there would be a long period of time between the two comings. Below are some examples of such prophecies. In the following passages, (-) indicates the present time, which occurs between the first and second comings of Messiah, but not revealed in the Tenach. (To the left of the (-) is information about the first coming of Messiah; to the right of the (-) is
information about the second coming of Messiah. This present time, which takes place between these two comings (the (-) inserted in the passage), is not revealed in these prophecies.

The “Gap” In The Tenach Between Weeks Sixty-Nine And Seventy

Isaiah 61:1-2
The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, (-) and the day of vengeance of our God.

Psalm 118:22
The stone which the builders rejected (-) has become the chief corner stone.

Isaiah 9:6
For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; (-) and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 53:10
But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render himself as a guilt offering, (-) He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

Zechariah 9:9-10
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (-) And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.
Such a gap occurs between Daniel 9:26 and 9:27. Between these two verses is the present time, during which God’s focus is on the church and not on Israel. It is not revealed in Daniel’s prophecy.

**Verse Twenty-Seven**

*Daniel 9:27*

"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Verse twenty-seven describes events that will take place during the seventieth week, the final seven years of Daniel's prophecy. This period is referred to in the Tanach as "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7). In the Brit Hadashah, it is referred to as the "Tribulation" (Matthew 24:21; Revelation 7:14). It is important to note that "he" in verse twenty-seven is not "the Messiah" in verse twenty-six. The events in verse twenty-seven take place after the "gap," long after the Messiah has completed his redemptive work and ascended to heaven.

When the seventieth week begins God will have concluded His program for church. He will then turn his attention to Israel again for the completion of the seventy years prophesied by Daniel. During this time he will save his people Israel, and prepare the nation to receive Him as their Messiah when He returns at the end of the 70th and final week.

According to verse twenty-seven the final week, the time of Jacob's trouble, will begin with the confirming of a seven-year (one week) covenant. This covenant will be made with "the many," that is, with Daniel's people, the nation of Israel. The one with whom Israel makes this covenant is the man of sin, the Anti-messiah. This covenant will evidently be a peace covenant, guaranteeing Israel's safety in the land and permitting her to perform sacrifices and offerings to God as she did long ago. This indicates that at that time Israel will be in her land and the Temple will have been rebuilt.

However, in the middle seventieth of the week (3½ years from the beginning of the week), the Anti-messiah will break his covenant with Israel. He will put "a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" and begin a period of unparalleled "desolation" for the Jewish people. This 3½ years is also called "a time (year), times, and half a time" (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 12:14). The Anti-messiah will break his word given in the covenant and turn against Israel, becoming her destroyer and defiler.

After the Anti-messiah has broken his covenant with Israel he will commit the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by the prophet Daniel and by Yeshua:
"And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days" (Daniel 12:11).

"But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14)

The abomination of desolation will involve the Anti-messiah entering the Holy of Holies, declaring himself to be God, and demanding that all people worship him. However, the Anti-messiah will not succeed with his evil plan. Verse twenty-seven concludes by saying that "a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (the Anti-messiah). At the end of the seventieth week, Messiah will return and the Anti-messiah will be defeated and cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20 – the “beast” in this verse is the Anti-messiah).

**Conclusion**

After the seventieth week, when Messiah has returned and the Anti-messiah has been defeated, Messiah will begin his glorious reign in Jerusalem. God will have triumphed over evil, and a new age of peace will begin. One may ask, "Of what significance are all of these things to me?"

One who does not believe in Yeshua (Jesus) should seriously consider the accuracy of this prophecy, and the evidence it gives that the Bible is God’s Word. According to the Bible, those who do not believe in Yeshua as their Savior are separated from God by their sins. Yeshua died for those sins on the cross; he received the punishment we deserve so that we might be reconciled to God, be forgiven for our sins, and spend eternity in heaven with God. Receiving Yeshua as our Savior results in eternal life, failing to do so results in eternal damnation and separation from God forever. Those who do not believe in Yeshua should receive Him as their Savior, so they may have peace with God and inherit eternal life.

Those of us who do believe in Yeshua should respond to this prophecy and other biblical truths by showing our appreciation for what God has done for us in redeeming us from the curse of sin. We should love God with all our heart, love others as we love ourselves, obey God's commandments as revealed in His Word, and reach out to a lost and dying world with the gospel, “for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).
The Suffering And Exalted Servant

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Isaiah 52:13-15
Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted. Just as many were astonished at you, My people, so His appearance was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. Thus He will sprinkle many nations, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand.

Isaiah 53:1-12
Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors. (NAS)
Introduction

Isaiah (Hebrew: Izaya, “The Lord Saves”) resided and ministered in Jerusalem from c. 740 B.C.E, until c. 700 B.C.E or somewhat later. He therefore prophesied during the kingships of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (1:1). He was married to a prophetess (8:3) and had two sons: Shear-jashub (7:3), “a remnant will return,” and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (8:3), "swift is the booty, speedy is the prey." Thus the name of the first child held a promise of mercy; the second, a warning of judgment.

The incredibly accurate portrait Isaiah paints of the suffering and exaltation of the Messiah in Chapters 53:12-53:13 more than seven centuries in advance, including minute details of the event, clearly indicates that Isaiah himself could not by himself have known these things. Rather God, who declares “the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done,” (Isaiah 46:18) revealed them to him. This affirms that the Book of Isaiah was inspired by God and is completely true and without error.

It is unwise to order the messianic prophecies in terms of importance. However, it is safe to say that this passage holds a special place among the messianic prophecies. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the passage paints such an extremely accurate and vivid portrait of the Messiah that one who reads it for the first time, without any “coaching,” invariably recognizes that it is speaking of Yeshua the Messiah. It is not unusual for a Jewish person, who is asked to read the passage for the first time, to accuse the person who requested to them to read it of trickery. “You tricked me,” they say.” “You told me that I was going to read a passage from the Tenach (Old Testament). This passage is clearly from the Brit Hadashah (New Testament).” The implication is clear. The reader sees that the passage speaks of Yeshua.

Secondly, like Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is embroiled in controversy. While evangelical scholars believe that the passage speaks of the Messiah’s suffering and ultimate exaltation, large segments of modern day Judaism teach that the servant is Israel, which suffers for the nations (Gentiles). The position taken in this study is that the passage speaks exclusively about the Messiah. We will discuss this controversy in our study.

There are four Servant Songs in the Book of Isaiah. The Servant in all four songs is the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord. The first song, in Isaiah 42:1-9, speaks of God selecting His Servant, who will bring justice to earth. Here the Servant is described as God's agent of justice, a King that brings justice in both royal and prophetic roles, yet justice is established neither by proclamation nor by force. The Messiah does not ecstatically announce salvation in the marketplace as prophets were bound to do but instead moves quietly and confidently to establish a right faith in God.

The second song is in Isaiah 49:1-13. This song, written from the Servant's point of view, is an account of the Messiah’s pre-incarnate calling by God to lead both Israel and the nations. The Servant is now portrayed as the prophet of the Lord equipped and called to restore Israel and the nations to God. Yet, anticipating the fourth song, he is without success. Taken with the picture of the Servant in the first song, his success will come not by political or military action, but by becoming a light to the Gentiles. Ultimately his victory is in God's hands.
The third song, in Isaiah 50:4-11, has a darker yet more confident tone than the others. Although the song gives a first-person description of how the Servant was beaten and abused, here the Servant is described both as teacher and learner who follows the path God places him on without pulling back. Echoing the first song's "a bruised reed he will not break," the Servant sustains the weary with a word. His vindication is left in God's hands.

The fourth song, Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the passage we will now study. It should be remembered that there were no chapter breaks in the original manuscripts of the books of the Bible. Isaiah 52:12-53:13 comprises a single unit without any breaks in the author’s line of thought. This passage, the last and longest Servant Song, announces the destiny of the Servant. It declares that the Servant intercedes for others, and takes the punishments and afflictions due to others because of their sin. Because of his righteousness and his willingness to die for the sins of others, the Servant is, in the end, rewarded with an exalted position.

The passage can be divided into five sections, each having three verses. The first line of each section presents the theme of that section (Fruchtenbaum, p. 54). We shall study the passage in this format.

Of Whom Does Isaiah 52:13-53:12 Speak?

There are contextual, grammatical, and historical reasons why the Servant in this passage cannot be the nation of Israel.

I. Contextually, the passage does not paint a picture of Israel that is consistently painted by Isaiah throughout the book.

A. The servant in the passage is seen as a one who is righteous in the eyes of the Lord. For example, 53:9 says, *He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.*” Also, 53:11 describes the Servant as “The righteous One.”

B. Conversely, Isaiah describes Israel as being extremely unrighteous in the eyes of the Lord. A vivid example of Isaiah view of Israel is found early on in the Book of Isaiah:

*Isaiah 1:4-15*  
*Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, they have despised...*
the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him. Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts, and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil. Your land is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your fields – strangers are devouring them in your presence; it is desolation, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. Unless the LORD of hosts had left us a few survivors, we would be like Sodom, we would be like Gomorrah. Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah. "What are your multiplied sacrifices to me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. "When you come to appear before me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. "I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to me. I am weary of bearing them. "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. (NAS)

C. This contrast between the passage under study and Israel as described in chapter one leads us to the conclusion that the Servant cannot be Israel.

II. The grammar of the passage also excludes Israel from being the servant.

A. Verse 53:2 says, “He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to him.” “We” is Isaiah’s people, Israel. Grammatically, the “we” in this verse cannot be the “He” in this verse. That is, the we (Israel) cannot be the “he” (the Servant).

B. Verse 53:3 says, “And like one from whom men hide their face, he was despised and we did not esteem him. Again, as in verse two, the “we” (Isaiah’s people, Israel) cannot be the “He” (the servant).
C. On the same grounds, Verse 53:4 also grammatically excludes Israel from being the Servant: the “our (Isaiah’s people Israel) cannot be “He,” and the “‘we” (Israel) cannot be “Him” (the Servant).

III. A study of the history of the interpretation of this passage will prove enlightening. (Fruchtenbaum, pp 124-128)

A. The interpretation that the passage refers to Israel is a recent one. The ancient rabbis before the coming of Yeshua interpreted the passage as referring to the Messiah.

1. The Targums are translations of parts of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew language into Aramaic. The word Targum is related to a Hebrew term meaning "translation." These translations were sometimes literal and exact, but were often paraphrased. Many translators took the opportunity to comment upon the Hebrew texts. In a sense, some Targumim (plural) are a form of commentary on the Bible (Nelson’s Bible Dictionary).

2. Among the earliest Targums are those of Jonathan ben Uziel, dating from the first century C.E. His Targums on Isaiah 52:13-53:12 begin with the words, “Behold my servant Messiah shall prosper.” (The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters [New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc.1969, p. 5, in Fruchtenbaum, p. 124.] The Targums of Jonathan ben Uziel were often quoted by the early rabbis, and he was considered an authority on the Jewish view of the Tenach. As the above quote illustrates, he definitely believed that the Isaiah passage under study as referring to the Messiah.

3. The Babylonian Talmud also took the Isaiah passage we are studying as referring to the Messiah. Verse four is specifically applied to the Messiah. In Midrash Thanhum it says:

   “Rabbi Nahman says: the word “man” in the passage...refers to Messiah, the son of David, as it is written, “Behold the man whose name is Zemah; where Yonathan interprets, Behold the man Messiah; and so it is said, ‘A man of pains and known to sickness.’” (The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah According
4. One of the most famous rabbis of the middle ages was Moses ben Maimon, better known as Miamonodis or Rambam. In his writings, he also sees the Isaiah passage we are studying as referring to the Messiah.

B. In the eleventh century C.E., for the first time in the history of Jewish theology, the idea that the Isaiah passage did not refer to the Messiah, but to the people of Israel, is asserted. This theology was first proposed by Rabbi Shlomo Yizchaki, better known as Rashi.

1. A number of Rabbis of his day reacted strongly to Rashi going against the traditional interpretation of the passage. For example, in the sixteenth century C.E. Rabbi Saadyah Ibn Danan of Grenada, circa 1500 reacted against the interpretation that the Isaiah passage refers to the people of Israel, demanding that Jewish interpreters return to the Talmudic interpretation that the passage refers to the Messiah.

2. Rabbi Danan also sheds some light on the reason many rabbis were switching to the new view. It was during this period that many debates occurred between rabbis and Christians. The Christians used the Isaiah passage to show that Yeshua was the Messiah. The rabbis defended themselves against this argument that the Isaiah passage shows that Yeshua was the Messiah by saying that the passage referred to Israel.

C. Thus, we can see that the original, traditional interpretation of rabbinic Judaism was that Isaiah 52:13-53:12 referred to the Messiah. The later interpretation that the passage referred not to the Messiah, but to Israel, was not a result of objective, unbiased interpretation. Rather, it was a reaction of some rabbis to the Christian claim that the passage referred to Yeshua. The rabbis adopting the newer interpretation strongly denied Yeshua was the Messiah, strongly reacted to what was done to the Jewish people throughout history in the name of Yeshua, and saw Him as a threat to their view of Judaism.
Isaiah 52:13-15

Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted. Just as many were astonished at you, My people, so His appearance was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. Thus He will sprinkle many nations, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand. (NAS)

IV. The speaker in this passage is Isaiah. The Servant is the Servant of the Lord, the Messiah.

V. These three verses are a summary of Isaiah 53:1-12. They speak of the suffering and ultimate exaltation of the Servant.

A. My Servant” is the servant of the Lord God.

B. The Servant being lifted up (verse 13) refers not to his being lifted up on the cross, but to his being exalted at the right hand of God for having been obedient to the point of dying for the sins of Isaiah’s people as well as those of the nations. The concept of being lifted up in exaltation is found elsewhere in the Bible, both in the Tenach and the Brit Hadashah. An example from the Tenach is Psalm 27:6 (see also Philippians 2:9, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 1:3, 8:1; 10:12, 12:12 and 1 Peter 3:22).

“And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me; and I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.” (Psalm 27:6, NAS)

VI. Verse fourteen describes the result and extent of the suffering endured by the Servant, which would lead to his death. Isaiah’s description of the Messiah in verse fourteen compares the suffering of Messiah to the sufferings of the Jewish people throughout the ages. Just as the Jewish people suffered greatly at the hands of their enemies, so would the Messiah, but to an even greater extent. “His appearance was marred more than any man, and his appearance more than the sons of men” is expressed in the words of Pilate when he presented Yeshua to the Jewish people after he had been scourged:
Yeshua therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.
And Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!" (John 19:5 NAS)

After being severely beaten and whipped with a multi-strand whip, each strand having a nail or piece of glass attached to it, Yeshua’s appearance was so battered and disfigured that he no longer resembled a man. In fact, many who were condemned to crucifixion died from the scourging that preceded it and never made it to the cross.

VII. Verse fifteen tells us that despite the horrible sufferings He would endure, the Messiah would in the end be victorious. Those who once mocked Him would be silent before Him. They would see Him for who he is and shut their mouths in awe of Him. This alludes to Isaiah 45:23, which was quoted by the apostle Paul in Romans 14:11 –

"I have sworn by myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance." (Isaiah 45:23, NAS)

But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." (Romans 14:10-11, NAS)

VIII. Verse five says that the Servant will “sprinkle many nations.” “Sprinkle” alludes to cleansing by the priest under the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 4:6; 8:11; 14:17). The Servant, who was despised and rejected, would actually provide the most important thing not only for His people Israel, but for the nations and their kings as well: cleansing from sin. This cleansing from sin was accomplished by Yeshua’s death on the cross.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you
were justified in the name of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, NAS)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25-27, NAS)

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5, NAS)

Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Isaiah 53:1-3, NAS)

IX. Though Israel as a nation has often been disobedient to God, and has often been rebellious and lost in unbelief, there has always been a remnant within national Israel that believed in the Living God. That remnant is the “our” in verse one. The remnant laments the fact that so few people believe that their message about the Messiah is true. This speaks of the rejection of Messiah recorded in the gospels, and clearly stated by the Apostle John in the prologue of his gospel:

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. (NAS)

“He own” are the Messiah’s own people, Israel. He came specifically for them, but they “did not receive” (rejected) him.
X. “For” in verse two is an “explanatory,” connecting verse two to verse one. Verse two explains the reasons for the unbelief mentioned in verse one.

A. Messiah grew up before the Father “like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground.” Messiah was not born into royalty in the earthly sense. Rather, he was born into a poor, normal family. There was nothing special about the Messiah’s childhood. This echoes Isaiah 11:1 –

\[ A \text{ shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. (NIV) } \]

B. There was nothing about the Messiah’s appearance in His first coming that prompted people to believe he was the Messiah. Unlike King Saul, who was a tall, handsome man whose appearance commanded respect and adoration, Messiah had “no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him.” There was nothing about Messiah’s appearance that attracted people to him.

XI. Verse three develops the thought contained in verse two. People moved from a failure to desire Him to despising and rejecting Him. The Hebrew words translated “sorrows” (makob) and “grief” (choliy) are more forceful than the English translations. Makob literally translates into the English “pains” or “anguish,” and choliy literally translates “disease,” or “calamity.”

A. One view is that these words imply that Messiah was a man sick at heart over being rejected by those whom He came to heal.

B. Another view is that the Messiah, in His dealings with sick, sinful people (e.g. Adulterers, lepers, et cetera) manifested a physicians willing involvement; he is a man of pain and sickness in the sense that He gives of himself to these people and empathizes with them to the point of feeling their pain and anguish.
C. Yet another view is that “pain” and “anguish” describe the Messiah’s vicarious suffering for the sins of the world. As we shall see, the vicarious nature of the Messiah’s suffering are made clear in verse four (Grogan, p. 302).

XII. “Like one from whom men hide their face” is a simile. Men did not literally hide their faces from Messiah. Rather, they refused to acknowledge who He was and to commit themselves to Him by sharing in His sufferings and rejection.

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15:18-19, NAS)

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33, NAS)

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. (1 Pet 4:12-13, NAS)

Isaiah 53:4-6
Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

XIII. Verse 4a describes the vicarious suffering of the Messiah figuratively in terms of sickness and pain, while verse 4b shows that His people came to the grievously wrong conclusion that the Messiah was suffering for His own sins at the hand of God (Grogan, p. 303).
A. “Griefs (Hebrew: choli) literally translates into the English, “sickness” or “disease.” It’s meaning is clearly stated in Deuteronomy 7:15 –

"And the LORD will remove from you all sickness (choli); and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you. (NAS)

B. “Sorrows” (Hebrew: makob) literally translates into the English, “anguish” or “pain.”

C. “Bore” (Hebrew: Nasa) literally translates into the English “to carry away.” This word beautifully describes what the Messiah did with our sins on the cross. He removed them from us, placed them on Himself, and carried them away.

XIV. Verse five may be rendered –

“but he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.” (Grogan, p. 299)

A. The word “pierced” in verse 5a is different in the Hebrew from the word “pierced” in Psalm 22:16. Though the two words are similar in meaning, there are subtle differences between them.

For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.(NAS)

1. In Psalm 22, the word translated “pierced” is the Hebrew word karah, which literally translates “to bore open.” It appropriately describes the piercing of the Messiah’s hands and feet as described in the psalm.
2. The word translated “pierced” (Hebrew: *chalal*) in Isaiah 53:5 translates “to bore, as in opening by a wedge, or piercing through. It may also mean to be made sick, wounded, or polluted. It appropriately describes the piercing of Messiah’s side by a sword after His death on the cross.

XV. Piercing and crushing are both appropriate terms for the crucifixion, the first literal and the second figurative, and both are aptly summed up as “scourging” later in the verse.

XVI. Verse 5b figuratively pictures the Messiah’s vicarious suffering as bringing an end to our estrangement from God. The Apostle Paul speaks of this in 2 Corinthians 5:21 –

\[
\text{He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NAS)}
\]

XVII. In summary, verse five speaks of the consequences of sin, and of Messiah’s suffering the penalty of our sins on our behalf. The healing spoken of in verse five is the healing of the soul, as in salvation, and not healing from specific diseases or physical ailments. This is borne out by the use of “transgressions” and “iniquities” in verse 5a.

1. As a result of the Messiah’s suffering the punishment due us for our sins, those who believe in Him have inner peace rather than inner anguish or grief, and are healed spiritually.

2. Messiah’s death satisfied the wrath of God against sin and allows Him to “overlook” the sins of those who believe. They have been sufficiently paid for by Messiah’s death (Martin, p. 1108).

XVIII. Verse six paints a perfect picture of sin. The essence of sin is going one’s own way rather than God’s way. Straying like a dumb sheep away from God, who is our Shepherd, and going our own way, is sin, which is the way of death.
A. The verse also indicates recognition on the part of the remnant that they were too were guilty, and that God made His Servant, the Messiah, the object of His wrath in order to take away their guilt (Martin, p. 1108).

B. Verse six again speaks of the vicarious suffering of the Messiah on our behalf: the Lord has caused the iniquity of the sheep (a figure for the Messiah’s people) to fall on Him (the Messiah).

C. Verses 4-6 clearly paint a picture of healing from sin (i.e. salvation) as a work of God and not a work of man. Once a sheep has gone astray, it cannot by its own efforts find its way back to the sheepfold. It is entirely up to the shepherd to find the lost sheep and bring that sheep back to the fold.

Isaiah 53:7-9
He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. (NAS)

XIX. Verse seven consists of two parallel phrases. The first phrase is a literal description of the Messiah’s behavior during his affliction; the second phrase is a simile expressing the same thought as the first.

A. Verse 7a refers to the Messiah’s interrogation, saying, “he remained silent (“did not open his mouth”). This does not mean that he did not speak at all, but that he offered up no defense against the false accusations brought against him.

1. The scene is similar to an accused being interrogated by a detective during an interrogation. The accused may speak, but afterwards, when his colleagues ask the interrogator if the interrogation was successful, he may shrug his shoulders and say,
“I could not get anything out of him.” Although the accused did speak, he said nothing in his defense, nor did he admit to the crimes of which he was accused.

2. This was true of Yeshua during both his Jewish and Roman trials.

Matthew 26:59-63a
Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Yeshua, in order that they might put Him to death; and they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" And the high priest stood up and said to Him, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" But Yeshua kept silent.

Matthew 27:12-14
And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He made no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" And He did not answer Him with regard to even a single charge, so that the governor was quite amazed. (NAS)

Luke 23:8-9
Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to some sign performed by Him. And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. (NAS)

B. Verse 7b expresses the same thought as verse 7a in the form of a simile.

1. The tendency of sheep is to follow others, even to their own destruction (see verse six). In verse 7b, the quiet, gentle nature of sheep is stressed. Seeing many sheep sheared for their wool or killed as sacrifices, Israelites were well aware of the submissive nature of sheep.
2. *Yeshua*, as the Lamb of God (John 1:29), quietly submitted to his death. He did not try to stop those who opposed him; rather, He remained silent rather than defend himself.

3. He was willingly led to death because He knew it would benefit those who would believe (Martin, p. 1108).

XX. *Yeshua’s “oppression” and judgment”* can be seen as referring to his arrest (John 18, 24) and judgment (being sentenced to die (John 19:16) (Martin, p. 1108), or as two nouns expressing the same thought for the sake of emphasis.

A. To be “taken away” (Greek: *luqaach*) means to be taken to death (Martin, p. 1108). It is parallel to being “cut off” (Greek: *nigzar*), which suggests not only a violent, premature death, but also the judgment of God (Grogan, p. 303).

> "And I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth." (Genesis 9:11, NAS)

> “Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.” (Exodus 12:15, NAS)

B. The words, “as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off of the land of the living may mean He was cut off in the prime of life and left no descendants. They may also mean that few of his generation (those who lived during his time) considered his death important.

C. Some verbs in verse eight (was taken away, was cut off) like those in verse four (stricken, smitten, afflicted) and verse five (was pierced through, was crushed indicate by
their passive voice that these actions were done to him by the Father (see verse ten, *the Lord was pleased to crush him, putting him to grief*).

*He made Him who knew no sin [to be] sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him* (2 Corinthians 5:21, NAS)

D. Verse eight ends by saying that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due.

1. Throughout the *Tenach* and the *Brit Hadashah* “My people” always refers to Israel. Once again, the distinction between the Servant and Israel is established.

2. Verse eight emphasizes that the Servant did not die for his own sins (for He was the sinless Son of God), but for the transgressions of his people Israel, who had sinned and did deserve death (to whom the stroke was due).

   a. Transgression (*mipesha*) is a word for sin that emphasizes the breaking of a law (Fruchtenbaum, p. 56).

   b. The word transgression pictures a person crossing a boundary into forbidden territory.

XXI. Verse nine indicates that the soldiers who crucified the Messiah intended to bury him with the two criminals with whom he was crucified (“His grave was assigned with wicked men”). However, he was buried in a rich man’s tomb, Joseph of Arimethea (Matthew 27:57-60).

   A. Verse 9b may be understood to mean “although He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth,” emphasizing the fact that he did not die for his own sins (of which there were none), but for the sins of others.
B. Alternatively, the word “because” may refer back to verse eight, and the contrast of “wicked men” and “a rich man.” “Wicked men” and “a rich man” can be seen as antithetical parallelism, the former picturing to Messiah’s rejection and the later to his ultimate vindication. Thus, “wicked men” indicates the human intention involved in the death of the Messiah, while “a rich man” refers to God’s ordained intervention and transference of the Messiah from one who is considered wicked to one who is ultimately vindicated (Grogan, p. 304).

Isaiah 53:10-12
But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render himself {as} a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors. (NAS)

XXII. Verse 10a asserts that it was the Father’s will that Messiah suffer, and that the Messiah was obedient to the Father’s will. It also tells us that the Messiah’s suffering was that of a guilt offering.

A. In the Mosaic Law, a guilt offering was an animal that was offered as a blood sacrifice by a person who had committed an unintentional or intentional sin for which there was no possible restitution (Leviticus 4:5-13; 6:24-30). Covering (forgiveness) of sin was represented by the blood smeared on the horns of the altar of incense or burnt offering and poured out at the base of the altar. The guilt offering cleansed the sinner of his sin and re-established his right standing before God.

B. The penalty for all sin, death, was vicariously inflicted on the sacrificial animal. Guilt for the worshiper's sin was transferred symbolically to the animal through the laying on of the hands of the guilty person.
C. Although the guilt offering would “cover” the sin of the sinner, it could not permanently take away that sin. All guilt offerings looked forward to Messiah’s death, which did not have to be repeated time after time, as did the Mosaic guilt offerings.

*Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (of sin).* (NAS)

*Hebrews 9:11-14*
*But when Messiah appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* (NAS)

*Hebrews 7:26-28*
*For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.* (NAS)

XXIII. Messiah’s death and burial appeared to end his existence (He was “cut off” Isaiah 53:8), but in Isaiah 53b we see that He is once again alive.

A. Thus, by strong implication, Isaiah 10b speak of the resurrection of the Messiah, predicted by Isaiah centuries in advance. Because of his resurrection, Messiah will “see his offspring (those who by believing in him become children of God, John 1:12), and he will prolong his days (live on forever as the Son of God (Martin, p. 1109).
But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12, NAS).

B. Additionally, verse 10b tells us that Messiah would be blessed (prosper) because of his obedience to God.

XXIV. Messiah’s suffering, which included his death, led to life (his resurrection). Satisfied that his substitutionary work was completed (It is finished, John 19:30), the Servant can justify the many (declare righteous all those who believe). The justification of those who believe is ultimately founded on the fact that God’s Servant, the Messiah, “would bear their iniquities.”

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah (Romans 5:1, NAS).

XXV. Because of his willing obedience to God, the Servant will be exalted (verse 25, “I will allot him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong”).

A. To have a portion with the great and divide the spoils with the strong pictures a general, after winning a battle, sharing goods taken from the enemy.

Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captive Thy captives; Thou hast received gifts among men, even among the rebellious also, that the LORD God may dwell there. (Psalm 68:18, (NAS)

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men." (Ephesians 4:7-8, NAS)
B. Because Messiah was numbered with the transgressors that is, made sin for us, and bore the sin of many, that is, everyone, He is exalted and allows believers to share in that exaltation.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21, NAS)

C. Having now justified those who believe in him by bearing their sins (verse 12), Messiah now intercedes for them. Messiah is our advocate with the Father, interceding for us when Satan, the “accuser of the brethren,” (Revelation 12:10) attempts to condemn us before God.

Romans 8:33-34
Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Messiah Yeshua is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. (NAS)

Hebrews 7:23-25
And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing, but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (NAS)

XXVI. “This great passage gives a tremendously complete picture of what the death of the Messiah accomplished on behalf of Israel (John 11:49-51) and the whole world (1 John 2:2). His death satisfied God’s righteous demands for judgment against sin, thus opening up the way for everyone to come to God in faith for salvation from sin.” (Martin, p. 1109)

John 11:49-51
But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole
nation should not perish." Now this he did not say on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Yeshua was going to die for the nation. (NAS)

“...and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2, NAS)
The Crucifixion And Exaltation Of The Messiah

Psalm 22

Psalm 22:1-31
My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. O my God, I cry by day, but Thou dost not answer; and by night, but I have no rest. Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel. In Thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. To Thee they cried out, and were delivered; in Thee they trusted, and were not disappointed. But I am a worm, and not a man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, because He delights in him." Yet Thou art He who didst bring me forth from the womb; Thou didst make me trust when upon my mother's breasts. Upon Thee I was cast from birth; Thou hast been my God from my mother's womb. Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. They open wide their mouth at me, as a raving and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and Thou dost lay me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. But Thou, O LORD, be not far off; O Thou my help, hasten to my assistance. Deliver my soul from the sword, My only {life} from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth; and from the horns of the wild oxen Thou dost answer me. I will tell of Thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise Thee. You who fear the LORD, praise Him; all you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel. For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has He hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard. From Thee comes my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever! All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the LORD'S, and He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive. Posterity will serve Him; it will be told of the LORD to the coming generation. They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it. (NAS)
Introduction

As the heading of the Psalm indicates, King David wrote Psalm 22. Although it is likely that David wrote the psalm during a time of great distress, we should remember that David was a prophet as well as a king. That Psalm twenty two so accurately describes the suffering and death endured during a crucifixion makes it obvious that David was writing the psalm prophetically as well as personally. This is not to say that David was aware of the prophetic elements of the psalm, but it is difficult to read Psalm twenty-two and not associate it prophetically with the crucifixion of the Messiah Yeshua. Our study of Psalm twenty-two will focus on the prophetic nature of the psalm.

Messiah, although feeling forsaken by God and scoffed at by his enemies, was confident that God would not fully abandon him. Verses 1-10 form Messiah’s initial cry of distress. They include two cycles, each comprised of a lament (verses 1-2; 6-8) and a declaration of confidence (verses 3-5; 9-10 (Ross, p. 810).

The turning point of the psalm is at the end of verse 21, where the Messiah’s cries and prayers give way to praise. Hebrews 2:12 quotes verse 22 as an acknowledged Messianic prophecy (Kidner, p. 105).

Verses 1-2

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. O my God, I cry by day, but Thou dost not answer; and by night, but I have no rest.

I. In verses one and two Messiah cries out to God the Father in deep agony. This cry took place during the hours of darkness that fell upon the land during the crucifixion.

A. When conversing with the disciples, Yeshua always referred to God as “My Father” or “your Father,” never as “our Father.” Verse one, a cry that was uttered by Yeshua while on the cross is the one exception. Here, Yeshua cries out to God not as “my Father,” but as “my God.” This is because at that time Yeshua had become sin for us, and the relationship between the Father and the Son was no longer paternal, but judicial.

B. When Yeshua became sin for us the Father, who could not look upon sin, separated himself from His Son. Thus the cry of Yeshua, “why have you forsaken me?”
C. It should be noted that although Messiah felt forsaken of God, he did not forsake God. In spite of his feelings of abandonment, he still cried out to God.

D. As we shall see, the physical suffering of Messiah on the cross was incomprehensible. However, that suffering paled in comparison with the heartache suffered by Messiah when, for the first time in eternity, he was forsaken by and separated from the Father. It should be noted that the Father also suffered because of being separated from his only begotten Son.

E. So great was God’s love for us that both the Father and the Son were willing to endure indescribable suffering on our behalf so that we might be delivered from the penalty of our sin.

F. When Yeshua was on the cross, he had no recourse but to cry out to God. There was no other hope of deliverance. It is not unusual for a godly man or woman to feel lost, forsaken and in a state of hopelessness; there is no one who can help or deliver. It is at these times that one must cry out to God, our final and most certain hope in times of hopelessness.

II. The suffering David wrote about concerning himself may have lasted for days and nights with no answer to his prayers. Although Messiah was on the cross for a number of hours and not days, the intensity of his suffering caused time to move slowly, as though many days and nights had passed.

Verses three – five

Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel. In Thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them.

III. Although he feels forsaken, Messiah does not lose his belief in the character of God, which is his only hope. God is holy, and will therefore ultimately vindicate the innocent.
IV. The reference to God being “enthroned (Hebrew: yoseb, “sitting”) is a confessional reference to God’s rule (VanGemeren, p. 200). Here Messiah acknowledges God’s sovereign control over his situation.

V. In the Tenach, God often advised his people Israel to remember what he had done for them in the past, so that they might maintain their faith in him and not forget him. Here Messiah puts into practice this important council of God. Believers today would do well in times of suffering to do the same. Especially valuable during times of hardship is a recollection of one’s testimony of how God brought the believer to salvation.

Verses six-eight

*But I am a worm, and not a man, a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

VI. At this point Messiah feels less than human; hence the poetic metaphor “I am a worm and not a man. Human dignity is often lost when one feels hopeless and forsaken.

VII. Rather than pitying him or helping him, those around him who saw Messiah’s death scorned him, hurling insults at him and mocking him because the God he claimed to serve was not rescuing him. The expressions used in verse eight were used by those in verse eight were adapted by those who mocked Yeshua at the cross (Matthew 27:41-44), not realizing that they were fulfilling this prophecy and that he was the suffering Messiah.

*Matthew 27:41-44*

*In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him, and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him. "He trusts in God; let Him deliver (Him) now, if He takes pleasure in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" And the robbers also who had been crucified with Him were casting the same insult at Him.* (NAS)
Verses nine-ten

Yet Thou art He who didst bring me forth from the womb; Thou didst make me trust when upon my mother's breasts. Upon Thee I was cast from birth; Thou hast been my God from my mother's womb.

VIII. Having fixed his mind on God’s having faithfulness to his people Israel in verses 4-5, Messiah now dwells on God’s personal, lifelong care of him.

IX. Messiah’s confidence his ultimate deliverance by God is drawn from his training as a child from the very beginning he was trained to trust in the Lord, who had brought him out of the womb. All his life the Lord had been his God (Ross, p. 810).

X. In verse nine, in Messiah’s trust in God his mother is mentioned, but as in all other messianic prophecies, there is no mention of a human father. As Isaiah 7:14 tells us, Messiah was born of a virgin and had no human father (Fruchtenbaum, p. 84).

Verses 11-13

Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. They open wide their mouth at me, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

XI. Messiah now changes from a prayer of complaint to a prayer of supplication. God has always been with him, and now he prays for him to once more be near, for “trouble is near.”

XII. When there is no one to help the suffering, Messiah realizes that it is God alone who can help. It a very real sense, there is no such thing as being all alone in one’s suffering, and the Messiah knows it. When all hope is lost, and there is no one to help, the only alternative that may bring deliverance is a cry to God. All his life God has been with him, and now Messiah prays that God will be with him yet again in this, his hour of suffering.
XIII. Verses twelve and thirteen are metaphors describing the nature of the suffering of the Messiah.

A. This is a scene often enacted: the strong closing in on the weak; the many on the one. The crowd is pictured as bestial (bulls, wild dogs, lions, oxen) but it is all too human.

B. The context suggests some of the motives for which men do these things to one another: resentment for those who make high claims (verse 8); the compulsion of crowd mentality (verses 12, 16a); greed, even for trivial gains (verse 18); and perverted tastes – enjoying a harrowing spectacle (verse 17) simply because sin is murderous, and sinners have hatred in them (see John 8:44). (Kidner, p. 107)

"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies. (John 8:44, NAS).

Verses 14-15

_I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and Thou dost lay me in the dust of death._

XIV. Although stoning was the method of execution in David’s day, he prophetically looks forward to and describes the means of execution of the Messiah, which would not take place for many years.

A. When one is crucified, their body loses its normal human shape, becoming twisted and gnarled like water that is poured out and loses its shape. In the Scriptures great fear is likened to water and wax (Joshua 7:5; Ezekiel 7:17; 21:7). “I am poured out like water” may also allude to the extreme sweating Messiah endured during his crucifixion.
B. The stress of crucifixion on the joints causes the bones to go out of joint.

C. Like melted wax, all of Messiah’s courage (heart) was gone (Ross, p. 810) Also, during crucifixion the heart can actually rupture.

D. Lack of resilience and inability to cope any longer with the trauma of life is brought out in the image of the dried out and useless potsherd. Sherds, found by the thousands at archeological sites, are pieces of broken pottery. Though almost useless, at times they were used as scoops (Isaiah 30:14). The Messiah is a broken man, whose lack of fortitude affects his ability to speak. His tongue is dried out like a potsherd from dehydration to the extent that it sticks to the roof of his mouth and he is barely able to speak. After six hours on the cross Yeshua, in barely audible tones said, “I am thirsty” (John 19:38).

E. In Messiah’s weakness, he was on the brink of death. Being laid “in the dust of death” is an allusion to what God said to Adam in the garden in Genesis 3:19 –

> “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (NAS)

Messiah suffered the penalty of death due Adam (and all of mankind) so that we would not have to.

**Verse 16**

> For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.

XV. Messiah again describes his enemies and his agony.
A. His enemies tortured him and watched him with no pity or compassion. He compared them to “dogs,” who in the ancient world were scavengers. Like dogs, his foes (enemies) surrounded him, waiting until he was dead so that they could tear at his limbs (Ross, p. 810).

B. “They pierce my hands and my feet could have no possible reference to David. Being a prophet, David described the process of crucifixion the Messiah experienced when he was affixed to the cross. The word for piercing here is not the same that is used in Zechariah 12:10. The word used in Zechariah 12:10 means “to thrust through” and would and would refer to the spear which pierced Yeshua’s side. The word used here is the word which would be used of ear piercing and would be consistent with nailing ones hands and feet to a cross (Fruchtenbaum, p. 85).

**Verses 17-18**

_I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots._

**XVI.** Messiah once again describes his agony. He is emaciated and weak to the point that his enemies considered him as good as dead, so they divided his garments among them. Unknown to them, they were fulfilling messianic prophecy and affirming Yeshua’s claim to be the Messiah.

_And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots... (Matthew 27:35, NAS)._  

**Verses 19-21**

_But Thou, O LORD, be not far off; O Thou my help, hasten to my assistance. Deliver my soul from the sword, My only life from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion’s mouth; and from the horns of the wild oxen Thou dost answer me._
XVII. Messiah once again turns to a prayer of supplication. He prayed that the Lord would deliver him from the power of the dog and the lion’s mouth (his enemies).

XVIII. Suddenly, in verse 21a, Messiah changes from a prayer of supplication to prayer of praise. The Lord has heard him and has delivered him. This deliverance may be his death, which ended his suffering on the cross, or may even be the resurrection, which delivered him from suffering forever.

Verses 22-31

_I will tell of Thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise Thee. You who fear the LORD, praise Him; all you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel. For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has He hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard. From Thee comes my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever! All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the LORD'S, and He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive. Posterity will serve Him; it will be told of the LORD to the (coming) generation. They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it._

XIX. The Messiah’s suffering is now complete, and the psalm now speaks of Messiah’s exaltation and adoration of God. This change from suffering to exaltation clearly implies that the resurrection has in fact taken place. The Messiah encourages the godly to trust in and praise God (verse 26), and the psalm then ends with a description of Messiah’s second coming and millennial rule (verses 27-31).
Psalm 16
The Resurrection Of The Messiah

Introduction

Psalm sixteen is a Psalm of David, in which he celebrates the joy that comes from his faith in God. As the psalm unfolds, David expresses his confidence in God in both life and death. A theme that runs through the psalm is the wisdom and joy finding one’s refuge in God. (Ross, p. 803). While the psalm no doubt speaks of David’s relationship with the Lord, the psalm does leap forward in time to an event that could not happen in David’s lifetime: the resurrection of the Messiah. Thus David, being a prophet, foretold centuries in advance crucial information about the resurrection of the Messiah.

Verses 1-8

I. David does not reveal the occasion of this psalm. It may have been a threat by his enemies of personal sickness. He opens the psalm with words of trust in God, who alone is able to give one shelter in times of distress.

II. David’s faith in God is based on God’s promise to keep and guard those who “seek refuge” in Him (Vangemeren, p. 154).

III. David is clear: the only safe refuge is in God. He states, “the sorrows of those who have bartered for another god will be multiplied.” (verse 4) Whereas David Delights to have fellowship with those who trust in his God (verse 3), he refuses to fellowship with those who worship others gods (verse 4). David’s trust in the Lord is exclusive.

IV. David now addresses the Lord directly, praising His blessings. He compares the Lord to a portion allotted to him by inheritance (Ross, p. 804). Besides being all that David needs to satisfy him in life, the Lord is like a bountiful inheritance received in a time of need. David’s thought may also be that the Lord’s blessings are greater that any inheritance one may receive.

V. Because of this great bounty David has received as a result of trusting in the Lord, David now breaks into praises for the Lord. The Lord counseled David in the night (as well as in the daytime), and guided him safely. Because of this, David knew that he would not
be shaken from his walk of integrity and enjoyment of the blessings he had in the Lord (Ross, 9. 804).

**Verses 9-11**

I. David once again expresses his trust in God. So strong is David’s trust in God, that he is convinced that God will not abandon him even in death. He states, “Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol…” (verse 10a).

II. In the second half of verse ten, David says something that could not have applied to him. He states, “neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay” (verse 10b). The reason that this could not have applied to David is that David did die and his body did undergo corruption, as would any other corpse. Also, David states that verse 10b does not apply to him, but to God’s holy One.

III. The explanation for this apparent paradox is given to us by the apostle Peter in Acts 13:32-37 –

"And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this {promise} to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee.' "And as for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' 'Therefore He also says in another Psalm, 'Thou wilt not allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.' "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. (NAS)

Although Messiah did die, before corruption could set in, God resurrected him from the dead. As we have said David, being a prophet, foretold this centuries in advance.
Verses 10-11

I. In verses 10 and eleven David once again praises the Lord, expressing his trust in him both in life and in death.

II. God will make known to David the “path of life” that leads to joy. Additionally, David’s statement, “in Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever” expresses David’s faith that God’s blessings transcend even death (i.e. “forevermore”).