

The PORTENTOUS CHILD

Lesson Two

The Plot of the Book of Isaiah

The threat of exile
The call to repentance
The righteous king
The birth of the redeemer
The repentance of Judah

King Jotham (2 Kings 15:32–38)

Uzziah died, Jotham Reigns
Pekah son of Remaliah: King of Israel
Rezin: King of Syria
Jotham: King of Judah

King Ahaz (2 Kings 16)

Israel and Syria allied
War with Judah

A Sign for King Ahaz (Isaiah 7)

The *Almah*:
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. (Isaiah 7:14)

The Virgin: Abi bat Zechariah (2 Kings 18:2)

She will call his name Immanuel

Immanu-el (עִמָּנוּ אֵל): God with us

The threat from Assyria

The Sign: “Your wife will have a son, she will call His name Immanuel, and before he is a teen-ager, Assyria will destroy both the kingdoms of Aram and Ephraim.”

So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, “I am your servant and your son; come up and deliver me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me.” Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king’s house, and sent a present to the king of Assyria. (2 Kings 16:7–8)

Isaiah’s Portentous Son (8:1-4)

Maher-shalal-chash-baz (מָהֵר שָׁלַל חָשַׁבַּז): “Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey.”

Shear-jashub (*she’ar yashuv*, שְׂאֵר יָשׁוּב) means “A remnant will return.”

Conspiracy Theory (Isaiah 8:5-15)

Gentle waters of Shiloah (Siloam)

Davidic monarchy; Zion

Ki Immanuel

עֲצוּ עֲצוּהָ וְתִפְּרֹ דְבָרוֹ דְבָרוֹ וְלֹא יִקְוּם

אֵל כִּי עִמָּנוּ אֵל (Isa 8:10)

Eight-century political intrigue:

“You are not to say, ‘It is a conspiracy.’ ... And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread.” (8:12)

The stumbling stone:

“A stone to strike and a rock to stumble over.” (8:14)

Isaiah Looks for the Redemption (8:16-22)

Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. (Isaiah 8:18)

Galilee of the Gentiles (9:1-7)

Redemption and hope for Israel

In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and captured Ijon and Abel-beth-maacah and Janoah and Kedesh and Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria. (2 Kings 15:29)

Unto Us a Child is Born (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. (Isaiah 9:6)

Rabbi Hillel II said, “There shall be no Messiah for Israel, because they have already [enjoyed] him in the days of King Hezekiah.” Rabbi Joseph said, “May God forgive [Hillel] for saying this.” (b.Sanhedrin 99a)

Isaiah 9:7 says that “There will be no end to the increase of His government.” The Hebrew contains a small, seemingly insignificant spelling error in the word translated as “increase.” The misspelled word is *lemarbeh* (לְמַרְבֵּה). In that word, the letter *mem* (מ) appears in its closed form (ם), a form ordinarily appearing only at the end of a word. The Talmud explains that a closed *mem* indicates mystical and hidden teaching: “The open *mem* (מ) and the closed *mem* (ם) signify open teaching and closed [esoteric] teaching, respectively” (b.*Shabbat* 104a)

“There will be no end to the increase of His government” (Isaiah 9:7). Rabbi Tanchum related that Bar Kappara once expounded on this text while teaching in Sepphoris, as follows: “When the letter *mem* (מ) appears in the middle of the word, it is always an open *mem*. Why is this one [in the word *lemarbeh*, לְמַרְבֵּה] a closed *mem* (ם)? The Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to fulfill the prophecy [of Isaiah 9:6–7] by appointing Hezekiah as the Messiah. His war with Sennacherib [the king of Assyria] was to be the war of Gog and Magog. Then the attribute of justice complained before the Holy One, blessed be He, saying, “Lord of the Universe! If you did not deem David worthy to be the Messiah, even after he sang so many hymns and psalms to You, is it fair to make Hezekiah into the Messiah? He did not compose a single hymn despite all the miracles you did for him.” Therefore, God closed the letter *mem* in *lemarbeh* ... A voice from heaven cried out, ‘[The identity of the Messiah] is my secret, it is my secret.’” (b.*Sanhedrin* 94a)

Targum Yonatan sees Isaiah 9:6–7 as a prophecy yet to be fulfilled in the coming Messiah:

The prophet said to the house of David, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and He has taken the Torah upon Himself to keep it. His name is called from eternity, Wonderful, The Mighty God, who liveth to eternity, the Messiah, whose peace shall be great upon us in His days. The greatness of those who do the Torah shall be magnified, and to those, that preserve peace. There shall be no end to the throne of David, and of his kingdom, to establish it and to build it in judgment and in righteousness from henceforth, even for ever. By the WORD of the Lord of hosts this shall be done. (Targum Yonatan, Isaiah 9:6–7)

Isaiah in the New Testament

All the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days" (Acts 3:24).

The virgin and Immanuel

Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14

Greek: *Parthenos* (παρθένος) "virgin"

Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:23
<i>She will call His name Immanuel.</i>	<i>They shall call His name Immanuel.</i>

Matthew's quotation of Isaiah 7:14 follows the Septuagint closely, but one word is different. In agreement with the Hebrew, the Septuagint says, "She will call his name Immanuel." Other versions of the Septuagint read, "You will call his name Immanuel." Matthew, however, says, "They shall call his name Immanuel." Why the change? Rabbi Yechiel Lichtenstein (Even Tzohar) speculated that Matthew may have consulted a Hebrew copy of Isaiah containing a textual variant:

"In our version of the Tanach, the verse reads, 'she will call his name (*ve-karat shemo*, וְקָרָאָהּ, וְקָרָאָהּ). In my opinion, this is because their version read, 'he will call his name (*ve-kara et shemo*, וְקָרָאֵת שְׁמוֹ), having a verb without a clear subject, a form that is typical of Scripture. This came into Greek as 'they will name' (*kalesousin*, καλεσουσιν). Thus, the proper translation back into Hebrew should be *ve-kara et shemo* (וְקָרָאֵת שְׁמוֹ)." (*Commentary on the New Testament on Matthew 1:22.*)

Amazingly, Lichtenstein's opinion here is vindicated by the Great Isaiah Scroll, which was discovered with the Dead Sea Scrolls in Qumran Cave 1 in 1947—thirty-five years after his death. The verb in the Great Isaiah Scroll appears just as he predicted.

Do not fear Persecution

1 Peter 3:13–15; Isaiah 8:12

The Stumbling Stone

1 Peter 2:6-8; Isaiah 28:16; Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 8:14
Romans 9:30–33; Isaiah 8:14 (28:16)

"A Secret from the Talmud" Isaac Lichtenstein *The Everlasting Jew* 104–105; (b.*Sanhedrin* 38a)

Judah and Hezekiah, the sons of Rabbi Chiya once sat at the table with Rabbi [Judah the Prince] and uttered not a word. He said, "Give the young men plenty of strong wine, so that they will say something." When the wine took effect, they began by saying, "The son of David cannot appear until the two ruling houses in Israel shall have come to an end, namely the Head of the Exile in Babylon and the Prince in the land of Israel, for it is written [in Isaiah 8:14]: "And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel." (b.Sanhedrin 38a)

Children of God

Hebrews 2:13; Isaiah 8:17–18

The writer of the book of Hebrews has Messiah speaking in the voice of Isaiah.

A Great Light

Matthew 4:14-16; Isaiah 9:1-2

Matthew quotes only two verses from the prophecy. He chooses two verses that specifically mention Zebulun, the tribal territory in which the village of Nazareth sat, and Naphtali, the tribal territory in which the village of Capernaum sat. He prefaces the quotation with the words: "And leaving Nazareth [i.e., Zebulun], He came and settled in Capernaum [i.e., Naphtali], which is by the sea [i.e., Lake Galilee], in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali" (Matthew 4:13). Matthew believed that Yeshua was the promised child born to the house of David predicted by Isaiah, the great light that was to appear in Zebulun and Naphtali (i.e., Nazareth and Capernaum).

He will arise in the land of Galilee, and on that day the whole world shall be shaken and all the children of men shall seek refuge in caves and rocky places. Concerning that time it is written: "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. II, 19). "The glory of his majesty" refers to the Messiah when he shall reveal himself in the land of Galilee; for in this part of the Holy Land the desolation first began, and therefore he will manifest himself there first, and from there begin to war against the world. (Zohar II:7b)