

## Messiah in the Tanach, 08

### Introduction

- Skeptics deny that the Tanach has any real Messianic predictions.
- Some evangelicals view messianic texts as historical allusions.
- Scholars say that Jesus was mistaken, or he played to people's ignorance.
- How can we show that there are real messianic predictions in the Tanach?

### The Law: Genesis 3:14-15

<sup>14</sup> Then God יהוה said to the serpent ...

<sup>15</sup> "I will put enmity

Between you and the woman,  
And between your offspring and hers;  
They shall strike at your head,  
And you shall strike at their heel." NJPS



### Notes

- "Proto Evangelium"?
- Skeptics deny that this is messianic.
- Naturalistic view: humans versus serpents in common life.
- "seed" = collective singular noun. (But singular in 4:25 = Seth.)
- Theme: God extends mercy in judgement: Gen, 4.15, 6.18, 12.1-9, 19.16.
- Interpretation: author's intent & original readers' understanding.
- Skeptics deny that this is messianic.
- Symbolical view: There is a perpetual struggle without hope of relief.
- *Sensus plenior* view: Naturalistic: snakes bite humans, and humans kill snakes.
- If naturalistic, then no messianic intent.
- Messianic view: Predicts future coming of an individual who dies while gaining victory over the Serpent.
- Caution: Does not teach virgin birth, nor a non-lethal bite to the heel.
- Thesis: The Genesis author intended to introduce a future redeemer, and will identify him in the rest of the Torah.

### Context

- Addressed to an intelligent being.
- Enmity is between moral agents.
- Mutually mortal blows = individuals.
- The woman's seed/offspring = Seth... Noah... Abraham... Isaac... Judah... David... Solomon...
- The serpent's seed/offspring = Cain... Nephilim... Amalek... all disbelievers...

### Innertext

- Mercy in the midst of judgement:
- "The LORD put a mark on Cain," Gen 4.15.
- "I establish my covenant with you," Noah, Gen 6.18.
- "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed," Gen 12.3.
- "I will ... remember the covenant with their forefathers," Lev 26.40.

### Intertext

- The Serpent = Leviathan, Isa 27.1
- "The fleeing serpent," Job 26.13
- "You were an anointed guardian cherub ... till unrighteousness was found in you," Eze 28.12-14
- "Dust shall be the serpent's food," Isa 63
- "Your offspring shall possess his enemies' gate" Gen 22.17f
- 'Seed' = royal offspring, 2 Samuel 7.12
- "The vision of the Almighty... O Israel"
- "His king shall be higher than Agag ..."
- "what his people will do to your people in the latter days ..."
- "a scepter shall rise out of Israel ..."
- "it shall crush the forehead of Moab" Num 24.5

### The Prophets: Isaiah 7:14

<sup>13</sup> "Listen, House of David...

<sup>14</sup> Assuredly, my Sovereign will give you a sign nonetheless!

Look, the young woman is with child and about to give birth to a son.

Let her name him Immanuel\*." NJPS 1985

\*Immanuel: Meaning "with us is God."

### Notes

- Skeptics doubt that belief in the virgin birth be necessary to Christian faith. They assert:
  - Isa 7 was fulfilled in King Ahaz' court.
  - 'Almah = 'young woman' not 'virgin'.
  - 'The child' = Ahaz' or Isaiah's son.
- Sensus plenior = Matthew wrote a midrash about Jesus & Isaiah 7.
- Views on what is a 'Almah:
- Direct prediction: the virgin Mary.
- Historical fulfillment: Ahaz' concubine.
- *Sensus plenior*: applied to Mary.
- LXX: Greek parthenos, never pregnant.
- Aquila: Greek neannis, young woman.
- Hebrew: 'almah = girl at puberty not (yet) sexually active.

### Context

- Tiglath-pileser of Assyria invaded the northern kingdom of Israel in 731 BC.
- Destroyed the monarchy by 721 BC.
- Ashurbanipul completed exile, 669 BC.
- Uzziah of Judah, Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel attack Jerusalem in 734, threaten to end the House of David.
- Wicked Ahaz had burned his son.

### Content

- Isaiah & his young son Shear-Jashub come to Ahaz.
- Isaiah predicts three signs:

- Mid-range (7:7-9): Ephraim will no longer a people.
- Long range (7:10-15): A pregnant virgin.
- Short-range (7:16-25): Before Shear-Jashub matures, Assyria will invade.

### Innertext

For a child has been born to us,  
A son has been given us.

<sup>6</sup> And authority has settled on his shoulders...:

Upon David's throne and kingdom,

<sup>7</sup> That it may be firmly established...

● David: Confirming the covenant. NJPS Isa 9

<sup>1</sup> But a shoot shall grow out of the stump of Jesse...

The spirit of GOD shall alight upon him;

<sup>2</sup> A spirit of wisdom and insight...

Nations shall seek his counsel

<sup>10</sup> And his abode shall be honored... NJPS Isa 11

● Throne: The Davidic covenant is confirmed.

### Intertext

2 And you, O Bethlehem of Ephrath...

From you one shall come forth

To rule Israel for Me—

One whose origin is from of old...

3 Truly, [God] will leave them [helpless]

Until she who is to bear has borne... Micah 5:2-3 [Hb 1-2] NJPS

### The Writings: Psalm 110 [LXX 109]

<sup>1</sup> Of David. A psalm.

The LORD said to my lord,

"Sit at My right hand

while I make your enemies your footstool." NJPS 1985

● LORD: The divine Name, YHWH.

● lord: Someone of superior status.

### Notes

● Written by King David (Le-Dawid).

Views:

- Not written by David. (No neg. proof)
- David called himself 'my lord'. (No e.g.)
- David abdicated to Solomon.
- David foresaw a greater king.
- David predicted a/the Messiah.
- "My lord": In Joshua 5:14 = divine title.
- Author's intent:  
"The last word of David ... God ... has made with me an everlasting covenant." 2 Sam 23:1-5

- Postexilic redaction: deepened and clarified the Psalms messianic intent.
  - Psalms 107-109: Pleas for deliverance.
  - Psalm 110: The deliverer foretold.
  - Psalms 111-113: Praise for deliverance.

### Context

- “My lord” is superior to David.
- He shares in Yhwh’s authority.
- Rules in Zion over enemies.
- People submit to his power.
- Performs priestly work. See 2 Sam 8.18
- Protected by Adonay.
- Judges nations and rulers.

### Innertext

<sup>2</sup> Kings of the earth take their stand,  
and regents intrigue together  
against the LORD and against His anointed...

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said to me, “You are My son ...” <sup>8</sup> I will make the nations your domain;  
your estate, the limits of the earth. Psalm 2 NJPS

### Intertext

<sup>9</sup> Thrones were set in place,  
And the Ancient of Days took His seat.

<sup>12</sup> As I looked on, in the night vision,  
One like a human being  
Came with the clouds of heaven...

<sup>14</sup> All ... nations ... must serve him.  
His dominion ... shall not pass away.  
Daniel 9 NJPS

### Conclusion

- The three divisions of the Tanach present messianic predictions.
- Context, innertext and intertext confirm and amplify the messianic message.
- Only the Messiah can fulfill these texts.

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