

The Virgin Birth

Introduction

Years ago during a small group meeting of the church I was attending some women became engaged in a conversation on the virgin birth. One of the ladies stated she did not believe in the virgin birth and began asking what others thought. Several chimed in they did not believe in it either. I asked a lady with whom I had been talking, since we had overheard the conversation, what she thought. She replied she did not believe Jesus was born from a virgin. Curious, I asked her if she believed Jesus had risen from the dead. She thought a moment and said no, she did not believe that either. I then asked her why she went to church. Her reply was enlightening. She said it made her feel good and gave her a sense of warmth and belonging.¹

I mention this story because it illustrates the spiritual environment of most mainline denominations and churches. These ladies were pleasant, nice people. They were religious, active church-goers. But they were not Christians. They were without Christ, without hope, and without eternal life.²

The purpose of this article is to show what the Bible reveals about the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and why it is an essential doctrine of the faith. If Jesus was not born of a virgin, He was not the Messiah, and not qualified to pay for our sins and rise from the dead. In other words, if Jesus was not virgin-born, we have no salvation. If so, Christianity is a charade.

The First Intimation of Redemption and the Virgin Birth

The Bible teaches that God keeps secrets and reveals them in His own time (Deuteronomy 29.29). Sometimes, as in the case of the virgin birth, God provides hints about His secrets. As we

shall see in this study, God not only revealed several hints but prepared a lot of ground to accomplish the virgin birth. At times, it appeared such a birth would be impossible. But God is tricky. This is my way of saying He is sovereignly good, knows the end from the beginning, has a plan, never fails, and always keeps His promises. The first hint of redemption is found in Genesis 3.15. God addressed the [serpent](#)³ following the disobedience of Adam and Eve:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

God declared He would put “enmity,” ([enmity](#)) i.e., hatred, hostility between Satan and his seed and the seed of the woman. The seed of the woman refers to Christ while the seed of Satan refers to unbelievers (cf. John 8.44). Satan would bruise ([bruise](#)) the heel of the seed of the woman and the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. Thus, the Serpent and his seed would injure the seed of the woman but the seed of the woman would fatally wound the Serpent. This prophecy was not understood by Adam and Eve. Eve appears to have thought it was going to be fulfilled by their son Cain (Genesis 4.1). They had no idea that the consequences of their disobedience would encompass thousands of years and billions of lives. We now know the prophecy referred to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Satan wounded Him at the cross but the Lord defeated Satan by His death on the cross and subsequent resurrection.

The phrase “seed of the woman” is most interesting for it is a biological contradiction. The word “seed,” ([seed](#)), denotes maleness. Men have seed; women have eggs. But God used the phrase “seed of the woman,” rather than “seed of the man.” God is particular about language. He means what He says and says what He means. As careful interpreters, we must always recognize what the Bible says and what it does not say.

If the seed would not come from man, i.e., not “seed of the man,” and a woman has no seed, then from where would the seed come? This answer is from God Himself. That is exactly what happened. As Mary would learn, the “seed of the woman” would be God Himself (Micah 5.2).

The Second Intimation of the Virgin Birth

The next intimation of the virgin birth is Isaiah 7.14. The context of this verse is the following: Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, allied to attack Judah (Isaiah 7.1-2, 4-9). The motive behind their alliance was probably to incorporate the southern kingdom to battle the Assyrian threat and create a buffer state to guard their southern flank against a possible Egyptian attack. The Lord told Isaiah their attack would not succeed and that Ahaz, the king of Judah, should ask God for a sign, not only for himself, but for the whole house of David (Isaiah 7.13).⁴ God offered a sign to prove to the idolatrous Ahaz and the Davidic dynasty that the God of Israel was the true God (2 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 28). Ahaz refused under a pretext of piety (Deuteronomy 6.16). But Ahaz’s piety was feigned. The text says God was “wearied” (יָאֵסַף) with Ahaz’s response. But even though Ahaz refused to ask God for a sign, God gave one anyway.

	Near and Far Signs of Isaiah 7.10-16
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Context of the Sign	¹⁰ Then the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; make <i>it</i> deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!” ¹³ 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?
1 st Part of Sign: to the House of David	¹⁴ 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.
2 nd Part of Sign: to Ahaz	¹⁵ He will eat curds and honey at the time he knows <i>enough</i> to refuse evil and choose good. ¹⁶ For before the boy will know <i>enough</i> to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken.

Commentators have struggled to interpret this passage. Did the prophecy have a near-term, long-term, or a dual fulfillment? And to whom did verses 15-16 refer?

The sign was in two parts. The first part of the sign was long-range and was for the house of David and to a larger degree the nation of Israel. The sign was that the coming Messiah would be virgin-born. This sign was fulfilled with the birth of Christ (Matthew 1.22-23).

The next verses, 15-16, had a short-term fulfillment and were directed primarily to Ahaz. The “he” of verses 15-16 cannot refer to the son “Immanuel” of verse 14 since the two kings threatening Judah were defeated only a few years later, not 700 years later. The key to verses 15-16 is verse 3. The Lord

instructed Isaiah to take his son, [Shear-jashub](#), with him to meet Ahaz (Isaiah 7.3). Needless to say, normal prophetic procedure did not include bringing a small child to confront a king and deliver a prophecy. The reason for Isaiah's son's presence was that the child might serve as an object lesson of the prophecy.

This was the picture: Isaiah met Ahaz with his son and said, "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." As noted above, this part of the sign focused upon the dynasty of David and the nation of Israel (cf. Isaiah 7.14) and was fulfilled with the birth of Christ (Matthew 1.22-23).⁵ Then, indicating his own son, Shear-jashub, Isaiah addressed Ahaz and said, "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." Curds and honey are foods of prosperity. They indicated Judah would enjoy abundance during the lad's childhood. Before he became old enough to know good and evil the two kings would be destroyed.⁶ Ahaz lived to see the prophecy fulfilled (2 Kings 16.9). Assyria took Syria and the northern kingdom, Israel, fell in 722 B.C. Such an interpretation allows fulfillment of both prophecies (Isaiah 7.14, 15-16) and remains faithful to the text.

The Word "Virgin"

"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).

Another source of controversy in this passage is the meaning of the word "virgin," the Hebrew word [עַלְמָה](#). This word can mean virgin or a young girl. It is used seven times: Genesis 24.43; Exodus 2.8; Psalm 68.25; Proverbs 30.19; Song of

Solomon 1.3, 6.8; Isaiah 7.14. As usual, the best way to determine the meaning of a word is to examine it in its contexts.

The Septuagint (LXX) was the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures composed in the 3rd century B.C. by 70 Jewish scholars. They translated the word □□□□□□ as follows.

Passage	Greek Translation	Meaning
Genesis 24.43	παρθένος	virgin
Exodus 2.8	νεᾶνις	maiden
Psalms 68.25 (26)	νεᾶνις	maiden
Proverbs 30.19	νεότης	youth
Song of Solomon 1.3	νεᾶνις	maiden
Song of Solomon 6.8	νεᾶνις	maiden
Isaiah 7.14	παρθένος	virgin

The LXX scholars translated □□□□□□ twice as [παρθένος](#). They were careful in their translation choices and thought only two passages qualified for the narrower term “virgin.”⁷

The Gospels and Isaiah 7.14

The Gospels teach Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born. Matthew quoted Isaiah 7.14 (Matthew 1.23) as the fulfillment of the prophetic sign Isaiah had given over 700 years before. Luke’s account agrees with Matthew’s. Both texts use the word παρθένος for “virgin.” Mary was no fool. She understood how a woman had a baby. She questioned the angel about how she, a virgin, could have a child.

The passages below reveal clearly what Isaiah meant by his prophecy: the Messiah would be virgin-born. They also demonstrate the soundness of LXX translators insight.

Thus, Matthew wrote (very literal translation):

Matthew 1.18	πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εὐρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου
	Before they were to come together she was discovered having in her womb [a child] from the Holy Spirit
Matthew 1.20	τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου
	For what in her was born is from the Holy Spirit

In answer to Mary's question of how she could have a child while a virgin, Luke wrote:

Luke 1.35	καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν αὐτῇ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ
	The angel answered her and said, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you and because of this the One being holy born will be called the Son of God.

The angel answered Mary's question about how she, a virgin, could have a child. The angel's answer was that this would be the work of God the Holy Spirit. Mary did not question the angel. She accepted what he said. That is what faith is—believing what God says.

Preparing the Environment: Daughters of Zelophehad

Numbers 26 enumerates the tribes of Israel. The tribes numbered 601,730.⁸ Within this all-male census is verse 33: "Now Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but only daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah."

According to Jewish law at the time, inheritance passed through sons not daughters. The greatest part of an inheritance was land. Since the Mosaic law stated it would be allocated to sons, the daughters of Zelophehad recognized

their family would lose its inheritance unless the law changed. You may be thinking at this point, "What does this have to do with the birth of Jesus?" This we will see shortly.

In Numbers 27 we have the following account:

¹ Then the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph, came near; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah and Hoglah and Milcah and Tirzah. ² They stood before Moses and before Eleazar the priest and before the leaders and all the congregation, at the doorway of the tent of meeting, saying, ³ "Our father died in the wilderness, yet he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah; but he died in his own sin, and he had no sons. ⁴ Why should the name of our father be withdrawn from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father's brothers." ⁵ So Moses brought their case before the Lord.

Moses took the case to the Lord and the Lord ruled directly in the matter:

⁶ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ⁷ "The daughters of Zelophehad are right in their statements. You shall surely give them a hereditary possession among their father's brothers, and you shall transfer the inheritance of their father to them. ⁸ Further, you shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. ⁹ If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. ¹⁰ If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. ¹¹ If his father has no

brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his nearest relative in his own family, and he shall possess it; and it shall be a statutory ordinance to the sons of Israel, just as the Lord commanded Moses.’”

The daughters petitioned Moses to be allowed to inherit and preserve their inheritance. The daughters gave an honest representation of their father, acknowledging his strengths and weaknesses. They reminded Moses that their father had not been part of the rebellion organized by Korah. Nevertheless, he died in the wilderness, for he sided with the opinion of the ten spies, rather than that of the two, Joshua and Caleb. God ruled in favor of the daughters. The stipulations of the new law were the following:

Zelophehad Law of Inheritance	Text
If a man died without a son, inheritance would go to his daughter	Numbers 27.6-11; Joshua 17.3-6
If a man had no daughter, inheritance would go to his brothers.	
If a man had no brothers, inheritance would go to his father’s brother.	
If a man’s father had no brothers, inheritance would go to his nearest relative.	
An inheriting daughter must marry within her tribe. Inheritance would not move from one tribe to another.	Numbers 36.1-13

Crises for the Virgin Birth: Near Destruction of the Davidic Line

Satan is behind most of the suffering the Jews have experienced in history (and most of the suffering of Gentiles as well). The Jews held the key to God’s redemptive plan. Satan knows if he can destroy the Jews he wins his war against God. If no Jews exist, God’s promises fail. In the book of

Esther is the account of Haman's attempt to destroy the Jews. The Jews commemorate their deliverance from Haman's evil plot with the festival of Purim. In recent history, Hitler tried to destroy the Jews. At the present time, this task has been taken up by the Arabs. Satan has also made direct attacks upon the Messiah Himself. Herod attempted to kill all the male Jewish babies under two years of age to eliminate the prophesied King (Matthew 2.1-18). Satan energized the crowd to crucify Jesus and when He went to the cross Satan thought he had achieved victory. But it turned out to be his strategic defeat. Satan is the author of all anti-Semitism.

One of Satan's most intense attacks on the house of David (from which would come the Messiah) occurred in the 9th century. In 2 Chronicles 21, we read:

¹ Then Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Jehoram his son became king in his place. ² He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael and Shephatiah. All these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. ³ Their father gave them many gifts of silver, gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was the firstborn. ⁴ Now when Jehoram had taken over the kingdom of his father and made himself secure, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and some of the rulers of Israel also. ⁵ Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. ⁶ He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab did (for Ahab's daughter was his wife), and he did evil in the sight of the Lord. ⁷ Yet the Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David because of the covenant which He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever (2 Chronicles 21.1-7).

According to the record, the evil, idolatrous, king Jehoram destroyed everyone in the Davidic line except himself. God judged the people with a plague and killed Jehoram with a terrible intestinal disease for his treachery. God agitated the Philistines and Arabs to attack Judah as further judgment. Jehoram, however, had sons before he died. When the Philistines attacked they killed all of Jehoram's sons except Jehoahaz, also known as Ahaziah. The Davidic line was reduced to one son again (2 Chronicles 21.12-20). While God inflicted judgment by this attack, we can be certain Satan orchestrated the operation to kill the royal household.

Ahaziah became the next king and both he and his mother Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, were exceedingly evil. God destroyed Ahaziah through Jehu (2 Chronicles 22.7). When Athaliah learned of her son's death she killed all the sons of David except Joash whom [Jehoshabeath](#), King Jehoram's daughter and wife of Jehoiada the priest, hid. We read:

¹ Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring of the house of Judah. ² But Jehoshabeath the king's daughter took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she would not put him to death. ³ He was hidden with them in the house of God six years while Athaliah reigned over the land (2 Kings 11.1-3).

Through Jehoiada the priest's skillful leadership, organization, and planning, Joash ascended to the throne (2 Chronicles 23.1-3). These were brutal and treacherous times and within them, Satan made three major attempts to destroy the Davidic line. Each attempt reduced the Davidic line to a

single individual. That was how close Satan came to defeating God.

Curse of Coniah

Jeremiah prophesied Judah's demise by the Babylonians. Jehoiakim, Judah's king, refused to heed Jeremiah's counsel and continued to lead the nation into idolatry. He named his first son Jeconiah, which means Jehovah's signet ring. He thought his royal house was as secure as a signet ring on Jehovah's hand. Interestingly, God never referred to him by this name. He called him Coniah, not Jeconiah. Jeremiah prophesied the following about his and his son's fate:

¹⁸ *Therefore thus says the Lord in regard to Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, "They will not lament for him: 'Alas, my brother!' or, 'Alas, sister!' They will not lament for him: 'Alas for the master!' or, 'Alas for his splendor!'* ¹⁹ *"He will be buried with a donkey's burial, dragged off and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.* ²⁰ *"Go up to Lebanon and cry out, and lift up your voice in Bashan; Cry out also from Abarim, for all your lovers have been crushed.* ²¹ *"I spoke to you in your prosperity; but you said, 'I will not listen!' This has been your practice from your youth, that you have not obeyed My voice.* ²² *"The wind will sweep away all your shepherds, and your lovers will go into captivity; then you will surely be ashamed and humiliated because of all your wickedness.* ²³ *"You who dwell in Lebanon, nested in the cedars, how you will groan when pangs come upon you, pain like a woman in childbirth (Jeremiah 22.18-23)!*

²⁴ *"As I live," declares the Lord, "even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet ring on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; ²⁵ and I will give you over*

into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. ²⁶ I will hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. ²⁷ But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it. ²⁸ “Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar? Or is he an undesirable vessel? Why have he and his descendants been hurled out and cast into a land that they had not known? ²⁹ “O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord! ³⁰ “Thus says the Lord, ‘Write this man down childless, a man who will not prosper in his days; for no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah’” (Jeremiah 22.24-30).

God’s curse ended legitimacy of royal rule from the royal bloodline of David, through Coniah (Jeconiah). The question that naturally arises is, “How can the Messiah come from a bloodline which God has cursed?” Joseph, the husband of Mary, was a descendant of Coniah (Matthew 1.11, 16). As such, he was under God’s blood curse and unqualified to rule Israel as was his son or sons. But God had promised the royal line of David would rule forever! How could His promise be fulfilled in light of the curse? How could this apparent contradiction be resolved? Satan must have thought God had painted Himself into a box when He issued this curse. But again, God is tricky. He always has a way. And that way was the virgin birth. Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary, avoided the blood curse. He was the only possible candidate who could solve the dilemma.

The Genealogies: Matthew and Luke

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke provide genealogies of Jesus.⁹ God had revealed that Israel’s successful ruling line would come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49.10). Later, He

narrowed the line to the house of David when He established the Davidic Covenant (Ruth 4.16-21; 2 Samuel 7.11-16; Psalm 89).

Matthew's genealogy traces the royal and legal line of Jesus. Since Matthew's gospel portrays Jesus as the King of the Jews, his genealogy began with Abraham. This genealogy goes from David through Solomon, the royal line. Note carefully how Matthew expressed Jesus' genealogy with reference to the birth of Jesus:

Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah (Matthew 1.16).

Throughout the 41 previous generations of the genealogy Matthew used the expression, "x was the father of y." But when he came to Jesus, he abandoned this formula. He stated that Joseph was the husband of Mary, *not* the father of Jesus. Why? Because Jesus was the "seed of the woman" (Genesis 3.15), Mary, not the "seed of the father," Joseph.

Luke's genealogy begins with Adam rather than Abraham because Luke portrayed Jesus as the Son of Man. Luke stated that Jesus was "supposed" or "believed by custom" ([νομίζω](#)) to be the son of Joseph. According to Matthew's genealogy, Jacob was the father of Joseph (Matthew 1.16). But Luke's genealogy states that Joseph was "of Heli" (Ἰωσήφ τοῦ Ἡλεὶ). Is this a contradiction? No, Heli was Mary's father not Joseph's. Joseph was the *son-in-law* of Heli (Luke 3.23). We know this because Luke's genealogy is Mary's genealogy. Mary was of the line of David just like Joseph but her lineage went through Nathan, another son of David, not through Solomon. This side of the bloodline was not under God's curse of Coniah.

Daughters of Zelophehad Reprised

We learned above that if a father had no sons, inheritance could pass to the daughter. Heli, the father of Mary

apparently had no sons (cf. John 19.25-27). Mary married within the tribe of Judah and met the legal requirement of the Zelophehad law. Therefore, Mary had legal rights of inheritance which included claim to the royal line. Jesus, therefore, was born of Mary, of the house and lineage of David and carried the legal title to the line, but without the blood curse of Coniah. Again, "the seed of the woman."

Medical Facts: Blood

The blood of the mother does not come in contact with the fetus during pregnancy. The two blood systems remain separate. From the time of conception until birth no blood passes from mother to child. The placenta forms a union between the fetus and the mother and allows vital nutrients such as proteins, fats, carbohydrates, salts, minerals, oxygen, etc. to pass through it but no exchange of blood normally occurs. The blood produced by the child comes from the child itself as a result of the introduction of the male sperm.

An unfertilized ovum cannot develop blood. The female egg on its own does not contain the elements necessary to produce blood. Only after the male sperm has entered the ovum can blood develop. For example, an unfertilized egg of a hen is an ovum on a larger scale than the human ovum. The unfertilized hen's egg can be incubated but will never develop. It will eventually decay and rot. However, if the egg is fertilized by a rooster's sperm the incubated egg will begin to show signs of life after a few hours. Little red streaks began to occur in the egg and reveal the presence of blood. This is not possible apart from a union of the male sperm with the female ovum. The male element has added life to the egg. The Bible declares that life is in the blood: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17.11) and "For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof" (Leviticus 17.14). No life exists in the egg until the male sperm unites with it. Since the life of the flesh is in the blood, it follows that the source of blood is the male sperm.

Conclusion

God's statement immediately after Man's disobedience of the "seed of the woman" was the first and greatest clue as to the nature of the coming Redeemer. Throughout the Scriptures, we read of Satan's many attempts to destroy the Jews, the line of David, and the Messiah Himself. He failed in every attempt. God is sovereign and cannot be defeated. The virgin birth is an essential doctrine of Christianity: no virgin birth, no Redeemer, no Christianity.

¹ The resurrection is the grand miracle. If one can believe the resurrection other miracles are child's play. To be a Christian, one must believe that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15.1-4). Not to believe this is to be without Christ, without hope, and without eternal life. The virgin birth is hardly a problem for the God Who has created the heavens and the earth and resurrects the dead.

² A Christian is one who believes Paul's gospel (1 Corinthians 15.1-4; Romans 2.16), that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. Only through a virgin birth could Jesus become man without Adam's sin nature (1 Corinthians 15.22). If Jesus was not born without sin He could not die for our sins and rise from the dead. Therefore, the virgin birth is an essential doctrine for salvation. Not to believe it means that Christ was not sinless and not God. If He was not, salvation is impossible.

³ The being or creature who addressed Eve is a fascinating subject. Was Eve's conversation with a reptile or with something else? E. W. Bullinger devoted an appendix in his Companion Bible to this [subject](#) regarding the word □□□□□□. His comments are quite thought-provoking.

⁴ Ahaz was an exceedingly evil and idolatrous king. He sacrificed his own son to an idol (2 Kings 16.1-4).

⁵ Significantly, Matthew included the article with virgin, i.e., ἡ παρθένοϛ. The basic purpose of the article in Greek is

emphasis of individual identity. The article functioned originally as a demonstrative. Thus, the sense is “that virgin,” i.e., the one prophesied by Isaiah.

⁶ The reign of [Pekah](#) was short, i.e., 735-732 B. C. Rezin also died in 732.

⁷ Some scholars have stated that a better word for “virgin” was [אֲרָמָה](#). Such a suggestion, while interesting, is irrelevant. The Gospels interpret Isaiah 7.14.

⁸ The census only included men 20 years old and older who were capable of going to war. It excluded the tribe of Levi, elderly men, women, and children. It is safe to assume that the total population of Israel was at least 4,000,000 and perhaps as many as 7,000,000 (cf. Exodus 12.37, 38.26; Numbers 1.44-49, 2.32-33, 22.5, 11, 23.10, 26.51, 26.2, 4). The Hebrew people were not the rag-tag gaggle as depicted in Cecil B. DeMille’s *The Ten Commandments*. They were a large population.

⁹ Matthew presents Jesus as the King of Israel and therefore traces Jesus back to David. Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man and therefore goes back to Adam. John presents Jesus as the Son of God and gives His divine genealogy (John 1.1-5, 14-18). Mark presents Jesus as the Servant and presents no genealogy since genealogies of servants are generally unimportant.

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