

Part IV

Isaiah 7:14 continued

The prophet Isaiah promised that a virgin will bear a son and His name shall be called Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). There are two questions that this article will answer. First, why is a Son born and not a daughter? Secondly, what is the significance of the name Immanuel?

There is a great deal of significance of the word "son." Generally speaking, there are three uses for the word "son" in Hebrew thought. The first usage is the most common. A son is a male child, for example

"For a child is born to us, a Son is given to us, and the government shall be upon His shoulders..." Isaiah 9:5

Another example from the scripture,

"And she made a vow and said, "O L-rd of Hosts, if you look upon the affliction of your maidservant, and remember me, and do not forget your maidservant, but give to your maidservant a male (child), I will give him to the L-rd all the days of his life and a razor shall not go up upon his head." I Samuel 1:11

In this usage, there is no difference between a son and daughter, except for gender. This usage is the most frequently used.

The second usage reveals that it is possible to use the word "son" in the sense of a servant. For example,

"And the sons of the prophet said to Elisha..." II Kings 6:1

In this example, the sons of the prophets, they are not literally the prophets' children, but men that learn and study with Elijah and other prophetic leaders.

The third usage reveals that the word "son" can carry the significance of an heir. For example,

"I was watching in night visions and I saw in the clouds of heaven One like the Son of Man and He came to the Ancient of Days and they brought Him before Him and He was given dominion, honor and kingship so that all people, nations and languages would serve Him, His dominion will be an eternal dominion that should never pass away, and His kingdom shall never be destroyed." Daniel 7:13-14

In this example, there is a relationship between the second and third usage. The term in Daniel 7:13 translated "Son of Man," is the same Son that the prophet Isaiah says will be born to a virgin called Immanuel. This prophecy of Daniel focuses on the "Son of Man" that comes before the Ancient of Days (G-d). For what purpose does the Son of Man approach the L-rd? In order to inherit dominion, honor and the kingdom that belongs to the L-rd G-d Almighty.

The Talmud, in the section Sanhedrin 98A, the Gemara discusses this passage from Daniel and states that the Son of Man is the Messiah. This means that Messiah will inherit the dominion, honor and kingdom that rightly belong to G-d. It is this fact that has led the rabbis to refer to Messiah as King Messiah. In continuing this verse, we find it written

"...so that all people, nations, and languages should serve/worship Him and His dominion would be an everlasting dominion that should never pass away and His kingdom shall never be destroyed." Daniel 7:14

These sentences are very important in order to understand the true identity of Messiah. There is no argument in Judaism that Messiah is a human being, the problem is that Daniel says that all people, nations and languages shall worship Him (Messiah). If Messiah is only flesh and blood, then would it not be idolatry to worship Him? The rabbinical sages of the past and present state that one should not translate the Aramaic word as "worship", but "serve", as subjects serve an earthly king. Is this rabbinical assertion correct? The Aramaic word appears several times within the book of Daniel. What is important to know is that each time it always has the meaning of "worship". For example,

"...your G-d they do not **worship** and to the golden statue they do not prostrate themselves." Daniel 3:12

"...that you do not **worship** my G-d and that you do not prostrate yourselves to the golden statue that I have set up." Daniel 3:14

"Behold our G-d, Whom we **worship**, is able to save us; He will rescue us from the fiery, burning furnace and from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you O king, that we do not **worship** your god and the golden statue that you have set up, we shall not prostrate ourselves." Daniel 3:17-18

For the rabbinical sages to assert that the Aramaic word only has a meaning of service and not worship is clearly a failure in their knowledge of basic hermeneutical methods. The first rule in arriving at the meaning of a word is to thoroughly study the usage of the word throughout the book in which it appears. Had the rabbis done this, there is no way that they could have made their assertion. Now, returning to the question at hand, how can human beings worship a Messiah Who is just a man? The answer is that the Son of Man that Daniel speaks of is the same one that Isaiah tells us is born of a virgin and is called Immanuel. Hence, He is not just a Son of Man (a human being), but He is also the Son of G-d. The name Immanuel means literally, "G-d with us." This fact explains why it was a virgin who conceived a Son and not a woman who conceived by natural means.

Messiah, Who is fully man and fully G-d, is called the Son of G-d because He has two primary roles. The first is to serve His Father in achieving redemption for mankind and the second is to inherit His Father's kingdom and rule the universe for eternity.

Such a concept as the Son of G-d is quite foreign to Judaism today. But the question that must be asked is, "Is this concept biblically justified?" In the next article, we will continue our study of the significance of the term Immanuel and how it is used in the eighth chapter of Isaiah. Is the prophet referring to Messiah or is he referring to, as the rabbis state, either the son of Isaiah or king Hezekiah? We will also use Isaiah 9:5-6 as additional proof for this assertion that Messiah is the Son of G-d.