

# Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 31, Isaiah 7, Messianic Themes Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Wilson, Prophets, Session 31, Isaiah 7, Messianic Themes, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Marv Wilson's Session 31 focuses on Isaiah 7 and its Messianic themes, particularly the **Emmanuel prophecy**. The session explores the historical context of the Syro-Ephraimite war and King Ahaz's lack of faith, contrasting it with God's promise. **Wilson examines the debated translation of "Alma" (young woman) and its relation to "virgin" in different scriptures while analyzing the deeper meaning of Emmanuel: God with us.** The lecture clarifies that while "Alma" doesn't inherently mean "virgo intacta," the context, especially in Matthew's Gospel, clarifies the virgin birth of Jesus. **Finally, Wilson touches upon Catholic dogmas about Mary, including the Immaculate Conception, perpetual virginity, and bodily assumption, distinguishing these from Protestant perspectives.**

**2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Wilson, Prophets, Session 1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Prophetic Literature).**



**Wilson\_Prophets\_Session31.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Wilson, Prophets, Session 31, Isaiah 7, Messianic Themes

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Wilson\_Prophets\_EN\_Session31.pdf":

#### Briefing Document: Isaiah 7 - Messianic Themes

**Overview:** This session focuses on Isaiah 7, specifically the famous "Emmanuel" passage and its immediate and long-term significance. Dr. Wilson examines the historical context, the theological implications, and the linguistic nuances surrounding the key terms. He emphasizes the importance of faith in God amidst political turmoil and addresses the controversy surrounding the translation of "Alma."

#### Key Themes and Ideas:

##### 1. Historical Context: The Syro-Ephraimite War:

- Judah is under threat from a coalition of the northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim) and Syria (Aram) around 735 BC.
- King Ahaz of Judah is being pressured to join this alliance against Assyria.
- Ahaz, fearing the alliance of Ephraim and Syria, refuses to join and instead seeks help from Assyria, demonstrating a lack of faith in God. "The hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken as the trees of a forest are shaken in the wind." (v.2)
- Isaiah is sent by God to encourage Ahaz not to fear this alliance, portraying them as "two smoldering stubs." (v.4) These enemies are "have-beens" and "virtually impotent."

##### 1. The Call to Faith and Trust:

- The central message of the chapter is a call to trust in God's promises rather than seeking political solutions.
- Isaiah tells Ahaz, "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all." (Paraphrased from v. 9). This highlights the connection between faith ("Emunah") and stability. "No faith, no fixity, no confiding, no abiding, you're not going to last."
- Ahaz was very weak in faith, preferring to rely on human power (Assyria) instead of trusting in Yahweh's covenant promises to David.

- God offers Ahaz a sign as a demonstration of his faithfulness, but Ahaz rejects it. "He said, look, I'll give you a carte blanche, I'll give you a blank check, you name it."

#### 1. **Ahaz's Reliance on Assyria:**

- Ahaz instead seeks help from Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria, and becomes a vassal state. "I'm your servant, your son. We're family."
- He even uses temple treasures to pay for Assyrian support. This demonstrates his lack of faith and his misplaced trust in worldly power. "Money talks..."
- This decision only provides temporary relief and ultimately leads to more devastation, with Assyria eventually attacking Judah by 701 BC. "Ahaz was only going to get temporary relief."
- The text uses vivid imagery to show how Assyria will devastate the land and its people: "...described as a razor from beyond the river...to shave the head, to shave the pubic hair, and to shave the beard. All three are mentioned. Clean sweep."

#### 1. **The Emmanuel Prophecy (Isaiah 7:14):**

- God promises a sign: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. The Alma will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Emmanuel."
- The prophecy of Emmanuel, meaning "God with us," is seen as having two levels of fulfillment:
- **Immediate:** A child born in Isaiah's time, possibly Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, the son of Isaiah's second wife, serving as a near-term sign of God's presence and faithfulness. "The immediate Emanuel was the birth of a child to Isaiah in his own day"
- **Ultimate:** A deeper, more profound meaning points to the birth of Jesus, "God with us as Redeemer", as interpreted by Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 1:23).

#### 1. **The Translation of "Alma":**

- The Hebrew word "Alma" is the focus of much debate. Dr. Wilson stresses that it means a young woman of marriageable age and not explicitly "virgin".

- "There is no word in any language in antiquity that in and of itself means Virgo intacta. All Alma means...is a young woman of marriageable age. Presumably a virgin, but not conclusively so."
- He argues that no single word in ancient Near Eastern languages directly conveys "virgo intacta."
- Other terms often translated as "virgin" (e.g., Betula, Parthenos) are also shown to be used in contexts that do not always imply virginity.
- Wilson emphasizes that the context is crucial in understanding the intended meaning and the necessity of qualifiers in specifying virginity.

#### 1. **The Importance of Contextual Interpretation:**

- Dr. Wilson demonstrates how understanding the historical and cultural context sheds light on the true meaning of scripture.
- He uses examples such as the rape of Dinah and the description of Rebecca to highlight the necessity of the qualifiers to clarify the sexual status of an unmarried woman.
- He argues that while the word "Alma" doesn't inherently mean virgin, the deeper significance is that of the virgin birth, but for it to have meaning for Ahaz, it must have an immediate significance. "for it to have any kind of meaning in Isaiah's own day and to Ahaz, it had to have an immediate birth that would be a sign to Ahaz. If the sign to Ahaz is just something coming seven or eight centuries later...I am not convinced that it has a singular and precise meaning."

#### 1. **Mary and Catholic Doctrine:**

- Dr. Wilson briefly discusses the Catholic Church's doctrines surrounding Mary, such as the immaculate conception, her perpetual virginity, and the bodily assumption into heaven.
- He acknowledges that these doctrines are not directly derived from biblical exegesis but have arisen from church tradition, which Catholics accept as equal with the Bible.
- He distinguishes these views from Protestant perspectives, which prioritize individual interpretation of Scripture. "Protestants, on average...do not hold Scripture to be of equal authority compared with Scripture."

- He believes that these doctrines were intended to preserve Mary from the "world of the ancient Neoplatonic world"

**Conclusion:** Isaiah 7 is a complex chapter that speaks to the importance of faith during times of crisis. The Emmanuel prophecy, while having an immediate significance to Ahaz, also has a deeper Messianic meaning fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. Dr. Wilson stresses the importance of understanding the historical context, the linguistic nuances, and the theological significance of these scriptures when seeking to understand the will of God.

This briefing document provides a detailed overview of Dr. Wilson's lecture on Isaiah 7. It can be used for further study and discussion on the topic.

## 4. Study Guide: Wilson, Prophets, Session 31, Isaiah 7, Messianic Themes

### Isaiah 7: Messianic Themes Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What is the immediate historical context surrounding Isaiah 7, and who are the key political figures involved?
2. Why was King Ahaz hesitant to trust in the Lord and how did he respond to the Lord's offer of a sign?
3. What is the significance of the Hebrew word *Alma*, and how has its translation been debated in relation to the concept of the virgin birth?
4. Explain the concept of *sensus plenior* in the context of the Emmanuel prophecy in Isaiah 7.
5. What was the sign that the Lord promised to the house of David, and how was it to be a sign of deliverance?
6. How did Ahaz seek protection from his enemies and what were the consequences of this action?
7. According to the lecture, what are some of the challenges in the translation of the Hebrew and Greek words often interpreted as "virgin?"
8. What are the three dogmas of the Catholic Church that relate to Mary, and how do these contrast with Protestant views?
9. How did the Assyrian invasion of Judah provide only temporary relief for Ahaz and the southern kingdom?
10. How does the lecturer explain the dual fulfillment of the Emmanuel prophecy, and why is it important for Ahaz's time?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The historical context is the Syro-Ephraimite war, where King Pekah of the northern kingdom (Ephraim/Israel) and King Rezin of Syria formed an alliance against Judah. King Ahaz was on the throne of Judah at this time and did not want to join their alliance against Assyria.

2. Ahaz was hesitant to trust in the Lord because he preferred to rely on tangible political power (Assyria) rather than faith. When offered a sign by the Lord, Ahaz refused, because he had already decided to align himself with Assyria for protection.
3. The Hebrew word *Alma* means "young woman of marriageable age," and while it can imply virginity, it does not explicitly mean "virgin." The debate lies in whether *Alma* should be translated as "virgin" or "young woman," especially as it connects to the New Testament interpretation of the virgin birth.
4. *Sensus plenior* refers to the deeper, fuller meaning of a biblical text beyond its immediate context, often pointing to a future fulfillment. In Isaiah 7, the *sensus plenior* of Emmanuel points to the ultimate fulfillment in the birth of Jesus as God with us.
5. The sign was that "the Alma" would be with child and give birth to a son called Emmanuel, meaning "God with us." This was a sign of God's presence and faithfulness, promising deliverance from the immediate threat of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition.
6. Ahaz sought protection by aligning himself with Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria, sending him tribute from the Temple. This action led to temporary relief from the Syro-Ephraimite threat but also resulted in Judah becoming a vassal state under Assyrian control.
7. The lecturer notes that words like *Alma*, *Betula*, and *Parthenos* do not inherently mean *virgo intacta* and are generally interpreted to mean a young woman of marriageable age. It was set phrases, such as those in Genesis 24:16, that clarify if a woman was a virgin.
8. The three Catholic dogmas about Mary are the Immaculate Conception (Mary conceived without original sin), her perpetual virginity, and her bodily assumption into heaven. These contrast with Protestant views which don't typically accept perpetual virginity or the other two dogmas of the Catholic Church.
9. The Assyrian invasion provided temporary relief by conquering the Syro-Ephraimite alliance. However, it was a band-aid solution because Assyria would later, by 701, devastate Judah as well, leading to the siege of Jerusalem.
10. The lecturer explains the dual fulfillment, the prophecy had an immediate fulfillment with a child born during Isaiah's time, likely to Isaiah's second wife, which was a sign to Ahaz of God's presence and temporary deliverance. The

*sensus plenior*, however, pointed to the ultimate fulfillment in Jesus' virgin birth, signifying God's incarnation and redemption.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the political, social, and religious context of Isaiah 7, explaining how these elements contribute to a deeper understanding of the text.
2. Discuss the significance of faith and trust in God as presented in Isaiah 7, contrasting Ahaz's lack of faith with the message of the prophet Isaiah.
3. Explore the various interpretations of the *Alma* prophecy in Isaiah 7, and how different religious traditions have approached this debate throughout history.
4. Compare and contrast the immediate and long-term fulfillment of the Emmanuel prophecy in Isaiah 7, and explain the significance of the *sensus plenior* in interpreting biblical prophecy.
5. Evaluate the contrasting actions and choices of King Ahaz and how his decisions ultimately affected both his kingdom and his faith, and reflect on how these choices are instructive today.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Alma:** A Hebrew word meaning "young woman of marriageable age," often debated in the context of Isaiah 7 and the virgin birth.
- **Betula:** A Hebrew word often translated as "virgin," though it more broadly means an unmarried woman of marriageable age.
- **Parthenos:** A Greek word that can mean "virgin" or "young woman" and was the term used for Alma in the Septuagint.
- **Sensus Plenior:** A Latin term meaning "fuller sense," referring to a deeper, more comprehensive meaning of a biblical text beyond its immediate context.
- **Emmanuel:** A Hebrew name meaning "God with us," a key Messianic title in Isaiah 7.
- **Syro-Ephraimite War:** A conflict in the 8th century BCE in which Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim) formed an alliance to pressure Judah into joining them against Assyria.



- **Merism:** A literary device where two contrasting extremes are used to indicate totality or inclusiveness.
- **Tiglath-Pileser III:** The king of Assyria who Ahaz appealed to for help against the Syro-Ephraimite alliance and who began the destruction of the Northern kingdom.
- **Hezekiah's Water Tunnel:** A water tunnel built decades after the events of Isaiah 7, mentioned in the lecture as an example of a water source that was not available during Ahaz's reign.
- **Immaculate Conception:** A Catholic dogma stating that Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin.
- **Perpetual Virginity:** A Catholic doctrine stating that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life, even after the birth of Jesus.
- **Bodily Assumption:** A Catholic doctrine stating that Mary was bodily taken up into heaven.
- **Virgo Intacta:** A Latin phrase meaning "untouched virgin," used to refer to a woman who has never had sexual relations.
- **Hiphil:** A verb stem in Hebrew that emphasizes the causative or intensive meaning of a verb.
- **Niphal:** A verb stem in Hebrew that emphasizes the passive or reflexive meaning of a verb.

## 5. FAQs on Wilson, Prophets, Session 31, Isaiah 7, Messianic Themes, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### FAQ: Isaiah 7 and the Emmanuel Prophecy

1. **What is the historical context of Isaiah chapter 7?** Isaiah 7 is set around 735 BCE when Judah was threatened by a Syro-Ephraimite alliance. King Pekah of Israel (the northern kingdom) and King Rezin of Syria formed a coalition against Assyria and wanted to force King Ahaz of Judah into their alliance. Ahaz refused, leading the Syro-Ephraimite forces to plan an attack on Jerusalem and potentially replace Ahaz with a puppet king. This left Judah in a state of fear and vulnerability.
2. **What is the significance of the name "Emmanuel" in Isaiah 7?** The name Emmanuel, meaning "God with us," serves as a message of hope during a time of judgment. In its immediate context, it likely referred to a child born to Isaiah (Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz) as an assurance that God would remain faithful to the Davidic dynasty despite Ahaz's lack of faith. The name also holds a deeper, "sensus plenior," or fuller meaning, pointing to the ultimate fulfillment of God being with us through Jesus Christ as understood in Matthew's Gospel.
3. **Why is there debate over the translation of the Hebrew word "alma" in Isaiah 7:14?** The Hebrew word "alma" in Isaiah 7:14 is traditionally translated as "virgin," but more accurately means a "young woman of marriageable age." The debate arises because some translations, particularly the King James Version, render it as "virgin," while the Revised Standard Version (RSV) translates it as "young woman." This has significant theological implications, as "virgin" directly supports the idea of a miraculous virgin birth, while "young woman" does not carry that explicit meaning. There is no single word in ancient Near Eastern languages that directly equates to "virgin intacta," a concept that was later clarified by phrases rather than a single word.

4. **What does Dr. Wilson say about the use of the word *alma* in ancient languages?** Dr. Wilson explains that the term *alma*, as well as *betula* and *parthenos*, all translated at times as "virgin," simply mean "a young woman of marriageable age" in their original contexts. He states that no ancient Near Eastern word in itself, without additional qualification, definitively means "virgo intacta." In some texts, these terms are even used to refer to women who are not virgins, such as married women, rape victims, or concubines. To specifically indicate a woman's virginity, ancient texts utilized additional phrases or qualifiers, much like the phrases used to describe Mary's virginity in the New Testament.
5. **How does the sign of Emmanuel relate to King Ahaz's lack of faith?** King Ahaz demonstrated a profound lack of faith by refusing to trust God's promises and instead seeking an alliance with Assyria. God, through the prophet Isaiah, offered Ahaz a sign as confirmation of his faithfulness, but Ahaz rejected this, choosing to rely on tangible power instead. The sign of Emmanuel was then given as a sign to the House of David, not just to Ahaz. Even though Ahaz would not believe, God would still be faithful and bring the promised Messiah.
6. **What are the two ways that the birth of Emmanuel was fulfilled?** There were two fulfillments of the "Emmanuel" prophecy. The first and immediate fulfillment was the birth of a child to Isaiah's second wife, potentially Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. This birth served as a sign to Ahaz that God would be with Judah, delivering them from the Syro-Ephraimite threat. This provided a local or practical application of the "God with us" concept. The second, fuller fulfillment was the birth of Jesus Christ. This second fulfillment, the *sensus plenior*, is understood as the ultimate expression of "God with us," signifying God's incarnation and salvation for humanity, and it is in this context that Matthew's Gospel uses the Isaiah 7 passage.
7. **What was the long-term impact of Ahaz's decision to align with Assyria?** Ahaz's alliance with Assyria provided only temporary relief from the Syro-Ephraimite threat. However, this decision had disastrous long-term consequences. Eventually, Assyria, under Sennacherib, would turn against Judah, invading and ravaging the land in 701 BCE. The Assyrians would come like swarms of bees, occupying the land and surrounding Jerusalem. This illustrates that Ahaz's lack of faith and reliance on earthly power ultimately led to greater suffering and destruction.

8. **What are the Catholic Church's doctrines related to Mary that are relevant to this passage, and how do they differ from Protestant viewpoints?** The Catholic Church developed three specific doctrines related to Mary, including the immaculate conception, her perpetual virginity, and the bodily assumption. These doctrines are not directly based on biblical exegesis, but rather on Church tradition. Protestants generally reject these doctrines, particularly the immaculate conception and perpetual virginity, emphasizing the need to rely solely on scripture over Church tradition as their authority. Protestants do not hold that original sin was not passed onto Mary through the womb, as Catholics do. The concept of Mary's perpetual virginity is questioned based on biblical texts that mention Jesus' brothers and sisters. This highlights a fundamental difference in the authority and interpretation of Scripture between Catholic and Protestant traditions.