

The Attackers: Frederick Jennings's on Isa 11:2; Detailed Genealogies Informed the Jews of the Lord's Chart Pedigree to the House of David; Records in 1st Century Confirmed Davidic Line to Joseph and & Mary; Controversy about the Virgin Birth; Background on the Septuagint

The first pair ... tell of His *personal* qualifications, what He had, and shall ever have *in Himself*.

The second pair ... speak of His perfections *in relation to His people*, amid whom He takes His place.

The third pair speaks as we should expect, of His relation Godward. The three being *Selfward, Manward, Godward*.

1: "Wisdom and Discernment." He ever was, and ever shall be the very personification of Wisdom. All who come before Him are instantly "discerned;" every hidden thought understood afar off; no word of the tongue but that He knows it altogether (Ps.139:1-4). He is the "Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Let *Him* be the absolute Monarch, and who would not rejoice in the unlimited sway of One who could never err?

2: But we only learn of these qualities as they are called out, and so we next have "Counsel," that is the ability to advise, with unerring intelligence, in every situation, no matter how perplexing it may be. He is indeed ... for "in Him is strength." In His hands *autocratic* rule, so bitterly repudiated just now, would be perfection. (p. 145)

3: "Knowledge and fear of Jehovah." The connection of the two words shows what is meant by "knowledge." It is the capacity of the spirit for discerning God, and man's proper relation to Him. Thus it is linked here with that "fear of Jehovah" in which He, as perfect Man, abounded, never taking one step that was not ordered by God's Word. Even on the throne of all the earth, the highest qualification will be "the fear of Jehovah!" One need hardly point out how directly this contravenes all the current thought of the day. The only "fear" that rulers have who owe all their authority to "the people," is of the people. Their fear is of those *beneath* them, on whose suffrages the continuance of their power depends; not of God above, who no longer exists for all these practical matters. The Holy Scriptures make it only too clear, that the world, rejoicing in the triumph of democracy, will shortly lament that triumph. (pp. 145-46)

But these qualifications for rule of "The Branch" that we have looked at, do not answer the question as to His *benevolence*. He has all *wisdom*, all *power*, every quality of the Head and Hand; but how as to the Heart?—that is of all-importance. How will He use these powers?

The answer to this is included in the last ... of Spirit-qualifications—the fear of Jehovah—which is repeated, thus linking the verses together:

- v. 3: He will delight in the fear of the Lord, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear;
- v. 4: But with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. [NASB]

This fear of Jehovah is very wonderful in its effect, it results in His looking at everything in the light of Jehovah's will. Not deceived will He ever be, in the future, as He never was in the past, by any mere external show (what His eyes see), however plausible it may appear to be, whether in the kiss of a false disciple, or (what His ears hear) in the superficially kindly words of a true one (Matt. 16:23); but with a justice that is absolute, earth's government will be administered.¹ (p. 146)

- (27) The recording of one's genealogical line begins in Scripture as early as Genesis 5 and a thorough presentation of the chart pedigrees of the patriarchs and the twelve tribes of Israel are found in the first nine chapters of First Chronicles. We find this statement in:

1 Chronicles 9:1a - All Israel was enrolled by genealogies; and behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel.

- (28) The reasons for keeping such detailed family trees are based on the importance given by the Mosaic Law to several of the tribes of Israel:

Genealogical accuracy ... was made especially important by the facts that the land was promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that the priesthood was exclusively hereditary, that the royal succession of Judah lay in the Davidic house, that the division and occupation of the land was according to tribes, families, and father' houses; and for the Davididae, at least, that the Messiah was to be of the house of David.²

- (29) Because of keeping these detailed family trees the Jews were able to establish the validity of any person by consulting the record.
- (30) In the first century, when Joseph or Mary, and later, Jesus Christ, made the claim they were descendants of David it was an easy thing to confirm.
- (31) In A.D. 70, the Romans seized Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. One of the casualties of this siege was the loss of the genealogical records that confirmed the tribal relationships of the Jewish people.
- (32) Consequently, the appearance of the Messiah in history had to have occurred before A.D. 70 in order for His identity to be confirmed by public records.
- (33) The only records that remain are those contained in the Gospels of Matthew (Joseph's through the line of Solomon, 1:1-17) and Luke (Mary's through the line of Nathan, 3:23-38).
- (34) Because of the Davidic Covenant, it was imperative that the Messiah's chart pedigree run through David's house but in addition, the Messiah's true humanity must originate from a virgin pregnancy:

¹ F. C. Jennings, *Studies in Isaiah* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, nd), 145-46.

² Philip Wendell Crannell, "Genealogy," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2:1184.

Isaiah 7:14 - The Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin [עַלְמָה ('*almah*)] will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

- (35) The Hebrew noun '*almah* can refer to a "young woman" but context can require the translation of "virgin."
- (36) There has been much controversy among biblical scholars over which translation of the two is to be used in Isaiah 7:14.
- (37) There are two significant clues that confirm the intent of Isaiah's use in Isaiah 7:14. The first comes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint. Its importance and impact is significant in biblical theology and some background about the translation is essential:

The Greek version of the Old Testament commonly known as the Septuagint holds a unique place among translations. Its importance is many-sided. Its chief value lies in the fact that it is a version of a Hebrew text earlier by about a millennium than the earliest dated Hebrew manuscript extant (916 A.D.), a version, in particular, prior to the formal rabbinical revision of the Hebrew which took place early in the 2d century A.D. It is, moreover, a pioneering work; there was probably no precedent in the world's history for a series of translations from one language into another on so extensive a scale. It was the first attempt to reproduce the Hebrew Scriptures into another tongue. It is one of the outstanding results of the breaking-down of international barriers by the conquests of Alexander the Great and the dissemination of the Greek language, which were fraught with such vital consequences for the history of religion. The cosmopolitan city which he founded in the [Nile] Delta witnessed the first attempt to bridge the gulf between Jewish and Greek thought. The Jewish commercial settlers at Alexandria, forced by circumstances to abandon their language, clung tenaciously to their faith; and the translation of the Scriptures into their adopted language, produced to meet their own needs, had the further result of introducing the outside world to a knowledge of their history and religion. Then came the most momentous event in its history, the starting-point of a new life; the translation was taken over from the Jews by the Christian church. It was the Bible of most writers of the New Testament. Not only are the majority of their express citations from Scripture borrowed from it, but their writings contain numerous reminiscences of its language. Its words are household words to them. It laid for them the foundations of a new religious terminology. It was a potent weapon for missionary work, and when versions of the Scriptures into other languages became necessary, it was in most cases the LXX and not the Hebrew from which they were made.

The LXX was the Bible of the early Greek Fathers, and helped to mold dogma. Its language gives it another strong claim to recognition. Uncouth and unclassical as much of it appears, we now know that this is not wholly due to the hampering effects of translation. "Biblical Greek," once considered a distinct species, is now a rather discredited term. The hundreds of contemporary papyrus records (letters, business and legal documents, etc.) recently discovered in Egypt illustrate much of the vocabulary and grammar and go to show that many so-called "Hebraisms" were in truth integral parts of the *koinē*, or "common language," i.e. the international form of Greek which, since the time of Alexander, replaced the old dialects, and of which the spoken Greek of today is the lineal descendant. The version was made for the populace and written in large measure in the language of their everyday life.³

- (38) It is stated by Thackeray that New Testament writers consulted the Septuagint to confirm their choice of words when quoting Old Testament passages into the Koine Greek of the New Testament.
- (39) This is incorrect since the Septuagint is not a text inspired by the guidance of the Holy Spirit but produced simply from the linguistic talents of seventy elders sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria for the task.
- (40) On the contrary, the New Testament is inspired and when quotes were borrowed from the Septuagint they were done so with the approval and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- (41) Therefore, to confirm the virgin pregnancy of Mary, we first compare the translation of Isaiah 7:14 found in the Septuagint with its quote found in Matthew 1:23:

³ Henry St. John Thackeray, "Septuagint," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 4:2722.