

include the idea that the particular young woman is a virgin. It is occasionally translated as "virgin" in our English Bible, though sometimes<sup>†</sup> as "young woman." A typical occurrence is found in Genesis 24:43, where the servant of Abraham is looking for a wife for Isaac. Here it speaks of a young woman coming out to draw water. Naturally the young woman for whom he is looking is to be a virgin.

It is important to note that the Septuagint translators, writing possibly two centuries before the time of Christ, translated the word in Isaiah 7:14 by the Greek word for "virgin." They considered that the passage spoke of something remarkable and mysterious, something which had not yet been fulfilled.

For the Christian, Matthew's statement settles the matter. This verse is a prediction of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is wonderfully and literally fulfilled in Him. He was actually born of a virgin, and He is certainly Immanuel, God incarnate in human flesh.

There is no known fulfillment of this verse at the time of Ahaz. Either it was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, or it was not fulfilled at all.

The next two verses present a most remarkable transition of thought. In verses 15 and 16 there was no continuation of the rebuke, but rather words of blessing for the people of God. Though Ahaz is reprobate and deserves nothing good at the hand of God, God is going to deliver the land. Verse 14 says that God will send One who is to be His true representative on the throne of David. In verses 15 and 16 Isaiah leaves aside the question of when this One is to come. He simply takes His life as a measuring stick. The unexpressed assumption is: "Suppose that this predicted One were to be born next year." On this assumption the conclusion is: "Then butter and honey should he eat, when he would know to refuse the evil and choose the good." The translation of the King James Version "that he may know" is not very good here. The American Standard Version translates it: "when he

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<sup>†</sup>In the King James Version, this Hebrew word is translated *virgin* four times, *maid* twice, and *damsel* once; it is never translated by *young woman*.