

The Virgin Birth and Mary the as Perpetual Virgin: A Jewess and the Temple

To understand in Bible-interpretation the prediction of the virgin birth is linked, weirdly, to Mary's perpetual virginity. We have already seen in previous articles the importance of typology, officially used by the Apostle Paul and taught to Luke as God's manner of interpreting Scripture. Typology is endorsed through the New Testament (Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11; 1 Peter 3:19-21). On another note, we know self-styled Christians committed to the fundamentals (divinity of Christ, **virgin birth**, etc.) or fundamentalists and historical Christians (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, etc.) are unwaveringly committed to the Hebrew Scriptures predicting the virgin birth fulfilled in Jesus's birthday. However, more controversial is a rather odd fixation on the need for Mary not to exercise perpetual virginity, that is, after having Jesus she is thought by mostly fundamentalists to have had normal carnal relations with her putative (or real) husband Joseph.

This little work is going to show the reader step by step the places and ways that the virgin birth is predicted, but also show how it is very difficult to divorce Mary's perpetual virginity from the prophecies and first-century Christian literature supporting Mary's perpetual virginity. Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and fundamentalists should be able to enjoy a deeper set of arguments defending Isaiah 7:14, & 9:5-7, to show the Jewish prophetic texts surrounding the virgin birth. On the other hand, the investigation should serve to help them contemplate in Scripture the perpetual virginity of Mary as a rather obvious association with the virgin birth. Let's begin!

1. Virgin Birth: Eve's Seed, unhewn stone for altars, and Temple not-made-by-human-hands

All salvation history, for Judeo-Christians of the first centuries, hinged upon Jesus's identity as (Mr.) "**Wonderful**" aka "**Angel of Great Counsel**" (LXX Isaiah 9:5-6). Christians have an advantage by using both the Hebrew text (called the Masoretic Text or MT) and the more ancient witness to Old Testament called "the Septuagint" (abbreviated LXX). This latter text is essential for understanding completely the Jewish Bible, for it acts as a kind of virtual commentary by translation. Jesus's Nativity as the fulfillment of prophecy is mainly substantiated by the Greek Old Testament.

To start, LXX Gen 3:15 mentioned the relatively strange prophecy that one day a woman would produce from her own seed (not Adam's!) a child who would crush the head of the serpent: "[o Satan,] I will put enmity between you, and 'the woman' and *her seed*; He (the fruit of her loins) will watch [to strike] your head and you his heel." Otherwise, both New and Old Testaments are generally concerned with only "male seed" or children from patriarchs' loins. The seed of Mary alone (not of Joseph or of any earthly Father) is born from her. This is already implied by St. Paul; have a look!

Passages	English Trans.	Greek Text
Genesis 3:15 <i>Protoevangelium:</i> <i>woman-seed will be put at enmity with her enemy</i>	I will put enmity in between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed	ἔχθραν θήσω ἀνά μέσον σου καὶ ἀνά μέσον τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ ἀνά μέσον τοῦ σπέρματός σου καὶ ἀνά μέσον τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς
Galatians 4:4 Jesus-seed is uniquely of maternal flesh	God sent his son, born [from the seed(!)] of woman	ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικὸς
Romans 1:3 Maternal flesh connects Jesus to the seed of promise	Regarding his son born from the seed of David in his [mother's] flesh	περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα.

Paul connects Jesus's birth *only* to a woman and afterwards Galatians expands Romans regarding this idea and makes it more explicit; the female provided him seed (or sperm or in our language), i.e., the ovum, so that Jesus had a right to call himself a "son of David" according to the flesh he received from Mary. Of course, the kingly lineage of Solomon-David can be traced back to Abraham's seed/sperm/paternal line.

Paul associates a **woman** and her **seed** in a refurbished version of medical terminology among Greeks: "**born from the seed of...**"¹ Yet, Paul did not read Hippocrates, Speussipus, or Aristotle, for their terminology was adopted as a medically sound translation for Wisdom of Solomon (written originally either in Hebrew or Aramaic):

Wisdom 7:
1 I myself also am a mortal man, like to all, and the offspring of him that was first made of the earth, [<i>= Son of Man/Adam, like unto Jesus</i>]
2 And in my mother's womb [not seed(!)] was fashioned to be flesh in the time of ten months, being compacted in blood, out of the seed of man (ἐκ σπέρματος ἀνδρὸς) , and the <u>pleasure that came with sleep</u> . [<i>This is true of Solomon, but not Jesus who is not from such pleasure and male seed</i>]
3 And when I was born (ἐγὼ δὲ γενόμενος) , I drew in the common air, and fell upon the earth, which is of like nature, and the first voice which I uttered was crying, as all others do. [<i>This is true of Jesus in Luke 1</i>]
4 I was nursed in swaddling clothes, and that with cares. [<i>This is repeated in Luke 1</i>]
5 For there is no king that had any other beginning of birth. [<i>This is true of Jesus</i>]
6 For all men have one entrance into life, and the like going out. [<i>Jesus too</i>]
7 Wherefore I prayed, and understanding was given me: I called upon God, and the "spirit of wisdom " [<i>compare Ephesians 1:17 = Christ's spirit</i>] came to me.
8 I preferred her [wisdom] before scepters and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her.
9 Neither compared I unto her any uncut (useless[!]) ² stone (αὐτῆ ἰλίθον ἄτιμῆτον), ³ because all gold in respect of her is as a little sand, and silver ⁴ shall be counted as clay (πηλὸς) before her. ⁵

¹ The Greek translator is likely familiar with the ancient physician Hippocrates, *De natura pueri, de morbis iv*, Oeuvres complètes d'Hippocrate, vol. 7, ed. É. Littré (Paris: Baillière, 1851), sec. 22. This phraseology is employed precisely by Speussipus and Aristotle prior to being adopted into the translation of the LXX.

² See LXX 117[= MT 118]:22-23: "the stone which the builders rejected"; Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:10-11; 1 Peter 2:6-8.

Paul clearly avoids Solomon’s phrase: “**out of the seed of man**” using the instead a Scriptural substitute at the only other place in the Septuagint mentioning being born of a wife/woman: (Ezrah 10:3: “[the men rejected] **women** and **children born out of women** [τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ αὐτῶν]”). This explanation mirrors that of the ancient Christian Severian of Antioch:

After the banishment from paradise and the loss of immortal life, Adam **knew his wife** (see **below**) and thus carnal relations were introduced, this mixture of emissions that is more appropriate to animals than to human beings endowed with intellect and that is the foreboding of corruption and death, though it assures the continuance of the race. Acting, then, with such **wisdom** and love toward humanity, what does Emanuel do? He reunites both natures in one, [...] He who in the beginning fashioned human beings from the earth was fashioned from the Virgin, taking flesh from the Holy Spirit and from her. This flesh is consubstantial with ours, which is animated by a soul endowed with intellect. And this did not take place through sleep, by concupiscence or with the emission of human seed. What characterized our creation at the beginning was a coming in the flesh without seed. But for us, what distinguishes this second way of **coming into existence is to come entirely from the woman.** (Likewise, the conception took place in time, because “the time came for her to have her child.”) The [...] mother of God [...] took place in a marriage but [...] everything began without her having experienced carnal union and was accomplished in virginity, since, after the birth, the seal of her virginity remained intact. (Cathedral Homilies 7.10–12).⁶

³ For the combination of Temple stones being *both* “precious” and “unhewn,” see MT 1 Kings 5:17. This is translated into Greek at LXX 3 Kings 6:1: “large precious stones onto the foundation of the dwelling and unhewn stones (λίθους μεγάλους τιμίους εἰς τὸν θεμέλιον τοῦ οἴκου καὶ λίθους ἀπελεκήτους).” This explains 1 Peter 2:6-8, commenting on Jesus as cornerstone who is “precious (ἐντίμιον):”

For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and **precious cornerstone**, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “**The stone the builders rejected** has become the cornerstone,” and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”

I suspect a corrupted reading of the Greek is maintained because it formed a propitious wordplay. So, the Hebrew for an “unhewn” stone (Exodus 20:22ff; Deuteronomy 27:4-6) is *gāzīl* and does not carry a wordplay of “precious.” The Greek Exodus 20:25 says: “from stones... (with) the same which you shall not build as hewn (ἐκ λίθων [...] οὐκ οικοδομήσεις αὐτοὺς **τιμητούς**.)” When Wisdom 7:1-9 (clearly mirroring Deuteronomy 27:4-6) was translated into Greek, there was likely a scribal error or correction. “Unhewn stone (λίθον ἄτιμητον)” was misread as “worthless stone (λίθον ἀτιμητον).” For example, Liddell & Scott cite this passage as nonsensical. However, Solomon *in Greek* may actually be saying that **wisdom** is of greater value than the stone of the Temple rejected (and, thus, unhewn) that becomes God’s cornerstone. This fits well with Jesus-eternal-wisdom claiming his “Temple” (flesh) as destroyed and rebuilt. It stands as a resurrection verse. To strengthen my hypothesis, Old Latin manuscripts notice a problem with this reading that coincides with the Latin 1 Peter’s corrected version: “**precious stone** (*lapidem pretiosum* [(ἐν)τίμιον]).” Clearly Peter plays on the common unhewn-thrown-away-worthless tradition of the stone and therefore designates it “worthy.” See *Sapientia Solomonis*, Vetus Latina, vol. 11: Die Reste der latlateinischen Bibel, ed. P. Sabatier (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1977), 1:364.

⁴ This is reminiscent of the gold and silver that is hewn into pagan gods in MT Exodus 20:23, but which is contrasted to the true worship-stones “**unhewn**” or “**uncut**” by human hands (Exodus 20:25). The made from this stones (Exodus 20:24) is called “altar of Adam” or “altar of earth” (= in contrast above to worthless sand).

⁵ Unfortunately, of the Aramaic and Hebrew fragments that have been recovered, only Wisdom 7:1 – 8, it extant. This leaves us guessing as to what the original reading of Hebrew/Aramaic Wisdom 7:9 was. See Alexander Marx, “An Aramaic Fragment of the Wisdom of Solomon,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 40 (1921): 58-59.

⁶ See *Patrologia Orientalis* 38.2 (175):315–17 [71–73].

Now, Solomon dare not compare **Wisdom** (pre-Incarnate Jesus), who is the “**wisdom** and power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24), either to impotent pagan idols of **gold and silver**, or to God’s approved “**uncut stone**” to build a Mosaic altar, a patriarchal altar, and altar of the first Temple. Solomon reflects upon a **wisdom** greater than even these “**unhewn**” (viz., God-made at creation for making altars) Temple **stones**. Luke, as in his Gospel, records Stephen in Acts connecting the “tent” and the “Ark” with these prophecies. We have already shown fully that Mary is for Luke (and here in his Acts of the Apostles as well) the type (or a sort of more perfect fulfillment) of the tent and Ark of the Covenant. Let’s then look at how this all gets combined into Jesus’s role as the Temple and stone and altar “**unhewn**” or “not made by human hands.” Stephen under inspiration of the Holy Spirit declares:

Acts 7:44-50:

“Our ancestors had the tent/tabernacle (ἡ σκηνή) of the covenant law with them in the wilderness. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the type (τὸν τύπον) he had seen. After receiving the tabernacle, our ancestors under [Israelite] Jesus/Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, who enjoyed God’s favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob (σκήνωμα τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ). But it was Solomon who built a house for him. “However, the Most High does not live in dwellings made by human hands (χειροποιήτοις) (viz., of hewn stones).⁷ As the prophet says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand (ἡ χεὶρ) made all these things?”

David and Solomon know well that “my Name” or the name and presence of “Yahweh” (which Jesus uses uniquely to refer to himself in the New Testament) do not dwell in a fixed Temple (1 Samuel 7:5) but “my Name” is present and active among “my Fathers who walked before him” all over the world. This carries on a prophecy from the time of Patriarch Joseph’s blessing of his grandson “Fruit/Ephraim” (Compare Elizabeth’s greeting to Mary: “Blessed is the ‘fruit/Ephraim’ of your womb” [Luke 1:42]). Joseph declares as a type of Christ (crossing his hands in the form of a cross):

“And [Joseph] blessed and said: ‘God *before whom my fathers walked*, Abraham, and Isaac, [... who is] the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless these boys and let be named ‘my Name’ (YHWH) by them and the name of my Fathers Abraham and Isaac and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.” (MT Genesis 48:15-16)

Only Jacob and David dare use “my Name” to refer to their seed or that YHWH will somehow be in their offspring as his dwelling place. All other Old Testament references are uniquely to the Angel of the Lord or YHWH himself as “my Name” until Jesus reveals that he is the name under which every knee bends. As Hilary sums up the biblical interpretative tradition in the early 300s:

The same one who is called the angel of God is the Lord and God. But, according to the Prophet, the Son of God is ‘the angel of the great council.’ In order that the distinction of persons should be complete, He was called the angel of God, for He who is God from God is also the angel of

⁷ This word is very important for it is almost always used to talk about constructing an idol: LXX Leviticus 26:1, 30; Isaiah 2:18, 10:11, 16:12, 19:3, 21:9, 26:30, 31:7, 46:6; Daniel 5:4, 23, 6:28, 46:6; Judith 8:18, & Wisdom of Solomon (!) 14:8.

God. But that due honor should be rendered to Him, He was also proclaimed as the Lord and God.⁸

Somehow YHWH's name is supposed to be in Joseph/Jacob's seed and to live "by them" that is the one seed of Abraham expressed in the two boys. Ephraim or "fruit [of the womb]," however, is hinted at being the real blessing for this child named "Fruit" is the obvious one to receive the blessing to "grow." When Mary's "fruit" is "blessed" by the angel, the New Ephraim is blessed that literally has "my Name" (*Shem*) in the seed or YHWH. YHWH is not in a temple but walking-with-the-fruit/Ephraim, that is Incarnate in Jesus. Now this will be multiplied over all the earth by the adopted Son by those who are baptized "into the name [of Jesus]."

Conclusion: We have learned that Jesus is **the seed** of a woman and seed of Abraham & David in whom "my Name" or YHWH dwells and Jesus has his "tent" (a metaphor for flesh in Old and New Testament) or flesh from as if the skin over the ark or tent designed by YHWH and given to Moses. Jesus is the Temple or Incarnation from a virgin's flesh who is not hewn or manmade. Instead he is not-made-by-human hands. This seed, flesh, or tent is uniquely from a woman but, contrariwise, Solomon's natural birth "**from the seed of a man**" is implicitly contrasted by Paul to the virgin birth. Just because Mary is Ark (for Luke especially) and the skin-tent (donor) to Jesus of his Temple/tent/flesh, this does not mean she is automatically a virgin. Instead, we will have to see other Old Testament prophecies to show that the Ark of the Covenant will be a virgin.

2. Virgin Birth II: Abraham to Virgin Birth Prophecies and Mary's Annunciation

I next recount the role of "the Angel of Lord" in the Old Testament. Before the Incarnation, Jesus was not yet flesh. However, after he came, he instructed the people that he'd already been around for eternity. Recall that "Angel of the Lord" is almost always code for saying God-appearing-in-guise. At creation, in Genesis 1:2–3, the Word of the Lord and his Spirit descended into a vault filled with water. By touching water, life came out. Note the Father "sending" out his Word and his Spirit cooperating with the Father's Word. This vault is strangely like a womb. In fact, Mary's womb (Luke 1:35) admits two divine beings similarly to descend there to bring about a miraculous kind of life never before seen. Additionally, the Word of the Lord came to Noah (Genesis, chapters 5–6) in a command to him, like Yahweh commanding that creation be made earlier in Genesis. At God's word, Noah was inspired to send out a dove over water to confirm the beginning of a new creation. Once we see Yahweh's pattern is to send his Word, which in turns sends his Spirit, then we see the entire pattern of God's action in the universe and in the sacraments, especially as noticed by many ancient Christian writers.

This pattern allows us to arrive at Abraham's anticipation of a miraculous birth of some kind of angelic or heavenly being to save God's people. We begin at Genesis chapter 18. Abraham, as in Rublev's famous icon of the Trinity, encounters three humanlike angels, or are they? The sacred writer switches from referring to the angels in the singular, as Yahweh, then in

⁸ St. Hilary Poitiers, *The Trinity*, ed R.J. Deferrari, trans. S. McKenna, Fathers of the Church (Washington DC: CUA press, 1954): 25:112.

the plural. Here, God hints at his incomprehensibility.⁹ Abraham sees three beings, Father, Son, and Spirit. When Abraham saw the Lord (three angels), he fell down prostrate. Like the ceremony of Jesus at the Last Supper –signifying the baptism of the Apostles– Abraham washes the feet of the angels, for Jesus was himself baptized, and then washed in turn the feet of his disciples and ate the Last Supper. Finally, Abraham brings the angels three loaves of bread. So, too, Paul’s conversion includes ritual washing and eating immediately following. We should notice that Jesus claimed that Abraham had actually seen Jesus “and was glad” (John 8:56). Jesus was quite serious. Recall, Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to Abraham’s Sarah who made three loaves (for the Father, Son, and Spirit): “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened” (Matthew 13:33).

Jesus recounted his personal ministry and preaching the Gospel of the Incarnation to Abraham during his time with Abraham under the oak saying: “But I do know [the Father] and I keep his word. Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.” But the Jews said to him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?’” (John 8:55–7). Jesus recalled his visit to Abraham’s “tent” as the prefigurement or pattern or prototype of a miracle that would hint at his own angelic coming in the flesh from Mary’s donation.

Jesus, as we said, spoke about Abraham’s wife Sarah who made three loaves (for the Father, Son, and Spirit) at their visit: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.” To understand Sarah’s imperfect prefiguring Mary, notice in Genesis 18 that Sarah is in front of a “tent.” The term “tent” is code for flesh in passages of the Old and New Testament. For instance, as a type for us, Christ’s flesh in the tomb “pitches a tent [read: ‘flesh’] in hope” to see God’s face (Acts 2:26). Paul asserts that our earthly “tent” (bodies) passes away but we enter the heavenly “house not-made-by-human-hands” (= dwelling with the body of Jesus) (2 Corinthians 5:1; compare Hebrews 8:2-5, 9:11). As “tentmaker” (Acts 18:3), Paul prepares people’s flesh for glory! When Jesus at the end of time comes, he is put “on the throne” pitching his tent in the saints (σκηνώσσει ἐπ’ αὐτούς) and he pastures them from the heavenly throne forever (Revelation 7:15-17).

Now, this angelically disguised Father, Son, and Spirit announce a miraculous birth to Sarah at her “tent,” or in her “flesh” and she laughs seemingly incredulous. About 2000 years later, the Evangelist Luke records Mary similarly saying the exact opposite. When a created angel –clearly named Gabriel– announces that Jesus “the power of the Most High” and the Holy Spirit will come upon her (Luke 1:35), she –though like Sarah not understanding everything – says piously “So be it (according to your word)” or “Amen.”

⁹ This is standard interpretation. See for example quotes provided by Sheridan, M. (Ed.), *Genesis 12–50* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 61, 63–64, 66: St. Ephraim the Syrian: “Therefore the Lord, who had just appeared to him at the door of the tent, now appeared to Abraham clearly in one of the three. Abraham then fell down and worshiped him.”; St. Ambrose: “Abraham, who was glad to receive strangers, faithful to God and tireless in his service and prompt in fulfilling his duty, saw the Trinity typified.”; St. Caesarius of Arles, He received the three men and served them loaves out of three measures. “Why is this, brothers, unless it means the mystery of the Trinity?”

It is highly significant that Sarah's annunciation happens at her tent but that she never joins Abraham to be overshadowed under the oak of Mamre, which shows that Isaac is not the child of promise, who is hinted to have the name (Mr.) "**Wonderful**." The "overshadowing" and "shade" are also code for Yahweh's most intensive presence possible. Sarah's laughter leads to her rebuke that signals that the miracle of *Isaac's* conception will *not* be from "the woman's seed" (Genesis 3:15) but will be only from a normal act of marital love. The Trinity under the shade of the overshadowing oak prophetically hints to Sarah: "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything **too wonderful** for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:13–4). This is important, for Mary in Luke's Gospel will say oppositely that she is under a life-long vow of virginity, so how can she have a child (we'll see the Biblical evidence below in section 3). Notice, "...shall bear a child" are the very words used by Gabriel of Mary in Luke's Gospel. The Trinitarian prophecy follows, namely, that a miracle child is a case of what is only called "**wonderful**." Yet, Isaac is not the most **wonderful** thing the Lord has in store. We will find out that "too **wonderful**" is not the name of an event, but of a person; Mr. **Wonderful**, if you will! Here the Hebrew version of the Old Testament is equally important for us to get the whole picture. Soon, "**Wonderful**" will be revealed as the name that "Angel of the Lord" himself! For now, in salvation history, we should note the Sarah stands as a hint, or a foreshadowing, of some more miraculous conception of a miracle child that will make Isaac's situation pale in comparison. Sarah didn't know it, but she served as a pattern to recognize the moment when a perfect person, who will be the woman of Genesis 3:15, whose personal seed or singular conception, to produce what Sarah knows as "what is too **wonderful**" in comparison to her sterility miraculously lifted and a child given to her in old age. What would Sarah have experienced, if only she had bothered to step under the overshadowing oak of Mamre with three divine persons? This would presumably have been like Mary's annunciation, but indeed Sarah lacked the holiness attributed to Mary in Luke's Gospel. It appears that special qualities beyond Sarah were planned to be part and parcel of being Jesus's biological mother.

The most important revelation of a "**wonderful**" miracle next occurs in the book of Judges chapter 13. We see here the basic elements for God's fulfilling his promise to Abraham. Here, we begin the chapter by noticing that "the Philistines" did evil to Israel for 40 years; a propitious prefiguring of Jesus, who afterward will inaugurate a fast of forty days. Lest it just be thought that this is one of many cases of the sacred number 40, we should realize that the divine-like child, Samson, will be born in this chapter: "**He who shall begin to deliver Israel from (...) the Philistines**" (Judges 13:5). Eventually, this phraseology is changed by "**save the people from the Philistines**" in subsequent Scripture (e.g. 1 Samuel 7:8). Compare this to Matthew 1:21: "She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for **he shall save his people from their sins**." Samson is styled to be something like "superman" with powers that seems unbelievable, and this is with good reason. Although Jesus is the invisible and immaterial Word of God united to flesh, Samson is merely human –if barely so– as Samson does Herculean exploits of the flesh (for example, military marvels). This sets up the Old Testament to anticipate that whoever fulfills the type of Samson in the New Testament must be able to do signs and

wonders greater than these. The bar is set very high for what kind of marvels this wonderchild must perform. Jesus's more **wonderful** marvels contrary to laws of nature do surpass Samson, but it is his moral perfection in contrast to Samson that will signal a prophetic shift of focus in the upcoming prophecy of the virgin birth (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus's coming will save us principally from spiritual, not entirely from our political, maladies. The political order is not guaranteed eternally on the earth only holiness. In this, Jesus can be a blessing for all nations, since the one thing shared between many cultures, languages, and peoples is the divinely wrought soul or rationality of humans, which needs deliverance from unruly thoughts and passions.

The Angel of the Lord named (Mr.) **Wonderful** (viz., pre-Incarnate Jesus) tells Samson's Father, Manoah, something that will serve as the pattern for Samsonite-Nazirites in the future (Judges 13:15): (1.) The mother makes a vow (she must promise never – as a Nazirite female – to drink wine or grape) (2.) the Nazirite shall belong to the Lord as *one holy from the womb* (Judges 13:7: “ἅγιον...ἔσται...ἀπὸ γαστρὸς...”), and (3.) there is associated with such Nazirites an offering, whether symbolic or a burnt offering (*hōlāh*) as part of a ritual (Judge 13:16). Strangely, however, it is (Mr.) **Wonderful** who sacrifices himself in a fire and no explicit mention of sacrifice is made in the passage with regard Samson, as if the Angel of the Lord is the original being that is a holocaust. This pattern of a vow, sacrifice of a miracle, and child-turned-Nazirite recurs again with Hanna and Samuel:

Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord's house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. (1.) And she made a vow, saying, “Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then (3.) I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, (2.) and no razor will ever be used on his head.” (1 Samuel 1:9-11)

Ultimately at last at Mary's future Annunciation and Nativity. Samson needed to become a **Nazirite before she was worthy of bearing a godlike child of promise to deliver Israel**. Of course, Samson never cuts his hair in his type of Nazirite vow. In this case, there is no termination to the vow, of either the mother or of the son.

Apparently, Matthew (2:23): “He shall be called a Naz(i)rene” meant to play on this Old Samsonite-**Nazirite** prophecy fulfilled with Jesus-Samsonite-Nazirite. Jesus is always depicted with unshorn hair. Mary speaks the same phrases as the women Nazarites; namely, the Mother of Samson and Anna (mother of the prophet Samuel). But Matthew hints that Jesus is born in “**Nazareth**”¹⁰ (compare LXX Judges 13:5, 7: “**Ναζιραῖος**”), while Samson is established immediately by God as “a **Nazirite** from his mother womb.” Like Abraham-Sarah-Isaac, Manoah-Mother-Samson only imperfectly hint at the future perfection in Yahweh-Mary-Jesus. So, Israel must await the perfect deliverer. Jesus of **Nazareth** signals the divine comedy by which both a Samsonite Nazirite is dedicated to God from the womb, but who also is symbolized as both successor and bloodline of David by his birth in Bethlehem. His early-womb and childhood period are spent in Nazareth, while his birthday is in Bethlehem – as someone already dedicated in utero to God like Samson and Samuel.

¹⁰ From the verb (נָזַר *nazar*), to consecrate oneself; Nazareth (given the Galilean pronunciation) would indicate “consecrating” and “*nazir*” is the one consecrated from the womb.

If Genesis 3:15, or the “seed of woman,” will one day deliver God’s people from Adam’s sin, God only selected manly “seed of Abraham” so far in Abraham-Isaac-Jacob, Samson, and even Samuel. The mention of “too **wonderful**” in comparison Sarah’s child in Genesis 18:14 is supplemented by (Mr.) **Wonderful** revealing himself as the Angel of the Lord present at miraculous fertility and child-conception so far. Hanna is another case of this, but Mary’s f Annunciation and birth of him who is called “**Wonderful**” is exceptional. Mr. **Wonderful**, vaguely revealed to be one of the angelic Trinity at the oak of Mamre, is the same **Wonderful** producing Sampson by miracle.

Importantly, however, the prefiguring annunciations of Mary culminate in a prophecy to the line of King David before the political destruction of Israel beginning around 700 BC. The seed of Abraham was being constantly accompanied by Yahweh in its political history. However, even in great prosperity, there was great sin that displeased God. So, the Lord provided for the political destruction of the kingdom in consequence of sin. This suggested that sin was the real culprit, not poor practice of polyscience. Consequently, the prophet Isaiah spoke of the politically weak but spiritually strong Davidic King, Hezekiah, as prefiguring of the coming of the “**wonderful**” child to redeem and save God’s people. In his prophecy we see two entirely familiar elements, namely, (1.) a miraculous shadow or miracle to Hezekiah (like that of Mamre and the shadow of the Ark of the Covenant) and (2.) someone named (Mr.) **Wonderful** associated with a miraculous birth. What is more, by use of both the Hebrew and Greek Bibles, we notice that they equally attest to child of promise to be Mr. **Wonderful**. The Septuagint (LXX) calls the child born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), “the **Angel of Great Counsel**” (LXX Isaiah 9:6), while the Hebrew calls him by his Judge 13 name: “**Wonderful**.” Both of them point back to the place where an Angel = **Wonderful**, namely, the Angel at the annunciation to Samson’s mom, and “Mr. **Wonderful**’s” counsel given to Manoah and his wife.

His name is called **Angel of Great Counsel** [Hebrew: **Wonderful**] for I will bring peace upon the rulers [. . .] His government will be great and of his peace there will be no end: upon the throne of David to establish it kingdom with judgment and with righteousness, from henceforth and forever. (LXX Isaiah 9:6–7)

No longer is there a hint of something “**too wonderful**” to say by the divine angel in Genesis 18:14, no longer does a counseling Angel called “too **Wonderful**” stand outside of the womb blessing it for a child, but now the Angel-**Wonderful** is incarnate or pre-Incarnate Jesus is predicted to come into a young maiden’s womb. This follows upon the heels of the most ancient reading of the Old Testament: “Behold, a virgin (παρθένης) will have and will bear a son and you will call his name Emmanuel (God-with-us) (ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένης ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ)” (LXX Isaiah 7:14). This phrase is used only in three places in the whole Bible: (1) Mr. **Wonderful**’s prediction of Samson, (2.) The prediction of Mr. **Wonderful**’s birth, (3.) Mary’s birthing Jesus. Augustine provides this very same exegesis:

Earlier times were granted the prophets inspired and filled with the Word of God; we have been granted the Word of God himself as the prophet. But Christ, the Lord of the prophets, [is] a prophet in the same way as Christ, the Lord of angels, [is] an angel. For he himself also was called an **Angel of Great Counsel**. But even so, what does the prophet say elsewhere? That not

as a legate nor as an angel, but he himself, coming, will save them, that is, for saving them he will not send a legate, he will not send an angel, but he himself will come. Who will come? The Angel himself.¹¹

Now we see the link: Sarah's less-than-**too-wonderful** Isaac is not the child of promise, nor Samson whom Mr. **Wonderful** miraculously brings into existence, but rather the Angel-**Wonderful** or pre-Incarnate Jesus become God-with-us in a virgin's womb. At the moment of Mary's birthing, we come full circle for the angel Gabriel says of Mary's conception (using Genesis 18:14 verbatim): "For nothing is impossible/too **wonderful** for God" (Luke 1:37).¹² Here it is! The child is conceived by Mary, Gabriel immediately announced to be "too/Mr. **Wonderful**" as mentioned first in Genesis 18:14, then in Judges 13, then in Isaiah 9:6 – from the line of Abraham and Isaac –upon the earth in Mary! But *how do we prove that Luke professes her not only a virgin but a perpetual virgin?*

3. Luke's Gospel and its Definitive Teaching about Mary's Perpetual Virginity

Luke is a master storyteller. If we look at Luke chapter one from the perspective of his quotes that are meant to put meat on the bones of his claims of both typology and prophecy fulfillment, we find Luke's story of Mary, the virgin birth, and Mary's perpetual virginity in about five tiers of texts!

- (1.) Tier one for the virgin birth are sections from Genesis from Abraham and Sarah's annunciations
- (2.) Tier two, for the virgin birth are passages from Samson's mother's annunciation
- (3.) Tier three for Mary's perpetual virginity are from Japhtha and the dedication of his daughter to perpetual virginity as the result of the the Holy Spirit inspiring a singular vow to Yahweh
- (4.) Tier four for the virgin birth is Anna's annunciation
- (5.) Tier five are references to Mary as the Ark of the Covenant (in a previous article) that are not emphasized here

Let's compare the texts: Please pay especial attention to the **yellow highlights** below:

¹¹ Augustine of Hippo, *Tractates on the Gospel of John 11-27*, ed. T.P. Halton, trans. J.W.Rettig, Fathers of the Church (Washington DC: CUA Press, 1988), 79:38.

¹² Tertullian knew the force of this argument, even used by competing Christian sects, in the late-second and early-third centuries. See Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, ed. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, and A. C. Coxe, trans. P. Holmes, *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 3:605: "Therefore, they argue, it was not difficult for God to make Himself both a Father and a Son, contrary to the condition of things among men. For a barren woman to have a child against nature was no difficulty with God; nor was it for a virgin to conceive. Of course nothing is 'too hard [**wonderful**] for the Lord.'"

LXX (Judges, Samuel):	Luke 1:30 & following:
<p>Anna said: “your slave has found grace before your eyes (εὗρεν ἡ δούλη σου χάριν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου)” (1 Samuel 1:18); “and behold you will have in your womb and bear a son ... a Nazirite (ἰδοὺ σὺ ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξεις καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν... ναζιραῖον)”¹³ (Judges 13:6); the woman conceived and bore a son and called his name Samson (ἔτεκεν ἡ γυνὴ υἱόν καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Σαμψών)” (Judges 13:24)¹⁴ She knew not man (***)αὐτὴ οὐκ ἔγνω ἄνδρα(***)¹⁵ (Judges 11:39); The Spirit of the Lord was born upon Jephthah (ἐγενήθη ἐπὶ Ἰεφθαε πνεῦμα κυρίου) [...] and he made a vow to the Lord: “If you give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever come out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the Lord’s, and I will sacrifice it as a holocaust” (Judges 11:29-31) [...] Jephthah returned to his house (εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ) (Judges 11:34)[...] And [the dedicated virgin] said to her Father: And do to me this your word (ποίησόν μοι τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο) (Judges 11:37) [Jephthah] said: “go” and he sent her out for two months; she went too unto her neighbors and they wept over her [perpetual] virginity on the mountains (Εἶπεν πορεύου καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν αὐτήν δύο μῆνας καὶ ἐπορεύθη αὐτὴ καὶ συνεταιρίδες αὐτῆς καὶ ἔκλαυσεν ἐπὶ τὰ παρθένια¹⁶ αὐτῆς ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη”)(Judges 11:38)</p>	<p>³⁰Don’t fear (Μὴ φοβοῦ),¹⁷ Mary, for you have found grace before God (εὗρες γὰρ χάριν παρὰ τῷ θεῷ)³¹ and behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and will call his name Jesus (καὶ ἰδοὺ συλλήμψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν) and you shall call his name Jesus (καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν)”¹⁸ [...] ³⁴And Mary said to the angel [Gabriel]: “In what way shall this be, since I know not man (***)ἀνδρα οὐ γνώσκω(***)³⁵; ³⁵and the angel answered her: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you (Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ) [...] and the one born (γεννώμενον) shall be called holy [...] ³⁷“No discourse shall be ‘too wonderful/impossible’ from God.” And Mary said: ³⁸“Behold the slave of the Lord (ἡ δούλη κυρίου); May it happen to me according to your word (γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου)” [...] ³⁹Then did arise Mary in those days and went to the mountain country (Μαριάμ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὴν ὄρεινὴν) with haste unto the city of Juda⁴¹ and she entered into the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened as Elizabeth heard the greeting [...] ⁴¹Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (πνεύματος ἁγίου). ⁴²And Elizabeth cried aloud and said “Blessed are you (ἡ Ἐλισάβετ, καὶ ἀνεφώνησεν [ἡ] κραυγῇ μεγάλῃ καὶ εἶπεν· Εὐλόγημένη σὺ ἐν γυναῖξιν) [...] ⁵⁶Mary remained with her up to three months and then returned into her house (ὡς μῆνας τρεῖς, καὶ ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς).</p>

Commentary

Luke 1:³⁰: First, the Angel Gabriel greets Mary just as the Angel-of-the-Lord greeted Abraham (with a “greeting” & “don’t fear”). **Secondly, like Hannah who made the vow of the Nazirite (not**

¹³ Compare : “Nazorene (Ναζωραῖος)” (Matthew 2:23).

¹⁴ Compare: “**And she bore a son and called his name Samuel** (Καὶ ἔτεκεν υἱόν καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Σαμουὴλ)” (LXX 1Samuel/1Kings 1:20).

¹⁵ This is in direct contrast to the natural physically natural conception of Anna: “And he knew his wife Anna (Καὶ ἔγνω τὴν Ἀνναν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ)” (1sam1:19). In fact, this is opposite of all great conceptions (e.g., the same phrase in Genesis 4 for the conception of Adam by Eve, et al.).

¹⁶ The Masoretic is clear: *bəṯūlay* (virginity) that is lamentably perpetual as the result of her Father’s vow to God.

¹⁷ This is Mary greeted as the New Abraham (not the disobedient Sarah), for the Angel of the Lord both “greet” (ἀσπάζεται) and says “don’t fear” to Abraham alone, as Mary.

¹⁸ Compare: “Ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν” (Matthew 1:23).

to drink wine or grape), Mary's vow has been heard by YHWH. ³¹ Like Samson's mom, Mary will miraculously bear as a Nazirite a son and call him Jesus, for he will "save their people from Philistines/Sins." Jesus is Judges' Angel of Great Counsel (Mr. Wonderful) and Isaiah's God-with-Us (Emmanuel). ³⁴ Luke now surprises us all! He turns from Judges 13 and cites verbatim Judges 11:39...Why?

First of all, Judges 11:39 is the story of Jephthah. The story goes as follows: ³⁵ (1.) Jephthah was inspired by the "Spirit of the Lord" the same Spirit that came upon Mary in Luke 1:35 above. (2.) Jephthah is even said to have born into him this Spirit just like Mary who bore Christ as the result of this Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord or Holy Spirit cause Jephthah to make a vow, very much like Mary (in the image of Samson's mother and Hannah) makes a presumptive vow whereby she finds "grace before the Lord." Jephthah, under influence of the Spirit vows to dedicate the first being that he will run into if he crushes the polytheist incestuous-children of Lot by a great victory. Who does Yahweh make him run into? Well, he encounters his "only begotten daughter" who is nameless but whom he loves above all. Biblical scholars have several theories on what Jephthah's vow meant: (1.) virginity until death by human sacrifice, (2.) perpetual virginity only without human sacrifice (3.) perpetual virginity and an animal/substitutionary sacrifice (4.) perpetual virginity as the holocaust sacrifice symbolically.¹⁹ The major point is that Jephthah is worried and his daughter speak not about death or sacrifice but about the result of this vow (singular in all the Old Testament), namely, a promise of perpetual virginity! Japhtheh interprets the vow thus:

When Jephthah returned to his home [...] who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of timbrels! She was an only child. [...] When he saw her, he [...] cried, "Oh no, my daughter! You have brought me down and I am devastated. I have made a vow to the Lord that I cannot break." "My father," she replied, "you have given your word to the Lord. do to me this your word, [...] But grant me this one request," she said. "Give me two months to roam the mountains and weep with my friends, because of my virginity." "You may go," he said. And he let her go for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept her virginity. After the two months, she returned to his house, and he did to her as he had vowed. And she did not know man.

The situation is stunning, the Angel Gabriel place the part of Japhtheh, while Mary quotes verbatim Japhtheh's ever-virgin daughter who responds enthusiastically to the sacrifice-plan inspired by the Holy Spirit: "How shall this be, I do not know man." Here, Luke infallibly emphasizes Mary's vow to perpetual virginity. As the result of Gabriel's influence and the Holy Spirit's miracle-making pregnancy, Mary has been vowed and sacrificed as a perpetual virgin! Mary says in Luke: "How can it be in the future that I will be pregnant with a child, because I am the New only-begotten daughter of Japhtheh, who is perpetually consecrated to virginity and bound to die a virgin?"²⁰ Luke quotes from Judges 11 the only other such phrase in the entire

¹⁹ For the various theories, see David Marcus, *Jephthah and His Vow* (Lubbock: Texas Tech Press, 1986), 26.

²⁰ See, for example, an author (1130–1203), Martin Legionensis, *Sermon 30: On the Ascension of Christ* (PL 208:1144D):

The virgin daughter of the Judge Jephthah certainly prefigured by way of type (*typice praefiguravit*) this virginal flesh of Jesus Christ, taken from the virgin mother and the offered [flesh] in the odor of sweetness, when her same father returned as victor from war; he offered it to God.

history of Greek, which only signifies a divinely-predestined perpetual virginity by inspiring a vow of Father for his virgin daughter in the Holy Spirit. There can be no doubt what Luke conveys by an exact quote of Judges.⁴² Notice, however, the Luke's typology shows how and why God recorded in the Old Testament, Judges, the potentially disagreeable sacrifice of Japhthah. Instead of Mary bemoaning her virginity for two months as a perpetual curse, she goes to the mountains where Elizabeth celebrates her perpetual virginity as the very means by which God – contrary to all expectation – blesses Israel with a **wonderful**-child. Perpetual virginity is no longer the curse of Japhthah, but the blessing of Israel!²¹ Luke seems to opt for a legitimate interpretation of Judges 11, whereby Jephthah's vow was inspired by Yahweh's Spirit as a sort of anticipation of the contradiction of the virgin birth and the value of perpetual virginity as transformed by the Nazarites Mary and Jesus. The reason, however, that it is celebrated is that it is productive of child of promise. What is beyond dispute is the fact that perpetual virginity is at the center of Mary's response to Gabriel and there is a solution, which is not future sexual activity but a miracle of virgin birth!

Conclusions

In Luke 7:44, the Evangelist explicitly endorse typology (Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11; 1 Peter 3:19-21) as God's plan for anticipating the events of the New Testament in the Old Testament. In line with the reading, Mary is also interpreted in retrospect by Paul according to typology which he embraces so that she conceived of her own womanhood without the intervention of male seed due to the Protoevangelium (Genesis 3:15). Even Abraham had learned in Genesis 18 that there is a child of promise associated with the name of "**too wonderful**." Paul saw typology clearly in Galatians. In the Old Testament, the identity of the one called **wonderful** becomes gradually clearer by his self-revelation to a duo of Nazirites, Mother & son. The Nazirite child is always associated with a sacrifice and Judges 11 strangely seems to follow this very pattern, whereby there is a person who has been dedicated (though not from the time of her mother's womb) and who is to be offered or made holy to God by means of a vow. The relationship between Samuel's dedication by Hannah in 1 Samuel and the sacrifice of his daughter by Japhthah in Judges 11 have often been linked in modern scholarship. Like modern scholars, Luke sees the Nazirite paradigms linked to perpetual virginity. Mary and Jesus are styled a new type of Nazirites duo but not only this, in order to throw light on the meaning of an Old Testament event, Mary quotes verbatim her predecessor to protest her vow of perpetual virginity to the Angel Gabriel. Instead of dissuading her from virginity until death, like her type, Gabriel assures her that divine intervention can leave her vow intact and still produce offspring that will be the seed of Abraham and "the name" of Yahweh who is called **Wonderful**.

This insight is given as the type and rationale in Medieval books for the feast of the Mary's Entry into the temple where her virginity is offered by her parents to God. See Manuscript, *Harley 2838*, f. 8r (quotes Judges 11:39 in the medieval book: *Speculum humanae salvationis*).

²¹ "Three months" (instead "after two months") are in Luke due to the Ark of the Covenant remaining with Obbedom's house for three months.