

But thou. Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth to me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

This passage does not actually require the deity of the Messiah, but it does require his pre-existence. In fact, although this person will have been active for a long time (the Hebrew is consistent with either a finite or infinite time), yet he will claim a Judean village, Bethlehem, as his home town. Apparently the Messiah will be born and yet have existed before his birth. This idea (that the Messiah would be both son of David and yet pre-existent) is seen occasionally in the apocryphal literature, apparently because of Old Testament passages such as this one. But because no one knew how to reconcile such ideas, they are not emphasized as they are in the New Testament.

Another significant passage is Isa. 9:6:

For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a son is given,
And the government shall be upon his shoulder
And his name shall be called
Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God,
the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

The next verse (Isa. 9:7) makes it clear that this person is the Messiah, for he is to rule forever from the throne of David.

That this person will be born is even clearer than in Micah 5:2, yet so is his deity. Although some amazing attempts have been made to weaken the titles given to this person, the conjunction of the titles, his eternal rule, and his pre-existence beautifully fit a person who is both God and man.

This model which conjoins deity and humanity in one person also explains many other puzzling problems: how the sufferer of Isa. 53 can bear the sins of many, how the king in Ps. 45:6 can be addressed as God, how the priest-king of Ps. 110 is called "Lord" by his ancestor David, why the death and resurrection of the sufferer in Ps. 22 and Isa. 53 is so important to Israel and the Gentiles. Most of these are enigmas in the other Messianic models.

Conclusions

We have attempted to show in the preceding examples the superiority of the New Testament's model of the Messiah to all its competitors in fitting certain paradoxical Old Testament references concerning the offices, work, coming and nature of the Messiah. I believe this line of argumentation is very