

MARY IN OLD TESTAMENT

Must we speak of Mary in the Old Testament? We can hesitate, for Mary appears in it only indistinctly. According to the Second Vatican Council, these texts, prior to Christ, receive their meaning only retrospectively in the light of the New Testament, the inspired writers only caught a glimpse of the Mother of the Messiah. They saw, but indistinctly. Indeed, we too still question ourselves on the personal or collective scope of the texts: a) Is it a person or the entire people of God that the Bible considers as Mother of the Messiah in Mi 5 or Is 66? And does this Mother give birth to the Messiah or to the entire new people of God? These two questions are correlative and the New Testament will not solve the lack of distinction, implied in them.

Three Texts Relative to the Mother of the Messiah.

-Genesis 3:15 (The posterity of the woman, enemy of the serpent)

-The text is rich in meaning. It signifies in its entirety, and without making the outcome specific, the battle which will continue to take place until the end of time between humanity and the tempter who caused humanity to fall into sin. The Vulgate which interprets this text in the light of subsequent revelation goes doubly beyond the literal sense in translating: "She (the woman) shall crush your head". A) In the Hebrew it is "not the woman" but the "posterity" of the woman which is in battle with the posterity of the serpent. B) The same Hebrew verb "shuf" signifies the act by which the descendants of the woman on the one side and the descendant of the serpent on the other side combat each other. The precise meaning of this rare verb, used only in Psalm 139 and in Job 9:17, remains difficult to specify. IN any case it is not specifically stated that one of the two parties shall crush the other.

-In conclusion, exegetical honesty obliges us to renounce theologically seductive interpretations. The inspired text does not contain the formal affirmation of a complete victory wherein one could recognize the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

-Isaiah 7:14 (The Girl, Mother of Emmanuel)

-The text is one of the most difficult to interpret. It seems that it is a question of a "dynastic" sign: the birth of an heir in the line promised to David, according to 1 Samuel 7:14. But does this mean a son of Ahaz, which would be Hezekiah, or the last descendant of the line: the Messiah to come?

-Our findings are disappointing in that which concerns the literal prophetic sense of Isaiah 7:14, they are of positive interest in that which concerns the historicity of the virginal conception. Matthew affirms it because it is a fact and not because a pre-existent tradition would oblige him to demonstrate that the Messiah was conceived virginally. That the text of Isaiah was obscure for the Jewish tradition is a constructive proof in favor of the historicity of the virginal conception.

-Michah 5:2 (She Who is to Give Birth)

This last text is approximately contemporaneous with the preceding; it is related to it.

Eschatological Texts Whose Meaning is Realized at One and the Same Time in Mary and in the Church.

-Song of Songs 4:7 (You are all beautiful and there is no blemish in you").

-Hosea 2:21-22 (I shall betroth you to myself forever...)

-God is capable of restoring things to newness. He shall raise up in the last days a "new creation".

-Isaiah 66:7ff The Motherhood of Jerusalem.