Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6 is a famous passage that is popularly understood by Christians as a prediction that *"Messiah's name will be **called**,"* amongst other nicknames, *"Mighty God and EverlastingFather."*

It's in the bag. Our disputations should be over. The scoreboard doesn't lie. Christians: 3. Jews: 0. Game over. Christianity wins. What remains now is only for Jews to admit what their own Prophets have been conveying for centuries. The only problem of course is that nagging question... **"IF?"**. What IF these astute opinions of Hebrew text, all turned out to be Messianic lies? We already know that the first amongst the saintly always come with their argument, and they seem correct... until another comes along to examine them. Using that time-honored tradition then, let's now take a look at the beauty of Hebrew grammar, and discover the unchanging message of the Prophets.

...For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be on his shoulders. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

—Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6 (NIV/NKJV)

Not surprisingly, as with any other text, Biblical or otherwise, this oft quoted Isaiah text, if read without the benefit of a firm grip on the grammatical rules of Hebrew, can end up being translated into just about anything the translator wants it to say. Once accomplished, time and tradition simply take over, and non-Hebrew speaking societies will forever be deprived of the meaning of what was actually written down, unless we return to Hebrew.

IF, in fact, the New International Version and the New King James Version of this text (above) represented correct translations, and all we had at our disposal was logic and the NT, then with certainty we have to accept Christianity's claim that the ruler being spoken of, is God, is his own everlasting Father, is a wonderful counselor and a prince of peace. But fortunately, we have tools at our disposal that are immeasurably

more valuable, useful, efficacious and conclusive. We have the grammar, and the syntax of the Hebrew language itself.

In order to reacquire the understanding of this text our strategy, therefore, will involve four steps. First, we must determine the players. Who are the primary parties mentioned in this text? Next, we'll have to discern the meaning of each of the personal descriptions or names applied to the players. Then, we'll need to investigate the primary verb being used in the passage and decide in which voice the verb is being presented, be it an active voice or in a passive voice. Finally, we'll need to insert proper punctuation into the text in order to discern how to parse and read the text.

In order to accomplish this, we'll need to employ the most reliable *ta'amei ha'mikra* (Biblical accents), aka trope, or cantillation marks that are available. Fortunately an ancient source gives these marks to us, in the form of musical notations that were assigned to each word of Hebrew text, for the primary purpose of guiding a Chazan during his chanting of readings from the Hebrew Bible during public worship (called *"chazzanut"*).

The added benefit of these cantorial marks were that they provided an invaluable reference to the earliest and best preserved syntactical structure of the text. They served as a foundation upon which textual commentary was developed. In other words, trope marks give us a glimpse into the earliest accepted form of punctuation for the ancient text. Originally, the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings contained no punctuation. Trope comes in to provide the missing links to help us understand the text from a perspective closest to the time period of those who penned it. Without trope there are no ancient witnesses, leaving the Biblical record open to a free-for-all, allowing anyone to simply invent meanings and commentary as it best suits them. Our grasp of the substance of the message would be handicapped at best, which would leave us with little more than a guess at what is being communicated. On the other hand, with trope, we have the keys that give us the best shot at

understanding the original meaning of the text, as it was first intended, when it was presented. With the punctuation in place, the *Pashat* (simple meaning) of the text cannot be contested, for punctuation can change the entire meaning of the sentence, regardless of the language in which it is first penned. Just adding a simple comma, colon, semi-colon, or any other punctuation mark makes a world of difference in the process of comprehension, and impression of a message. Take for example the following four pairs of English sentences, and see for yourself, what punctuation accomplishes:

A woman, without her man, is nothing. A woman: without her, man is nothing.

Call me fool if you wish. Call me, fool, if you wish.

That that is is that that is not is not is that it it is. That that is, is. That that is not, is not. Is that it? It is.

...And lastly from the NT, and the words of Yeshua to the one who was crucified with him:

In truth I am saying to you, today you shall be with me in paradise.

In truth I am saying to you today, you shall be with me in paradise.

Punctuation is not just a code of courtesy to readers; it affects the meanings of messages in extremely crucial ways. For the Jewish People therefore, it is essential. The most reliable and comprehensive collection of trope vocalizations attached to the text, came to us from the Tiberian Masortim of the 8th century CE, and these are reproduced in nearly every copy of the Hebrew Bible, available today in print or in electronic form.

With these accents and marks as our guide, we will be able to determine who amongst the players, owns each of the personal descriptions of Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6, rather than depending on arbitrary and capricious "modern" English estimations of punctuation placement that give the text context and meaning.

The results may surprise you, as they reveal the message the Prophet intended to convey, rather than abandoning you to some Christian teacher's presumptions gleaned from reading an English translation, after he had already decided what doctrines belong inside, and before ever consulting the Hebrew text.

The Players

So who are the players in this verse? There are only five. The **first** is "us," **AM Israel** (the nation of Israel), for whose benefit a child is being born.

 The **child** himself, who will grow and eventually inherit the right to govern the nation, is the **second** player.

The **third** player is the **Prophet Yishaiyahu**, speaking or writing this verse, on behalf of AM Israel.

The **fourth** player is **God**, who presumably is giving the Prophet the inspiration to speak or write the verse. Since we are told that this governor will be referred to by one or more nicknames, or personal descriptions, a **fifth** player should also be considered. The player would be an **unknown** or **unidentified** party or group who actually bestows the nicknames or descriptions upon the ruler.

The Personal Descriptions or Nicknames

So, what are the titles mentioned in this Hebrew text? Typical English translations of the passage state that **FOUR** titles emerge, and each one of them are bestowed upon the newborn ruler: 1) *Wonderful Counselor,* 2) *Mighty G-d,* 3) *Eternal Father* and 4) *Prince of Peace.*

The second and third nicknames, are of most interest to those in the Trinitarian/ Messianic camp, for obvious reasons. But what does the text really say? How are these titles constructed, from a grammatical perspective, so that we can more accurately translate them?

Well, it turns out that in Hebrew, five individual nicknames are presented, in eight separate words. Two of the eight are simple stand-alone nouns. The third nickname is a noun that is modified by the fourth word, an adjective. The last two nicknames (the 4th and 5th nicknames) are constructs comprising of two words each. Let's look at each in detail:

1. פֶּלֶא (Peleh): Stand-alone noun. It renders into English as *"a Wonder"* as in "What a wonder!" In Israel, the first cellular phone company that sold mobile phones, was called *"PelePhone"* because to everyone, it was a "wonder" phone. The same thing applies here in Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6. It is NOT an adjective, and besides that, in Hebrew, the adjective always follows the noun. It therefore can never be legitimately translated as *"wonderful"* as in *"wonderful counselor."*

2. יוֹעֵץ (Yo'etz): Stand-alone noun. It renders into English as *"a Counselor"* as in an attorney, someone who gives *counsel* and *guidance*. Yishaiyahu records a similar term (in a feminine plural form) in chapter 25, when he says of G-d, *"You have created a* **wonder**: **guidance** from afar, faithfulness, truth."*

3. אֵל גִ...בּוֹר (El Gibor): A noun *(El)* modified by an adjective *(Gibor)*. It renders into English as *"mighty (or powerful) G-d."* In modern Hebrew, Gibor can also be a noun. If that were the case here, the phrase might be rendered as *"G-d, a champion."*

4. אֲבִיעַד (Avi'ad): A construct comprising of two nouns and perhaps a single suffix attached to the first noun — *Avi*. *Avi* by itself, should be rendered into English as "my father." However, when placed into a construct form together with the second noun *"ad"* *(eternity)*, it can be understood either as *"Father for eternity"* or *"my Father for eternity."* Another good translation would yield *"Father in perpetuity"* or *"my Father in perpetuity."* Avi'ad is most often rendered in Christian Bibles as *"Everlasting Father,"* or

"my Father is forever," but this is entirely inaccurate, for the simple reason that *"everlasting"* is an adjective, and *"forever"* is an adverb, parts of speech which are just not part of this text.

5. שַׂר־שָׁלוֹם (Sar-Shalom): A construct comprising of two nouns. *"Sar"* is a prince or minister. *"Shalom"* of course means peace. Together the phrase conveys the idea of a prince who ministers peace; a *"Prince of Peace."*

The Primary Verb is the Key

Now that we know who the players are, and what the five nicknames are, what remains now is to discover who amongst the players, owns those nicknames. In other words, for each of the five names, to who is it referring, and by whom?

Let's consider first exactly who is bestowing the nickname(s) upon the ruler. Once again, there are five possibilities, taken from amongst our players. It could either be the first player, **AM Israel**. It could be the second player, **the ruler** who has the government upon his shoulder, bestowing the names upon himself (however unlikely that may sound). It could be the speaker/writer of the verse itself — **the Prophet Yishaiyahu** — speaking on behalf of AM Isra- el. It could be **G-d**, who is giving the nicknames. The last possibility is that the one bestowing the nicknames is **alto- gether unknown** and/or unidentified. In order to arrive at the answer, we must, out of grammatical necessity, check out the primary verb, and see if we can determine its voice, i.e. whether it is written in a passive voice or an active voice.

Two Voices: Only One is Telling the Truth

The primary verb in this verse, aside from the child and son, who is being **born** and **given** respectively, is the verb **"called."** In nearly every English translation ever produced, this verb is presented in its passive form. **Passive,** by definition means that we know that the action of "calling" is being done, but we don't know who is performing it. An **active** verb, on the other hand, always identifies the one performing the action. I called, she called, they called, we called. We can always identify who is doing the action "calling" in each of these cases. But here, "*And his name shall be called...*", it is not possible to determine the one doing the "calling." Whoever it is, he, it or they are altogether unknown. We can only guess, which leaves readers deprived of crucial information, which further prevents them from knowing the destiny or qualifications of the ruler, which the passage seeks to impart.

If we discover that this verb was actually an **active** verb, it would change the entire impression of the verse, because obviously, what was once unidentifiable would become incontrovertibly transparent, and that changes everything! So let's do some research by comparison, and see if the translators got it right. We'll first look at three examples from the Torah, which employ the **passive** form of the verb "to call," to illustrate the difference.

. לְזֹאת **יִקָּרֵא** אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לֻקֳחָה־זֹּאת׃

..and she shall be called "woman", because from man she was taken.

Who will call Hava "woman?" We don't know. We only know that "woman" is what she would be called, from that point in time, onward.

אַחֲרֵי־כֵן **יִקָּרֵא** לָךְ עִיר הַצֶּ֣דֶק׃

...After that, you [Jerusalem] will be called the City of Righteousness"

Who exactly will be calling Jerusalem a city of righteous- ness? We are not told. We only know that eventually, the city shall be called by this name.

לַחֲכַם־לֵב יִקָּרֵא נָבוֹן...

The wise in heart shall be called prudent...

Who shall call those with wise hearts, "prudent?" The text doesn't say. But it is certain that someone will, according to this proverb.

Now, let's look at some examples from the Torah, which employ the **active** form of the verb "to call":

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לָיְלָה...

God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night.

So the evening and the morning were the first day.

וַיִּשְׁלַח פַּרְעֹה וַיִּקְרָא לְמֹשֶׁה ו...לְאַהֲרֹן...

...and Par'oh sent and called for Moshe and Aharon.

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בִּן־נוּ...ן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ׃ .

..and Moshe called Hoshea the son of Nun, Yehoshua.

In the first three examples, there was no way to determine who was doing the calling. But, in the last three examples, the caller was always immediately identified; in these cases, God, Par'oh, and Moshe respectively.

As it turns out, in Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6, in Hebrew, the verb for "call" is **NOT passive** *(Nifal)*, but rather with unalterable certainty, in its

ACTIVE *(Qal)* form, and yes, it changes everything! We finally get introduced to the one who is bestowing a nickname upon the son who is destined to rule.

...For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be on his shoulders. A Wonder, a Counselor, Mighty God, my Father in perpetuity, **shall call him**... "Prince of Peace."

— Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6

This is exactly how anyone native Hebrew speaker reads the text. The nikud is what provides the necessary instruction on what voice is being employed, which vowels are attached to the consonants, and how to read this verb in our text.

 Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6; Active or Passive?

Some have objected, saying that a Qal (active) verb can be translated as a passive, and that Hebrew grammar supports this hypothesis. For proof, they cite discussions of well-known *"scholars,"* all of them non-Jewish, who decided to allow for what they call an *"indefinite personal subject."* In simple terms, that means they permit the active verb's "doer" to be

unspecified and unknown, and then list Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6 as a case where their rule applies. I call this subterfuge, *"a last- ditch effort to protect the Pope's doctrine,"* aka 'cheating.'

These big-name scholars appear to be magicians. They pull whatever rules they need that suit them, right out of thin air. Then, they use obscure, yet impressive terms like *"indefinite personal subject"* to convince their readers that they know what they are talking about. They seem to forget that the Jewish People don't relate to what translators want to do with our text. We have no need of the translation. They gather together and write books on Hebrew Grammar, and make up their own rules of translation to support their own agendas. But we know what the text says in Hebrew. We do not require them to teach us our own language.

Imagine a Frenchman who encounters the phrase in English, *"Jack threw the ball."* He decides to translate that phrase into the French equivalent of *"the ball was thrown to Jack,"* effectively changing the verb "to throw" from its active form, into its passive form. When asked why he translates the phrase this way, he answers, *"I am applying the rule of the indefinite personal subject, which is well known in France by French scholars of the English language, and thus it is ok to render the verb as passive."* Obviously the French do not know English as well as native English speakers do, right? If Jack is throwing the ball, it is one thing. If the ball is thrown to Jack, it is quite another, because we don't know who actually threw the ball to Jack. If the ball smashes through a glass window, who is to blame? Is it Jack, to whom the ball was originally thrown (passive), or is it the person who actually threw (active) the ball? This is the problem with translations; In general, the translator is usually a native speaker of the target language, rather than of the source language.

For some reason, when it comes to the Bible, we have a plethora of scholars in the world, all claiming to be experts in Hebrew, and all of them are conjuring up elaborate rules to force our language to say what

it does not say and never intended to communicate. Few, if any of the "scholars" are native Hebrew speakers. When it comes to the rules of grammar in tandem with theology, why should Jews listen or submit to rules established by non-Jews, who are foreigners to our culture and language? Wouldn't it be wiser to find those who are indigenous to communities where the Hebrew language is used as a matter of course in daily affairs, in order to determine the true meaning of the text?

The Punctuation

Once verb structure, class and voice are all identified and properly understood, all that remains in order to produce a reasonably sound parsing and reading of a text in a language other than in Hebrew, is to insert punctuation *(commas, colons, etc.)*, where it belongs, and as the trope delineates. In the case of Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6, note the following cantillation marks, which appear from right to left, beginning with the Hebrew verb-phrase *"and shall call"* (וַיִּקְרָא) — they are:

⌢	Kadma-Azla (a pair)	⌕	T'slisha-G'dola
⌐	Pashta	⌐	Munach
⋮	Zakef-Katan	⌣	Tipcha
❘	Sof-Pasuk		

Zakef-Katan · Pashta · T'slisha-G'dola · Kadma-Azla

וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ אֵל גִּבּוֹר אֲבִיעַד שַׂר־שָׁלוֹם׃

Sar-Shalom · Avi'ad · Gibor · El · Yo'etz · Peleh · She'mo (His Name) · Va-Yik'Ra (And Shall Call)

Sof-Pasuk · Tipcha · Munach

> VA-YIK'RA SHE'MO – PELEH, YO'ETZ, EL GIBOR, AVI'AD: SAR-SHALOM
> PELEH, YO'ETZ, EL GIBOR, AVI'AD – SHALL CALL HIS NAME: SAR-SHALOM

The *Tipcha*, which falls on the second-half of the word "Avi'ad" (my Father in perpetuity) is a trope mark, which directs us how to read the text. It demands a dragging out of the word, because it is the last break before a pause. It tells readers to pause after the word "Avi'ad." The modern equivalent to this mark, is a colon. In other words, just as indicated above, this is precisely how we know that the previous four nicknames belong to the "caller," and only the last nickname (Sar-Shalom) belongs to the one who is being "called" by the "caller." And those four nicknames are separated from the preceding verb-phrase, *"and shall call,"* with the placement of the ***T'lisha G'dola*** over the first character in the word "Peleh." The modern typographical equivalent would be a dash. Biblical Hebrew typically reads in this order; a verb – followed by the noun or nouns performing the action described by the verb.

What emerges is a proper translation of Yishaiyahu [Is] 9:6. The prophesy informs us about a child that will be born, and a son who will be given, whose destiny shall be to rule all of Israel as her governor. Who makes this announcement to us? A Wonder, a Counselor, Mighty God, my Father who is eternal. And He (Mighty God) intends to call this ruler *"Sar (Prince or Minister) of Peace."*

Pointing to Mashiach, this makes perfect sense, and it is in keeping with our expectation of a son, who is a Prince. God is never called a Prince. He is the Father of all. A Prince can never be his own Father. The Prince shall become a ruler, but only in subjection to the greater rule of His

Father's kingdom, the Kingdom of God. Yeshua was never called a wonder, nor a counselor. His ministry was never portrayed as a ministry of counseling. He never once usurped the title of "Mighty God." On many occasions he claimed that his Father sent him, but he never said of himself that he was a *"Father for all time."*

These are all descriptors of the King, of the king of kings. In *"Shirat Ha'Yam"* (The Song of the Sea), sung by b'nei Israel after they crossed the Red Sea in safety, following the destruction of the Egyptian army that had been pursuing them, HaShem is described as the one who works "פֶּלֶא" (**Feleh**).   God is often portrayed as our great counselor. In Tehilim (the Psalms), David blesses Ha'Kadosh, Baruch Hu, as his "יְעָצָנִי" (**Ya'atzani**), a construct of the Hebrew word "Yo'etz."   The God of Israel is often described as "הַגִ...בֹּר" (**Ha'Gibor**).   After David delivered the plans to build the Temple to his son Shlomo, and the people had given all of the materials that would be needed, willingly and wholeheartedly, he blessed Yehovah as "אָבִינוּ מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד־עוֹלָם" (**Avinu** mei'Olam ve'**Ad**-Olam).   Each of these nicknames are unmistakably owned by Yehovah, and no other. They are never used to describe a man or God's chosen Mashiach.

The Last Nail

Finally, what is perhaps most obvious to the Hebrew reader, is that only **ONE** name is given to this child who is born, upon whose shoulders, the right to govern has been bestowed. Distinctly in Hebrew, the word for name is "shem." Had it been the intention for the Prophet to convey that several names were being given to this governor, the Hebrew would have reflected the plural "sh'mot" ("names", as in the name of the second book of the Bible, **Sh'mot** – these are the "names"...). In this

passage, in order to make that SINGLE name possessive, so that it belongs to "him", a "vav" was added, rendering the word "shem" into the construct "she'mo" (שְׁמוֹ – "his name"). Once again, had it been the intention of the Prophet to convey the fact that several names were being given to this governor, the Hebrew would have rendered the plural construct of "his"+"sh'mot" into "sh'mo'tav" (שְׁמוֹתָיו). But the text simply does not read this way. HaShem has assigned **only one name**, to be our governor. "A wonder, a Counselor, God the Champion, Father for eternity, shall call him by this **one name**: *Prince of Peace*."

That is just the way Hebrew constructs its phrases and sentences, and that is the way it is understood by anyone who speaks or understands Hebrew. Unfortunately, however, the wool has been pulled over the eyes of millions for centuries, as pastors, teachers and theologians have hoodwinked us even in English. Even if we were to pretend that the verb "call" was in fact passive, and that "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father" were names reserved for our newborn ruler, then even the English text should have read, *"And his NAMES shall be called…"*

Only a translator with an agenda ignores these details, hoping the serious Bible student won't study and discover the error. Would someone write to their parents, saying, *"We decided to call the NAME of our newborn son Paul, David, Michael **and** Marvin"*? It would appear that our translators are either delinquently dishonest, or just plain dull! Trinitarians have long been in the habit of forcing pure logic-less hallucinations upon a text, in order to make it say what they want it to say. Why not just allow the text to speak for itself?