

“The Lamb & The Lion Are Coming!”

Isaiah 7:14

October 31, 2021

INTRO:

VIDEO: *“Christmas Is Messy”*

- How well do you know the Christmas story?
- *How well do you understand the Christmas Savior?*

How much do you love & live the Christmas mission?

(NOTE: It's ALWAYS the Christmas season...)

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- Season: Christmas & Christ are reunited today!
- Series: “Show And Tell” (The Word of God)
 - Bible Cloth... & Lesson #27...
- Sermon: *“The Lamb & The Lion Are Coming!”*

- Scriptures: Isaiah 7:14

Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign:
Behold, the virgin will conceive and give birth to
a son, and she will name Him Immanuel.

BIG IDEA: **Messy humanity’s
only hope is our holy Messiah!**

PREVIEW: 1. Back, 2. Back, 3. Back, 4. Back, 5. **Forward!**

TEXT: “...*God with us...*”

I. **Back - PREISTHOOD** of Christ

John 14:6

I am the way, the truth, and life, NO ONE comes to the Father EXCEPT through Me.

“When God is your Ambassador and Go-between to God... you are going to be, by His grace, thru His Gospel, and for His glory... **good to go with God.**”

- JDP

VIDEO: “*Christ as Prophet, PRIEST, & King*”

T/S: Luke 1:39-55 *Mary Visits Elizabeth*

39In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, **40**and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. **41**And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, **42**and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! **43**And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should

come to me? [44](#)For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. [45](#)And blessed is she who believed that there would be^a a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

Mary’s Song of Praise: The Magnificat

[46](#)And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,

[47](#)and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, [48](#)for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; [49](#)for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. [50](#)And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. [51](#)He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; [52](#)he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; [53](#)he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. [54](#)He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, [55](#)as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

II. Back - PERSON of Christ

Luke 2:25-30

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was **Simeon**, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon

him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ... 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation

VIDEO: Luke 1-2 *"Birth of Jesus The Christ"*

III. **Back - PROMISE** of Christ

John 6:44

NO ONE comes to Me unless
the Father draws them.

John 8:32 & 36

You will know the truth (His name is Jesus)
and the truth shall set you free
He who the Son sets free is free indeed!

VIDEO: *"Jesus is Messiah"*

IV. Back - PASSION of Christ

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

He Was Pierced for Our Transgressions

13Behold, my servant shall act wisely;

he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.

14As **many were astonished at you—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—** 15so

shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

1 Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. 3He was **despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces **he was despised, and we esteemed him not.****

4Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5But **he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.**

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. **8** By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? **9** And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. **12** Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because **he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.**

VIDEO: *“Resurrection of Jesus”*

V. Forward - PEOPLE of Christ

- A. Receive
- B. Repent
- C. Remember
- D. Remind
- E. Repeat

1. **RECEIVE** (John 1:12-13 & Acts 1:8)
2. **REPENT** (Mark 1:15 & 1 John 1:9)
3. **REMEMBER**

COMMUNION

VIDEO: *"Isaiah 53 Captions"*

Luke 22:19-22

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **20** And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. **21** But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. **22** For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but **woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!**"

4. REMIND

Luke 24:25-27

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Isaiah 35:8

A highway will be there, a roadway, And it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, But it will be for the one who walks that way, And fools will not wander on it.

5. REPEAT (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20; Mk 16:15; Jn 20:21)

Luke 24:45-49

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, **46** and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, **47** and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses of these things. **49** And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

REVIEW: Christ & Christ's Coming (aka Christmas)

1. Prophet, **Priest**, & King Jesus The Christ
2. **Person** of Christ
3. **Promise** of Christ our Messiah
4. **Passion** of Christ – Crucifixion & Resurrection
5. **People** of Christ

T/S: **Messy humanity's
only hope is our holy Messiah!**

CLOSE:

*The Bible, God's holy Word, has always cried out:
"Christ is coming, so come to Christ!"*

- JDP

**Come to the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world...
before the Lion of Judah comes to you
with His wrath & reckoning for your sins.** - JDP

Let's **PRAY**

WORSHIP:

1. *Away In A Manger;*
2. *Hark The Herald Angels Sing;*
3. *Isaiah 53*

Prophecies of Jesus's birth

Not only was Christ's miraculous birth prophetically revealed, but God planned his lineage from the very beginning. Here are eight prophecies predicting elements of Jesus' birth and childhood.

1. The nations will be blessed through Abraham's lineage

Prophecy:

"I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3).

Fulfillment:

"And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways" (Acts 3:25–26).

2. God's covenant with Isaac's ancestors

Prophecy:

"Then God said, 'Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him'" (Genesis 17:19).

Fulfillment:

"Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, 'It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned'" (Romans 9:7).

3. The nations will be blessed through Jacob's offspring

Prophecy:

"Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring" (Genesis 28:14).

Fulfillment:

Jacob is part of Jesus' genealogy.

"the son of Jacob,
the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham,
the son of Terah, the son of Nahor" (Luke 3:34)

4. The scepter will come through Judah

Prophecy:

"The scepter will not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
until he to whom it belongs shall come
and the obedience of the nations shall be his" (Genesis 49:10).

Fulfillment:

Judah is part of Jesus's genealogy.

"the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram,
the son of Hezron, the son of Perez,
the son of Judah" (Luke 3:33)

5. David's offspring will have an eternal kingdom

Prophecy:

"When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Samuel 7:12–13).

Fulfillment:

"This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1)

6. A virgin will give birth, and he will be called Immanuel (God with us)**Prophecy:**

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

Fulfillment:

"The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

7. The Messiah will end up in Egypt**Prophecy:**

"When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hosea 11:1).

Fulfillment:

"So he [Joseph] got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was

fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son'" (Matthew 2:14–15).

8. The Christ will be born in Bethlehem

Prophecy:

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times." (Micah 5:2).

Fulfillment:

"When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written:

"'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.'" (Matthew 2:4–6).

HEAR & SEE GOD!

3 while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 4 You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians,

and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel." - Exodus 19:3-6

9 And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever." When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD,
10 the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments
11 and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

- Exodus 19:9-11

16 On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. 17 Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

- Exodus 19:16-17

***** Exodus 20:22 *****

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,

25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

- Matthew 1:18-25 (cf. Isaiah 7:14)

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem,

2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;

4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

*** 6 "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." (cf. Micah 5:2)

7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.

***8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him."

9 After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

11 And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Matthew 2:1-12

1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

*** 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"

4 Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him,

6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.

10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

***11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

***12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 3:1-12

***1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

***2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way,

***3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.

7 And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.

8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Mark 1:1-8

***26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

***27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

***28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"

29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

***31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

***32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

***33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

*****35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy-the Son of God.

***36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

*****37 For nothing will be impossible with God."

***38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38

1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

***4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

***7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

***10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

*****11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

***13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

*****14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

***15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

***20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2:1-20

***1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

***2 He was in the beginning with God.

***3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

***4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

***5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

***6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

***7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.

***8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

***10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

***11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

*****12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

*****13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

***14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")

***16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

*****17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

19 And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

22 So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

***23 He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

24 (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.)

25 They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26 John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know,

27 even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."

28 These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

***29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'

31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel."

32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

***33 I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

***34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

***35 The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,

***36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

John 1:1-36

John The Baptist's Coming:

- A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Isaiah 40:3

PROPHECIES ON THE BIRTH OF JESUS

When Jesus was sharing with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he could have been sharing prophecies surrounding his birth. Jesus could not have forced these prophecies to happen. These were God-ordained prophecies that spoke to God's ability to work out the smallest of details from where Jesus was born, to the unique circumstances of his birth, to the actions of his parents when he was born. Here are several Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled with Jesus' birth:

- [Genesis 22:18](#) – All the nations would be blessed through Abraham's offspring
- [Numbers 24:17](#) – Jesus would be from the line of Jacob
- [Isaiah 11:1](#) – Jesus would be from the line of Jesse
- [Jeremiah 23:5-6](#) – Jesus would be from the line of David
- [Micah 5:2](#) – Jesus would be born in Bethlehem
- [Isaiah 7:14](#) – Jesus would be born from a virgin

- Isaiah 9:6-7 – A child would be born and the government would be on his shoulders
- Psalms 72:10 – Jesus would be worshipped and given gifts at his birth
- Jeremiah 31:15 – King Herod would murder children in an attempt to kill Jesus
- Hosea 11:1 – Joseph would be warned to take Jesus to Egypt for a time to protect him.

2) The Messiah would bring in a new covenant

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Jeremiah 31:31

New Testament citations: Matthew 26:28, Luke 22:20, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Hebrews 8:6-13, Hebrews 9:15, Hebrews 12:24

Commentary: The expression “new covenant” appears seven times in the New Testament, and the new covenant is even more frequently referred to simply as the “covenant,” with the context showing what is meant. The first big question is, when will this covenant begin to take effect?

6) The Messiah would be born of a virgin

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Isaiah 7:14

New Testament citations: Matthew 1:22-23, Luke 1:31-35

Commentary: More than most others, this prophecy has occasioned seemingly unending debate: was it fulfilled in Isaiah's time, or was it for a later time? Does the Hebrew word *almah* refer to a virgin or a young woman? Was Matthew in the New Testament misquoting it and distorting its meaning?

7) The Messiah would come according to a timetable

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Daniel 9:24-27

New Testament citations: Matthew 24:15-16, Mark 13:14-15, Galatians 4:4

As Daniel prayed, the angel Gabriel appeared to him to bring an announcement: Gabriel tells Daniel not about the 70 years of captivity (which Daniel knew were coming to an end) but about "seventy sevens," or a period of 490 years, climaxing not merely in the return from Babylon but in the messianic age.

12) The Messiah would be a prophet like Moses

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Deuteronomy 18:15-19

New Testament citations: Matthew 13:57, Matthew 21:46, Luke 24:19, John 1:21, John 1:25, John 6:14, John 7:40, Acts 3:22, Acts 7:37

Commentary: This prophecy comes in the context of a warning by Moses against false prophets. In contrast to false prophets, the “prophet like me” will speak what is true. Moreover, according to [verse 16](#), the prophet would speak for God so that the Israelites would not need to hear God’s voice directly, which was a fearsome prospect. In this way, the prophet would be a mediator between God and the people.

16) The Messiah would be called God’s Son

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Psalm 2:1-12

New Testament citations: Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22, Acts 4:25-28, Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5, Hebrews 5:5

Commentary: Psalm 2 speaks of the nations of the world plotting against both God himself and his “Anointed.” Originally, this referred to the Davidic king, but the scope of what is described here, as well as later Jewish tradition, understood this to be referring to the Messiah, God’s Ultimate “Anointed.” In verse 7, God specifically calls the Anointed “my Son” and promises worldwide rule in the face of the laughable opposition of the nations who counsel rebellion against God.

18) The Messiah would be the Son of Man

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Daniel 7:13-14

New Testament citations: Matthew 9:6, Matthew 12:8, Matthew 13:41, Matthew 16:13, Matthew 16:27, Mark 8:31, Luke 6:22, Luke 9:22, John 1:51, John 3:13-14, Acts 7:56 and many others

Commentary: “Son of Man” is the way Jesus referred to himself numerous times in the gospels. While “Son of Man” may sound like it emphasizes Jesus’ humanity, it is actually one that speaks about his deity and his exalted nature. It derives from Daniel 7:13-14, where Daniel receives a vision at night. On the “clouds of heaven” he sees “one like a son of man,” who appears before God—the “Ancient of Days.”

21) The Messiah would be the star coming out of Jacob

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Numbers 24:17

New Testament citations: Matthew 2:2, Revelation 22:16

Commentary: The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, speaks of the “rise” of a star from Jacob, echoed in the New Testament’s star that “rose” (Matthew 2:2, [9](#)), using the same Greek word. At the other end of the New Testament, in Revelation 22:16, Jesus calls himself the “bright morning star.”

22) The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Micah 5:2 [Hebrew Bible verse 1]

New Testament citations: Matthew 2:1-6, John 7:40-43

Commentary: In agreement with the thought that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, we find first that Jesus was actually born there, though he grew up in Nazareth. Second,

the “chief priests and scribes” cited the prophet Micah in support of this idea. [Continue reading commentary >](#)

24) The Messiah would be a descendant of David

Hebrew Scriptures reference: 2 Samuel 7:12-16

New Testament citations: Matthew 1:1, Luke 1:32-33, Acts 15:15-16, Hebrews 1:5

Commentary: The prophets of ancient Israel looked for a day when this promise would be fulfilled in an ultimate descendant of David—the Messiah—who would rule over the nation. Isaiah 11:1, in a great messianic passage, tells us that “there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.” Jesse, as we learn elsewhere, was the father of David.

27) The Messiah would be preceded by a messenger

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Malachi 3:1

New Testament citations: Matthew 11:10, Mark 1:2, Luke 1:76

Commentary: Malachi is speaking to Jewish people who had returned to the land of Israel from exile in Babylon and who had rebuilt the temple. Yet the promises of God’s glory filling the temple had apparently not materialized. To a dispirited people, Malachi prophecies that God will indeed come to the temple, preceded by a “messenger.”

28) The Messiah would be the coming one to whom the scepter belongs

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Genesis 49:10

New Testament citations: Matthew 2:6, Matthew 2:11, Romans, 1:5, Romans 15:18, Romans 16:26, Hebrews 7:14, Revelation 5:5

Commentary: This prophecy is part of Jacob's prophetic blessings on his sons; the full blessing on Judah is found in Genesis 49:9-12, in which Jacob speaks of the preeminence of that tribe. We can mention three highlights of the prophecy blessing: 1. The promise of the "scepter" and "ruler's staff" indicates that Judah would exercise rulership.

29) The Messiah would be acclaimed

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Psalm 118:25-29

New Testament citations: Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:9-10; Luke 13:34-35; 19:38; John 12:13

Commentary: Psalm 118 was one of the Hallel Psalms (Psalms of Praise) recited at Passover time. All four Gospels record that as Jesus entered Jerusalem in the days leading up

to Passover, crowds gathered, acclaiming Jesus as the one “who comes in the name of the Lord” (Psalm 118:26).

30) The Messiah would be the seed of the woman

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Genesis 3:15

New Testament citations: Romans 16:20, Galatians 4:4, Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 12:9, 17

Commentary: The singular “he shall bruise your head” suggests a particular individual; the contrast between head and heel may suggest that the blow against Satan and evil will be lethal, but not so the blow against the individual. Just as Genesis sets the stage for everything that follows in the Bible, this verse sets the stage for the coming of someone who would inflict a death blow on Satan and on evil. As a result, many understand this to be the first hint of a coming one who will be victorious over evil.

31) The Messiah would be the descendant of Abraham through whom all nations would be blessed

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Genesis 12:3

New Testament citations: Acts 3:24-26

Commentary: It has always been the biblical hope that one day the nations of the world would join with Israel in worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. One can make a good case that through Jewish doctors, lawyers, scientists, and the world-renowned Israeli technology sector, great blessing has already come to the world. But as the Bible shows us, the ultimate fulfillment is that through Jesus.

33) The Messiah would be our Kinsman-Redeemer

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Ruth 4:4-9

New Testament citations: Luke 1:50, 58, 68, 72, 78; John 10:17-18; Romans 5:7-8; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:4; Hebrews 2:11-12, 17

Commentary: In the book of Ruth, the idea of *chesed*, often translated *lovingkindness* or *mercy*, lies behind the action of the redeemer (Hebrew, *go'el*). *Chesed* implies acting to meet the deep needs of others based on relationship of commitment and covenant. Because of this, it also implies that a more powerful person will be the one showing *chesed* to one who is weaker, and it is done voluntarily. In the same way, God's *chesed* lies behind His acts of mercy on behalf of His people Israel

35) The Messiah would be the great light

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Isaiah 9:1-2 [Hebrew Bible 8:23-9:1]

New Testament citations: Matthew 4:13-16, Luke 1:76-79; 2:32; John 1:4-5; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46

Commentary: Galilee, represented here by the tribal areas of Zebulun and Naphtali, were the first to be taken into captivity by Assyria in the eighth century BC. Here, Isaiah promises that they will see a reversal of this tragedy, for God's light will shine on them—an emblem of His presence and guidance. Matthew chapter 4 portrays Jesus' ministry in Galilee as the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. Galilee, though inhabited by Jews, was also a populous area for Gentiles, hence the designation "Galilee of the Gentiles"—with a hint that Jesus' ministry will impact not only the Jewish nation but others as well.

38) The Messiah would be preceded by a forerunner

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Isaiah 40:3-5

New Testament citations: Matthew 3:1-3; Mark 1:1-3; Luke 1:76; 3:1-6; John 1:22-23

Commentary: As Malachi 3:1 does (see [commentary on that verse](#)), Isaiah 40:3-5 speaks of someone coming to prepare God's way. Where Malachi talks about a *messenger* coming to *bring God back to His Temple*, Isaiah speaks of a *voice* crying out to prepare God's way *in the desert*.

39) The Messiah would be a light for the nations of the world

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Isaiah 42:1-7

New Testament citations: Matthew 12:15-21; Luke 2:27-32; John 8:12; Revelation 21:23-24

Commentary: In [Isaiah 42:6](#), we read that the servant will be “a light for the nations.” This actually helps us to understand what kind of justice ([Matthew 12:18, 20](#)) God will bring to the Gentiles (the nations of the world), and what kind of “hope” Isaiah says they will have. As the following New Testament verses show, the servant’s light will provide revelation, life, and direction or guidance.

40) The Messiah would be the object of a murderous plot, but hope lies ahead

Hebrew Scriptures reference: Jeremiah 31:15

New Testament citations: Matthew 2:16-18

Commentary: Herod’s murder of the male children in Bethlehem who were two years old and under is part of a pattern in Scripture in which evil rulers attempt to destroy Israel. We remember that Pharaoh asked the midwives to kill the male babies of the Hebrews. We recall that Assyria and Babylon ripped Israelites from their land and brought them into captivity. We think about how Haman tried to commit genocide against the Jewish people. Now in Matthew, Herod is seeking

to destroy someone that he views as a competitor, as another king.

Reference: Jeremiah 31:15

Fulfillment: Matthew 2:16-18

Jeremiah 31 is a passage of hope and restoration for the beleaguered nation of Israel. We should actually go back to chapter 30 to see the start of Jeremiah's message of hope. Then chapter 31 goes on to include both the famous prophecy of a new covenant and an affirmation that God's people Israel will never be destroyed, even if they end up in exile in Babylon.

In verses 15 and 16 of chapter 31, there is a dialogue going on. First, in v. 15, we find Rachel, one of the four matriarchs of Israel, grieving bitterly over the fate of her "children":

Thus says the LORD: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."

Ramah was the place where the exiles were herded together to march to Babylon, and Rachel is portrayed as weeping in her grave at that very place as the nation is taken captive.

But then God responds in verse 16, telling Rachel to no longer weep, for there is a hope ahead for the nation:

Thus says the LORD: "Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work, declares the LORD, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy."

It is in verse 16 Matthew cites in his gospel:

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children

in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

“A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.” (Matthew 2:16-18)

What Matthew is doing in his first few chapters is this: he is not saying that the Old Testament passages he cites are direct predictions of Jesus' life – though they certainly were in other cases. What he is doing is showing that key points about the life of Israel are being repeated in Jesus' life. In this way, Jesus fulfills Scripture because as the greatest Israelite of all, his life follows the contours of the nation's history. The Old Testament, too, sees similar patterns. For example, the Exodus from Egypt is considered by the prophets as a pattern of an even greater Exodus to come in the future when Israel is gathered from the nations and redeemed in full. The coming Messiah is considered in the Old Testament to be another David, or even another Moses. It is as if Matthew is saying, “Jesus is with you, Israel – what you went through, he went through.” This may sound odd to our ears, but it made sense for the ancient readers of Scripture.

And so Herod's murder of the male children in Bethlehem who were two years old and under is part of a pattern in Scripture in which evil rulers attempt to destroy Israel. We remember that Pharaoh asked the midwives to kill the male babies of the Hebrews. We recall that Assyria and Babylon ripped Israelites from their land and brought them into captivity. We think about how Haman tried to commit genocide against the Jewish people. Now in Matthew, Herod is seeking to destroy someone that he views as a competitor, as another king. It has been estimated that given the population of Bethlehem at the time as less than 1,000,

the number of children Herod had killed would have been at most twenty. That is not exactly genocide, terrible as it was; the real tragedy would have been if Herod had destroyed the Messiah among those twenty. Then Rachel would really have wept!

But remember that in Jeremiah, God responds to Rachel by telling her that there is a hope ahead, so her weeping can cease.

We may be reminded here of Psalm 30:5(Hebrew, 30:6):

“Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.”

In any event, in Matthew, there is yet hope ahead in spite of Herod – for the Messiah lives, and we should note, the Jewish people will continue to survive and even flourish.

Old Testament Prophecies about the Birth of Jesus

The Hebrew Bible, known to Christians as the Old Testament, introduces the concept of a *messiah*, an anointed one of God who will come to usher in an era where all people of earth will live together harmoniously and righteously. The Jews believe that this idea is implied in the story of Creation. According to Rabbinical thinking, God wanted us to live with Him in a paradise, so He created the Garden of Eden. Human sin required us to be expelled; yet, when Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, God did not destroy Eden. Rather, He maintained it and is awaiting a time when we will be worthy of returning.

According to Judaism, the Messianic Age is the time when the Messiah will bring us back to the kind of world that God originally intended. This time is described by a number of the prophets, and further references to the Messiah can also be found in the Psalms. A large number of these have to do with the future birth of the Messiah – which Christians recognize to be Christmas!

Before reviewing some of these, let us engage in an imaginary exercise to help us appreciate both the astonishing accuracy of these writings and the equally astonishing unlikelihood of them all coming to pass.

Imagine that in Waco, Texas, ancient scrolls are uncovered which were written 600 to 1,000 years ago. Some were written before the discovery of America by Columbus, and all were written before the American Revolution. The scrolls predict that someone in our generation will be born who is of the direct lineage of George Washington. This person would be descended from a long line of important founders of America, all of whom were known to be from Virginia. The scrolls further reveal that the person would be born in Tarrant County, Texas in the town of Azle. Miraculously, his mother would be a virgin. At the time of his birth, dignitaries from other countries would mysteriously know about him and would come to worship him and present him with precious gifts, believing he was a special envoy from God.

In addition, our imaginary prophecies would also reveal that as a result of this child being born, local ruling tyrants would make an attempt to murder him. This would result in the deaths of many other innocent children whose mothers would weep over their loss. To protect this special child from the tyrants, his father would

take him to another country, later bringing him back. This future child would grow up to lead a religious revolution.

Now, imagine that all this came to be true in our lifetime, fulfilling the predictions of these centuries-old scrolls. As astronomically unlikely as the creation, preservation and fulfillment of these written prophecies might seem, this is a fair parallel to what we have in the ancient Hebrew Scripture prophecies about Jesus!

Let us take a look at the prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus.

We know Jesus was of Jewish descent and therefore was the seed of Abraham. In Genesis 22:18 we are told that through Abraham's offspring "all nations on earth will be blessed." Christians believe Jesus is the fulfillment of this promise.

We also know that He is from the line of Jacob, Abraham's grandson. Numbers 24:17: "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."

From Isaiah 11:1 we know He is from the line of Jesse, the father of King David: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a branch will bear fruit. The spirit of the Lord will rest on him."

From Jeremiah 23:5-6 we know He is from the line of King David: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land ... This is the name by which he will be called: the Lord our righteous savior."

Reaffirming that Jesus is from the line of King David, we have this prophecy from 2 Samuel 7:12-13, which was actually spoken by Samuel to King David: “When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”

From the prophecy of Micah, 5:2 we know He was born into the tribe of Judah in the region of Ephrathah, in the town of Bethlehem: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

From Isaiah 7:14 we know that He was born from a virgin: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and you will call him Immanuel.” The name *Immanuel* means “God with us” and indicates the divinity of Jesus.

That Jesus would be worshipped by shepherds from the desert, and that foreign kings would present gifts to Him is revealed in Psalm 72:9,10: “May the desert tribes bow before him and his enemies lick the dust. May the Kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the Kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts. May all Kings bow down to him and all nations serve him.”

When Jesus was born, King Herod slaughtered a number of children in an attempt to kill Him. This is predicted in Jeremiah

31:15: “A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

In response to this attempt on the life of Jesus, Joseph is warned in a dream to take Jesus to Egypt, where they stayed until Herod died. This is predicted in Hosea 11:1: “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”

We conclude our review of these ancient writings by marveling at them collectively. These biblical prophecies are astonishing because of their accuracy alone. Yet, they become all the more astonishing when we consider the unlikelihood of all of these prophecies being fulfilled ... but they were!

Dr. David Teitelbaum

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Perhaps no other person in history has received more attention than Jesus of Nazareth. Scholars and historians are eager to uncover the mysteries of his life, death, and resurrection. More incredible than the volumes written on the life of Jesus after his birth, though, is what was written about him before he was born. Jesus claimed the Hebrew Scriptures were about him, going so far

as to say that Moses himself wrote with him in mind ([Luke 24:44](#); [John 5:46](#))!

The writings about Jesus that came prior to his birth are known as prophecies. Sometimes people think of prophecies as vague, Nostradamus-type predictions about future events. But biblical prophecies are anything but vague, detailing everything from the place and manner of Jesus' birth to the way he would die. These prophecies (often made thousands of years before Christ's birth) demonstrate that the Bible isn't merely the work of historians and poets. The Apostle Peter wrote,

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

[2 Pet 1:19-21](#)

The biblical writers could describe future events in detail because they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, who knows the beginning from the end. It's this heavenly knowledge passed onto the prophets and revealed in Scripture that confirms there is no God like the God of the Bible (see [Isa 46:9-10](#)). As Christmas approaches, here are three prophecies about Jesus' birth for you to meditate on:

1. The place of his birth.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

[Micah 5:2](#); cf. [Matt 2:1](#)

700 years before Jesus' birth, the prophet Micah spoke of a ruler who would come out of the town of Bethlehem, and whose coming forth would be from of old, even "from ancient days."

*****The last phrase there could be translated, "from the days of eternity." Here Micah foresaw that this eternally existing one would be born in podunk Bethlehem.

***** Why Bethlehem? In Hebrew, Bethlehem means "bread house." Bethlehem is where the bread comes from! Jesus identified himself as the bread of life ([John 6:35](#)). He alone can satisfy our deepest spiritual longings.

2. The manner of his birth.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

[Isa 7:14](#); cf. [Matt 1:23](#)

Like the prophet Micah, Isaiah's ministry took place hundreds of years before Christ, and he foresaw that the Messiah's birth would be miraculous. *A virgin would conceive* and bear a son who would be called Immanuel, which means "God with us." As with the Micah prophecy, this highlights the divine status of the one who would be born.

***** But why was he born of a virgin? The virgin birth highlights that salvation is wholly a work of God. In the Old Testament, God often raised up mighty heroes to deliver his people in miraculous ways. Some of the greatest Old Testament savior types were born to mothers who had difficulty conceiving. Sara was barren before she conceived Isaac ([Gen 11:29-30](#)); Rebekah was barren before she conceived Jacob ([Gen 25:21-26](#)); Rachel was barren before she bore Joseph ([Gen 30:22-24](#)); Samson's mother was barren before she bore him ([Judg 13:2-3](#)); and Hannah was barren before she conceived Samuel ([1 Sam 1:1-2](#)). God worked against the odds to demonstrate his power and glory. It's only fitting that the greatest savior of all would be born against all odds, to a virgin! The impossibility of the virgin birth showcases the divine manner of Jesus' entrance into the world, and paves the way for the expectation that he would be the ultimate deliverer of God's people.

The virgin birth is very important for another reason, too. Because Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit ([Matt 1:18](#)), he could assume humanity in its totality, and still be without sin.

*****The virgin birth ensured that Jesus would be our perfect representative ([Heb 4:15](#)), sharing our humanity, but not our guilt.

3. The purpose of his birth.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

[Gen 3:15](#); cf. [Col 2:15](#)

***** Writing thousands of years before Jesus' birth, Moses recorded this ancient prophecy about the offspring of a woman who would crush Satan's head. While this prophecy reveals to us why Jesus came, it also foreshadows the manner of his death. His heel would be bruised, a promise that Christ's victory would come through Christ's sufferings. Jesus was born to restore humanity, and he was crucified to redeem humanity.

***** From the earliest chapters of the Bible, prophecies of the Savior's birth move the narrative forward. Each book of the Old Testament is like a river bringing us down to the manger in Bethlehem. There, we find the promised seed who would deliver humanity by conquering sin and Satan.

As we remember the birth of Christ this Christmas, let's reflect on the entire life of our Lord, marveling at the prophetic testimony and rejoicing in the greatest gift of all: Jesus.

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THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND ISAIAH 7:14¹

Charles L. Feinberg, Th.D., Ph.D. Former Dean and Professor of Old Testament Talbot Theological Seminary – La Mirada, CA

Isaiah 7:14 continues to be one of the most debated texts in the Bible. After surveying various scholarly opinions, two key Hebrew words, 'almâ (young woman) and b^etûlâ (maiden) are discussed as to the immediate historical and prophetic intent of

Isaiah. After also consulting the LXX version and Matthew's use (1:23) of Isaiah 7:14, it is concluded that the passage is a signal and explicit prediction of the miraculous conception and nativity of Jesus Christ.

No student of the Old Testament need apologize for a treatment of Isaiah 7:14 in relation to the doctrine of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. From earliest times to the present the discussions which have centered about this theme have been both interesting, varied, and at times even heated. Lindblom characterizes Isaiah 7:14 as “the endlessly discussed passage of the Immanuel sign.”² Rawlinson maintains: “Few prophecies have been the subject of so much controversy, or called forth such a variety of exegesis, as this prophecy of Immanuel. Rosenmueller gives a list of twenty-eight authors who have written dissertations on it, and himself adds a twenty-ninth. Yet the subject is far from being exhausted.”³ Barnes emphasizes the obscurity of the passage: “Who this virgin was, and what is the precise meaning of this prediction, has given, perhaps, more perplexity to commentators than almost any other portion of the Bible.”⁴ Again, he insists, “Perhaps there is no prophecy in the Old Testament

¹ Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg (1909–1995), longtime Dean of Talbot Theological Seminary and highly esteemed Old Testament scholar, served as Dr. MacArthur's mentor and favorite seminary professor during his study for ministry at Talbot. This essay was published by Dr. Feinberg in *Is the Virgin Birth in the Old Testament?* (Whittier, CA: Emeth Publishing, 1967), 34–48 and is used by permission of the *Charles Lee Feinberg Family Trust*. This article appears essentially in its original form.

²Johannes Lindblom, “A Study on the Immanuel Section on Isaiah vii, 1–ix, 6,” *Scripta Minora* 1957–58:4 (Lund, Sweden: Lund CWK Gleerup, 1958), 15.

³ George Rawlinson, “Isaiah: An Exposition,” in *The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (1892; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 10:129.

⁴ Albert Barnes, “Isaiah,” in *Notes on the Old Testament: Explanatory and Practical*, ed. Robert Frew (1853; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950), 1:148.

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on which more has been written, and which has produced more perplexity among commentators than this. And after all, it still remains, in many respects, very obscure.”⁵ Skinner seeks in a general way to pinpoint the source of the difficulties. He states: “Probably no single passage of the Old Testament has been so variously interpreted or has given rise to so much controversy as the prophecy contained in these verses. The difficulties arise mainly from the fact that while the terms of the prediction are so indefinite as to admit a wide range of possibilities, we have no record of its actual fulfillment in any contemporary event.”⁶ In view of these statements concerning the difficulties in the passage, one may scarcely expect unanimity among either liberals or conservatives in theology.

The logical point at which the investigation should be initiated is a careful treatment of the immediate context. It was in the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah,⁷ that a coalition was formed between

Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, against Ahaz. Their avowed objective (Isa 7:5–6) was the dethronement of Ahaz and the setting up in his place of a Syrian pretender, a vassal king, Tabeal. When the fact of the confederacy was made known to the royal house, the consternation was great indeed. The text states it (v. 2) under a strong figure. But God had not been consulted in the matter, and He made known that the plottings of Judah's enemies would be frustrated. Moreover, in yet sixty-five years the northern kingdom of Ephraim would be no more. In that dark hour it required faith to lay hold of this pronouncement of Isaiah, and he warned that if God's word through him were not believed, there would be no establishment of the king and his people.

Then it was that God, out of His boundless love and mercy to the Davidic house, wishing to confirm the strong assurances already made, invited Ahaz to ask for a sign in attestation of these predictions. Ahaz was not to feel in the least confined, for he was allowed a latitude of request from heaven above to Sheol below. Any request within these extensive areas was permissible. But Ahaz in a hypocritical display of sudden piety refused to put God to the test. This was an affront to God to disobey in so peremptory a manner. Isaiah's patience had long since been exhausted with the vacillating, faithless monarch. Will Ahaz now wear out God's patience as well?

In spite of the king's disobedience and without his co-operation, the Lord Himself promised a specific sign: a virgin with child was to bring forth a

⁵ Ibid., 157.

⁶ J. Skinner, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapters I.–XXXIX*, The Cambridge Bible (Cambridge: The University Press, 1900), 60. See also: Robert W. Rogers, “Isaiah” in the *Abingdon Bible Commentary*, ed. Frederick Carl Eiselen (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1929), 643–44 ; W. Fitch, “Isaiah” in *New Bible Commentary*, ed. F. Davidson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 569; and Emil M. Kraeling, “The Immanuel Prophecy,” *JBL*, 50, no. 4 (1931): 277–95.

⁷ Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951), 104. He places his accession date at 722 BC, at the age of twenty.

The Virgin Birth and Isaiah 7:14 13

son whose name would be Immanuel. Before certain stages of growth were reached in the life of the child, both Syria and Ephraim would no longer be threatening powers to Judah. How is this passage to be understood in the large? Is it a prediction of an ominous nature? Is it a prophecy of a salutary character? Or is it composed of both elements?⁸ In order to determine this basic question it will be necessary to treat the individual terms of the passage.

What is meant by the word ‘*ôt* (*sign*)? If there were agreement here among interpreters of the prophecy, one could feel he were off to a good start. But the variety of views is disconcerting, to say the least. Brown has counted seventy-nine occurrences of the word in the Old Testament, forty-four times in the singular and thirty-five in the plural. He understands the usages in our passage as relating to a sign which “takes place before the promised event happens, and serves as a pledge to those to whom it is given that the event suggested by it will come to pass. We shall expect, then, to find in the sign given to Ahaz

something which occurred prior to the deliverance foretold in the same passage, and became a pledge to him of that deliverance.”⁹ Fitch holds that the sign was “not necessarily miraculous.”¹⁰ Gray feels that the sign has in view something which was previously foretold, but has now actually happened.¹¹

But the traditional position that a miracle is demanded by the context is not without its able exponents. Barnes unequivocally maintains that the sign is “a miracle wrought in attestation of a Divine promise or message. This is its sense here.”¹² Kraeling concludes that something unusual is to be looked for, “so that the ancient virgin birth interpretation was not without a good psychological basis when viewed from this angle.”¹³ J.A. Alexander reasons that “it seems very improbable that after such an offer, the sign bestowed would be merely a thing of everyday occurrence, or at most the application of a symbolical name. This presumption is strengthened by the solemnity with which the Prophet speaks of the predicted birth, not as a usual and natural event,

⁸ Kraeling, “Immanuel,” 281, ably sets forth the three groups of interpretation. ⁹ Charles R. Brown, “Exegesis of Isaiah VII. 10-17,” *JBL*, 9, no. 1 (1890): 119. ¹⁰ Fitch, “Isaiah,” 569.

¹¹ George B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah I–XXVII*. ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), I:121. Also Skinner denies that an objective miracle is here called for (*Isaiah*, 60). See also Cuthbert Lattey, “The Term *Almah* in Is. 7:14,” and “Various Interpretations of Is. 7:14,” *CBQ* 9 (1947): 95 and 147–54, who would appear to take the same position.

¹² Barnes, "Isaiah," 155.

¹³ Kraeling, "Immanuel," 280.

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but as something which excites his own astonishment, as he beholds it in prophetic vision."¹⁴

Those who insist that Isaiah must be speaking of an event already past or one on the contemporary scene are not giving the interjection *hinnēh* (Behold) its proper force. Delitzsch maintains: "*hinnēh* with the following participle (here participial adjective; cf. 2 Sam xi. 5) is always presentative, and the thing presented is always either a real thing, as in Gen. xvi. 11 and Judg. xiii. 5; or it is an ideally present thing, as is to be taken here; for except in chap. xlvi. 7 *hinnēh* always indicates something future in Isaiah."¹⁵ We are indebted to Young for bringing to bear upon the term the light from Ras Shamra literature. After pointing out similar constructions to Isaiah 7:14 in Genesis 16:11; 17:19; and Judges 13:5, 7, he states: "At present it is sufficient to remark that the phrase introduced by *hinnēh* is employed in the Scriptures to announce a birth of unusual importance. It is therefore of particular interest to note that this formula has been found upon one of the texts recently excavated at Ras Shamra."¹⁶

The storm center of the text is, of course, the word *'almâ* (young woman). Reams have been written upon it and, doubtless, reams will be written on it in the future. What is the exact translation of this important and pivotal word? Is there an element of

ambiguity in it, or has the vagueness been imported into the discussion by interpreters? Here the exegete of Isaiah has a splendid opportunity to go slowly and plough deeply. To be accurate in one's conclusions all the evidence available must be weighed properly. First of all, it must be noticed that the noun has the definite article. For many this phenomenon is without significance, but Lindblom affirms: "The most natural explanation is that a definite woman is in view."¹⁷ Hengstenberg is even stronger when he declares: "In harmony with *hinnēh*, the article in *ha- 'almā* might be explained from the circumstance that the Virgin is present to the inward perception of the prophet—equivalent to 'the virgin there.'"¹⁸ The better interpretation of the passage would see a significance in the prophet's use of the definite article, pointing to a specific person.

¹⁴ Joseph A. Alexander, *Commentary on Isaiah* (1865; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953), 167.

¹⁵ Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on The Prophecies of Isaiah*, trans. James Martin (1879; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 1:206.

¹⁶ Edward J. Young, *Studies in Isaiah* (London: Tyndale, 1955), 159. His conclusion is: "Isaiah, therefore, because of the tremendous solemnity and importance of the announcement which he was to make, used as much of this ancient formula of announcement as suited his purpose." (160).

¹⁷ Lindblom, "Immanuel,"¹⁹. Also A. R. Fausett, "Hebrews," in *A Commentary: Critical, Experimental and Practical* by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown (1893; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 3:586.

¹⁸ E.W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament* (1892; repr., Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1970), 2:44. Young explains it thus: "More natural, however, is the

generic usage in which the article serves to designate some particular unknown person.” (*Studies*, 164).

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But what is the precise meaning of *‘almâ*? There are numerous scholars who are noncommittal as to whether the term signifies a virgin or a married woman. Rogers states his position clearly: “First of all, it must be said that the Hebrew word *‘almâ* may mean ‘virgin,’ but does not necessarily mean anything more than a young woman of marriageable age. Had the prophet intended specifically and precisely to say ‘virgin,’ he must have used the word *b^etûlâ* (maiden), though even then there would be a faint shade of uncertainty.”¹⁹

It is in place here to indicate that many reputable scholars have held and do hold that the Hebrew term in this context means virgin. Gray affirms that “*‘almâ* means a girl, or young woman, above the age of childhood and sexual immaturity...a person of the age at which sexual emotion awakens and becomes potent; it asserts neither virginity nor the lack of it; it is naturally in actual usage often applied to women who were as a matter of fact certainly (Gen 24:43; Ex 2:8), or probably (Song 1:3; 6:8; Ps 68.26), virgins.”²⁰ Gordon, an able Jewish Semitic scholar, presents an interesting sidelight on the problem. He maintains: “The commonly held view that ‘virgin’ is Christian, whereas ‘young woman’ is Jewish is not quite true. The fact is that the Septuagint, which is the Jewish translation made in pre-Christian Alexandria, takes *‘almâ* to mean ‘virgin’ here. Accordingly, the New Testament follows Jewish interpretation

in Isaiah 7:14. Little purpose would serve in repeating the learned expositions that Hebraists have already contributed in their attempt to clarify the point at issue. It all boils down to this: the distinctive Hebrew word for ‘virgin’ is *b^etûlâ*, whereas ‘*almâ*’ means a ‘young woman’ who may be a virgin, but is not necessarily so. The aim of this note is rather to call attention to a source that has not yet been brought into the discussion. From Ugarit of around 1400 B.C. comes a text celebrating the marriage of the male and female lunar deities. It is there predicted that the goddess will bear a son.... The terminology is remarkably close to that in Isaiah 7:14. However, the Ugaritic statement that the bride will bear a son is fortunately given in parallelistic form; in 77:7 she is called by the exact etymological counterpart of Hebrew ‘*almâ*’ ‘young woman’; in 77:5 she is called by the exact etymological counterpart of Hebrew *b^etûlâ* ‘virgin.’ Therefore, the New Testament rendering of ‘*almâ*’ as ‘virgin’ for Isaiah 7:14 rests on the older Jewish interpretation, which in turn is now borne out for *precisely this annunciation formula* by a text that is not only pre-Isaianic but is pre-Mosaic in the form that we now have it on a clay tablet.”²¹

¹⁹ Rogers, “Isaiah,” 643–44. For the same approach compare: Lindblom, “Immanuel,” 18; C.W.E. Naegelsbach, “The Prophet Isaiah,” in *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical* by John Peter Lange (1869; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 6:121–23; and Conrad von Orelli, *The Prophecies of Isaiah* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1899), 53. Skinner holds that *b^etûlâ* is not wholly free from ambiguity, while contending that ‘*almâ*’ does not necessarily connote virginity (*Isaiah*, 56).

²⁰ Gray, *Isaiah*, 126–27.

²¹ Cyrus H. Gordon, "Almah in Isaiah 7:14," *JBR* 21, no. 2 (April, 1953): 106. Some have overlooked or minimized the fact that Joel 1:8 indicates a *b^etûlâ* has been married and lost her

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The position espoused here has been ably set forth by many, but not more cogently than by Machen who contended: "The question, we think, cannot be settled merely by a consideration of the meaning of the Hebrew word '*almâ*. It has been urged, indeed, on the one hand that the Hebrew language has a perfectly unmistakable word for 'virgin,' *b^etûlâ*, and that if 'virgin' had been meant that word would have been used. But as a matter of fact there is no place among the seven occurrences of '*almâ* in the Old Testament where the word is clearly used of a woman who was not a virgin. It may readily be admitted that '*almâ* does not actually indicate virginity, as does *b^etûlâ*; it means rather 'a young woman of marriageable age.' But on the other hand one may well doubt, in view of the usage, whether it was a natural word to use of anyone who was not in point of fact a virgin."²²

The reference is undoubtedly to the virgin Mary, a fact clearly attested by Matthew 1. Those who cannot interpret '*almâ* as a virgin present a variety of views as to the identity of the young woman. Some assert it was the consort of Ahaz, any contemporary young woman, Isaiah's wife, one of Ahaz' harem, or a princess of the court of Ahaz. Manifestly, these do not meet the requirements of the context for a miraculous occurrence.

If there is divergence of thought on the identity of the mother of the child, there is no less agreement on the child himself. One position is that the child is an unknown one born in that day to confirm the prophecy of Isaiah. Others hold that the son is the son of Isaiah. Still others maintain that the child is Hezekiah, not realizing or overlooking the chronological difficulty here. A number of expositors contend for a double or multiple fulfillment, one in Isaiah's day and one in the life of Christ Himself. Alexander states a valid refutation: "It seems to be a feeling common to learned and unlearned readers, that although a double sense is not impossible, and must in certain cases be assumed, it is unreasonable to assume it when any other explanation is admissible. The improbability in this case is increased by the want of similarity between the two events, supposed to be predicted in the very same words, the one miraculous, the other not only natural, but common, and of everyday occurrence."²³

Against the view that verses 14–16 relate wholly and entirely to the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the position maintained here, has been leveled the charge that it gives the prophecy no relevance to the day in which it

husband. See the interesting reference of William S. LaSor in his "*Isaiah 7:14—'Young Woman' or 'Virgin'?*" (Altadena, CA: By Author, 1953), 3–4; especially the larger issues involved at the end of his treatment.

²² J. Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (New York: Harper, 1930), 288.

²³ Alexander, *Isaiah*, 170. In order to avoid some of the difficulties involved here, the view has been taken that verse 14 refers to Christ, whereas the rest of the

passage, that is, verses 15 and 16, relate to Shear-jashub, son of Isaiah. See William Kelly, *Lectures on Isaiah* (London: Morrish, 1871), 125.

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was uttered. This is a serious matter, for the prophet must speak to his own generation as well as to future ones. To many a fulfillment centuries later would be worthless to Ahaz and his contemporaries in their distress. But the exact opposite is true. Ahaz and his courtiers were fearful of the extinction of the Davidic dynasty and the displacement of the king by a Syrian pretender. However, the longer the time needed to fulfill the promise to the Davidic house, the longer that dynasty would be in existence to witness the realization of the prediction. It is well stated by Alexander: "... The assurance that Christ was to be born in Judah, of its royal family, might be a *sign* to Ahaz, that the kingdom should not perish in his day; and so far was the remoteness of the sign in this case from making it absurd or inappropriate, that the further off it was, the stronger the promise of continuance of Judah, which it guaranteed."²⁴ The conclusion, then, is inescapable that "...there is no ground, grammatical, historical, or logical, for doubt as to the main point, that the Church in all ages has been right in regarding this passage as a signal and explicit prediction of the miraculous conception and nativity of Jesus Christ."²⁵

²⁴Alexander, *Isaiah*, 171. ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

The Birth of Jesus

Making the Impossible Possible

by **BibleProject Team** 4 years ago

Have you ever excitedly anticipated something only to find that when it arrived it was nothing like what you had expected? Maybe as a kid you were expecting to get a BB gun for Christmas, but instead you unwrapped pajamas. What a let down! Well, when we unwrap the story of Jesus' birth, it isn't what you might expect, but it certainly isn't a let down. Let's explore the cast of characters and the events surrounding the birth of Jesus in the first two chapters of Luke.

The Time Had Come

For 400 years before Jesus' birth, God was silent. He spoke no prophetic words, psalms or encouragement to His people. And then one day, He appeared and made a fairly significant announcement. What was the message that would compel God to break His silence?

For centuries, dating all the way back to Genesis 3 the scriptures would point to a Savior who would deliver the world from the bondage of sin and establish God's kingdom on earth. You can imagine then, when this Messiah finally came in the form of a tiny baby Jesus, born to a young, poor, no-named girl (AKA the famous

Virgin Mary) people might doubt. Surely this could not be the savior the prophets spoke of! Baby Jesus was after all born in a barn of all places, placed in a feeding trough, and His birth was celebrated by goat and sheep-herders. These were hardly appropriate accommodations for the King of Kings...or were they?

The Herald – John the Baptist

It all began with an old barren couple, reminiscent of Abraham and Sarah. Zechariah, a priest, and his wife Elizabeth, a descendant of Israel's first High Priest Aaron, tried unsuccessfully for years to have a baby. Even though Zechariah worked in the temple, the couple may have faced criticism, shame, and guilt because of their barrenness.

And then one day, an angel named Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and told him to get ready for a son. He and Elizabeth would name him John. The boy would bring his parents joy, be great in God's sight, and prepare the people for the Messiah. (Fun family fact: Elizabeth and Mary were cousins).

Zechariah couldn't believe the news. How could he and Elizabeth possibly have a baby? Because he questioned Gabriel in disbelief, Zechariah was struck with muteness. He would be silent until John was born and God's prophecy was fulfilled.

Holy Spirit Conception

Gabriel was, of course, also met with skepticism from Mary when he delivered the second announcement. “How shall this be? Seeing I know not a man?” said Mary. Gabriel explained the Invisible Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, would overshadow her and “that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” She would call His name Jesus. Mary accepted the angel’s words, affirmed her willingness to serve God, and pondered the coming birth of Jesus.

As we read Luke’s account of these incredible events, you can imagine the full range of emotion that Mary was experiencing—and Joseph, her fiancé, as well. In this story of immaculate conception, Mary demonstrates that while she might have been the least-likely candidate for the mother through whom God binds Himself to humanity, He does it so that there can be no mistake that His hand is directing it. He makes the impossible possible — conception within a barren Elizabeth and a Virgin Mary.

God’s miracle birth announcements are only the beginning of an incredible story orchestrated by God and recorded by Luke. Early in this story, in the first two chapters in fact, we gain valuable insight into God’s plan. He would use those in the low places, the poor and invisible, to bring about his new world order.