

5. We have a superior priesthood, a superior spiritual life, and superior rewards and blessings, all made possible by our superior Savior, Jesus Christ.

Doctrinal Conclusions

1. This is the time of year during which we pause to celebrate the entrance of our Lord into human history. The impact of Christmas is not so much its unique beginnings but its ultimate victory.
2. The Virgin Birth was the beginning of a vast divine experiment designed to provide salvation to all mankind.
3. It was due to the virtue, integrity, and honor exhibited by Jesus of Nazareth that made this salvation a reality.
4. The fact He fulfilled the salvation plan of God on the cross is our guarantee of a superior spiritual life.
5. Superior dividends from His substitutionary sacrifice are being paid out daily in the superior dispensation called the Church Age.
6. We are the grace beneficiaries of this unspeakable gift simply through faith alone in Christ alone.
7. A superior High Priest + a superior system for spiritual growth + superior promises + superior delegated power + superior divine operating assets = superior invisible historical impact from a superior spiritual life.
8. Christmas therefore becomes for us an “Auld Lang Syne” whereby we pause to reflect back upon the Father’s deployment of His uniquely born Son to execute His superior plan: Operation Reconciliation.
9. Through these superior things we are given the opportunity of living a superior life.
10. In conclusion let us remember the Source of our so great salvation and His entrance into the human race for our benefit and for the purpose of our eternal redemption:

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.” (NIV)



Genesis 49:10 “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between His feet, until He [Shiloh [שִׁילֹה] comes to whom it belongs; the nations will obey Him. (NET)

Micah 5:2 “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.” (NIV)

Isaiah 7:14 “The Lord Himself will give you a sign [תּוֹא] ’oth]: the virgin [עֲלֻמָּה] *’almah*] will be with child and will give birth to a Son and will call him Immanuel [עִמָּנוּאֵל] (‘*Immanu’el*): God with us].” (NIV)

11. The word “sign” is the Hebrew noun *’oth*:
תּוֹא ’oth. The word occurs 78 times in the Old Testament and in 75 cases the Septuagint translates it by the Greek *sēmeion*. (p. 168)
’oth, “sign,” is an object, an occurrence, an event through which a person is to recognize, learn, remember, or perceive the credibility of something. (p. 170)³
12. Isaiah’s prophecy includes a sign by which future generations will be able to recognize the arrival of the Messiah and to perceive His credibility: the Virgin Birth. There is controversy among theologians as to the definition of the word for “virgin.” The word **עֲלֻמָּה ’almah** is one of three words in the Hebrew that could be translated “virgin” or “young woman of marriageable age,” i.e., nubile.
13. However, one of the major principles of hermeneutics is to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. Of the seven uses of *’almah* in the Old Testament the six apart from Isaiah 7:14 all refer to literal virgins. There is no reason therefore, especially in view of the context, to assume Isaiah’s prophecy does not also refer to a virgin, a conclusion discussed by:

³ G. Johannes Botterwech, and Helmer Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Translated by John T. Willis. Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 1:168, 170.



Since everyone agrees that עַלְמָה *‘almah*, means an unmarried woman, if the woman in Isaiah 7:14 were a non-virgin, then God would be promising a sign involving fornication and illegitimacy. It is unthinkable that God would sanction sin, and in any case, what would be so unusual about an illegitimate baby that could possibly constitute a sign? (p. 34)

As far as ancient Jewish writers were concerned, there was no argument about Isaiah 7:14 predicting a virgin birth. The *Septuagint* is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures made about 200 B.C., 200 years before the issue of Jesus’ Messiahship ever arose. The Jews who made this translation, living much closer to the times of Isaiah than we do today, translated Isaiah 7:14 using the Greek word *parthenos* which very clearly and exclusively means a virgin. (p. 35)⁴

14. Isaiah later speaks of both the Lord’s birth and the Incarnation but skips the Church Age to describe His titles as Ruler over His millennial kingdom:

Isaiah 9:6 Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, [Church Age is skipped] and the government shall be on His shoulders [millennial kingdom]. And He will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

v. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on [the Second Advent] and forever [eternity future].

15. Now we move to the New Testament and two major Messianic passages. The first announces the imminency of Isaiah’s prophecy and the other documents its fulfillment. The latter includes an angelic disclosure of another “sign” to be used to verify the Messiah’s identity. First, the prophecy reiterated what the virgin identified:

Luke 1:26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

⁴ Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. Messianic Christology: A Study of Old Testament Prophecy Concerning the First Coming of the Messiah. (Tustin: Ariel Ministries, 1998), pp. 34-35.



Luke 1:27 to a virgin [παρθένος, *parthénos*: a youthful woman who has not had relations with a male] pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

v. 28 The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

v. 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

v. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.

v. 31 “You will be with child and give birth to a Son and you must call His name Jesus.

v. 32 “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David,

v. 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; in fact, His kingdom will never end.”

16. Next, Luke relates the fulfillment of the prophecy:

Luke 2:1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

v. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

v. 3 And everyone went to his own town to register.

v. 4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

v. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

v. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,

v. 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped him in burial cloths and placed Him in a feeding trough, because there was no room for them in the inn.

v. 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night.



Luke 2:9 And angel of the Lord [the seraph-rank King of Arms of the angelic College of Heralds] appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

v. 10 But the seraph angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news [the provision of salvation to all who believe] of great joy that will be for all the people [unlimited atonement].

v. 11 “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.

v. 12 “This will be a sign [σημεῖον, *sēmeíon*: that which distinguishes one person from another] to you: You will find a Baby wrapped in burial cloths and lying in a feeding trough.”

v. 13 Suddenly with the seraph there appeared a great army of angelic warriors who were praising God and singing:

v. 14 “Glory to God in the heavenlies, and on earth, peace among those with whom God is well-pleased.”

v. 15 So it was, when the angelic army had passed in review and gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds began speaking to one another, “Let us go straight through to Bethlehem and see this truth [“thing”: ῥῆμα, *rhēma*: the “word of life” or the subject matter of the seraph’s message] which has happened which the Lord [God the Father] has made known to us.”

v. 16 And they hastened and found by searching Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a feeding trough.

v. 17 And having seen this sign they made known to others this saying [ῥῆμα, *rhēma*: this “word of life”] which had been told them about the Child.

17. The shepherds put together the signs and came to the doctrinal conclusion that the Baby they visited in the feeding trough in Bethlehem was the long-awaited virgin-born Messiah of Israel, and His name is Jesus, Who is Christ the Lord.



18. On 26 December circa 4 B.C., the Lord Jesus was awakened by the first sunrise of His Incarnation. It introduced him to a life that would change the dynamics of the entire world from that day to this. That life would end 33 years later in a sacrificial death that would provide eternal life to millions who would believe the sign of the cross: the work of our Savior Jesus Christ made possible by the matchless grace and undiminished love of God.

(End Christmas Special 2024)

