

# Doctrine of the Trinity, Part 3

There are many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah in which we can easily find fulfillment in Jesus' life and works. In this lesson, we will present a few of the most significant prophecies.

OT prophecies predicted the Messiah would be of human generation. We see this as early as Genesis 3:15 when God tells Adam, the woman, and the serpent that He will "put enmity between her seed and his seed" and her seed would "bruise his head."

This is a reference to the promised Messiah and the victory of the Cross. Eve expected a child to fulfill that promise. When Cain is born, she thinks he is the promised redeemer, and exclaims that she has begotten a "man from God" (Gen. 4:1).

Consider how this is such a clear picture of what happened to another woman many centuries later, when Mary conceived a "man from God" through the miraculous impregnation by the Holy Spirit. We see this promise reinforced in the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:3 when Abraham is promised a descendant who will be a blessing to all the world.

**2 Samuel 7:12** When your days are fulfilled, and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, <sup>15</sup> but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. <sup>16</sup> And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.' "

Here we see God promising David in the Davidic Covenant that long after David is dead, his seed will rule in an everlasting kingdom (v. 16).

**Jeremiah 23:5** Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

<sup>6</sup> In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

**Jeremiah 33:15** In those days and at that time, I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

Isaiah predicts the circumstances of the Messiah's birth to a "virgin" and will be called "Mighty God."

**Isaiah 7:14** Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The rabbis like to point out that *almah*, translated as "virgin," can also be translated as "damsel," "maid," or even "young woman," but it should be noted that even these translations normally imply virginity.

Micah clearly predicts the place of the Messiah's birth as Bethlehem.

**Micah 5:2** 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.

The Messiah would perform miracles just like those Jesus performed.

**Isaiah 35:5** Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup> then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

Messiah would be rejected and persecuted.

**Psalms 22:6** But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

**Isaiah 49:7** Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation ...

**Isaiah 53:3** He 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.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But 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.

Isaiah 53:4-6 and verse 12 speak of the vicarious death of the Messiah for our "transgressions," and our chastisement was upon Him, and he "bore sin for the many." That was the whole purpose of the Cross. The blood of lambs and goats could only temporarily cover or hide sin. It could never take sin away. No ordinary man could ever qualify, because we are all sinners and our righteousnesses are as "filthy rags." Only through the vicarious death of one who is qualified because He is perfect and without the "spot or blemish" of sin, could sin be brought into judgment. The animal sacrifices were designed to teach Israel that blood was required to deal with sin, but it would require the blood of the Messiah as God, the only acceptable sacrifice for sin, to accomplish the job.

Psalms 109 speaks of the rejection and persecution of the Messiah and what will happen to Israel as a result of their apostasy.

Zechariah 9:9 predicts that the Messiah would ride triumphantly into Jerusalem on the back of a young ass, a colt, exactly as Jesus did the Sunday before He was killed.

**Zechariah 9:9** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The seventy-week prophecy of Daniel predicted almost to the day the date the Messiah would be "cut off" —killed. It said the "anointed one" would be cut off after 69 weeks. A "week" is seen as seven years. Sixty-nine "weeks" of seven years each = 483 years using a 360-day Hebrew

calendar. The countdown began with Artaxerxes Longimanus's decree to rebuild Jerusalem in 445 BC. From that date, there are 69 "weeks" until Jesus' death.

There are many more passages in the OT that describe Jesus and what He did during His short 33 years on earth. I have attempted to demonstrate that the concept of the Messiah as both man and God is revealed in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. I have done so to answer the charge that the Trinity is purely a Christian-manufactured doctrine and was never a part of Jewish beliefs. That simply is not true. The "Pesikta Rabbati," which Jewish scholars date to the sixth or seventh century AD, speaks of a suffering Messiah. The "Midrash Aseret Memrot" states that the Messiah will be made the trespass offering. The "Midrash Konin" says that the Messiah must suffer wounds for Israel's sins and cites Isaiah 53:5, which speaks of the Messiah being "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities." The "Zohor," a text almost as sacred as the Bible and the Talmud, has a rather startling passage that says, "he smites just one man among them and for his sake heals all the rest," and cites Isaiah 53:5 as evidence.

The Old Testament references to the Messiah that were clearly fulfilled by Jesus are staggering in both their number and their accuracy. Any person with an open mind who believes in the Old Testament is compelled to consider the possibility that the promised Messiah for Israel was a man who would also be deity—God in the flesh—Jesus of Nazareth, who would "suffer for the many." We Christians generally accept that Jesus was God in the flesh, as many passages in the NT support this. Now you have seen that the Old Testament agrees with the New Testament. The idea that the Messiah is also God is not something the Christians dreamed up.

## **Statistics**

In the January-June edition of "Messianic Perspectives," published by the Christian Jew Foundation Ministries, an article explores the statistical probabilities that Jesus could fulfill the more than 300 OT prophecies concerning the Messiah. The experiment was conducted back in the 1950s by Dr. Peter Stoner, a professor at Pasadena City College. Dr. Stoner was a mathematician who brought Messianic prophecies into his classroom. To keep the study at a reasonable level, it was **limited to only eight prophecies**. They are:

1. Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.
2. His arrival would be announced by a forerunner or prophet.
3. He would enter Jerusalem on a young donkey.
4. He would be betrayed by a trusted friend.
5. The price of the betrayal would be the thirty pieces of silver.
6. The coins would be thrown back into the House of the Lord.
7. They would not be returned to the Temple treasury but used to buy a “potters’ field.”
8. The Messiah would remain silent before His accusers.

After the number-crunching, the results came back that the chances of one person fulfilling all eight of these prophecies (not to mention the others) would be 1 in  $10^{17}$ , or 1/100,000,000,000,000,000 — one chance in one hundred quadrillion.

Let’s put that number into perspective. If each of these were converted to a silver dollar, and they were spread over the state of Texas, **the coins would cover the entire state nearly two feet deep!**

The article goes into much more detail. It can eventually be found at the CJF Ministries website, but you may have to wait a while. Currently, the latest “Messianic Perspectives” post is from late last year.

<https://cjfm.org/resources/messianic-perspectives-archive/>

## The Virgin Birth

The doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ is essential to Christianity. It is a key doctrinal element that helps establish the deity of Jesus of Nazareth. To be the sin-bearer requires absolute perfection, and no mere mortal can meet that requirement because all men have a sin nature inherited from Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22). God can accept nothing less than perfection. To do so would violate part of His own essence, namely His perfect righteousness.

As perfect righteousness, God is the only qualified sin-bearer, but this raises other problems with His essence that we must address. To confine Himself to time and space violates His omnipresence. To take sin upon Himself violates His righteousness and impeccability. To become lower than the angels and equal to man violates His sovereignty. To submit Himself to judgment by man and to the death Jesus endured violates His omnipotence. God cannot simply come to earth, indwell a man, and take the punishment demanded for sin, which is death.

Furthermore, God expects man to meet His standard, and that standard is perfection. Through his own efforts, man has failed miserably to even come close to meeting that standard. **But if God demands it, then it must be possible.** If God's perfect righteousness must be satisfied and someone must suffer the punishment for sin in order for man to be redeemed, as taught in the Levitical system, then there must be the possibility of such a redeemer. Since the time of the fall, the need for the redeemer has been taught through the system of sacrifices formalized in the Mosaic Covenant.

We face a dilemma. We need a qualified redeemer. Neither man nor God is it. A solution seems impossible, but God is smarter than we are. God's solution is the "hypostatic union." We will define the hypostatic union as follows:

In the Person of Christ, two natures are inseparably united, without mixture or loss of separate identity, without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal and eternal.

**Romans 1:2** ...he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David **according to the flesh** <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be the Son of God in power **according to the Spirit** of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. (Emphasis added)

“According to” is a kata meaning “down from.” Jesus was a descendant of David by normal human reproduction and is the Son of God through the Holy Spirit and a miraculous impregnation.

**Philippians 2:5** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Also John 1:1-14; Romans 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; and Heb 2:14.

This means that Christ is the God-Man now; He has been the God-Man since the virgin birth, and He will be the God-Man forever. **He is the unique person of the universe.** The incarnate Person of Christ includes undiminished deity. Jesus Christ is God, coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Spirit. The incarnate Person of Christ also includes true humanity, comprising body, soul, and spirit.

Through the virgin birth, Jesus avoided both spiritual death and the sin nature. His humanity was unique because He did not personally sin. His deity was unique in that it included humanity. He possesses every attribute of deity and is eternally related to the other two members of the Trinity (Isaiah 48:16; John 1:1-4; Hebrews 5:5).

The two natures of Christ are united without transferring attributes. The attributes of deity never become human, nor do human attributes become divine. Each attribute remains within its corresponding nature. The

essence of deity cannot be changed; it is immutable. To rob Christ of a single attribute of His divine essence would destroy His deity. To rob the humanity of Christ of a single attribute of His humanity would destroy His humanity.

### **He is undiminished deity and true humanity.**

**Romans 1:2** Which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Philippians 2:5** ... Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> **but emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Emphasis added)

“Emptied” is the Greek *kenoo*, which means to deprive of force, render vain, useless, and of no effect. The root word means to empty. His deity was not surrendered but rather temporarily set aside. In the Incarnation, no attribute of His essence was changed. **In fulfilling the purpose of the Incarnation, certain attributes of deity were not exercised**, but this does not imply that they were surrendered, diminished, or destroyed. During the Incarnation, Jesus did not exercise His deity as the Second Person of the Trinity. He set it aside and lived as a man, **experiencing life exactly as we do** (Philippians 2:7-9; Hebrews 2:7-9). He experienced hunger, weariness, thirst, and pain. He was tempted as we are. As the Second Adam, He was born innocent, just as the first Adam was created innocent. During His 33 years on earth, Jesus did not sin and remained innocent, uniquely qualifying Him to be the vicarious substitute who went to the Cross in our place.

As God, He could easily avoid sin, but as man, it was more difficult. He set aside His deity and relied entirely on the Holy Spirit for guidance, strength, and power.

**Isaiah 11:2** And the **Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him**, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. (Emphasis added)

**Matthew 4:1** Then Jesus was **led up by the Spirit** into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Emphasis added)

**Mark 1:12** The **Spirit immediately drove him** out into the wilderness. (Emphasis added)

**Luke 4:1** And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was **led by the Spirit in the wilderness** <sup>2</sup> for forty days, being tempted by the devil. (Emphasis added)

**Luke 4:14** And Jesus returned **in the power of the Spirit** to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. (Emphasis added)

**Matthew 3:16** And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw **the Spirit of God descending** like a dove and coming to rest on him. (Emphasis added)

The miracles He performed were not done in the power of His own deity but under the power of the Spirit. Thus, Jesus of Nazareth, walking in the Spirit, proved that victory over sin was possible.

**Jesus test-drove the prototype spiritual life, proved that it worked, and left it for us to use.**

**John 14:16** “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.”

**John 14:25** “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

**Acts 1:8** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**Acts 2:1** When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, believers have access to the same power source Jesus used. This was not universally available before the Cross. Now all believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit and divine enablement. When we use this power source, we can achieve victory over sin, just as Jesus did (Galatians 5:16).

The union of the divine and human natures of the incarnate Christ must be considered hypostatic and personal. The Greek noun *hypostasis* means substance, essence, standing under, taking upon oneself. Christ took upon Himself true humanity. Hypostatic refers to the whole person of Christ, distinct from His two natures: divine and human. The fact that Christ is true humanity forever proves that humanity can live forever, but not in the original body that comes into the world through physical birth. That body is subject to deterioration and eventual death. The resurrection body is never subject to any kind of death, another unique characteristic of Jesus Christ. And believers will have the same kind of body in eternity.

**Philippians 3:20** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

As God, Jesus is coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Spirit. As man, He is superior to all mankind, both in human impeccability and in His deity.

This union does not imply that deity possessed humanity or that deity indwelt Christ's humanity. The union was more than harmony or sympathy. It was personal. Two natures were joined into one *hypostasis* or essence

forever, forming a unique *hypostasis*. It did not exist prior to the virgin birth, but it will endure forever.

The God-Man has one essence forever. Therefore, the attributes of both the divine and human natures belong to the Person of Christ. These attributes are now inseparable. The characteristics of one nature are never attributed to the other. This means that during the First Advent, Christ could simultaneously be omnipotent and weak, and omniscient and ignorant. However, the ignorance of His humanity was overcome by His daily intake of doctrine.

**Luke 2:40** And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

**Luke 2:52** And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

We say that **in the hypostatic union, Jesus was undiminished deity and true humanity**. It is the virgin birth that was the vehicle that enabled this to come into existence.

We got a hint of how special our redeemer had to be as far back as Genesis 3:15, when God said to Satan, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

As previously seen, this is the first mention of the Messiah in Scripture. Satan would "bruise the heel" of the woman's seed, a reference to the Messiah's going to the Cross and dying. But the seed of the woman, the Messiah, would bruise Satan on the head. This refers to the strategic victory of the Cross: though the Messiah would be killed, sin would be judged, and He would be resurrected in victory. The "bruise on the head" is a fatal wound for Satan that seals his fate.

What is most interesting here is the term "seed of the woman." The culture of Israel and the surrounding nations was strongly patriarchal. The reference to the "seed of the woman" rather than "seed of the man" is striking in that context. There is a very good reason God used that specific term "seed of the woman." That is because a man would have no part in the conception of the Messiah.

We use the term "virgin birth," which is quite inaccurate. More accurately, it should be called the "virgin conception." The fact that Mary was a virgin served only one purpose: to prove that her husband, Joseph, or any other man, for that matter, had nothing to do with her becoming pregnant. Joseph did not contribute the sperm and the 23 male chromosomes that come with it. Those 23 male chromosomes were provided miraculously by God, the Holy Spirit, not through copulation.

With her virginity having served its intended purpose and Jesus being conceived and born, there was no need for Mary to remain a virgin. As husband and wife, Mary and Joseph went on to have a normal, productive sexual relationship after Jesus' birth. We know this because the brothers and sisters of Jesus are mentioned elsewhere in Scripture.

**Acts 1:14** All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

**Matthew 13:55** Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And are not all his sisters with us?

**Galatians 1:19** But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

See also Mark 15:40; 16:1.

Jesus' brother James was a pillar of the church in Jerusalem alongside Peter and is cited by the early church fathers as the brother of our Lord and the author of the Book of James.

The virgin conception was intended solely to establish that Joseph did not father Jesus, not to glorify Mary in any way. Why was it necessary for the Messiah, the Redeemer, to have no human father? Because the sin nature is passed to the child through the father, and for the Messiah to be qualified as the "lamb without spot or blemish" of sin, He had to be conceived without a sin nature. Jesus was born perfect, exactly as Adam was created. Adam acquired a sin nature when he sinned. Jesus would not have acquired one because He did not succumb to temptation as

Adam did, thereby qualifying Him as the unique person in the universe to meet God's perfect standard and to become our substitute on the Cross, bearing the judgment for our sins.

## **The Sin Nature**

The sin nature resides in every cell of the body, regardless of a cell's structure or function, whether it is muscle, fat, skin, or bone. Each cell contains 46 chromosomes. The chromosomes in each cell carry the same pattern of genes, which, like a blueprint, determine all of that person's physical traits: eye color, height, bone structure, and IQ. These chromosomes also carry the sin nature. Each chromosome in every cell is contaminated with Adam's sinful trend. Thus, the sin nature is passed to the child through a natural process.

If both Joseph's and Mary's DNA was contaminated by the sin nature, how was her son, Jesus, born without a sin nature and Adam's imputed sin? God had a perfect plan for dealing with that: Mary was miraculously impregnated by the Holy Spirit.

Since Joseph was not his biological father, we must conclude that normally, the sin nature is passed to the child through the father's DNA. But what about Mary's DNA?

For growth, repair, or replenishment, the body's cells divide through a process called mitosis, in which one cell becomes two. The two cells are identical to the single cell from which they came.

However, the reproductive cells, the male sperm and the female ovum, are produced by a specialized cell-division process called meiosis. **After meiosis, each new cell has only half the original number of chromosomes**, or 23 instead of 46. Through this process, the male and female reproductive cells prepare for fertilization, during which their combined chromosomes produce a cell with the normal, complete set of 46 chromosomes.

In the male parent, spermatogenesis begins when an immature reproductive cell with 46 chromosomes divides to produce two mature sperm cells, each with 23 chromosomes.

In females, an additional unique process occurs, producing a single cell. Approximately once a month, this single cell is produced through a process called oogenesis. During meiosis, unneeded cellular material is expelled as small, nonfunctional polar bodies that soon disintegrate and are reabsorbed by the body. What is thrown off? The 23 male chromosomes with the sin nature, leaving one large, uncontaminated ovum with only 23 female chromosomes, ready for fertilization.

That one cell in the female, produced each month, is the only uncontaminated cell in the human body. In this normal biological process, God made provision to fulfill the promise that Christ, “the seed of the woman” (Genesis 3:15), would become the Savior. In female meiosis, God paved the way for the virgin conception, in which the Second Person of the Trinity entered the world as a perfect, uncontaminated Man, fully qualified to go to the Cross as our substitute.

The 23 chromosomes in the mature ovum are entirely free of the sin nature, but each sperm is contaminated in all of its 23 chromosomes. When the ovum is fertilized by the sperm, it also becomes contaminated by the sin nature carried by the sperm. Thus, through human genetic transmission, the zygote, blastocyst, embryo, fetus, and eventually the infant possess a sin nature. It doesn't matter what the sex of the child is; both are carriers of the sin nature. **But because Adam sinned in cognizance, not the woman, only the male transmits the sin nature.**

**1 Corinthians 15:22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

**Romans 5:19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

**Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

Romans 2:12 tells us that Adam was the original source of sin in the human race (not God) and that sin “enters the world” for each individual when Adam's sin is imputed at birth. As Homo sapiens, we all sinned when Adam sinned because Adam was the federal head of the human race.

**Romans 5:18** Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

The physical consequence of his transgression is passed down genetically through his progeny. Because of the principle of affinity, the justice of God must directly impute Adam's sin to the sin nature in us at the moment we are born. Adam's original sin plus the sin nature equals spiritual death. We are born physically alive but spiritually dead and in need of the "new birth."

The ovum produced by Mary was fertilized by the Holy Spirit, thereby precluding the transmission of a sin nature. This occurred miraculously and entirely apart from any act of copulation. Mary's husband, Joseph, took no part in any way. Thus, Jesus was born without a sin nature.

It should be noted that the promise that the Messiah would be of the line of David was fulfilled through Mary, who was descended from David through Nathan, the second son of David and Bathsheba. Her husband, Joseph, was also descended from David, but through the first son, Solomon, and that line to the Messiah was cut off by the Coniah curse through the virgin conception.

King Jeconiah (also known as Jehoiachin or Coniah) was cursed by God through the prophet Jeremiah for his idolatry, oppression, violence, and the shedding of innocent blood in Judah. His disastrous three-month reign and rebellion against Babylon led to a devastating exile. Because of these sins, God declared in Jeremiah 22:30 that none of his descendants would ever prosper or sit on the throne of David to rule in Judah.

The virgin conception served to break the chain of transmission of the sin nature to Jesus. Thus, Jesus was born without a sin nature, and through His life of sinless perfection, as God in hypostatic union, with undiminished deity and true humanity, He alone was qualified to go to the Cross as a substitute for us.

## **About Mary**

In closing, a few points about Mary are worth noting. Catholics tend to place far too much emphasis on her, while Protestants try their best to

ignore her. The truth about Mary lies somewhere between those two extremes.

- Mary is not the mother of God. The deity of Jesus Christ existed in eternity past, long before Mary drew her first breath. God does not have a mother. Calling her the mother of God is heresy.
- Mary is the mother of the **humanity** of Jesus Christ.
- Mary had a sin nature just like you and me, and she sinned just like you and me. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." "All" does not exclude Mary.
- Mary acknowledged her status as a sinner in need of a savior when she said, "and my spirit rejoices in **God my Savior**" (Luke 1:47).
- Mary was not and is not deity, and to worship her is tantamount to idolatry, a violation of the first and second commandments.
- Mary did not remain celibate after the birth of Jesus. There was no need to do so once Jesus was born. Mary and Joseph had at least six children after Jesus.
- Mary did not ascend bodily into Heaven. There is no Scriptural support for that claim.
- Except for brief appearances in the Gospels concerning the nativity, the childhood of Jesus, and the Cross, Mary essentially disappeared from the Holy Scripture. No special ministries in the early Church are associated with her.
- The focus should always be on Jesus and His work on the cross, not on Mary.

In her defense, Mary was, without a doubt, a mature believer and an obedient child of God. She clearly demonstrated an extraordinary amount of faith, poise, and maturity for a young woman. God uses prepared believers. She was entrusted with the awesome responsibility of caring for, nurturing, and providing early training for the humanity of Jesus Christ. She is worthy of praise, admiration, and emulation as a mother and as a spiritually mature believer.