



Adventures in Bible Study

Jesus—The Best of All

To many people, however, Jesus is a puzzle they can't quite put together. Was He a good man, a philosopher, insane, or what, they wonder. Such was the lawyer, Josh McDowell. He considered himself an atheist, but one day he decided to get to the bottom of who Jesus really was. He began with this premise. Either Jesus was a liar (He knew He really wasn't the Son of God, but said so anyway), or else He was insane (He really thought He was the Son of God even though He wasn't), or else He really was who He said He was.



Jesus was so different from the people of His day that many of them wondered who He really was. Jesus Himself always claimed that He was not of this world. He said: "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight." **John 18:36**. The Bible records not only what Jesus said about Himself, but

also what the prophets said the true Son of God would be and do when He came. McDowell decided to examine what the Bible said about Jesus, and what it predicted the Son of God would be and do. He also examined the historical material outside of the Bible concerning Jesus. The result of his search was simply this: there was more evidence to substantiate who Jesus was as the Son of God, than there was to substantiate George Washington as president!

Jesus said, "These are the Scriptures that testify about me." **John 5:39**. As we examine what the Bible says about Jesus (the place of His birth, the manner of His birth, His betrayal, and the manner of His death) we too shall see the truth that converted a lawyer.

The Bible specifically points to Bethlehem as the place of Christ's birth (**Micah 5:20**). You remember the Christmas story. A decree came forth from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be counted and taxed. Thus Joseph and Mary traveled to the city of their ancestry, which was Bethlehem. When they arrived there was no room for them in the inn because so many others were

doing the same thing, no doubt. The only place available was the stable, which was probably a rough cave. There Jesus, the Saviour, was born, and Mary wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger.



Concerning the mother of the Messiah the Bible had predicted a virgin would give birth (**Isaiah 7:14**). The Bible records that Mary was a virgin, and when she inquired as to how she, a virgin, could ever have a child without a husband the angel said the Holy Spirit would cause Mary to miraculously conceive, and His name was specified as well. "The angel said to her . . . you will be with child and give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus." **Matthew 1:18-21**.

The Bible also said there would be a star to mark the birth of the Saviour (**Numbers 24:17**). Wise men from the east came to Israel following a star. The star led them to Bethlehem, to the very place where Jesus was staying, and they worshipped Him.



There were prophecies that required the Messiah to be a special man, and to be able to accomplish special deeds. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach

good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the "prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." **Isaiah 61:1-2**.

It is well known what the record states regarding Jesus and His good works. He gave sight to the blind. He preached encouragement to those bowed down with the weight of sin as He loved and forgave them. He had a way of breaking up funerals setting death's captives free and comforting those that mourned. There is no question that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah who was to come.

The Bible also predicted what would happen when the

Messiah should give His life for the sins of the world. On Thursday night, the day before Jesus was crucified, He told His disciples as they sat at the Passover meal together that one of them would soon betray Him (**Psalm 41:9**). Judas Iscariot went out that night informed the religious leaders who desired to destroy Jesus where He could be found. The prophets foretold even the price Judas was paid for his betrayal of Jesus (**Zechariah 11:12-13**). Judas received 30 pieces of silver for betraying Jesus. However, afterward he tried to undo what he had done. He wasn't really sorry for what he had done, but he was sorry for the consequences. He came back to the priests to give the money back, but they would not receive it from him (**Matthew 27:5-7**).

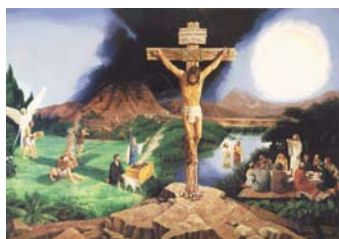


Jesus was bound and treated as if He were a common criminal. They took Him before the Roman authorities for punishment and death. In the scenes that followed more prophecies were fulfilled.

"I offered My back to those who beat Me, My cheeks to those who pulled out My beard; I did not hide My face from mocking and spitting." **Isaiah 50:6**. The Bible records that Jesus was beaten and mocked, and scourged with a Roman scourge. His back was beaten to a bloody pulp. Then they took Him out and crucified just as the prophets predicted. "They pierced My hands and My feet." **Psalm 22:16**.

Even as Jesus hung upon the cross He was thoughts were for others. He spoke to John and told Him to care for Mary. To Mary, His mother, Jesus said to look to John to care for her. And then there was a thief to save before He should give up His life. Even in death Jesus was ministering for those about Him.

While Jesus hung upon the cross other prophecies were being fulfilled. "They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." **Psalm 22:18**.



The cross Roman soldiers gambled for his clothing. The Bible says two thieves were crucified with Jesus that day. As the hours of the Sabbath approached the religious leaders didn't want the men to remain on the cross over the hours of the Sabbath. When the soldiers came to break the legs of the thieves so they would suffocate (being unable to push up to breathe) they found Jesus was already dead so they did not break his bones (**Psalm 34:20**).

As Jesus died the sky grew black. Nature itself was compelled to show her disgust for what they had done to the Creator. Jesus triumphantly exclaimed, "It is finished!" and then He died. The Roman Centurion who beheld all these events said, "Surely this man was the Son of God."

Then His disciples came and carried Him away to a tomb where He rested over the hours of the Sabbath.

On Sunday, the first day of the week, the angel of the Lord came down and rolled away the stone and sat on it! Jesus came forth victorious over death and the grave. Jesus had said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." **John 11:25**



Today you may travel around the world and visit the remains of many self-proclaimed holy men, but

you cannot visit the remains of Jesus, for He is not here, He is risen! Jesus is alive today, and He has the same power to heal, to forgive and to give life that He had when He walked personally upon the earth. Come to Him with everything that concerns you.

Speak to Him in prayer. He will hear you. He will receive you and lovingly send just the help you need. He will give you the power you need to face the circumstances in your life with the power that only He can give. Jesus is who He said He was—the Son of God. You can trust your life in His hands.