

# Jesus of Nazareth

## The Lamb of God



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# **BibleWay Publishing**

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## Lesson 1

### Prophecies and Eye Witnesses

There are over sixty (60) Old Testament prophecies about Jesus all of which were fulfilled. These prophecies covered the entire period of the Old Testament beginning in Genesis and ending in Malachi. The chances of twenty-five of these occurring exceed 1 in one thousand trillion.

There are many prophecies concerning Jesus in the Old Testament but what were the possibilities of making just 25 predictions about someone who was to be born many years later and having these predictions come true?

Dr. Hawley O. Taylor has provided this answer: "Regarding these  $n$  cases of events foretold for Israel's Messiah who was to come, if the chances of success were even in the case of each one, that is  $p$  (probability) equals  $n$  in every case, then the overall probability that all  $n$  events would find their fulfillment in one person would be  $p^n$  equals  $(1/2)^n$ . Thus, there would be but one chance in  $2^n$  (33 million, where  $n$  equals 25) of all these foretold events coming true if they were mere guesses. Now a glance at these prophecies concerning Christ reveals that they do not all have an even chance of success, for in some instances it is highly improbable that the event could occur at all (as for a child to be born without a human father). A very conservative compromise would be  $p$  equals  $1/5$ ; and the overall probability for the  $n$  prophecies coming true would be  $p^n$  equals  $(1/5)^n$  or one chance out of a thousand trillion if  $n$  equals 25. (Modern Science and Christian Faith, p. 178) Even if the prophecy regarding the virgin birth be excluded, the number remains astronomically large. Too large to assume that this accidentally happened! Twenty-five prophecies concerning Christ and their fulfillment, from Modern Science and Christian Faith, pp. 179-183. Obviously, fulfilled prophecies validate the prophecy.

Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets. The Old Testament recorded the prophecy and the writers of the New Testament clearly show their fulfillment. This is only one of the proofs that Jesus was who He claimed to be, God in the form of Jesus of Nazareth.

#### Jesus

"The Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures [Old Testament] that testify about me" (John 5:37-39).

#### The Apostle Peter

Christians wear the name of Christ because Christ is their Lord, Teacher, Guide, Savior, Redeemer, Model, High Priest, Hope, Sacrifice for sin and much, much more. The rock-solid foundation for our faith is the truth of Peter's confession - "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus is real and the Bible is true. All that needs to be known about Jesus is found in the Bible. All of human history revolves around Him. Jesus is the central character of the human drama. It is not surprising that the history of the world is divided into two spans of time: before Christ (B.C.) and after Christ (A.D.).

#### The Apostle John

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his

own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, **he gave the right** to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:1-13).

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

### John the Baptizer

"He [John] cries out, saying, 'This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:15-18).

"Jesus looked toward heaven and prayed Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted Him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began" (John 17:1-5).

### Pilate, The Roman Governor

"Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'Is that your own idea,'" Jesus asked, 'or did others talk to you about me?' "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. 'It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?' Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.' 'You are a king, then!' said Pilate. Jesus answered, 'You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.' 'What is truth?'" "Pilate asked" (John 18:33-38).

### Jews

"We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God. When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. 'Where do you come from?' he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. 'Do you refuse to speak to me?' Pilate said. 'Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?' Jesus answered, 'You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin'" (John 19:7-11).

### The eunuch from Ethiopia

"And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'" (Acts 8:37).

### Summary

These and many other passages clearly show that Jesus:

- a) was God through whom everything was created
- b) humbled Himself to come to earth in the form of a man
- c) became the perfect sacrifice for sin.

"All this was done that anyone who received him, those who believed in his name, **he gave the right** to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:12-13).

## Questions

1. Prophecies being fulfilled within a very few years in one person by many different prophets over hundreds of years earlier is:
  - Inconceivable
  - Unreliable
  - Validates the
2. New Testament eyewitnesses had little to say about Jesus being the Son of God.
  - True
  - False
3. Only Peter publicly acknowledged that Jesus was the Son of God.
  - True
  - False
4. Why was all authority given to Jesus by God?
  - To fulfill all righteousness
  - Give eternal life to those who obey His commands
  - Allow Him to live a sinless life
5. Which of the following statements about Jesus are correct?
  - Everything was made by Jesus, the Son of God
  - Jesus humbled Himself to come to earth as a human
  - Jesus became the perfect sacrifice for sin
  - All the above

## Lesson 2

### What Secular Writers Say About Jesus

Even though the Bible statements are proof that Jesus was a real person, there is also considerable evidence outside the Bible confirming that Jesus was a historical person, just as the Bible presents him. The following external writings by some ancient non-Christian historians collaborate on Bible statements about Jesus:

Matthew states "They had crucified him ... and sitting down, they kept watch over him there ... from the sixth hour until the ninth-hour darkness came over all the land" (Matthew 27:35-36; 45-46). Mark put it this way "At the sixth-hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour" (Mark 15:33).

### Thallus

Thallus, a Samaritan-born historian who lived and worked in Rome about A.D. 52, quoted by Julius Africanus, a Christian chronographer of the late second century.<sup>1</sup> "Thallus, in the third book of his histories, explains away this darkness as an eclipse of the sun." Africanus stated his objection to the report arguing that an eclipse of the sun cannot occur during the full moon, as was the case when Jesus died at Passover time. The force of the reference to Thallus is that the circumstances of Jesus' death were known and discussed in the Imperial City as early as the middle of the first century. The fact of Jesus' crucifixion must have been fairly well known by that

time, to the extent that unbelievers like Thallus thought it necessary to explain the matter of the darkness as a natural phenomenon. ... Ironically, Thallus' efforts have been turned into the mainstream of historical proof for Jesus and for the reliability of Mark's account of the darkness at his death."<sup>2</sup>

### Mara Bar-Serapion

"A manuscript in the British Museum preserves the text of a letter sent to his son by a Syrian named Mara Bar-Serapion. The father illustrated the folly of persecuting wise men like Socrates, Pythagoras, and the wise king of the Jews, which the context obviously shows to be Jesus. "What advantage did the Athenians gain from putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as a judgment for their crime. What advantage did the men of Samos gain from burning Pythagoras? In a moment their land was covered with sand. What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their king? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished. God justly avenged these three wise men: the Athenians died of hunger; the Samians were overwhelmed by the seas; the Jews, ruined and driven from their land, live in complete dispersion. ... Nor did the wise King die for good; he lived on in the teaching which He had given".<sup>3</sup>

### Cornelius Tacitus

A Roman historian living from about A.D. 50 to A.D. 100 wrote regarding Nero's fire. "Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus".<sup>4</sup>

### Plinius Secundus

A Roman governor in A.D. 112 wrote Emperor Trajan "They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang an anthem to Christ as God and bound themselves by a solemn oath not to commit any wicked deed ... after which it was their custom to separate, and then meet again to partake of food, but food of an ordinary kind".<sup>5</sup>

### Seutonius

An annalist and court official of the Imperial House during the reign of Hadrian wrote about A.D. 120 in the Life of Claudius. "As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he (Claudius) expelled them from Rome."<sup>6</sup> Edward C. Wharton then states "The reason for the fame of this quotation is due to the fact that Luke, some sixty years earlier, had recorded this same incident as the reason for the apostle Paul yoking up with a Christian Jewish couple named Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-2). Again, the mention of Christ in the historical context is observed in extra-biblical literature."<sup>7</sup>

### Flavius Josephus

Josephus has an interesting observation. "There arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we should call him a man; for he was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure. He won over many Jews and also many Greeks. This man was the Messiah. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross at the instigation of our own leaders, those who had loved him from the first did not cease. For he appeared to them on the third day alive again, as the prophets had predicted and said many other wonderful things about him. And even now the race of Christians, so named after him, has not yet died out."<sup>8</sup>

### Early Jewish and Gentile Writers

The following quote from F. F. Bruce summarizes this very clearly. "Whatever else may be thought of the evidence from early Jewish and Gentile writers...it does at least establish, for those who refuse the witness of Christian writings, the historical character of Jesus himself. Some writers may toy with the fancy of a 'Christ-myth,' but they do not do so on the ground of historical evidence. The historicity of Christ is as axiomatic [self-evident rd]

for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar. It is not historians who propagate the ‘Christ-myth’ theories.”<sup>9</sup>

### Questions

1. Matthew’s account of Jesus’s crucifixion is confirmed by Thallus quoting Julius Africanus.  
 True  
 False
2. A Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus wrote that Christ “suffered the extreme penalty.”  
 True  
 False
3. Non-Christian writers provide evidence external of the Bible confirming the Bible account that a man with unusual powers lived in Galilee/Judea.  
 True  
 False
4. No Roman, only Jewish historian supports the Biblical account that Jesus was crucified by Pontius Pilate.  
 True  
 False
5. Josephus observed in his writings that Pilate condemned Jesus to be crucified and that Jesus appeared to His disciples three days later.  
 True

1. F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*, Eerdmans, p. 113.

2. Edward C. Wharton, *Christianity: A Clear Case of History* Howard p. 7.

3. *British Museum Syriac Mss.*, F. F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament*, p. 31.

4. *The Annals and the Histories*, 15:44. From *Britannica Great Books*, Vol. 15, p. 168.

5. *Epistles*, 10:96.

6. *Life of Claudius*, 25:4

7. Edward C. Wharton, *Christianity: A Clear Case of History*, Howard p. 11.

8. *Antiquities*, 18,3. 3.

9. F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*. P. 119. All the above were cited by Edward C. Wharton in his book *Christianity: A Clear Case of History*

### Lesson 3

#### Jesus’ Early Life

God through the prophet Isaiah stated, "The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

Then God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you (Luke 1:26-28).

His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with

child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:18-21).

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" - which means, God with us (Matthew 1:23).

### Birth

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. 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. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:1-7).

### Escape To Egypt

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi [wise men NKJV] from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.' When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him (Matthew 2:1-3).

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him" (Matthew 2:12-13).

### Returning Home to Nazareth

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene" (Matthew 2:19-23).

### Youth

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you". "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house [business NKJV]" (Luke 2:41-49)?

Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:51-52).

#### Questions

1. Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child (pregnant).  
 True  
 False
2. Jesus was born in Jerusalem as He was King of the Jews.  
 True  
 False
3. Jesus was of priestly lineage, a Levite.  
 True  
 False
4. Because of Herod, Joseph took Jesus and his mother to Egypt, and following Herod's death they returned to Israel.  
 True  
 False
5. At the age of 12 Jesus asked questions of the temple teachers.  
 True  
 False

#### Lesson 4

##### **Jesus Beginning His Mission**

###### Baptism by John the Baptizer

"I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me. I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel'" (John 1:26-28).

Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'" I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God (John 1:26-34).

###### Tempted By Satan

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become

bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." Jesus answered him "It is also written: Do not put the Lord your God to the test." Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you" he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only." Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him (Matthew 4:1-11).

### His Mission

When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:13-21 from Isaiah 61:1-2).

### His Parables

Someone has said that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It appears that many of the teachings of Jesus were done in parables. It may be that the Jews who were trying to please God could understand many of these parables, while the religious leaders whose hearts were more concerned with position, power, prestige, and money could not comprehend their meaning.

### His Miracles

What was the purpose of the Miracles? Was Jesus trying to draw attention to Himself, wanting His countrymen to make Him their king or fulfilling God's promise to send the anointed one?

Often great crowds followed Jesus, perhaps out of curiosity, trying to see "what's in it for me?" or with a desire for political power if He was to be king. Some may have believed He could be the Messiah. The witnesses to His miracles can be divided into three groups:

#### The Recipient of the Miracle

Surely all were filled with joy and gladness and most glorified God. The one notable exception was the cleansing of the ten lepers nine of which did not return to give God glory.

#### Those Witnessing the Miracle

The witnesses not only observed the miracle; they recognized man's limitations noting that only through God's power could such miracles be performed. They praised God and glorified Him.

#### The Religious Leaders

The religious leaders were commonly referred to as the Scribes and Pharisees. They had wealth, power, prestige, and praise of men. They believed Jesus was going to destroy their nation, their position, and their power. Consequently, they refused to acknowledge He was from above or that any of the miracles He

performed were from God. They attributed them to the power of the Devil. They wanted to kill Him but feared the people who believed He was from God. Finally, they violated many of their own traditions and laws, (trial on the Sabbath, seeking false witnesses, paying money for his capture but refusing it when returned acknowledging it was "blood money"). Ultimately, they said, "Let Him come down from the cross and we will believe in Him". Instead of coming down from the cross, He came back to life after dying and they still refused to believe in Him.

### His Enemies

The scriptures identify those opposed to Christ during His Earthly ministry and opposed to His church following His resurrection and ascension.

### Herod (The Great)

"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him". ... When King Herod heard this he was disturbed ... He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him". ... When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi (Matthew 2:2-3; 8, 16 NIV).

### The Devil (Satan)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God," ... Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me". Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'." Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him (Matthew 4:1-3; 8-11).

### Citizens of Nazareth (Hometown folks)

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, 'Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?' So, they were offended at Him (Matthew 13:53-57 NKJV).

### Judas Iscariot (One of the Apostles)

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So, from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him (Matthew 26:14-16 26:3-4 NKJV).

### Pharisees, Chief Priests, Elders, Scribes and Council

As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" ... But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons". ... behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" — that they might accuse Him. Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then, is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might

destroy Him. ... Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet (Matthew 9:32-34; 12:10-14; 21:45-46 NKJV).

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do" ... "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." ... Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him (Matthew 23:1-3; 13-14 NKJV).

And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none (Matthew 26:57-60 NKJV).

#### Questions

1. The miracles Jesus performed in secret.
  - True
  - False
2. Who were the enemies of Jesus?
  - The common man
  - The religious leaders
3. The Jews religious leaders refused to believe because
  - They did not see any of the miracles He performed
  - They were more interested in position and prestige
  - Jesus never told them about their sinful condition
4. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus was to
  - preach the gospel to the poor
  - proclaim freedom for the prisoners
  - recover sight for the blind
  - proclaim the year of the Lord
  - all the above
5. Satan tempted Jesus but Jesus did not yield to his temptations.
  - True
  - False

#### Lesson 5

#### **The Sin-Offering – Jesus's Atoning Sacrifice**

## Arrest

Jesus said to the chief priests, the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, 'Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour when darkness reigns.' Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest (Luke 22:52-54).

## Jews Mock Trial

The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" And they said many other insulting things to him. At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You are right in saying I am." Then they said, 'Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips" (Luke 22:63-71).

## Roman Trial

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (John 18:33-37)

Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release him." With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.) Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore, I will have him punished and then release him." But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So, Pilate decided to grant their demand (Luke 23:13-24).

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him" (Matthew 27:19).

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified (Mark 15:15).

## Crucifixion

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him (Mark 15:15-20).

They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS (Matthew 27:33-37).

It was the third hour [9:00 AM] when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS (Mark 15:25-27).

At the sixth hour [noon] darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" - which means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me (Mark 15:33-34)?

When some of those standing nearby heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah." One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God (Mark 15:35-39)!

It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb (Mark 15:42-46).

### Resurrection

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said" (Matthew 28:1-6).

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:19-22).

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:26-28)!

### Ascension

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over

a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So, when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts1:1-11).

#### Questions

1. The Roman soldiers charged with the responsibility of crucifying Jesus said.
  - When will those Jews learn they cannot defeat us?
  - This man must be terrible for his religious leaders wanted him crucified
  - Surely this man was the Son of God
  - Another insurrectionist learned the hard way
2. There is no record that Jesus was buried.
  - True
  - False
3. The morning following Jesus' death and burial at a guarded tomb, there was
  - An earthquake and the grave stone was rolled away
  - An angel of the Lord came to earth
  - Those guarding the tomb became as dead men
  - Jesus had come back to life - He was resurrected
  - All the above
4. Following his resurrection Jesus was seen by
  - His apostles
  - Hundreds of people
  - Both
5. No one witnessed Jesus going to Heaven following His resurrection. It is just a clever story made up by His disciples for their own personal gain.
  - True
  - False

## Woes and Warnings

### To the Antichrists (Those who deny Christ is God)

This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world (1 John 4:2-3 NIV).

Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist (2 John 7 NIV).

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it (Matthew 7:13-14).

So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 7:12).

### To Christians

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them (Matthew 7:15-16).

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery, they deceive the minds of naive people (Romans 16:17-18).

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears (Acts 20:28-31).

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book (Revelation 22:18-19).

The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire (Matthew 3:10).

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law (Galatians 5:17-18).

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft;

hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:26-27).

#### To those Relying On Riches

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets (Luke 6:24-26).

#### To Religious Leaders

Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it (Matthew 23:16-22).

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are (Matthew 23:15).

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence (Matthew 23:25).

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to (Matthew 23:13).

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel (Matthew 23:23-24).

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside, you appear to people as righteous but on the inside, you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness (Matthew 23:27-28).

#### Questions

1. Who are the antichrists?
  - The Devil and his angels
  - Christians who returned back to a worldly life
  - Those who deny that Christ is the Son of God

- Spirits
- 2. It is acceptable for Christians to treat non-Christians with less respect.
  - True
  - False
- 3. Some people, even those who profess to be Christians, will intentionally teach contrary to the Gospel and the Apostles' teachings.
  - True
  - False
- 4. Which of the following are sinful?
  - sexual immoral
  - impurity and debauchery
  - idolatry and witchcraft
  - hatred
  - discord
  - jealousy
  - fits of rage
  - selfish ambition
  - dissensions
  - envy
  - drunkenness
  - orgies
  - all the above
- 5. Those who keep all God's commands but do not show mercy or justice are righteous.
  - True
  - False

## Lesson 7

### **His Message**

In the beginning and for five days God spoke everything into existence concluding that it was good. On the sixth day "God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). So, They, God, created man, male and female, from the ground previously spoken into existence. Man was even able to talk to God. Man was given instructions to take care of the place God had placed him on the earth. Man was told not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

But man separated himself from God when he rebelled by disobeying the only thing God told him not to do. This sin brought physical death and unless man could somehow be reconciled to God also a spiritual death. This

reconciliation would require a blood sacrifice. Not just any sacrifice for “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” (Hebrews 10:4)

It would require someone who had no sin to be that perfect sacrifice. “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.” (Romans 5:7)

Three apostles, Paul, Peter and John, wrote about Christ’s sinlessness and sacrifice to take away sins of the world. “We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20-21) “Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:21-22). “But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.” (1 John 3:5)

John the Baptist was "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him'" (Matthew 3:3). He said "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matthew 3:11-12)

Following His baptism by John to fulfill all righteousness and overcoming the temptations put before Him by Satan, Jesus returned to Galilee and then went to Nazareth. In their synagogue He took a scroll and “Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.’” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’” (Luke 4:17-21)

So, what is this “good news to the poor” He preached? It was and still is – God became flesh and blood like all other human beings. He was born of woman but conceived by an act of the Holy Spirit not by man. “He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” and stated “I must be about My Father's business” (Luke 2:49 NKJV and Luke 2:52 NIV) The business of the Father was to bring all men back into a righteous relationship with Them before sin entered the world. To do this a perfect sacrifice must be made and man must change from a life of self-seeking and rebellion to one of trust, obedience and reverence in the one who could forgive their sins and give eternal life. Jesus said "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6-7). Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20). Proof of all this was in prophecies fulfilled, miracles witnessed and acknowledged by enemies, and ultimately in His public death and burial and His resurrection witnessed by hundreds of His disciples.

Since He is the Way, the Truth, and The Life, and since He has all authority in heaven and on earth, and since no one could come to the Father except through Him, then what is required of us to have our sins forgiven, being reconciled, and saved? Or as the Jews said on Pentecost Day “When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)

## **Hear**

- Study diligently and read what Christ preached for they are the Words of life.

## **Understand**

- All men are sinful having disobeyed God's commands
- I have sinned and am not living according to God's commands
- My sin will result in my eternal death
- I must be forgiven to have eternal life with God
- Christ is the only way for me to be forgiven of all my sins

#### **Believe Jesus**

- Was and is God
- Came to earth in flesh as Jesus of Nazareth
- Lived among men
- Willingly gave His physical life as the perfect sacrifice for my sins, being crucified
- Was buried
- Rose from the grave on the third day
- Appeared to hundreds of his disciples following His resurrection
- Ascended back to heaven to be with the Father

#### **Repent**

- Change my life from sin and disobedience to trust and obedience

#### **Confess**

- Acknowledge publicly my belief that Jesus is the Son of God.

#### **Die**

- Put to death my old, sinful, worldly life

#### **Seek**

- Call upon God to forgive me of my sins

#### **Bury**

- Bury my sinful life I put to death in the grave of baptism in water (immersion) into the death, burial and resurrection of Christ allowing God to raise me from the grave as a new Creation.

#### **Receive**

- The Holy Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come

#### **Become**

- A new Christian as God will add me as His adopted child to the other children into the Church Christ established

#### **Live**

- Continue to live steadfastly and obediently to Christ and the Apostles' teachings "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3.)

#### **Questions**

1. Reconciliation to God requires the blood sacrifice of someone who had no sin.
  - True
  - False
2. There are many ways to get to heaven since one religion is as good as another.
  - True
  - False
3. One of the last things Jesus said was "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son

and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

True

False

4. What is the message of Christ?

He left Heaven to come to earth as a man

In the judgment He will forgive In the judgment He will forgive everyone of their sins

To give His life as the only sacrifice for man's sins

5. What must one do to be saved?

Confess your belief that Jesus is God the sin sacrifice that can forgive sins

Change your life from sinning to righteousness

Be buried, immersed, baptized, calling on God to forgive

Live faithfully in Christ and his teachings, commands

All the above

### Conclusion

The Holy Spirit, by preserving the Bible, has made us indirect witnesses or observers of these miracles. Will we refuse to acknowledge Him like the Scribes and Pharisees or will we praise God for the opportunity to be forgiven of our sins by trusting in Him and obeying His commands? The decision is ours as to where we will spend eternity.

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