

Hope Channel presents

DISCOVERIES '08

6

By Mark Finley

The Child Born in the Middle East Who Will Change the World

Who is the Christ of Revelation? Is He just a good man, a wise teacher, a philosopher? **Revelation 1:1** says, “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ.*” Who is this that is being revealed? What does the Bible say about Him? If He was just a man and John, the author of Revelation made up the whole thing, then while it may be an interesting literary work, there is nothing supernatural about any of it. It all depends on who Christ is.

Jesus claimed that He was more than human. In **John 6:38**, He says – “*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*” Jesus said He came down from heaven. The Bible points forward to a Christ who is divine; a Christ that we can trust and have complete confidence in – an eternal Christ. **John 5:39** says, “*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*” The “Scriptures” Christ referred to is what we know as the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophets predicted the coming of the Messiah and specific events in His life. Christ fulfilled those prophecies precisely. In fact, Christ’s life is a life written beforehand. The biography of Jesus was written before He was born.

Prophecies Surrounding Jesus’ Birth

Jesus’ birth place was predicted nearly seven hundred years in advance in the book of **Micah 5:2**, “*Bethlehem...out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel.*” Anyone who knows the Christmas story will remember that Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth. It was a decree of Caesar Augustus that brought them to Bethlehem just in time for Jesus’ birth. Centuries in advance the Bible predicted that Christ would be born in Bethlehem and indeed He was.

Prophecy pointed forward to exact details of His birth. **Isaiah 7:14**: “*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*” The virgin birth was part of God’s divine plan. The Holy Spirit conceived the Christ Child in the womb of Mary. In **Luke 1:30, 31**, an angel announces His birth – “*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.*”

Back in the days of the Exodus, Moses wrote in the book of Numbers, 1500 years before Christ – **Numbers 24:17**: “*A Star shall come out of Jacob.*” He described this star that would rise in the east and lead the wise men to the very home of the Messiah.

Prophecies Surrounding Christ’s Life

Prophecies were fulfilled one right after the other in His life. Christ walked among men. He took children and cradled them in His arms. He spoke to the poor and gave them words of hope and encouragement. He brought joy and a smile to hearts and lives everywhere. Listen to how **Isaiah 61:1** and **2** prophesies of this

Christ – *“The LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.”* Christ’s life fulfilled this prophecy in minute detail.

The reason Jesus worked so many miracles is to demonstrate the reality of His divinity. His miracles are straight forward evidence that He is divine. They are evidence of the highest magnitude. He touched the eyes of the blind and they were opened. He touched the ears of the deaf and they were unstopped. He healed. He forgave. He raised the dead. Jesus, the life giver, is the only one that can resurrect the dead.

Prophecies Surrounding Jesus’ Death

Most of the prophecies of His life were fulfilled in His last moments on earth. Jesus gathered His disciples around Him at the last supper. A prediction made a thousand years in advance by David was fulfilled that very night. **Psalm 41:9** says, *“Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”* The psalmist David predicted it would be a close friend who would betray Christ. Notice very carefully the accuracy and precision of these prophecies revealing Christ’s trial and betrayal. **Zechariah 11:12**: *“So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.”* Neither 25 nor 35 pieces of silver but the prophecy named the price at 30 pieces of silver 500 years before Christ. Judas betrayed our Lord for exactly 30 pieces of silver. Christ is no common man and the Bible is no common book.

Zechariah 11:13... *“So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.”* Not only the price but the result were predicted and fulfilled exactly. Judas’ conscience so badly condemned him he refused to keep the blood money. He returned to the temple and threw the silver coins on the floor. Everybody that sells out Christ cheap finds the thing they betrayed Him for is too heavy to hold. And the Bible says in the book of Acts that Judas hung himself, the rope broke, he fell down, and smashed his body among the rocks. What a price to pay for betraying Jesus. The priests recovered the money but they couldn’t allow it to be returned to the temple treasury. They used it to buy a field that belonged to a potter. The potter’s field became a cemetery for the non-Jews. Prophecy was fulfilled minutely, specifically, exactly. Why? Christ is more than a good man. He is more than an ethical teacher. He is divine.

Prophecies of the last twenty-four hours of His life came to a focal point. They focused on His death. The magnifying glass of prophecy zeroed in on a place called Calvary – a hill called Golgotha. **Isaiah 50:6**: *“I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.”* The Bible predicted 600 years in advance exactly what took place in Pilate’s courtyard. Christ was whipped on the back, beaten on the head and face, spit upon, mocked and shamed.

Psalm 22:16, one thousand years before Christ, predicted: *“They pierced My feet.”* Stoning was the method of capital punishment in Israel for centuries. Crucifixion was introduced about a hundred and fifty years before Christ. It was practiced until the years of Constantine around three hundred twenty years after Christ. Crucifixion was practiced for about a five hundred year window. God in the Bible revealed one thousand years ahead of time exactly how Christ would die. The Bible gives us confidence that the Christ who died on Calvary’s cross was more than just a good man or philosopher. We can come with those thousands who have gathered at the foot of the cross. We can confess our sins – our sins too can be forgiven there. There at that cross we can be free from condemnation. We can become a new man, a new woman at that cross.

John 11:25 records Jesus words: *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”* The empty tomb reveals the divinity of Christ. He has risen. He is alive.

No other figure in history has fulfilled all these predictions, but they are fulfilled in the life of one individual. If Christ is who the Bible says He is, then indeed, He is the Child born in the Middle East. The Bible predicts one more event in the life of Christ – He is coming again. Since He precisely fulfilled the rest of the prophecies in the Bible, we can be sure of this also.

THE BIBLE SAYS

- John 6:38** Jesus came from Heaven to do the will of His Father.
- John 5:39** Jesus declared that the Scriptures testify or bear witness of Him.

JESUS' FAMILY BACKGROUND

- Micah 5:2** Jesus, the Messiah's birthplace, Bethlehem
- Isaiah 7:14** Jesus would be born of a virgin.
- Numbers 24:17** The wise men would be guided by a star to the Messiah's birthplace.

JESUS' MINISTRY

- Isaiah 61:1, 2** Jesus' ministry of loving compassion and selfless service.

JESUS' FINAL DAYS

- Psalms 41:9** Jesus would be betrayed by a close friend.
- Zechariah 11:12** Jesus would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver.
- Isaiah 50:6** Jesus' back would be smitten and his face spit upon.
- Psalms 22:16** Jesus' hands and feet would be pierced. He would be crucified.
- Psalms 16:11** Jesus would be resurrected from the dead.
- John 11:25** Jesus declares He is the resurrection and the life.

Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward - a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible - our textbook, for this seminar – offers **Learning Unlimited!**

#6 - The Child Born in the Middle East Who Will Change the World

1. Jesus made many stupendous claims about Himself, among which was one about *pre-existing* before His human birth. He told the Jews, who revered Abraham, the patriarch who lived about 2000 B.C. and who was called *the father of the faithful*, “**Before** Abraham _____, I_____.”
To check your answer, see John 8:58.
2. Another striking claim made by the Carpenter of Nazareth was heard when He declared that “the *Scriptures*, meaning *all* the Old Testament hold writings, “*testify* of _____.”
To check your answer, see John 5:39.
3. Still another claim Jesus made that stirred ill-will among the Jewish leaders occurred when He healed a paralyzed man and then told him, “Man, thy _____ are _____ thee.”
To check your answer, see Luke 5:18-21.
4. God made clear through inspired prophecy that *the Messiah* – “He...that is to be *Ruler* in Israel,” would be **born** in which city of the Holy Land?
A. Jerusalem D. Bethlehem
B. Nazareth E. Capernaum
C. Jericho
To check your answer, see Micah 5:2.
5. Since Mary and Joseph *did not live* in that place (named in question 5 above), *God arranged matters* for Jesus to be born there by forcing His parents to travel to their ancestral town in response to “a _____ from _____ Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.”
To check your answer, see Luke 2:1-6.
6. T Loss of blood makes one very *thirsty*, and Jesus cried out in thirst as He hung on the cross.
 F But the cruel executioners offered Him **vinegar** to drink instead – as the Bible predicted!
To check your answer, see Psalm 69:21.
7. A thousand years before Christ’s birth, King David was inspired to predict that “He keepeth all His _____; not one of them is _____.”
To check your answer, see Psalm 34:20.
8. T The Bible predicted that the coming Messiah, who would be “Immanuel” – meaning *God*
 F *with us* - would be born of a virgin, and that this miracle would constitute “a sign.”
To check your answer, see Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; and Luke 1:26-35.

9. Prophecy foretold not only that the coming Messiah would be **killed**, “cut off _____ of the land of the _____;” but also the precise **manner** of that death – *cruel crucifixion* – when it predicted, “They _____ My _____ and My _____.”

To check your answer see, Isaiah 53:8; Psalm 22:16; and Zechariah 12:10 & 13:6.

10. T The Roman soldiers not only *divided up* Christ’s few pieces of **clothing**, but
 F they also *gambled* or *cast lots* to see who would get His **seamless robe**, precisely as predicted.

To check your answer, see Psalm 22:18 and John 19:23-24.

11. On the lines below, tell what details the Bible predicted about Christ’s *betrayer*, his *fee*, and what *happened* to his “blood money.”

To check your answer, see Psalm 41:9; John 13:18-26; Zechariah 11:12-13; Matthew 26:14-16 & 27:3-7.

12. The Apostle says, “These are written, that ye might BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have LIFE” (John 20:31). In your own words, comment below on how effective Bible prophecies pointing to the Messiah are in confirming your belief in Christ.

To check your answer, see any of the Bible texts listed above.

A Thought for Today

Matthew 1:21

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

