

# JESUS WHO IS THIS MAN?

JESUS' CLAIM TO BE GOD.

## TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 01

“... the single most powerful figure – not merely in these two millennia but in all human history – has been Jesus of Nazareth.”

R Price, Jesus at 2000 (*Time* cover story)

# SOLVING THE RIDDLE OF LIFE

## 01 – JESUS, WHO IS THIS MAN?

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Is there a short cut to solving the riddle of life? Oxford scientist **Richard Dawkins**, is a militant atheist out to convert people to atheism. He considers all religion as bad, although he has a pantheistic reverence for nature. He's against monotheistic religions that believe in a super-natural God, with "Christianity mostly in mind."

Science, he says, is based on evidence, while religion is based on irrational faith. Yet on the origin of life he makes a startling profession of blind faith. "...*however improbable the origin of life [arising by chance] might be, we know it happened on Earth because we are here.*" There is absolutely no observable evidence for the spontaneous generation of life by chance! If scientists could produce life in the laboratory it would not be by chance, but by intelligent design.\*

In *River out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life* he says:

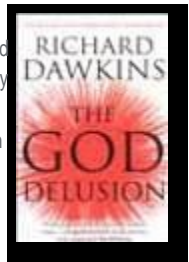
*"The universe we observe has... no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference."*

Granted that much religion in the world is bad, does that mean that Christianity isn't true and God doesn't exist? Is there some sure way of testing such pessimistic assertions about the meaninglessness of life? Yes, there is! It's the answer to the question:

"What is the real nature of the man Jesus who appeared two thousand years ago in Palestine claiming to be the solution for the problems of the world?" Who is this Man?

Is Jesus out of date? This is no small issue. Millions believe that He is God. The Bible says that following Jesus is a life-and-death matter. (Romans 6:23). Therefore, what is the real nature of Jesus, the founder of Christianity? THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY STANDS OR FALLS ON THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION. Jesus is either a LIAR, a LUNATIC or LORD.

\*The claim that scientists have created artificial life is rather "a re-creation of existing life – changing one simple type of bacterium into another – than a built-from-scratch kind." (Associated Press, 20 May, 2010)



The pop group Powderfinger in their song "JC" sing:

*Oh Jesus Christ, what name do you go by now  
For time is passing, with the wind blows new decrees  
Canned for life, your use-by date is faded and followers of you now watch TV.*

# Jesus' Claims to be Lord

Liar, Lunatic, or Lord



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## The Tremendous Claims of Jesus

Thomas Schultz writes:

*“Not one recognised religious leader, not Moses, Paul, Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc., have ever claimed to be God; that is, with the exception of Jesus Christ. Christ is the only religious leader who has ever claimed to be deity [God] and the only individual ever who has convinced a great portion of the world that He is God.” (The Doctrine of the Person of Christ, page 209)*

The claims that Jesus made are quite staggering. If someone came along today and said the sort of things He said, he would be laughed out of town. He wouldn't even get a hearing. We'd tell him, *“You've gone round the bend, mate!”*

Yet there's never been anyone who has made such far-out claims as Jesus did and been counted sane by a large portion of the world. In fact most would acknowledge Jesus as a great moral teacher. Let's look at some of Jesus' claims.

1. What did Jesus claim had been given to Him? Matthew 28:18, 20 (page 706 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society, NIBMIN 00195)

All \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven and on earth has been given to me.... And surely \_\_\_\_\_, to the very end of the age.

2. What did Jesus claim He could do? Matthew 9:1-8 (page 687)

Take heart, son; \_\_\_\_\_.

3. While Jesus said we needed forgiveness for sin (who hasn't made a mistake?), what did He say about Himself? John 8:46 (page 758)

Can any of you prove me \_\_\_\_\_ of sin?

# The Character of Jesus

The deeds of Christ matched His words. If a single flaw could be found in the record of His life, we would have the right to reject Him and His claims. But no such flaw exists. Those who live closest to us know us best, and those who lived closest to Jesus found no fault in Him. They said, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8), yet notice their claims about Jesus.

## THE TESTIMONY OF HIS FRIENDS

4. How did Peter, one of Jesus' closest followers, describe Jesus? 1 Peter 1:19 (page 857)

... a lamb without \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ .

5. How much sin did John, another of Jesus' closest followers, say was in Jesus? 1 John 3:5 (page 863)

And in him is \_\_\_\_\_ .

6. In temptation, how did He differ from us? Hebrews 4:15 (page 848)

[Jesus was] tempted in \_\_\_\_\_ , just as we are - yet was \_\_\_\_\_ ,

## THE TESTIMONY OF HIS ENEMIES

7. What judgment did Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, make about Jesus? Luke 23:4, 13-16 (page 747) |

find \_\_\_\_\_ for a charge against this man.

At the trial of Jesus the religious leaders had to bring in false witnesses with trumped-up charges against Him. (Matthew 26:59-63, page 704)

8. What did Judas, the follower who betrayed Jesus, say that he had done? Matthew 27:4 (page 704)

I have betrayed \_\_\_\_\_ blood.

The Roman centurion (commander over a hundred soldiers), in witnessing the crucifixion of Jesus, said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39, page 722)



Portion of Sistine Chapel: Creation of Adam Courtesy Christus Rex



Pop singer PETER GARRETT of Midnight Oil fame says the message of Jesus “gives us a purpose, a hope, the ability to go on.”

“The historian . . . writes the name of Jesus of Nazareth at the top of the world’s greatest characters.” (H G Wells)

“... the single most powerful figure - not merely in these two millennia but in all human history - has been **Jesus of Nazareth.**” R Price, Jesus at 2000 (*Time* cover story)

## The Predictions of Jesus

Is there some way to test Jesus’ claims? Yes there is! His predictions about the future are a simple test of the truthfulness of His claims to be God.

9. What influence did Jesus claim He had? John 8:12 (page 757) |

am the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Just as the sun is the source of all life and energy in the physical world, so Jesus claims to be the inspiration of all life spiritually. The life and teachings of Jesus have inspired that which the world considers the very best in every area of life.



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George Frederick Handel

**THE ARTS:** Michelangelo’s *Sistine Chapel*, in Rome, is considered one of the greatest masterpieces.

**MUSIC:** Handel’s *Messiah* is recognised as the height of musical genius.

**LITERATURE:** Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost* the best in literature.

**SCIENCE:** Modern science was born out of the Christian world view. Scientists such as Sir Isaac Newton; German astronomer Johannes Kepler; Michael Faraday, the discoverer of electromagnetic induction, etc. were all motivated by their devotion to Jesus.



**WELFARE:** Our hospitals and welfare institutions were begun by people who were motivated by love for Jesus. **Florence Nightingale**, the founder of modern nursing, was a devoted follower of Jesus. Likewise, **Dr Barnardo**, with children's orphanages.

**CHANGED LIVES:** Millions in lands around the world have had their lives changed for the better by the teachings of this Man.



Courtesy Florence Nightingale Museum

10. What did Jesus say would pass away before His words would? Matthew 24:35 (page 701)

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my \_\_\_\_\_.

## Survival of the Bible

Written on the stones of buildings, printed in millions of books, inscribed on the hearts of men and women, are the timeless words of Jesus. At births, marriages and deaths, in times of joy and in times of grief, His words flow, as inspiration and comfort. Only one who was God could speak as Christ spoke, only one divine - the one who fashions the future - could foretell the unfading influence of His words. Over 600 million Bibles and Bible portions are published, on average, annually. As well as this, a Google search for the 'Bible Online' gave 36,000,000 hits. **The Bible is still the world's bestseller!**



## World Circulation of Scriptures by Bible Societies - 2009

Bibles	29,391,276
Testaments	11,193,612
Portions (eg Gospel)	15,080,283
New Reader Portions*	7,340,576
New Reader Selections*	57,267,122
Selections*	310,870,370

\*New Reader Portions, Selections, and other portions less than a chapter.

The word “gospel” means “good news.” The “good news” Jesus taught was that He would set up a new world without evil, suffering or death. He predicted this message would “be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14, page 701)

11. What did Jesus predict about His death and resurrection? Matthew 17:22, 23 (page 695). See Luke 24:6, 7 (page 749)

They will kill him, and on the \_\_\_\_\_ he will be \_\_\_\_\_.



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## The Empty Tomb

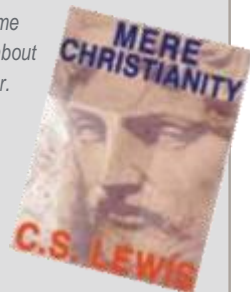
Many people die for false causes that they believe to be true, but no-one would be prepared to die for something they knew was a lie. Yet most of Jesus’ disciples died for their belief in Him.

If the resurrection of Jesus were a hoax, the disciples would have known about it. It was the resurrection of Jesus that changed them from frightened followers to courageous Christians.

The great Oxford and Cambridge scholar **C S Lewis** said:

*“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.*

*“You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” (Mere Christianity, pages 52, 53)*



How did a penniless Jew who lived nearly two thousand years ago, who never wrote a book, or travel out of Palestine, who preached for three years and then was executed as a criminal by the Romans, have such an influence? The only natural explanation is the supernatural one that He is God.

Only one who was God could make predictions with such accuracy and detail. Jesus stands justified by His predictions. Likewise, both Old and New Testaments of the Bible are guaranteed as truth by His divine endorsement.

## SOLVING THE RIDDLE OF LIFE

Here then, is the short cut to solving the riddle of life. Jesus, and the Bible He inspired, is the "way and the truth and the life." Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away." (John 14:6; 6:35, 37, pages 764, 755)

## Trevor Marsicano

### "JESUS WAS MY ANSWER"

In March 2009, Trevor Marsicano became the newest rising star in U.S. Long Track Speed Skating. At 19, he won four medals (a gold, silver, and two bronze), making him the youngest gold medalist in the sport's 140-season history. At the 2010 Winter Olympics he won silver in a team event and gold in February at the World Cup, Utah and again with the team in Germany, in March, 2011. As a successful athlete he knows the thrill of breaking records, but Trevor doesn't let this determine his self-worth. Rather, he turns to God, "because *whether we achieve great success or fall flat on our face, God will always treat us with the same love.*" Trevor accepted Jesus as Saviour at age 13. He said, "I was going through a hard time in school and was looking for some hope and love that would never fade. Jesus was my answer."<sup>\*</sup>

We can do that too! How would you like to respond to what you've learned about Jesus?

- I've found this guide helpful in understanding who Jesus really is. I
- would like to learn more about Jesus.
- I'd like to do what Trevor did and invite Jesus to come into my life.

How do the claims, character and predictions of Jesus affect you?

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What things have you discovered that have helped you the most?

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<sup>\*</sup>www.about.com; www.daylife.com

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