

Resources:

- McDowell, Josh, and Sean McDowell. **More Than a Carpenter**. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2009.
- Strobel, Lee. **The Case for Christ**. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.
- McDowell, Josh. **Evidence for Christianity**. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2006.

Chapter 11: Will the Real Messiah Please Stand Up?

Jesus Alone is the Christ, the Savior of the World

Q. What credentials did Jesus have to support his claims to be the Messiah and Son of God?

- Claims
 - The New Testament presents Jesus to be God
 - Others acknowledged Jesus to be God
 - Jesus himself claimed to be God
- Lord, Liar or Lunatic?
- Historical proof
 - Oral & written testimony (some eye-witnesses, some second-hand, some secular)
 - Physical proof (archaeological discoveries)
- Theism provides the proper foundation for science (most reasonable explanation)
- Crucifixion & Resurrection
 - No question that Jesus was dead
 - Eye-witness testimony that Jesus was resurrected
 - No other theory about the resurrection is reasonable
- Effects of Jesus' resurrection on others
 - Disciples
 - Paul
 - Changes to Christian Jews' key social structures and new sacraments
- The rapid growth of the Church
- Fulfillment of (messianic) prophecy

What is the different between prediction and prophecy?

- Birth
 - **To whom** - Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)
 - **Where** - Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
 - **When** - Temple would still be standing (Psalm 118:26, Daniel 9:26, Zechariah 11:13, Haggai 2:7-9)
- Life
 - The **response** the Messiah would encounter (Psalm 22:7-8, 118:22, Isaiah 8:14, 49:6, 50:6, 52:13-15)
 - Someone would **prepare** the way (Isaiah 40:3-5, Malachi 3:1)
- Death
 - **Betrayal** by Judas (Psalm 41:9, Zechariah 11:12-13)
 - By **crucifixion** (Psalm 22:6-18, Zechariah 12:10, Galatians 3:13) *Isaiah 53
 - Be **resurrected** (Psalm 16:8-11, 49:15, 86:13)
 - **Ascend** to Heaven (Psalm 68:18)

Q. Couldn't it be coincidence that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies?

- **No one else** has been able to show that they fulfill them as Jesus does
- The probability that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled just **8** of the prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} (100,000,000,000,000,000)
- This proves that **God** inspired the writings of the prophecies
- This proves that **Jesus** is the Messiah

Q. Couldn't it be that Jesus deliberately attempted to fulfill the prophecies?

- Half of the details of the Messiah's coming were beyond human control
 - Ancestry & place of birth
 - Betrayal by Judas
 - Manner of death
 - Reactions of others

Q. Couldn't it be that the Gospel writers made up details to make Jesus fit?

- Those inside and outside the **Christian** community didn't claim they were false
- Why would the disciples die for something they knew was a **lie**?

Q. Couldn't it be that the Old Testament scriptures were misinterpreted to fit Jesus?

- Scholars who have studied the OT prophecies **in context** do not agree
- The prophecies are easily identified so that they can be researched by **anyone**

Q. What about psychics that have made predictions?

- Prophets in the OT were **stoned** if their predictions did not come true (Deut 18:20-22)
- Among hundreds of prophecies, biblical prophets are not known to have made a single **error**
- Recent studies have shown that psychics' predictions are extremely **unreliable**, and even in the small percentage of correct predictions they are vague and/or hardly surprising

Why would God go to all this trouble?

Chapter 12: Isn't There Some Other Way?

Jesus is the Only Way

Why is Jesus the only way to a relationship with God?

Isn't there some other way to God?

What about Buddha? Muhammad?

Can't a person simply live a good life?

If God is such a loving God, then won't he accept all people just the way they are?

Q. What is the likely basis for questions like these?

- A misunderstanding about the basic **nature** and character of God
 - Stop asking "How can a loving God allow anyone to go to hell?"
 - Start asking "How can a holy, just, and righteous God allow a sinful person into his presence?"
- Many understand God to be **loving**, but go no further
 - He is a God of love, but also a God who is **holy, just and righteous**
 - God cannot **allow** sin in heaven
 - We know God through his **attributes** (loving, holy, just, righteous)
 - We **adopt** attributes, but God's attributes flow from his very nature
 - When God loves, he is not making a decision; he is simply being **himself**

How would you describe what sin is?

Q. If God's nature is love, then why does He send people to hell?

- God **doesn't** send people to hell; they go because of their own **choices**
- God created man and woman to share his love and glory with them
 - However, Adam and Eve chose to **rebel** against God
 - Therefore, **sin** became a part of their nature and **death** their penalty (Romans 6:23)
- Regardless of their rebellion, God loved man and woman
 - However, God's dilemma was that sin cannot **survive** in his holy, righteous and just presence
 - Therefore the **Godhead/Trinity** (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) made a decision to resolve the problem
- Jesus would pay the penalty for man and woman's sins
 - He became **man** in the flesh (John 1;14, Philippians 2:6-7)
 - He lived a sinless life, therefore the penalty of death **did not apply**
 - He took on the sins of the world, because he has the **capacity** to as God
 - God accepted Jesus' death as a **substitute** for ours, satisfying his righteous and just nature
 - **Justice** was done and the penalty was paid, therefore God could accept us again offer to us a restored **relationship** with him

Q. For whom did Jesus die?

- For the **world** (John 3:16)
- For **God the Father** (Romans 3:25)

Q. Why couldn't God just forgive without requiring any payment?

- Wherever there is forgiveness, there is also **payment**
- God forgave man and woman, and paid the price of **forgiveness** himself on the cross
- No other religious or ethical leader can offer that **payment**
- No one can offer that payment by "**living a good life**"
- There is no other way but **Jesus** (John 14:6)

Of the three key evidences offered in this book – the reliability of the Bible, the historical evidence for the Resurrection, and fulfilled prophecy – which do you find most convincing? Why?
