

Before The Manger; After The Cross

Part 2

Mic 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, [though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah, [yet] out of thee shall he come forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting.

The Jewish leaders believed this verse spoke of the promised Messiah.

Mt 2:1 ¶ Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

It is worth noting that the chief priests and scribes left out part of the prophecy.

“...whose goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting.”

HCSB translation is a little clearer.

“...His origin is from antiquity, from eternity.”

The promised ruler is eternal.

Jesus existed before the manger; He also exists after the cross.

The next generation of chief priests and scribes would also fail to understand the truth of Jesus Christ.

They thought killing Him would solve the problem they had.

They were successful, but they didn't realize that it wasn't their doing.

They unwittingly fulfilled the purpose of God.

Read again the prayer of the apostles in the 4th chapter of Acts.

Ac 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Jesus made His arrest and death plain to those who would listen.

Matthew 17:22 And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:

Matthew 20:18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, 19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

Matthew 26:2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Jesus started getting the disciples ready for His death right after the conversation about Jesus' identity.

(Whom do men say I am...whom do ye say I am?)

Mt 16:21 ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

The problem with killing Jesus though, has to do with the part of Micah's prophecy that the priests left out.

Jesus is eternal. He is "God with us!"

Man cannot end an eternal life.

The rulers did not grasp this.

Mt 27:62-66

62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

They truly believed they could end what they considered to be heresy.

Their headache was just beginning.

Mt 28:1-10

1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know

that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. 10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

It is worth examining the reaction of the guards and the chief priests.

V.v. 11-15

11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. 12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. 14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

There are people today who will refuse the gospel no matter the evidence.

I think it was the 19th century philosopher, Hume, who said he didn't want the Bible to be true.

These guards saw the angels, yet still took the money.

They may not have seen Jesus, because one gospel says they "...became as dead men..."

According to the scriptures, the cross was not the end of Jesus.

The foundation of Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus.

The apostles believed and preached the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

Paul was adamant that if Jesus did not rise from the dead, then our hope was in vain.

(How can the belief be true if the foundation be false?) ISBE

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is supported by the evidence more adequately than any other attempted explanation.

Even non theists admit that Luke was an excellent and accurate historian.

Ac 1:1 ¶ The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

One of the fiercest enemies of the gospel testified that Jesus appeared alive after the cross to a crowd of over five hundred at one time.

1Co 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

What could account for the astonishing change in these men in so short a time? The mere removal of the body from the grave could never have transformed their spirits and characters. Three days are not enough for a legend to spring up which should so affect them. Time is needed for a process of legendary growth. There is nothing more striking in the history of primitive Christianity than this marvelous change wrought in the disciples by a belief in the resurrection of their Master. (ISBE)

This former enemy of the cross was transformed though, than by more than eyewitnesses.

V.v.7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.⁸ And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Here is the evidence that Jesus lived beyond the cross. He is still changing lives!

Is He real to you?