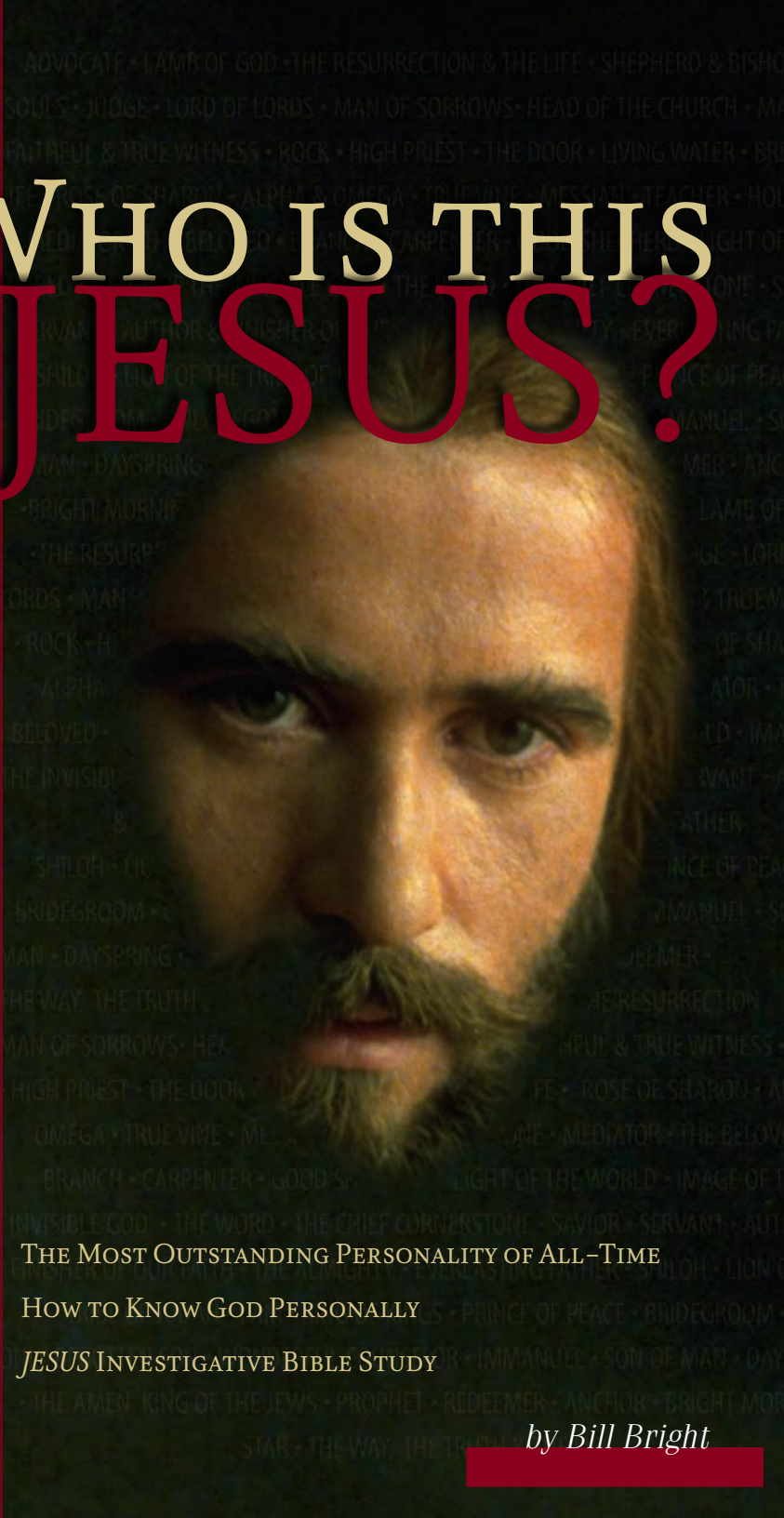


WHO IS THIS JESUS?



**This Special
Edition
Mini-
Magazine
Includes:**

THE MOST OUTSTANDING PERSONALITY OF ALL-TIME

HOW TO KNOW GOD PERSONALLY

JESUS INVESTIGATIVE BIBLE STUDY

by Bill Bright

Who, in your opinion, is the most outstanding personality of all time? The greatest leader? The greatest teacher?

Who has done the most good for mankind and lived the most holy life of anyone who has ever lived?



Visit any part of the world today, and talk to men of any religion. No matter how committed to their particular religion they may be, if they know anything of the facts, they will have to acknowledge that there has never been a man like Jesus of Nazareth. He is the unique personality of all time.

Jesus changed the course of history. Even the date on your morning newspaper gives witness to the fact that Jesus of Nazareth lived on earth nearly 2,000 years ago.

His Coming Foretold

Hundreds of years before Jesus' birth, Scripture recorded the words of the great prophets of Israel foretelling His coming. The Old Testament, written by many individuals over a period of 1,500 years, contains more than 300 prophecies detailing His coming, all of which came true exactly as predicted during Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

The life Jesus led, the miracles He performed, the words He spoke, His death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascent to heaven—these all point to the fact that He was not merely man but more than man. Jesus claimed, "I and My Father are One" (John 10:30, New King James Version), "He who has seen Me has seen

Background notes

Passover (Luke 22:7 and following)

The Passover is an annual religious festival when the Jews recall how God rescued their nation from slavery in Egypt. They remember particularly how the angel of death killed the first-born of all Egyptians, yet “passed over” all the Jewish families. God told them they would be protected by sprinkling lamb’s blood on their door posts. It was after this event that the Egyptians finally allowed the Jews to leave Egypt. An important part of the Passover festival was the killing and eating of the Passover lamb.

New covenant (Luke 22:20)

God had promised in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 31:31-34) that He would bring in a new era. This promise became known as the new covenant. In the New Testament Jesus says that this era is now beginning and that His death would confirm it. This is the guarantee that God gives to us that He will forgive us and that we will have a special relationship with Him.

Messiah (Luke 22:67)

The Hebrew word “Messiah” means “anointed one.” (To anoint someone with olive oil was to honor him or to appoint him to do some special work.) In Greek, the language of the New Testament, “Messiah” is translated “Christ.” The Jews hoped that the promised Messiah would come as king, to deliver the nation from foreign rule and to set up a righteous, divine kingdom in Israel. There are many verses in the Old Testament that speak of this anointed one who was to come. Although Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, He did not do what the Jews expected. Instead He came as a servant and as one who would suffer. His Kingdom was established, not in a palace, but in the hearts of men and women. Yet in the end all things were to be brought under His rule.

Son of Man (Luke 22:69)

To describe Himself Jesus used “Son of Man” most often. In Luke 22:69, He refers to an Old Testament passage (Daniel 7:13, 14) about a son of man (human being) who was given an everlasting kingdom. The Jews have understood Daniel to be referring to the promised Messiah.

V. Jesus: The Life-Giver

The last chapter of Luke gives a clear account of the fantastic miracle of the resurrection. After Jesus’ crucifixion His disciples were afraid of the Jews. While they continued to meet, they did so in secret. Suddenly, Jesus came to them.

C.S. Lewis, a famous writer and Christian, wrote:

The New Testament writers speak as if Christ’s achievement in rising from the dead was the first event of its kind in the whole history of the universe. He has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought and beaten the king of death.

A. The Resurrection

READ: Luke 24:1-53

1. *How do you think the disciples felt after seeing Jesus crucified?*

News began to reach them that Jesus was alive again. The disciples' reaction shows that they did not expect this. They thought the story was nonsense (v.11). The two on the road said that they were surprised by the news (v.22) and Jesus Himself confirmed that they had doubts in their minds (v.38). Nevertheless, various people became convinced that Jesus had risen from the dead.

2. *What convinced the women? (24:5-8)* _____

3. *What convinced the two people on the road? (24:25-32)* _____

4. *What convinced the group of disciples? (24:36-43)* _____

5. *How did the disciples' attitude toward Jesus change? (24:52, 53)* _____

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the climax of His life's work. Jesus rose from the dead as He said He would. This challenges us to believe that the other things He said about Himself are also true. The resurrection demands a response from us, one way or another.

B. Responding to Jesus

Let's look at one particular woman about whom Luke wrote, and see how she responded to Jesus.

READ: Luke 7:36-50

This woman had a bad past. Her behavior toward Jesus was very different from the stiff and starchy response of Simon the Pharisee.

1. Why do you think the woman acted as she did? (7:37, 38) _____

2. Jesus told Simon a story to explain the woman's actions. (7:40-43)
Why do you think He did that? _____

3. How were the woman's debts cleared before God? (7:48) _____

4. What does "faith" mean? (7:50) _____

5. What did "go in peace" mean to this woman? (7:50) _____

She could be sure that she was at peace with God. Jesus had welcomed, accepted and forgiven her because of His love and mercy. Nothing she had done could have *earned* His response. But she was now free to live as a new person.

We can be sure in this same way. We can *never* pay God the debt we owe Him for our sinful behavior. But, if we come to Jesus as this woman did, we can know that He forgives and accepts us completely. In the last session we discussed how this happens through Jesus' death on our behalf.

C. Becoming a Christian

The sinful woman came to Jesus and recognized her sin. She trusted Jesus to forgive her and, by her actions, thanked Him for the new life He offered her. We must do the same if we want to be at peace with God, both now and eternally.

You could pray something like this:

Jesus, I realize that I have been running my own life and have rebelled against You. Thank You for dying for my sins. I open my life to You and ask You to be my Savior and Lord. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Amen.



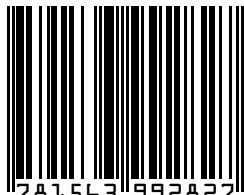
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