

# EXPLORATION: BIBLE

By Chip Thompson

## IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS: BEFORE & AFTER

The past twenty Exploration Bible articles have shown archeological evidence to prove that Jesus was exactly who he claimed to be. Jesus was both the Jewish Messiah (see: John 4:25-26) and the eternal God come to earth in human flesh (see: John 8:51-59). We have seen archeological evidence for the story of Jesus: From Gabriel's announcement to Mary in Nazareth; to His birth in Bethlehem; to His life at sites in Galilee and Jerusalem; to the events surrounding the passion week leading to His crucifixion, burial and resurrection. The physical proof for the story of JESUS found in the archeology of Israel is AMAZING. Today we will examine evidence for Jesus BEFORE & AFTER His life here on earth.

**BEFORE:** We only need look to one piece of evidence for Jesus BEFORE His coming to earth. It is the Dead Sea Scrolls manuscript known as the Great Isaiah Scroll.



**This is the Solid Rock Bible Museum's replica of the Great Isaiah Scroll. If you would like to see this replica, visit the Solid Rock Café in Ephraim, 96 E Center St. (Photo by Chip Thompson, 2024)**

This ancient Bible manuscript is arguably one of the most important archeological finds of all times. It is a complete scroll of the Book of Isaiah that dates to at least 125 B.C. The Book of Isaiah contains more prophecies about the future Jewish Messiah than any other Old Testament book. It is IMPORTANT to note that the Great Isaiah Scroll pre-dates the birth of Jesus by over 100 years.

Isaiah 7:14 tells us God will give us a sign that will identify the Messiah as the only Child born of a virgin. Isaiah 9:6-7 tells us this special Child will be "the Mighty God" who will forever reign in Jerusalem on the throne of his father David. Isaiah 35:2-6 identifies the Messiah as the One who will open the eyes of the blind, cause the deaf to hear, and make the lame

to leap. Isaiah chapter 53 explains how the Messiah will save us from our sins when God lays upon Him the iniquity of us all. It seems impossible for anyone to read the above passages and not see Jesus in them. You should grab your Bible and read these passages for yourself. There are many more prophecies about the Messiah contained in Hebrew scriptures, but the Great Isaiah scroll alone is more than enough to identify Jesus as the Jewish Messiah who is the eternal God.



**Just to the left of the dark seam-stain is Isaiah chapter 53 in the Great Isaiah Scroll manuscript. [Photo: Israel Museum, Digital Dead Sea Scrolls, Fair Use Act.]**

**AFTER:** The Isaiah Scroll also tells what will happen AFTER the Messiah comes to earth. If you are a non-Jewish believer in Jesus, these prophecies are about YOU. Never in human history has any religious figure been accepted as God and Savior by people from every nation on earth. Yet, Isaiah prophesied that the Jewish Messiah would come not only for Jews, but He would also bring the Gentiles to salvation. And these prophecies were written by Isaiah in about 700 B.C. No fewer than nine chapters speak of this wonder – Isaiah chapters 9, 11, 42, 49, 56, 60, 61, 62, and 66.

Isaiah 11:10 says, "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse [Jesus], Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him." Isaiah 49:6 tells us, "Indeed He [God] says, 'It is too small a thing that You [Messiah/Jesus] should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You [Messiah/Jesus] should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'" WOW, how could Isaiah have possibly known that worship of the Jewish Messiah would spread to every nation on planet earth?

Today in our world there are 2.4 billion Christians. This is by

far the largest religion on the planet. Every nation on earth has a population of Christians. The vast majority of these believers are Gentiles who name Jesus as their Savior and God. They gather to worship the name of Jesus Christ all over our world. Even in countries where Christianity has been outlawed believers gather in underground churches. More Christians today are being martyred for their belief in Jesus than in any other period of human history. At least 1,000 Christians each month are martyred for their faith. Believers in the Middle East are often beheaded for their belief in Jesus. When faced with unimaginable pain and suffering these Gentile believers refuse to denounce the name of their Savior and God, Jesus Christ.

With this in mind, why does Christianity continue to grow? From the beginning of the church in the first century A.D. until the early fourth century it was illegal to be a Christian and was punishable by death. Yet the Christian church grew during this time of intense persecution to become the largest religion in the ancient world. That status has not and will not ever change because Jesus Himself promised, "I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Jesus also told parables that describe the growth of His kingdom [His Church] here on earth. These parables tell us His Church would continue to grow until it fills the whole earth – WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT HAS HAPPENED.



**This is Qumran Cave #1 where the Great Isaiah Scroll was discovered in 1947. [Photo by Chip Thompson 2018]**

YES, the Great Isaiah scroll is evidence from BEFORE Jesus and AFTER Jesus that His story is true. Are YOU a part of His story? Have YOU placed your faith in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, as your Savior and God? If you will simply believe what Jesus said in John Chapter 3 you will be saved. So, what are you waiting for? "Whoever believes in Him [in Jesus] shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).