

# HE CHOSE THE NAILS

What God Did to Win Your Heart by Max Lucado

## HIS BIRTH

**The words of King Herod when told of the birth of Jesus.**

“Kill him. There is room for only one king in this corner of the world.”

**The number of religious leaders who believed a messiah had been born in Bethlehem.**

Zero.

**The type of people who did.**

Some stargazers, night-shift shepherds, and a couple of newlyweds who claimed to have more experience giving birth than having sex.

**The reward given to Joseph and Mary for bringing God into the world.**

Two years in exile, learning Egyptian.

**This was the beginning of the Christian movement.**

(And these were the calm years.)

## HIS MINISTRY

**The word on the streets of Jesus' hometown when he claimed to be sent from God.**

Weird family. Have you seen his cousin?

**The reaction of the hometown folks.**

Stone him.

**The opinion of his brothers.**

Lock him up.

**The number of disciples Jesus recruited.**

Seventy.

**The number of disciples who defended him to the authorities.**

Zero.

**The assessment of his followers as found in the Jerusalem editorial page.**

A group of unemployed ne'er-do-wells recruited off the shipping docks and out of the red-light districts.

**The number of lepers and blind and lame people Jesus healed.**

Too many to count.

**The number of lepers and blind and lame people who defended Jesus on the day of his death.**

Zero.

## HIS EXECUTION

**The popular opinion regarding Jesus before he cleansed the Temple.**

See if he'll run for office.

**The popular opinion regarding Jesus after he cleansed the Temple.**

Let's see how fast he can run.

**The decision of the Jewish council.**

Three spikes and a spear.

**The talk on the streets of Jerusalem after Jesus died.**

He should've stayed in the furniture business.

**The number of times Jesus prophesied that he would come back to life three days after his death.**

Three.

**The number of apostles who heard the prophesy.**

All of them.

**The number of apostles who waited at the tomb to see if he would do what he said.**

Zero.

**The number of his followers who believed in the resurrection before it occurred.**

You do the math.

**The odds a street-corner bookie would've given the day after the crucifixion on the possibility that Jesus' name would be known in the year 2000.**

"I'll give you better odds that he'll rise from the dead."

## THE MOVEMENT

**The official response of the Jewish leaders to the rumors of the resurrection.**

Of course they say he's alive. They have to. What else can they say?

**The actual response of the Jewish leaders to the resurrection of Jesus.**

"A great number of the Jewish priests believed and obeyed."  
(Acts 6:7)

## HE CHOSE NAILS

**The decision of the Jewish leaders about the church.**

"If their plan comes from human authority, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them" (Acts 5:38-39).

**The response of the church.**

"The number of followers was growing" (Acts 6:1).

**The official response of the Jewish leaders to the conversion of Saul.**

Good riddance to the former Pharisee. Won't be months before he is in jail, and then what will he do? Write letters?

**What Saul, turned Paul, understood that his former colleagues didn't.**

"God gave [Jesus] as a way to forgive sin" (Rom. 3:25).

## THE MOVEMENT CONTINUES

**The belief of French philosopher Voltaire.**

The Bible and Christianity would pass within a hundred years. He died in 1778. The movement continues.

**The pronouncement of Fredrich Nietzsche in 1882.**

"God is dead." The dawn of science, he believed, would be the doom of faith. Science has dawned; the movement continues.

**The way a Communist dictionary defined the Bible.**

"It is a collection of fantastic legends without any scientific support." Communism is diminishing; the movement continues.

**The discovery made by every person who has tried to bury the faith.**

The same as the one made by those who tried to bury its Founder: he won't stay in the tomb.

**The facts.**

The movement has never been stronger: more than one billion Catholics and nearly as many Protestants.

**The question.**

How do we explain it? Jesus was a backwater peasant. He never wrote a book, never held an office. He never journeyed more than two hundred miles from his hometown. Friends left him. One betrayed him. Those he helped forgot him. Prior to his death they abandoned him. But after his death they couldn't resist him. What made the difference?

**The answer.**

His death and resurrection.

For when he died, so did your sin.

And when he rose, so did your hope.

For when he rose, your grave was changed from a final residence to temporary housing.

**The reason he did it.**

The face in your mirror.

**The verdict after two millennia.**

Herod was right: there is room for only one King.