

## Handout for Advanced Seminar #2

### The Proof of Prophecy and Jesus' Claims

#### Introduction

Point out that one of the strongest proofs of the inspiration of the Bible and of the deity of Jesus Christ is the tremendous amount of prophecy fulfilled. This phenomena is unique to Christianity, as no other religious book contains prophecy of the same nature as does the Bible. The reason is obvious: the other religious writers didn't want to take any chances. If they made some predictions and they didn't come true, then their entire religion would be discredited. The Biblical prophets, however, didn't hesitate. They came through loud and clear with: "Thus saith the Lord." They listed a number of specific things that were going to happen and then they did happen. Today I'd like to examine two of the reasons (there are many others) why Christians believe that Jesus is God.

Content--Do not add--just read through this with them.

- I. Because of the prophecies He fulfilled.  
There are over 300 prophecies concerning the Messiah that were literally fulfilled in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Let's look at three of them:
  - A. Psalm 22
    1. This is a Psalm of David written about 1000 B.C.
    2. Read verse one, "My God, My God..."  
With your thumb on that passage, turn to Matt. 27:46. When Jesus screamed these words, He was, in effect, saying, "Psalm 22 applies to me." Let's see how well it fits.
    3. Five particulars
      - a. 22:14--bones out of joint. During death by crucifixion, the bones are pulled out of joint in wrists, elbows, and shoulders.
      - b. 22:15--Tongue cleaveth to my jaws-extreme thirst. During this kind of death the saliva glands and the respiratory system became paralyzed. There is extreme thirst.
      - c. 22:16--They pierced My hands and feet. The nails of the Roman cross are referred to here.
      - d. 22:17--My bones stare at me, i.e., as the Messiah hangs on the cross He looks down and He sees his bones looking back at Him. In other words, He is either nude or partially nude. This was the way the Romans crucified a man in order to shame him.
      - e. 22:18--They cast lots - When Jesus was crucified, the Roman soldiers cast lots for His only robe. (John 19:23-24)



2. Seven weeks and three-score and two weeks = 69 weeks. The Hebrew word translated week is "shabua" = a period of seven. It refers not to a seven of days here, but a seven of years. This is proven by Gen. 29:26-28 where the same Hebrew word is used for a week of years. Therefore, the time period referred to is a period of 483 years.
3. At that time the Jewish calendar was set up on a 360 day year. Exactly how they adjusted we are still not sure, but we know that it was a 360 day year. Therefore, in days, the time period is 483 years times 360 days = 173,880 days.
4. Starting point - "going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem."

(Put 2nd overlay down.)

- a. Neh. 2:1 - It occurred in the 20th year of Artaxerxes. We know from archaeology that the first year was 465 B.C.; therefore, the 20th year would be 445 B.C.

(Put 3rd overlay down.)

- b. In the month Nisan. According to Jewish custom at this time, when the day of the month isn't mentioned, the first day of the month is assumed; therefore, it was the first day of Nisan, or 14 March, 445 B.C.
- c. This date would have been the date of the Passover. The Passover was always on the first of Nisan. It was the beginning of the Jewish New Year. The first of Nisan, the Passover, was always scheduled to start on the day after the sighting of the new moon of that month. Astronomer Royal traced it back and on the 13th of March there was a new moon. Therefore, the first of Nisan in 445 B.C., the Passover, must have been on 14 March.

(Put 4th overlay down.)

5. Finish point - This works out by adding 173,880 days to 14 March, 445 B.C., to 6 April, 32 A.D. This is the date that Jesus rode into Jerusalem proclaiming Himself to be Israel's Messiah. This fulfilled Zech. 9:9. Christians call it Palm Sunday.

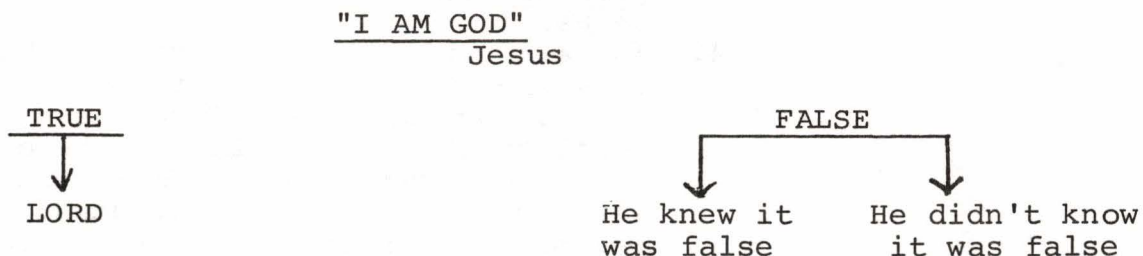
(Omit discussion of 5th overlay.)

II. Because of the claims that He made.

A. The claims

1. He claimed He is God - Mark 2:5-7  
John 8:24 - I AM = Yahweh =  
OT name of God. (He isn't  
in the original.)  
John 8:58 - Compare Ex. 3:13-14

- B. There are three alternatives when we view these claims. Be sure to diagram this for the person as you explain the alternatives. It makes the argument more powerful. Fill in the words, LORD, LUNATIC, and LIAR as you go along.



1. TRUE claim - then He is the Lord and our discussion ends. But since that is the point in question, we will still have to consider the alternatives involved if it is a false claim.
2. FALSE claim - If the claims were false then there are two alternatives:
  - a. He knew it was false - LIAR
    1. Deliberate misrepresentation or LIAR.
    2. Hypocrite - because He told everyone else to tell the truth.
    3. Fool - it was this very claim that resulted in His crucifixion.

It is very improbable that Jesus was lying. It is possible, however, that He was sincerely deluded. That leads us to the final alternative.

- b. He didn't know it was false - LUNATIC.
  1. Compare with today. If a man came up and said to you, "I am God, I created the world, I am the resurrection and the life, and I can forgive your sins," there wouldn't be the slightest shadow of a doubt in your mind as to whether or not that man was sane.
  2. This was no ordinary claim of deity and therefore, it wouldn't be ordinary insanity. Jesus made this claim in an intensely monotheistic culture. He was claiming to be the very God around whom the worship of Israel had revolved for the last 1500 years. A psychiatrist today would have considered Jesus to be a paranoid schizophrenic, i.e., a split personality with visions of grandeur.
  3. It is possible that Jesus was a liar. It

is possible that Jesus was a lunatic. But we're not talking about what is possible, but what is PROBABLE -- what is the most probable of these alternatives? (Let them answer.)

4. There is no in-between ground. The claim is either true or it is false. In other words, you can't have Jesus as a great moral teacher. C.S. Lewis, the great Cambridge scholar and a former atheist, was once struck by this argument. After becoming a Christian, he wrote many books in which he argued persuasively for the deity of Christ. In one of his books, Mere Christianity, he has a chapter on the deity of Christ, entitled the "Shocking Alternatives." The last paragraph of this chapter concludes in this way:

"What I am trying to do here is to prevent people from saying the very foolish things that they often say about Jesus of Nazareth, i.e., He is a great moral teacher. He would either be a liar, or a lunatic on the level of a man who calls himself a poached egg, or a demon or something worse. You can fall at His feet and acknowledge Him as Lord, or you can spit in His face as a demon. But let's not come up with any of this patronizing nonsense about His being a great moral teacher. He didn't leave that option open to us; He didn't intend to."

V. Close in Prayer.