

# Christian Apologetics (Youth)

## Week 5: Divinity of Jesus

### Jesus as Incarnate God

*Who is Jesus? Is Jesus a Prophet or a Wise Sage?  
Or Is Jesus a Liar, Lunatic, or Lord (C. S. Lewis)? Or Is Jesus Divine?*

Skeptics argue that Jesus never claimed to be divine, and that the early churches' claims of Jesus' divinity were contrived.

As believers, we argue that nearly everything Jesus said and did spoke of His divinity.

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The Pharisees accused Jesus of claiming equality with God (John 5:18, 10:24-25).

In response to the Pharisees' accusations, Jesus outlined his own defense in John 5 including the following witnesses:

- John the Baptist's **authoritative testimony** (vv. 32-35)
  - Jesus' **authoritative teaching** (v. 36)
  - Jesus' **miracles** (v. 36)
  - Jesus' fulfillment of Messianic **prophecies** (vv. 37-46)
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## Testimonies

### Authoritative Witness of John the Baptist

John the Baptist was the authoritative witness **appointed** and **anointed** by God to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah.

During Jesus' baptism, John testified to the people in John 1 saying ...

- Jesus is the **Lamb of God** who will **take away the sin of the world** (v. 29).
- Jesus is **anointed by the Holy Spirit** as he begins his ministry (v. 32).
- Jesus is the **Chosen One of God** - some translations say **Son of God** (v. 34).

### Extra-Biblical Testimony

In addition to the testimony of John the Baptist, prominent extra-biblical historians chronicled the historicity and divinity of Jesus including Tacitus, Lucian of Samosata, Thallus, Josephus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, and the Jewish Talmud.

- Collectively, their writings build a **compelling profile** of Jesus' divinity, as well as his death and resurrection.

### Other Eyewitness Testimony

In 2 Peter 1:16, Peter states that he and the other disciples were eyewitnesses to Jesus' majesty.

Jesus' disciples testify to his divinity.

- **John**: "Jesus, the **Word** was with God, and the **Word was God**. ... So the **Word** became human and made his home among us" (John 1:1-16).
- **Peter**: "You are the **Messiah**, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15-16).
- **Paul**: "Jesus is the **visible image of the invisible God**" (Colossians 1:15-19). "In Jesus lives all the **fullness of God** in a human body" (Colossians 2:9).

Other eyewitnesses of Jesus' divinity include Zechariah, Simeon, Anna, the Magi, the Roman centurion, the angel Gabriel, God the Father, Satan, Demons, and the **thousands of people** who witnessed Jesus' teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection.

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# Authoritative Teaching

## Realms of Jesus' Authority

During Jesus' ministry, he demonstrated his divine authority **over all realms** including:

- Authority to **Forgive Sins** (Luke 5:20-24)
- Authority Over **Peoples' Destiny** (John 14:6)
- Authority Over **Sickness** (Jesus' Miracles)
- Authority Over **Life & Death** (Jesus' Miracles)
- Authority Over **Nature** (Matthew 8:27)
- Authority Over **Old Testament Law** (Matthew 5:31-32)
- Origin of **Divine Truth** (Matthew 5:18)

## Jesus' Authoritative Teaching

When Jesus speaks of **his teachings**, he is referring to the **divine authority** of his teachings.

- We learn from Matthew 7:28-29, that the people were amazed by Jesus' teaching, and that his teaching **exceeded the authority of the religious teachers** of his day.
- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus **begins** his teaching with the phrase "**Amen, I say to you**". By using the word AMEN **before** the teaching (as opposed to **after**), Jesus is boldly declaring, "**I know this is true firsthand because I am the author of this truth!**" (John 14:6)

We observe that **Jesus' authority** is something he **possessed** because of his **divine nature**, as opposed to the **learned** and **vested** authority of the **religious teachers**.

## Jesus' Divine Titles

The many titles Jesus claimed during his ministry revealed his **divine nature** including:

- **Son of Man** (x85): Jesus claims to be the **divine figure** in the likeness of man who will come at the end of the age and establish his eternal kingdom in Daniel 7:13-14.
- **Son of God** (x42): Jesus claims to have **intimacy** with God the Father.
- **I Am** (x7): Jesus claims the **Messianic** titles described metaphorically in the Old Testament, e.g., bread of life, light of the world, door of the sheep, and true vine.
- **I AM - ego eimi** (x5): Jesus claims the same title as the **self-existent, eternal** God in Exodus 3:14.
- **One with God** (x1): Jesus claims to share the same **essence** as God, one and the same **being** in John 10:22-30.

## Jesus' Mental Health

We know Jesus was of **sound mind** because he did not exhibit any of the characteristics of Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Delusional Disorder, or Sociopathic Personality Disorder.

- Jesus was consistently depicted as one who was **level-headed** and **singly focused** on his mission.
- He was genuinely concerned about the wayward plight of people and **not fixated on himself**.

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# Miracles

Miracles **authenticate** the **message** of the **miracle worker**, e.g., Moses' miracles in Exodus 7-9.

- Likewise, God **authenticates** Jesus' claims of divinity with **signs, wonders, and miracles** in Acts 2:22.
- Jesus goes as far as saying that his miracles **prove** he is divine in John 5:36. Certainly, his **resurrection** is the greatest proof!

## Scope of Jesus' Miracles

The Gospel writers tell us that Jesus healed **all** those who were sick in Matthew 4:23-24.

- **ALL** Galilee, **EVERY** disease, **EVERY** affliction, **ALL** the sick, over a three-year period.
- Therefore, Jesus' miracles were witnessed and experienced by **thousands** of people (John 20:30).

## Nature of Jesus' Miracles

The first thing we observe about the nature of Jesus' miracles is that his authority is **without extent** or **limit**.

- From the Gospel record, we observe that there were **no domains** over which Jesus **did not exercise absolute authority**.
- The Gospels recount **38 miracle stories** including:
  - healing people of illnesses, deformities, and diseases (x20)
  - physical laws of nature (x9)
  - exorcising demonic spirits (x5)
  - raising the dead to life (x4)

The second thing we observe about the nature of Jesus' miracles is that he **exhibited explosive power**.

- The Greek word used for miracles in the NT is **dunamis** from which we get our English word **dynamite**.
- The import of the Greek word **dunamis** is that Jesus' miracles **occurred so quickly** (suddenly, immediately) that they couldn't have been **explained away by natural process**.

The third thing we observe about the nature of Jesus' miracles is that **he himself possessed the power** to perform miracles by his **word**, not by invoking the power of an outside source.

- Jesus' miracles were **not accompanied** by **incantations**, **potions**, or **rituals**, like other so-called healers of his day.
- Jesus' miracles did not depend on **proximity**. Jesus' **word** was enough.

We conclude that Jesus' power was both **extraordinary** and **unique**, unlike any power witnessed in his day!

## Fulfillment of Messianic Prophecies

### Summary of Messianic Prophecies

We learn from John 5:39,46 and Luke 24:44 that **Jesus** was the **focal point** of **all biblical prophecy** written in the OT scriptures, esp. the Law of Moses.

- Based on biblical scholarship, there are an estimated **46 messianic prophecies** in the OT that collectively provide a **prophetic profile** of the Messiah to come.

To illustrate the **accurate fulfillment** of prophecy, we turn to Psalm 22.

- Psalm 22 was written by King David in approximately **1,000 BC** as a psalm of lament and suffering.
- What is amazing about this Psalm is that it **prophetically** describes Jesus' **crucifixion**.
  - Forsaken by God (22:1)
  - Mocked & Ridiculed (22:7-8)
  - Side Pierced (22:14)
  - Bones Out-of-Joint (22:14)
  - Dehydrated & Exhausted (22:15)
  - Hands & Feet Pierced (22:16)
  - Bones Exposed (22:17)
  - Soldiers Gamble for Garments (22:18)
  - Mocked by Onlookers (22:6,7,8,12,13,17)

We learn from history that **crucifixion** was **first introduced** by the Persians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and later used by Alexander the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and the Roman empire in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

- The description of suffering in Psalm 22 was a **detailed portrait** of the brutal crucifixion that **predates** the use of crucifixion used by the Persians, Macedonians, and Romans.

How could David have known about death by crucifixion **600 years before it was first used** by the Persians and the **specific events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion 1,000 years in advance**?

- The **only reasonable answer** is that David was **speaking prophetically** by the **inspiration** of God.

### Messianic Fulfillment by Chance

What are the **mathematical odds** of Jesus fulfilling all OT prophecies with pin-point accuracy by chance?

According to Peter Stoner (1969), the odds of Jesus fulfilling **all 46 messianic prophecies** is **1 in 10<sup>157</sup>**.

As we examine these prophecies, we learn that half of the prophecies were **completely outside** Jesus' **control**.

- Therefore, Jesus could not have **orchestrated** the events of his life in order to fulfill these prophecies, e.g.
  - Jesus born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2 Matthew 2:1)
  - Jesus born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:22-23)
  - Children massacred at Bethlehem (Jeremiah 31:15 Matthew 2:16-18)
  - The methods of torture inflicted on Jesus during his crucifixion.

The odds of Jesus fulfilling **half** of the OT Messianic prophecies is **1 in 10<sup>78</sup>**.

Since these numbers are so astronomical, it is **impossible** to believe Jesus fulfill all or even half of the 46 prophecies by chance.

Because the fulfillment of Jesus' Messianic prophecies were **undisputably orchestrated** by God, we conclude that prophetic fulfillment is the **strongest evidence** for both the **divinity of Jesus**, and the **inspiration of God's Word**.

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