

Jesus Christ is Messiah

Scientific Mathematical Proof

The following is Chapter 3 from the book, *Science Speaks, a Scientific Proof of the Accuracy of Prophecy and the Bible*, by Peter W. Stoner, Ph.D., Assisted by Robert C. Newman, Ph.D., Moody Press.

Chapter 3

THE CHRIST OF PROPHECY

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me - John 5:39

The word "Scriptures" in this passage refers to the Old Testament. Christ is saying that in the Old Testament we will find the prophecies referring to Himself. It is therefore in these prophecies, and their fulfillment, that we may look if we wish to find evidence that Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of mankind, and everything else which was prophesied of Him, and which He claimed to be.

If we find these prophecies to be fulfilled in Christ, we will establish not only that Christ is the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament, but that those prophecies were given by God Himself. For if they were not given by God, no man would have fulfilled any number of them, as will be evident later in this chapter.

In order to evaluate our evidence we shall use the same principle of probability which was stated and used in the preceding chapter.

In evaluating these prophecies, we shall have to answer this question regarding each prophecy: One man in how many men has fulfilled this prophecy? I realize that some will object to this question, saying that these prophecies were made with respect to Christ, and no other man has, or even can, fulfill them. This, of course, is true when you consider the mass of prophecies regarding Christ, but it is not true of all individual prophecies. It was prophesied, for example, that Christ would be born in Bethlehem; certainly other persons have been born in Bethlehem. It was prophesied that Christ would be crucified; other men have been crucified. I certainly am not trying to be sacrilegious in asking these questions; but I am trying to look at the evidence entirely unbiased, that I may the better give a clear argument.

The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship at Pasadena City College sponsored a class in Christian evidences. One section of the work of this class was to consider the evidence produced by the fulfilled prophecies referring to the first advent of Christ. The students were asked to be very conservative in their probability estimates. They discussed each prophecy at length, bringing out various conditions which might affect the probability of any man fulfilling it. After discussion, the students agreed unanimously on a definite estimate as being both reasonable and conservative. At the end of the evaluations the students expressed their feelings thus: If any one were able to enter into the discussions and help in placing the estimates, as they had done, that person would certainly agree that the estimates were conservative.

The estimates used in this chapter are a combination of the estimates given by this class on Christian evidences combined with estimates given me later by some twelve different classes of college students, representing more than 600 students. I have carefully weighed the estimates and have changed some to make them more conservative. If the reader does not agree with the estimates given, he may make his own estimates and then carry them through to their logical conclusions.

We considered the following eight prophecies:

1. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

This prophecy predicts that the Christ is to be born in Bethlehem. Since this is the first prophecy to be considered there are not previously set restrictions, so our question is: One man in how many, the world over, has been born in Bethlehem?

The best estimate which we can make of this comes from the attempt to find out the average population of Bethlehem, from Micah down to the present time, and divide it by the average population of the earth during the same period. One member of the class was an assistant in the library so he was assigned to get this information. He reported at the next meeting that the best determination of the ratio that he could determine was one to 280,000. Since the probable population of the earth has averaged less than two billion, the population of Bethlehem has averaged less than 7,150. Our answer may be expressed in the form that one man in $7,150/2,000,000,000$ or one man in 2.8×10 to the 5th power was born in Bethlehem.

2. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me" (Mal. 3:1).

Our question here is: Of the men who have been born in Bethlehem, one

man in how many has had a forerunner to prepare his way? John the Baptist, of course, was the forerunner of Christ. But since there appears to be no material difference between the people born in Bethlehem and those born any other place in the world, the question can just as well be general: One man in how many, the world over, has had a forerunner to prepare his way?

The students said that the prophecy apparently referred to a special messenger of God, whose one duty was to prepare the way for the work of Christ, so there is a further restriction added. The students finally agreed on one in 1,000 as being extremely conservative. Most of the members thought the estimate should be much larger. We will use the estimate as 1 in 10 to the third power.

3. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon . . . a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9).

Our question then is: One man in how many, who was born in Bethlehem and had a forerunner, did enter Jerusalem as a king riding on a colt the foal of an ass? This becomes so restrictive that we should consider an equivalent question: One man in how many, who has entered Jerusalem as a ruler, has entered riding on a colt the foal of an ass?

The students said that this was a very hard thing to place an estimate on. They knew of no one but Jesus Christ who had so entered. The students thought that at least in more modern times any one entering Jerusalem as a king would use a more dignified means of transportation. They agreed to place an estimate of 1 in 10 to the fourth power. We will use 1 in 10 to the second power.

4. "And one shall say unto him, What are those wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6).

Jesus Christ was betrayed by Judas, one of His disciples, causing Him to be put to death, wounds being made in His hands.

There seems to be no relation between the fulfillment of this prophecy and those which we have previously considered. We may then ask the question: One man in how many, the world over, has been betrayed by a friend, and that betrayal has resulted in his being wounded in his hands?

The students said that it was very rare to be betrayed by a friend, and still rarer for the betrayal to involve wounding in the hands. One in 1,000 was finally agreed upon, though most of the students would have preferred a larger number. So we will use the 1 in 10 to the third power.

5. "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" (Zech. 11:12).

The question here is very simple: of the people who have been betrayed, one in how many has been betrayed for exactly thirty pieces of silver?

The students thought this would be extremely rare and set their estimate as one in 10,000, or 1 in 10 to the fourth power. We will use 1 in 10 to the third power.

6. "And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord" (Zech. 11:13).

This is extremely specific. All thirty pieces of silver are not to be returned. They are to be cast down in the house of the Lord, and they are to go to the potter. You will recall that Judas in remorse tried to return the thirty pieces of silver, but the chief priest would not accept them. So Judas threw them down on the floor of the temple and went and hanged himself. The chief priest then took the money and bought a field of the potter to bury strangers in. Our question is: One man in how many, after receiving a bribe for the betrayal of a friend, had returned the money, had it refused, had thrown it on the floor in the house of the Lord, and then had it used to purchase a field from the potter?

The students said they doubted if there had ever been another incident involving all of these items but they agreed on an estimate of one in 100,000. They were very sure that this was conservative. So we use the estimate as 1 in 10 to the fifth power.

7. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7).

One man in how many, after fulfilling the above prophecies, when he is oppressed and afflicted and is on trial for his life, though innocent, will make no defense for himself?

Again my students said they did not know that this had ever happened in any case other than Christ's. At least it is extremely rare, so they placed their estimate as one in 10,000 or 1 in 10 to the fourth power. We will use 1 in 10 to the third power.

8. "For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet" (Psalms 22:16).

The Jews are still looking for the coming of Christ; in fact, He might have come any time after these prophecies were written up to the present time, or even on into the future. So our question is: One man in how many, from the time of David on, has been crucified?

After studying the methods of execution down through the ages and their frequency, the students agreed to estimate this probability at one in 10,000 or 1 in 10 to the fourth power, which we will use.

If these estimates are considered fair, one man in how many men, the world over, will fulfill all eight prophecies? This question can be answered by applying our principles of probability. In other words, by multiplying all of our estimates together, or 1 in 2.8 times 10 to the fifth, times 10 to the third, times 10 squared, times 10 to the third, times 10 to the third, times 10 to the fifth, times 10 to the third, times 10 to the fourth power. This gives 1 in 2.8 times 10 to the 28th power, where 28 means that we have 28 ciphers following the 2.8. Let us simplify and reduce the number by calling it 1 in 10 to the 28th power. Written out, this number is 1 in 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

This is the answer to the question: One man in how many men has fulfilled these eight prophecies? But we are really concerned with the answer to the question: What is the chance that any man might have lived from the day of these prophecies down to the present time and have fulfilled all of the eight prophecies? We can answer this question by dividing our 10 to the 28th power by the total number of people who have lived since the time of these prophecies. The best information available indicates the number to be about 88 billion or 8.8 times 10 to the 10th power. To simplify the computation let us call the number 10 to the 11th power. By dividing these two numbers we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power.

Let us try to visualize this chance. If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all of the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is one in ten. Suppose that we take 10 to the 17th power silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? *Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.*

Now these prophecies were either given by inspiration of God or the prophets just wrote them as they thought they should be. In such a case the prophets had just one chance in 10 to the 17th power of having them come true in any man, but they all came true in Jesus Christ.

This means that the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of those prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only one chance in 10 to the 17th power of being absolute.

Sometimes we weigh our chances in the business world, and say if an investment has nine chances in ten of being profitable, and only one chance in ten of being a failure, it is safe enough for us to make the investment. Whoever heard of an investment that had only one chance in 10 to the 17th power of failure? The business world has no conception of such an investment. Yet we are offered this investment by God. By the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior, we know, from only these eight prophecies which lack only 1 chance in 10 to the 17th power of being an absolute proof, that that investment will yield the wonderful dividend of eternal life with Christ. Can anyone be so unreasonable as to reject Jesus Christ and pin his hope of eternal life on such a slim chance as finding the right silver dollar among this great mass, covering the whole state of Texas two feet deep? It does not seem possible, yet every man who rejects Jesus Christ is doing just that.

More than three hundred prophecies from the Old Testament which deal with the first advent of Christ have been listed. Every one of them was completely fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Let us see what happens when we take more than eight prophecies.

Suppose we add eight more prophecies to our list, and assume that their chance of fulfillment is the same as the eight just considered. The chance that one man would fulfill all sixteen is 1 in 10 to the 28th power times 10 to the 17th power, or 1 in 10 to the 45th power.

Let us try to visualize this as we did before. Take this number of silver dollars. If you make these into a solid ball, you will have a great sphere with a center at the earth, and extending in all directions more than 30 times as far as from the earth to the sun. (If a train had started from the earth at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, and had traveled steadily toward the sun at the rate of sixty miles per hour, day and night, it would be about reaching its destination today. But remember that our ball of silver dollars extends thirty times that far in all directions.) If you can imagine the marking of one silver dollar, and then thoroughly stirring it into this great ball, and blindfolding a man and telling him to pick out one dollar, and expect it to be the marked one, you have somewhat of a picture of how absolutely the fulfillment of sixteen prophecies referring to Jesus Christ proves both that He is the Son of God and that our Bible is inspired. Certainly God directed the writing of His Word.

In order to extend this consideration beyond all bounds of human comprehension, let us consider forty-eight prophecies, similar in their human chance of fulfillment to the eight which we originally considered. Using the same

principle of probability which we have used so far, we find the chance that any one man fulfilled all forty-eight prophecies to be 1 in 10 to the 157th power.

This is really a large number and it represents an extremely small chance. Let us try to visualize it. The silver dollar, which we have been using, is entirely too large. We must select a smaller object. The electron is about as small an object as we know of. It is so small that it will take 2.5×10 to the 15th power of them laid side by side to make a line, single file, one inch long. If we were going to count the electrons in this line one inch long, and counted 250 each minute, and if we counted day and night, it would take us 19,000,000 years to count just the one-inch line of electrons. If we had a cubic inch of these electrons and we tried to count them it would take us, counting steadily 250 each minute, $19,000,000 \times 19,000,000 \times 19,000,000$ years or 6.9 times 10 to the 21st power years.

With this introduction, let us go back to our chance of 1 in 10 to the 157th power. Let us suppose that we are taking this number of electrons, marking one, and thoroughly stirring it into the whole mass, then blindfolding a man and letting him try to find the right one. What chance has he of finding the right one? What kind of a pile will this number of electrons make? They make an inconceivably large volume.

The distance from our system of stars, or galaxy, to the next nearest one is nearly 1,500,000 light-years; that is the distance that light will travel in 1,500,000 years going 186,000 miles each and every second. This distance is so great that if every man, woman and child in the United States, 200,000,000 of them, had a library of 65,000 volumes, and you collected every book in all of these libraries and then started on this journey of 1,500,000 light-years, and decided to place one letter from one of the books on each mile (e.g., if "the" was the first word in the first book you would put "t" on the first mile, "h" on the second mile, and "e" on the third mile; then leave a mile blank without a letter and start the next word in the same manner, etc.), before you complete your journey you will use up every letter in every book of every one of the libraries and have to call for more.

Space, by some authorities, is supposed to extend in all directions to the distance, not of 1,500,000 light-years, but more than 4,000 times that far or 6,000,000,000 light years. Let us make a solid ball of electrons, extending in all directions from the earth to the distance of six billion light-years 6×10 to the 25th power times.

Suppose again that we had this great amount of electrons, 10 to the 157th power of them, and we were able to make 500 of these tremendous balls, six billion light-years in radius, each minute. If we worked day and night it would take us 10 to the 10th power times the 6 billion years back to creation to use up our supply of electrons. Now, one of these electrons was marked and thoroughly

stirred into the whole mass; blindfold your man and ask him to find the marked electron.

No man could in any way look over this mass of electrons, blindfolded or not blindfolded, and pick out any one electron, let alone the one that had been marked. (The electron, in fact, is so small that it cannot be seen with a powerful microscope.)

To the extent, then, that we know this blindfolded man cannot pick out the marked electron, we know that the Bible is inspired. This is not merely evidence. It is proof of the Bible's inspiration by God - proof so definite that the universe is not large enough to hold the evidence.

Some will say that our estimates of the probability of the fulfillment of these prophecies are too large and the numbers should be reduced. Ask a man to submit his own estimates, and if they are smaller than these we have used, we shall add a few more prophecies to be evaluated and this same number will be reestablished or perhaps exceeded.

Our Bible students claim that there are more than three hundred prophecies dealing with Christ's first advent. If this number is correct, and it no doubt is, you could set your estimates ridiculously low on the whole three hundred prophecies and still obtain tremendous evidence of the inspiration.

For example you may place all of your estimates at one in four. You may say that one man in four has been born in Bethlehem; that one of these children in four was taken to Egypt, to avoid slaughter; that one in four of these came back and made his home in Nazareth; that one in four of these was a carpenter; that one in four of these was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver; that one in four of these has been crucified on a cross; that one in four was then buried in a rich man's tomb; yes, even that one in four rises from the dead on the third day; and so on for all of the three hundred prophecies and from them I will build a number much larger than the one we obtained from the forty-eight prophecies.

Any man who rejects Jesus Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world.

