"Prove It!"
(Using the OT Prophecies to Show Jesus is the Son of God)
Part 3 of 5

I. Why Should These Lessons Matter to Us?

a. Estimated 7.1 billion people in the world today (May 2012). About 2/3 do not believe Jesus is the Son of God.

b. Unbelievers include 1.5 B Muslims, 1.5 B Hindus, 1.7 B Buddhist of various types, 1.1 B non-religious, 14 million Jews, and many others. How to convince them?

   i. Estimated numbers of religious adherents drawn from multiple sources, including "The Global Religious Landscape", Pew Forum, December 12, 2012. Note that number of Buddhists is especially hard to estimate, ranging from 350 million up to 1.7 B if including non-practicing 'natural Buddhists' and Chinese who practice multiple eastern religions; rationale for higher estimates available at TheDhamma.com or other Buddhist-oriented websites.

c. Carl Sagan, noted 20th century astronomer and outspoken unbeliever once said, "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence." An 'amen' to that!

d. Two sources of "extraordinary evidence" for faith in Jesus:

   i. Eyewitness accounts; and

   ii. Prophecies fulfilled.

II. Review of the Prior Lesson

a. It showed that Jesus fulfilled prophecies about coming of the Christ, the son of David who would be king over the eternal kingdom.

b. That lesson drew widely varied responses:

   i. Some really liked it.

   ii. Many others were overwhelmed by so much material!

   iii. One response: "I couldn't get it all, but please don't hold back anything, since I can always review the notes."

c. My own thoughts:

   i. Yes, that was a hard lesson for many to digest. The remaining classes should be much easier to follow!

   ii. We have very diverse class (from MIT PhD's to those who can barely read; from newcomers to those who have been studying Bible daily for decades)

iii. Not everyone will get everything. That is OK. However, everyone should get something; all should learn and grow.

iv. Everyone can take away the core teachings of that lesson:

1. Promise made to David 1000 years before the birth of Jesus, in **2 Samuel 7:11-16**, is a key prophecy. That promise was repeated many times in the OT and NT.

a. Future son of David would become king over a kingdom that would last forever.

b. He would be called the son of God and would build the temple.

2. The king would be the Anointed One (= Messiah = Christ).

3. There were many other OT prophecies about this future king. All were fulfilled in Jesus.

4. My personal hope: many will discover that *all* the OT is important. Treasures are hidden in unlikely places like Kings, Chronicles and the Minor Prophets. (**2 Timothy 3:14-17**, **1 Peter 1:10-12**, **Romans 15:4**)

a. Justin Martyr, a second century Christian, said to Trypho, a Jew: "These words have neither been prepared by me nor embellished by the art of man; but David sung them, Isaiah preached them, Zechariah proclaimed them, and Moses wrote them. Are you acquainted with them, Trypho? They are contained in your Scriptures, or rather not yours, but *ours*." (*Dialogue with Trypho,* Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, p.209)

v. Please review handout notes from last class. Also, I have a more streamlined study based on about 8 Scripture verses. You may want to use that for studying with others.

III. Three Foundational Lessons from the Old Testament Prophecies

a. Christ, the king is coming (<u>previous lesson</u>)

i. Expected by all the Jews in Jesus' time: his disciples, John the Baptist, Herod, the Pharisees, religious leaders; even by the children.

ii. Expected by the Samaritan woman at the well (**John 4:25**).

b. The Christ would suffer and die on the cross (focus of <u>this lesson</u>)

i. Not understood by anyone before Jesus' death, not even by his own disciples.

c. The Christ would rise from the dead on the third day (<u>next lesson</u>)

i. Even Jesus' own disciples did not anticipate that.

IV. Did the Christ Really have to Suffer and Die?

a. After his resurrection, Jesus explained that the suffering and death of the Christ was foretold.

i. **Luke 24:13-27** "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things?"

ii. **Luke 24:44-47** "This is what is written: 'The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day'."

b. Paul said it was part of the core gospel message.

i. **1 Corinthians 15:3** "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

c. Before his death, Jesus also tried to explain it to his disciples.

i. **Luke 22:34-37** It "must be fulfilled" (quoting **Isaiah 53**).

V. Two Groups have a Problem with the Christ being Crucified

a. Jews: How could the Messiah have been killed? By us?

i. In **1 Corinthians 1:22-24** Paul says that the Christ crucified is "a stumbling block to the Jews"

ii. Trypho, a Jew, tells Justin: "Be assured that all our nation waits for Christ…but whether Christ should be so shamefully crucified, this we are in doubt about….but prove to us (by the Scriptures) that whether he must be crucified and die so disgracefully and so dishonorably by the death cursed by the law. For we cannot bring ourselves even to think of this." (ANF vol.1, p.244)

b. Muslims: It didn't really happen; it only appeared that way.

i. Muslims believe that Jesus was the Christ; that he lived, ascended to heaven and will come again. However, they do NOT believe he was killed on the cross (nor raised from the dead).

ii. "That they said in boast, 'We killed Christ Jesus (Isa) the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah'—but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not—nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise." (Qur'an, 4:157-158)

iii. So the eyewitnesses in Jerusalem say Jesus was killed on the cross; Muhammad, living 600 years later, says otherwise!

VI. Four Prophecies about the Suffering and Crucifixion of the Christ

a. The Bronze Serpent (**Numbers 21**)

i. **Numbers 21:4-9**

1. Bronze snake is lifted up on a pole, for all to see.

2. All who look to it live; those who refuse to will die because of their sins.

3. But something very odd about this story!

a. God specifically told the Jews to *never make an idol* cast in the form of anything on earth, including "any creature that moves along the ground". (**Deuteronomy 4:15-19**)

b. In fact, they *did* end up in the sin of idolatry with this bronze snake, until Hezekiah broke it into pieces. (**2 Kings 18:4**)

ii. **John 3:14-16** Jesus says, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be <u>lifted up</u>."

1. He continues along the same lines in **John 12:32-34**, "'If I am <u>lifted up</u> from the earth, I will draw all peoples to myself.' This he said, signifying by what death He would die. "

2. Similar also to **John 8:28**, "When you <u>lift up</u> the Son of Man".

iii. Tertullian (Christian writer from Carthage, c. 160-225) commented on this story: "Why… did Moses, after the prohibition of any 'likeness of anything', set forth a brazen serpent, placing it on a 'tree', in a hanging posture, for a spectacle of healing to Israel, at the time when, after their idolatry, they were suffering extermination by serpents, except that in this case he was exhibiting the Lord's *cross* on which the 'serpent', the devil, was 'made a show of'….For he who then gazed upon that (cross) was freed from the bite of the serpents." (ANF v.3, p.166)

1. Note the similarity to what Paul says in **Colossians 2:13-15**, that Christ "made a public spectacle" of his enemies, "triumphing over them by the cross".

b. The Passover Lamb (**Exodus 12**)

i. **1 Corinthians 5:6-8** "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

ii. **1 Peter 1:18-19** You were redeemed, "with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect".

iii. **Exodus 12:1-15**; **v. 21-23**; **v. 43-47**

1. Male selected, without defect
2. Sacrificed at twilight on eve of the Passover
3. Blood of the lamb saves from the destroyer
4. Cannot break bones of the lamb
5. Remove all yeast from the house (representing sin) after the lamb is sacrificed

c. The Suffering Servant (**Isaiah 53**)

i. **Acts 8:32-35** Ethiopian was reading this passage from Isaiah.

ii. **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

1. Despised and rejected by men
1. Pierced for our transgressions
2. Man of suffering
3. Punishment that brought us peace was upon him
4. Led like a lamb to the slaughter
5. Did not open his mouth
6. Numbered with the transgressors
7. Killed, "cut off from the land of the living"
8. Assigned a grave with the rich
9. Bore the sin of many; made intercession for the transgressors

d. The Psalm about the Crucifixion **(Psalm 22)**

i. Elements of prophecy in this psalm

1. Begins, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"; among the last words of Jesus on the cross. (**Matthew 27:45-46** and **Mark 15:33-34**).
2. Mocked and insulted by the people
3. "He trusts in the Lord…let Him deliver him." (same said by Jesus in **Matthew 27:43**)
4. Surrounded by strong enemies
5. Extreme suffering described

a. "Poured out like water"

b. "All my bones out of joint"

c. "They have pierced my hands and my feet"

6. "They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."

ii. Justin Martyr, after recounting the details of this prophecy said to Trypho, a Jew, "no one in your nation who has been called King or Christ has ever had his hands or feet pierced while alive, or has died in this mysterious fashion – to wit, by the cross – save this Jesus alone." (ANF v.1. p.247-8; similar to Tertullian in ANF v.3, p.166)

VII. Other Shadows of the Cross Seen by Early Christians

a. For some examples of how early Christians saw the cross in the OT, see: ANF v.1, p.242-246 (Justin Martyr); v.3, p. 164-167 (Tertullian); v.5, p.524-525 (Cyprian).

b. **Exodus 17:8-13** Moses and Joshua defeat the Amalekites

i. **Read Exodus 17:10-13**. Joshua (name = Jesus) able to defeat the enemies of Israel only while Moses' hands held up.

ii. Aaron and Hur on each side, holding up his hands all day, until sunset, to gain the victory.

iii. Don't forget to read the preceding verse, **Exodus 17:9**. Moses had the staff of God in his hands (therefore making the form of a cross, with one man on each side!

iv. Tertullian asks the Jews why Moses prayed in that strange position instead of, "by knees bended, and hands beating his breast and face prostrate on the ground; except that…the *figure of the cross* was also necessary, through which Jesus was to win the victory". (ANF v. 3 p.165-6; similar to Justin in ANF v.1, p.244-254)

c. **Genesis 22:1-18** Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac.

i. Father to sacrifice "your only son, whom you love".

ii. The wood is placed on his son, who carries it to the place of sacrifice.

iii. Son is received (figuratively, for Abraham) back from death (consider **Hebrews 11:19**).

iv. From this sacrifice comes the promise of many descendants.

v. Tertullian said, "Isaac, when led by his father as a victim, and himself bearing his own 'wood', was even at that early period pointing to Christ's death;

conceded, as He was, as a victim by the Father; carrying, as He did, the 'wood' of his own passion." (ANF v.3, p.165)

d. **Isaiah 9:6** "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his *shoulders.*"

   i. Tertullian remarks that kings bear the sign of their power on their heads (crown) or in a staff or royal vestments. He asks, "What king in the world wears the ensign of his power on his shoulder?" "…The 'king of ages', Christ Jesus, alone reared 'on his shoulder' his own novel glory, power and sublimity – the cross." (ANF v.3, p.166)

e. **Isaiah 65:2** "All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people." (also quoted by Paul in **Romans 10:21**)

   i. Jesus' hands were outstretched all day long on the cross.

f. **Genesis 6-8** Even Noah's ark!

   i. "For Christ, being the first-born of every creature, became again the chief of another race regenerated through himself through water, and faith and wood, containing the mystery of the cross; even as Noah was saved by wood when he rode over the waters with his household." (Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, ANF v.1, p.268)

      1. Note the similarity to how Peter sees the Flood symbolizing Christian baptism (**1 Peter 3:20-21)**.

g. **More 'Water + Wood' Foreshadowings from Justin.** Justin pointed out the significance of other 'water + wood' miracles in the OT and ties them to the cross: "even as our Christ, by being crucified on a tree and by purifying us with water, has redeemed us…" Examples Justin cited where the wood brought about a change in the water (ANF vol.1, p.242):

   i. Jacob put peeled branches into water troughs, changed the appearance of the sheep. (**Genesis 30:37-43**)

   ii. Moses raised his staff, parted the Red Sea. (**Exodus 14:16**)

   iii. Moses cast wood into the bitter water of Marah; water became fit to drink. (**Exodus 15:25**)

   iv. Moses brought water from the rock with his staff. (**Exodus 17:5-7**)

   v. Elisha cast wood into the Jordan River; made the lost iron axe head float. (**2 Kings 6:5-7**)

VIII. Conclusion – The Christ Had to Suffer and Die on the Cross

a. It was all prophesied in detail 1500, 1000, 800, etc. years beforehand, by the Jewish prophets. Review the prophecies above, then read the 4 gospel accounts, and see for yourself.

i. He was rejected by his own people.

ii. He was the selected male lamb, without defect.

iii. The rulers conspired against him.

iv. He was mocked and insulted.

v. He carried the wood to place of his sacrifice.

vi. He did not resist nor complain.

vii. His hands and feet were pierced, by nails.

viii. They cast lots for his clothing.

ix. He was lifted up on the wood, as a spectacle.

x. He was surrounded by his strong enemies.

xi. His arms were outstretched all day long.

xii. The unique sign of his rule was on his shoulders.

xiii. His shed blood protects us from destruction.

xiv. He was sacrificed at twilight, at the Passover.

xv. He was crucified between two other men.

xvi. He was hanging painfully, with all his bones out of joint.

xvii. None of his bones were broken.

xviii. The father was willing to sacrifice his beloved, only son.

xix. He was assigned a grave with the rich.

xx. After his sacrifice, we are called to get rid of the yeast of sin.

xxi. Only by looking to the cross can we be saved from the deadly poison of the serpent's bite.