

## The Messiah in the Hebrew-Aramaic Scriptures

Unlike the RCC and LDS churches, there is little that we need to quote from regarding the doctrines of the Watchtower. We have already seen that they teach that Jesus is not God, but a man who was a created spirit being who became a man, lived a sinless life, atoned for Adam's sin on the cross, then was resurrected as a spirit being. These statements of the JW doctrine will not be disputed by any JW. As we proceed into the doctrine, however, things get a bit interesting.

JW's will not consider our KJV, NIV, NASB or other modern translations to be valid for presenting just who Christ is. We may argue issues of translation, but as with any debate, unless we are truly Biblical language scholars, we will not be successful, since the issues are quite technical in many places. Even if we "win" the argument, we lose the war, because when we attack the New World Translation, we attack the JW himself. We will be far better off to use the NWT to do our exposition. When we prepare in this way, we will show the JW that even his Bible teaches the same thing ours does. He will then begin to question what he has been taught without us attacking his church. One side effect of this approach is that many of our favorite texts will either be unusable or will take on very strange phraseology. This is a direct result of the fact that the NWT has been prepared with the express purpose of making it support JW theology.

The first step is to determine just who the Messiah was prophesied to be in the OT. Due to the differences between the NWT and other translations, we will include the NWT texts inline in our discussion. Please excuse the lengthy quotations that this will require.

### 1. What offices does the Psalmist identify for the Messiah in Psalm 110?

1 The utterance of Jehovah to my Lord is:

Sit at my right hand

Until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet.

2 The rod of your strength Jehovah will send out of Zion, [saying:] Go subduing in the midst of your enemies.

3 Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your military force.

In the splendors of holiness, from the womb of the dawn,

You have your company of young men just like dewdrops.

4 Jehovah has sworn (and he will feel no regret):

You are a priest to time indefinite

According to the manner of Mel-chiz'e-dek!

### 2. What offices did Melchizedek hold?

18 And Mel-chiz'e-dek king of Sa'lem brought out bread and wine, and he was priest of Most High God.

19 Then he blessed him and said:

Blessed be A'bram of the Most High God,

Producer of heaven and earth;

20 And blessed be the Most High God,

Who has delivered your oppressors into your hand.

At that A'bram gave him a tenth of everything. (Gen 14:18-20)

### 3. Who else holds this office?

19 This [hope] we have as an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm, and it enters in within the curtain, 20 where a forerunner has entered in our behalf, Jesus, who has become a high priest according to the manner of Mel-chiz'e-dek forever.

1 For this Mel-chiz'e-dek, king of Sa'lem, priest of Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him 2 and to whom Abraham apportioned a tenth from all things, is first of all, by translation, "King of Righteousness" and is then also king of Sa'lem, that is, "King of Peace." 3 In being fatherless, motherless, without genealogy, having neither a beginning of days nor an end of life, but having been made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

4 Behold, then, how great this man was to whom Abraham, the family head, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils. 5 True, the men from the sons of Le'vi who receive their priestly office have a commandment to collect tithes from the people according to the Law, that is, from their brothers, even if these have issued from the loins of Abraham; 6 but the man who did not trace his genealogy from them took tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 Now without any dispute, the less is blessed by the greater. 8 And in the one case it is men who are dying that receive tithes, but in the other case it is someone of the whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9 And, if I may use the expression, through Abraham even Le'vi who receives tithes has paid tithes, 10 for he was still in the loins of his forefather when Mel-chiz'e-dek met him.

11 If then, perfection were really through the Levitical priesthood, (for with it as a feature the people were given the Law,) what further need would there be for another priest to arise according to the manner of Mel-chiz'e-dek and not said to be according to the manner of Aaron? 12 For since the priesthood is being changed, there comes to be of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For the man respecting whom these things are said has been a member of another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is quite plain that our Lord has sprung up out of Judah, a tribe about which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

15 And it is still more abundantly clear that with a similarity to Mel-chiz'e-dek there arises another priest, 16 who has become such, not according to the law of commandment depending on the flesh, but according to the power of an indestructible life, 17 for in witness it is said: you are a priest forever according to the manner of Mel-chiz'e-dek.

Certainly, then, there occurs a setting aside of the preceding commandment on account of its weakness. 19 For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in besides of a better hope did, through which we are drawing near to God. 20 Also, to the extent that it was not without a sworn oath, 21 (for there are indeed men that have become priests without a sworn oath, but there is one with an oath sworn by the One who said respecting him: "Jehovah has sworn (and he will feel no regret), You are a priest forever,") 22 to that extent also Jesus has become the one given in pledge of a better covenant. 23 Furthermore, many had to become priests [in succession] because of being prevented by death from continuing as such, 24 but he because of continuing alive forever has his priesthood without any successors. (Heb 6:19-7:24)

4. In verse 3, we find that Melchizedek has no beginning and no end, but remains a priest forever. This priestly status is also identified for Jesus in verses 16, 17, 21, and 24. Who are the possible persons who might qualify as Melchizedek? (3)

5. What single person is identified in the Bible as having no beginning or end? (see verse 3)

13 Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel

From time indefinite even to time indefinite.

Amen and Amen. (Psalm 41:13)

6. What single person can rightly take on the names of "King of Righteousness" and "King of Peace"? (v. 2, see also Q10)

7. Is there any hint in scripture of Melchizedek existing on earth either before or after Abraham?

8. JW's state that Jesus is a created being, who therefore has a beginning, which denies that he could be Melchizedek. If God the Father is the only one of the three persons we are considering who could possibly be Melchizedek, how can John say the following?

18 No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten god who is in the bosom [position] with the Father is the one that has explained him. (John 1:18)

9. The issue of the time of origin of Jesus is addressed in Micah 5:2

2 And you, O Beth'le-hem Eph'ra-thah, the one too little to get to be among the thousands of Judah, from you there will come out to me the one who is to become ruler in Israel, whose origin is from early times, from the days of time indefinite.

This translation is obviously different than conventional translations. However, even here the language indicates the time of origin of Jesus. When does this text indicate that Jesus "began", and does this indicate whether he was a created being?

10. Who does Isaiah say that the Messiah would be? (Note: Jehovah is the name reserved to God the Father in JW theology.)

6 For there has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us, and the princely rule shall come to be upon his shoulder, And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Is 9:6

20 And it will certainly occur in that day that those who have escaped of the house of Jacob will never again support themselves upon the one striking them, and they will certainly support themselves upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in trueness. 21 A mere remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God. Is 10:20-21

Another area to look at in prophecy of the Messiah is that of judgment. As a way of illustrating the difficulties of dealing with JW's, we will take a brief side trip into translation. One of the key prophecies of the Messiah as judge is Psalm 72:1-2. To demonstrate the differences between JW and conventional translation, we will place the NWT and NASB side by side.

NWT	NASB
<p>1 O God, give your judicial decisions to the king, and your righteousness to the son of the king. 2 May he plead the cause of your people with righteousness and of your afflicted ones with judicial decision.</p>	<p>1 A Psalm of Solomon. Give the king Thy judgments, O God, And Thy righteousness to the king's son. 2 May he judge Thy people with righteousness, And Thine afflicted with justice.</p>

Verse 2 changes the entire thrust of the prophecy from judgment to advocacy. This is contrary to the intent of the original Hebrew, and removes a text which should be used to demonstrate the true nature of the Messiah from our armamentarium.

11. Who office(s) Isaiah say the Messiah will have?

1 And there must go forth a twig out of the stump of Jes'se; and out of his roots a sprout will be fruitful. 2 And upon him the spirit of Jehovah must settle down, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of mightiness, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah; 3 and there will be enjoyment by him in the fear of Jehovah.

And he will not judge by any mere appearance to his eyes, nor reprove simply according to the thing heard by his ears. 4 And with righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, and with uprightness he must give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth. And he must strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the spirit of his lips he will put the wicked one to death. (Is11:1-4)

12. Who is to be the judge at the end of time?

7 As for Jehovah, he will sit to time indefinite,

Firmly establishing his throne for judgment itself.

8 And he himself will judge the productive land in righteousness;

He will judicially try the national groups in uprightness. (Psalm 9:7-8)

12 Let the open field exult and all that is in it.  
At the same time let all the trees of the forest break out joyfully  
13 Before Jehovah. For he has come;  
For he has come to judge the earth.  
He will judge the productive land with righteousness  
And the peoples with his faithfulness. (Psalm 96:12-13)

17 Furthermore, if YOU are calling upon the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, conduct yourself with fear during the time of YOUR alien residence. (1 Peter 1:17)

7 And I heard the altar say: "Yes, Jehovah God, the Almighty, true and righteous are your judicial decisions." (Rev 16:7)

1 After these things I heard what was as a loud voice of a great crowd in heaven. They said: "Praise Jah, YOU people! The salvation and the glory and the power belong to our God, 2 because his judgments are true and righteous. For he has executed judgment upon the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he has avenged the blood of his slaves at her hand." (Rev 19:1-2)

13. Who is to be the judge at the end of time?

40 God raised this One up on the third day and granted him to become manifest, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses appointed beforehand by God, to us, who ate and drank with him after his rising from the dead. 42 Also, he ordered us to preach to the people and to give us a thorough witness that this is the One decreed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. (Acts 10:40-42)

10 For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may get his award for the things done through the body, according to the things he has practiced, whether it is good or vile. (2 Cor 5:10)

22 For the Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son, (John 5:22)

14. Who is to be the judge at the end of time?

15. Based on the passages we have reviewed, is there any logically consistent answer as to the identity of Jesus?