

SHADOWS OF THE COMING KING | DR. RANDY WHITE
SESSION 3: THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE MESSIAH

In this session, our objective is to illuminate the expected divine and human qualities of the Messiah by using prophecies found in the Hebrew scriptures. In Chapter 1, we discovered that these scriptures prophecy of a coming Deliverer. Chapter 2 narrowed these prophecies down to show the lineage and birthplace of this Deliverer. Now, we want to delve deeper, looking specifically at the nature and behavioral/character traits we should look for in the prophesied One.

PSALM 2

Psalm 2 gives us several prophecies about the coming Messiah, beginning with verse 2:

THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SET THEMSELVES, AND THE RULERS TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER, AGAINST THE LORD, AND AGAINST HIS ANOINTED... (PS. 2:2)

The LORD (Yahweh/Jehovah) is distinct from "his anointed" or the Messiah in this passage. The word "anointed" comes from the Hebrew **מָשִׁיחַ** [mashiyach], used as Messiah in Daniel 9:25-26. This term appears 36 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, often designated as "Lord's anointed" or "mine anointed".

Verse 2 is beneficial as it clearly identifies this Psalm as Messianic, which aids in interpreting the remainder of the chapter.

LET US BREAK THEIR BANDS ASUNDER, AND CAST AWAY THEIR CORDS FROM US. (PS. 2:3)

This verse uses "their", referring to the LORD and the Messiah, indicating their close partnership. Those against the Messiah oppose God too. The verse doesn't introduce Trinitarian indications found later in the text. It mainly reveals a unified attack against the Lord and His Anointed.

YET HAVE I SET MY KING UPON MY HOLY HILL OF ZION. (PS. 2:6)

In the Psalm, verse 6 reveals a declaration from the Lord, implying a connection between the "anointed" and "my king". This supports the messianic interpretation and emphasizes the prophesied Messiah's kingly nature. This perspective is vital, as overlooking it limits our understanding of Hebrew prophecy.

Many Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah because He wasn't a king in Jerusalem during His lifetime. This valid concern requires us to examine if the prophecies possibly suggest a first and second coming of the Messiah, characterized by initial rejection and later establishment as King.

I WILL DECLARE THE DECREE: THE LORD HATH SAID UNTO ME, THOU ART MY SON; THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE. (PS. 2:7)

The Psalm's speaker changes from the LORD in verse 6 to the King in verse 7, declaring the LORD's decree, "Thou art my Son." This suggests the Messiah is someone publicly acknowledged as God's Son. The phrase, "This day I have begotten thee," points to a specific day, possibly referring to the resurrection, as indicated in Acts 13:33 and Romans 1:3-4. The term "begotten," while usually suggesting birth, here is a figure of speech, a form of **ANTHROPOPATHEIA** where God emotionally claims, "That's my boy!" The baptism pronounces, "Thou art My Son," and the resurrection communicates, "today I have begotten thee."

ASK OF ME, AND I SHALL GIVE thee THE HEATHEN for THINE INHERITANCE, AND THE UTMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH for THY POSSESSION. (PS. 2:8)

In verse 8, the voice appears to transition back to that of the Lord (i.e., the Father), who offers the Son an open invitation to "Ask" and receive His inheritance, encompassing all nations and the entire earth. Considering this chronologically, the sequence is the declaration of sonship (v. 6), followed by the affirmation of the resurrection (v. 6), followed by the offer of kingship (v. 7).

THOU SHALT BREAK THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON; THOU SHALT DASH THEM IN PIECES LIKE A POTTER'S VESSEL. (PS. 2:9)

The Lord ends his dialog with the Son, outlining the power of the Messianic kingship. Two common misinterpretations often occur when interpreting this Psalm. The Jews mistakenly look for all events to happen at once, rejecting Jesus as he did not claim to be a benevolent, all-encompassing King.

Conversely, many Christians prematurely assert Jesus is reigning, partially fulfilling the unfulfilled prophecies of verses 8 and 9. The "already/not yet" view of evangelicalism, a mix of premillennialism and amillennialism, proposes the church must advance the kingdom. It would be more beneficial for evangelicalism to realize the kingdom will not be established until the Messiah asks of the Father.

PSALM 110:4

THE LORD HATH SWORN, AND WILL NOT REPENT, THOU ART A PRIEST FOR EVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.

Psalm 110:4 reveals the Messiah as not just a king, but also a "priest forever after the order of Melchizedek," a figure who was both a king and a priest. This expands the Messiah's role beyond what was previously understood.

Hebrews 6:20 confirms Jesus as this high priest, entering into the Holy of Holies, a display of priestly status. Anointed at his baptism and having entered the Holy of Holies, Jesus is currently a priest and will be both priest and king in the future.

Zechariah 6:13 highlights that the Messiah will build the temple, rule on his throne, and be a priest on his throne, indicating that no Messianic figure without priestly credentials can fulfill this prophecy.

ZECHARIAH 9:9

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 AN ASS, AND UPON A COLT THE FOAL OF AN ASS.

The prophecy of the Lord's journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem began in Micah 5:2 and concludes with His arrival as King on a young donkey, signifying specific prophetic fulfillment.

Three key attributes of the King are particularly notable. First, He is "just," embodying God's standards of justice, morality, and ethical behavior. This is exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth, who is widely recognized as just, even indirectly by His adversaries.

Second, the Messiah is described as "having salvation," a phrase which can be translated as saving Himself or being saved by another. This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus, post triumphal entry, was resurrected.

The third attribute is "lowly," a term implying humility or affliction, often used to describe those in need of justice and mercy.

These criteria strongly indicate Jesus' identity as the Messiah.

ISAIAH 11:1-5

AND THERE SHALL COME FORTH A ROD OUT OF THE STEM OF JESSE, AND A BRANCH SHALL GROW OUT OF HIS ROOTS: AND THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL REST UPON HIM, THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING, THE SPIRIT OF COUNSEL AND MIGHT, THE SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD; AND SHALL MAKE HIM OF QUICK UNDERSTANDING IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD: AND HE SHALL NOT JUDGE AFTER THE SIGHT OF HIS EYES, NEITHER REPROVE AFTER THE HEARING OF HIS EARS: BUT WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL HE JUDGE THE POOR, AND REPROVE WITH EQUITY FOR THE MEEK OF THE EARTH: AND

HE SHALL SMITE THE EARTH WITH THE ROD OF HIS MOUTH, AND WITH THE BREATH OF HIS LIPS SHALL HE SLAY THE WICKED. AND RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL BE THE GIRDLE OF HIS LOINS, AND FAITHFULNESS THE GIRDLE OF HIS REINS.

The list of Messianic attributes in this passage is astounding.

- **Origin:** Emerges from the lineage of Jesse, signifying a Davidic descent and royal heritage.
- **Empowered by the Spirit of the LORD:** Indicating divine anointment and support for His mission.
- **Wisdom and Understanding:** He will possess deep insight and the ability to comprehend complex matters.
- **Counsel and Might:** He will offer guidance and possess great strength, both morally and in leadership.
- **Knowledge and the Fear of the LORD:** Demonstrates a profound understanding of God's ways and a reverent submission to God.
- **Quick Understanding in the Fear of the LORD:** Shows an immediate and intuitive grasp of what it means to live in awe and respect of God.
- **Righteous Judgment:** He will not judge by appearances or hearsay but will make decisions based on truth and righteousness.
- **Advocate for the Poor and Meek:** He will judge and defend the poor and the meek with fairness.
- **Power over the Wicked:** He will defeat wickedness with His words ("the rod of His mouth") and the truth ("the breath of His lips").
- **Righteousness and Faithfulness:** These qualities will be central to His character, guiding all His actions and decisions.

Jesus not only applied this passage to Himself in Luke 4:16-21, but each of the ten prophesied characteristics can also be found to be true of Jesus, as supported by the New Testament.

Attribute	New Testament Fulfillment
Origin: Emerges from the lineage of Jesse, signifying a Davidic descent and royal heritage.	Matthew 1:1-16, Luke 3:23-38 (Genealogies of Jesus, showing His descent from David)
Empowered by the Spirit of the LORD: Indicating divine anointment and support for His mission.	Matthew 3:16-17, Luke 4:1 (Jesus' baptism, where the Holy Spirit descends upon Him and God affirms His sonship)
Wisdom and Understanding: He will possess deep insight and the ability to comprehend complex matters.	Luke 2:47 (The boy Jesus in the temple, amazing teachers with His understanding), John 8:3-11 (Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery)
Counsel and Might: He will offer guidance and possess great strength, both morally and in leadership.	Mark 6:34 (Jesus teaches the crowd because He had compassion on them), Matthew 8:26-27 (Jesus calms the storm, demonstrating His might)
Knowledge and the Fear of the LORD: Demonstrates a profound understanding of God's ways and a reverent submission to God.	John 8:28-29 (Jesus speaks of doing only what He sees the Father doing), Luke 22:42 (Jesus submits to God's will in Gethsemane)
Quick Understanding in the Fear of the LORD: Shows an immediate and intuitive grasp of what it means to live in awe and respect of God.	Mark 12:14-17 (Jesus' discerning reply to the question about paying taxes to Caesar)

Attribute	New Testament Fulfillment
Righteous Judgment: He will not judge by appearances or hearsay but will make decisions based on truth and righteousness.	John 7:24 (Jesus instructs to judge not according to the appearance but judge righteous judgment)
Advocate for the Poor and Meek: He will judge and defend the poor and the meek with fairness.	Matthew 5:3-10 (Beatitudes, blessings for the poor in spirit and meek), Luke 14:12-14 (Jesus teaches to invite the poor, maimed, lame, and blind)
Power over the Wicked: He will defeat wickedness with His words ("the rod of His mouth") and the truth ("the breath of His lips").	Matthew 23 (Jesus denounces the hypocrisy of the Pharisees), John 18:37 (Jesus declares His kingship and mission to testify to the truth)
Righteousness and Faithfulness: These qualities will be central to His character, guiding all His actions and decisions.	2 Corinthians 5:21 (Jesus is described as sinless, made to be sin for us), Hebrews 3:1-2 (Jesus is faithful to Him who appointed Him)

A CLOSING PLEA

The scriptures detail the Messiah's characteristics, pointing to Jesus of Nazareth. They depict a Messiah who is a king, priest, advocate for the poor, righteous, faithful, and divinely anointed, descending from King David.

Christians should confirm the New Testament's trustworthiness, affirming our faith's foundation. It's a historical document recording Jesus Christ's life, teachings, death, and resurrection. Its authenticity affects our understanding of Jesus and His accomplishments, so we should engage in scholarly dialogue about its trustworthiness.

If the New Testament is reliable, it convincingly points to Jesus being the fulfillment of the Hebrew prophecies. This truth impacts every aspect of our lives. Christians need to articulate and defend this truth respectfully.

It's challenging to convince someone that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament prophecies if they doubt the New Testament's veracity. We should focus on supporting its reliability, demonstrating its historical accuracy, consistency, and compelling accounts.

Often Christians struggle to defend the New Testament. The field of textual criticism has led to many changes in the New Testament text leading to confusion. An example is the Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament, revised multiple times and succeeded by the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, now in its 29th edition.

As believers, we need to understand and defend the New Testament's accuracy and reliability. This constant revision presents a significant problem for those seeking to maintain the New Testament's integrity.

The modern era has seen many English translations, leading to varying interpretations of the text. An example is the evolution of the American Standard Version (ASV) to the New American Standard Bible (NASB), which has undergone several revisions.

Christians should delve deeper into scriptures understanding their origins, revisions, and variations. This equips us to discern the truth and defend the New Testament and its proclamation of Jesus as the prophesied Messiah.

To provide solid evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, we need to prove the New Testament's reliability, a task still requiring much work.