

MJ Debate Responses

OT VERSES

Genesis 1:1 - Elohim (plural persons?)

1. Kohlengberger/Mounce Hebrew Dictionary: “God (plural of majesty: plural in form but singular in meaning, with a focus on great power; gods (true grammatical plural); any person characterized by greatness or power: mighty one, great one.”
2. BDB - 1. Plural - 1a. Rulers, judges - 1b. Divine ones - 1c. Angels - 1d. gods. 2. Plural intensive singular meaning - 2a. god, goddess - 2b. godlike one - 2c. Works or special possessions of god - 2d. The true God - 2e. God.
3. It acts like our English words “sheep” or “deer.” You need surround verbs, adjectives, and pronouns to decide on whether the word is singular or plural. My sheep IS drinking water vs. My sheep ARE drinking water.
4. TDOT, v1, p277-278 “The form elohim occurs 2570 times in all, with both the plural (‘gods’) and the singular (‘a god,’ ‘God’) meaning. As a rule, verbs and adjectives used with elohim are either singular or plural in conformity with the meaning; there are only rare exceptions. Why the plural form for ‘God’ is used has not yet [1974] been explained satisfactorily. Perhaps the plural also or even originally designated not a plurality, but an intensification; then elohim would mean the ‘great,’ ‘highest,’ and finally ‘only’ God, i.e., God in general.”
5. NISBE, v2, p505 “This form has been called the ‘plural of majesty’ or the ‘intensive plural’ because it implies that all the fulness of deity is concentrated in the one God.”

Genesis 4:1 (alt. Reading = “I have gained a man, YHWH.” TS2009)

1. Most English trans. Read “from the Lord” (KJV, BBE, NKJV, Webst.) or “with the help of the Lord” (LEB; JPS; ESV; NASB). YLT & LSV = “by YHWH.”
2. NET (first fn.) “The particle ‘et is not the accusative/object sign, but the preposition ‘with’ as ancient versions [LXX; Vulgate] attest. Some take the preposition in the sense of ‘with the help of’ (see BDB 85 sv... NEB, NIV, NRSV), while others prefer ‘along with’ in the sense of ‘like/equally with, in common with’ (see Lev. 26:39; Isa. 45:9; Jer. 23:28). Either works well in this context.”
3. LXX = “I have acquired a man through God.”
4. NET (fn. cont.) “Some understand ‘et as the accusative sing and translate, ‘I have acquired a man - the LORD.’ They suggest that the woman thought (mistakenly) that she had given birth to the incarnate LORD the Messiah who would bruise the serpents head. This fanciful suggestion is based on a questionable, allegorical interpretation of Gen. 3:15 (see the note there on the word ‘heel’).
5. Why name the child “Cain” if Even really thought it was the LORD?

6. Sarna - "In Hebrew 'et YHWH; the sign of the accusative often has the sense of 'together with'... The role of God in human pro-creation is frequently acknowledged in the Bible. As Niddah 31a expresses it; 'There are three co-partners in the production of a human being: God, father, and mother.'"
7. Konig - "with the help of... The words will then express the thanksgiving of Eve on her safe deliverance of a child."

Isaiah 9:6 "Mighty God, Eternal Father" (Never quoted in NT as applied to Yeshua.)

1. Trinitarians will argue vociferously that Jesus is NOT the Father, yet accept "Mighty God"
2. Oneness acknowledge both Father and God here equally (consistent)
3. Historical Context = King Hezekiah (Strength of Yah); [Jewish translations = "a child HAS BEEN born, a son HAS BEEN given"]; Mighty God could mean the king represents God on earth; Eternal Father could mean "may your reign be forever O king" + fatherly concern in governing nation.
4. Most likely THEOPHORIC (bearing the name of a god). The child is given names that express attributes of God. Example: Elijah "My God Yah" or Jehu "He is Yah"
5. Jewish Study Bible fn. "Semitic names often consist of sentences that describe God; thus the name Isaiah in Hebrew means 'the LORD saves'; Hezekiah 'the LORD strengthens'... These names do not describe that person who holds them but the god whom the parents worship. Similarly, the name given to the child in this v. does not describe that child or attribute divinity to him, but describes God's actions."

Isaiah 40:3 "Prepare the way of YHWH" (HCSB; Brenton LXX; ESV; LEB; WEB)

1. Historical: "Isa. 40:3, written originally to encourage Jews in Babylonian exile to return to Judea." (Jewish Annotated NT, Mt. 3:3). YHWH's presence had left but would return, and His way (obedience to Torah) would be restored.
2. Gospel writers (4) all use the verse to point to John the baptizer as "the voice in the wilderness" (authorial intent). No NT author used this text to teach Yeshua is YHWH.
3. Mt. 3:3 (quote) uses "way" and "paths" synonymously. WAY is the focus. John preached *repentance*; think of brush on an overgrown trail being cleared.
4. Yeshua (sinless) shows us the WAY of YHWH. He walked (1 Jon 2:6) in righteousness (cp. John 14:6 w/Psalm 119:1).
5. God visits through means: Ruth 1:6 (sending bread); Luke 7:16 (prophet arose).
6. Matthew doesn't do 1-to-1 quotes anyhow. Israel (Hos. 11:1) to Yeshua (Mt. 2:15), or Rachel (not there) weeping for Babylonian exiles (Jer. 31:15) to People (there) mourning for babies murdered by Herod (Mt. 2:17-18).

Isaiah 43:11 "I am YHWH, and there is no Savior but Me."

1. Context: trial of false gods; vs. 12 is key "I alone saved - not some foreign god."

2. Saviors (plural) in Scripture: yasha (Neh. 9:27 - saviors given; Othniel - Judges 3:9, YHWH was with the judge, Judges 2:18; Shamgar - Judges 3:31; Ehud - Judges 3:15-30.
3. No difference between physical and spiritual salvation - both are encompassed in these texts. When there is physical salvation it's for the purpose of spiritual betterment.
4. YHWH raised up YESHUA (vessel) to be a savior - Lk. 2:11; Acts 5:30-31; 13:23; 1 Jn. 4:14.
5. Acts 5:30-31 POWERFUL "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus... God exalted this man to His right hand as ruler and savior."

Isaiah 44:6 - is "His Redeemer" God the Son?

1. Jewish Study Bible "Thus said the LORD, the King of Israel, their Redeemer, the LORD of hosts."
2. "His" or "Their" is a reference back to Israel; YHWH is both King and Redeemer of Israel, 44:24; 41:14; 43:1.
3. GNB - "The LORD who rules and protects Israel, the LORD Almighty."
4. First and Last? Compare w/Rev. 2:8... shared titles does not mean shared person (or substance) - compare Mt. 5:14 w/Jn. 8:12 "light of the world."
5. Words like king, lord, god, etc. can/do have varying senses or degrees depending upon whom is being spoken about.

NT VERSES

John 1:1c - "the word was God"

1. Logos = Acts 6:5a "and the *saying* pleased" (proposal, HCSB); Eph. 6:19 "that utterance may be given" (message, HCSB)
2. Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26 "God said" - cp. Ps. 33:6, 9 "by the word of YHWH were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth... he spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."
3. Example: House plans in the mind of the carpenter; the final product shows the intellect of the carpenter. (How can a Dodge Caravan fit into the designers mind?)
4. John 1:1c is qualitative and adjectival (it's not the "ton Theon" of 1:1b).
5. God's spoken word (personified in OT) becomes a human being, 1:14.
6. Compare: we see God's wisdom become incarnate in human women in Prov. 31.

John 8:58 - "Before Abraham was, I am (he)."

1. You must add "he" due to the lack of the predicate noun; else "I am" what? (See John 6:20 "It is I" NASB)
2. Contextually: I am the light of the world (8:12); I am the Son of man (8:28)
3. John 4:26 = first use of "I am" in this Gospel = I am the Messiah.

4. I think it's best to understand that Yeshua was claiming to be the promised Messiah in the plan of Yahweh before Abraham existed. The Jews could have misunderstood him as claiming to be a pre-existent being or perhaps YHWH (Misunderstanding Motif = Nicodemus, Jn. 3 "born again"; certain Jews, Jn 6 "eat my flesh"; John 8:33 "We have never been enslaved to anyone" (physical) - Yeshua was speaking of spiritual slavery.
5. They could have gotten mad at him because of all he was saying; or, they could have stoned him because they didn't believe he was the promised Messiah but a spurious Messiah and thus false prophet. Whatever their reason - we don't take our cue from them.
6. "I am" in Ex. 3:14 is better "I will be" from Hebrew (see Ex. 3:12). Plus, the God identified in 3:15 (of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) can't be Jesus because of Acts 3:13.

Romans 9:5 - NRSV "...and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen."

1. It could either be reference Yeshua as God (immortal, divine, as opposed to "according to the flesh;" see Rom. 1:3-4) *or* a doxology to God the Father, *or* calling Messiah blessed of God.
2. NET fn (in part): Or "the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever," or "the Messiah. God who is over all be blessed forever!" or "the Messiah who is over all. God be blessed forever!" The translational difficulty here is not text-critical in nature, but is a problem of punctuation.
3. J. Schneider - "The much more probable explanation is that the statement is a doxology directed to God, stemming from Jewish tradition and adopted by Paul. Overwhelmed by God's dealings with Israel, Paul concludes with an ascription of praise to God. The translation would then read, "The one who is God over all be blessed for ever. Amen." or alternatively, "God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen." ("God" in The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, vol. 2, ed. Colin Brown, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976, p. 80)
4. R.S. Franks [Principle Emeritus, Western College in Bristol] - "It should be added that Rom. 9:5 cannot be adduced to prove that Paul ever thought of Christ as God. The state of the case is found in the R.V. margin...He [Paul] never leaves the ground of Jewish monotheism. It has been pointed out that Rom. 9:5 cannot be brought in to question this statement. On the contrary, God is spoken of by the Apostle as not only the Father, but also the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." (The Doctrine of the Trinity, Gerald Duckworth and Company, London, 1953 pp. 34-36)

Romans 10:9-10 - Does "Jesus is Lord" mean "Jesus is YHWH"?

1. Paul says that one must confess that "Yeshua is Lord" and believe in your heart that God (distinct from Yeshua) raised Yeshua from the dead.
2. Joel 2:32 is later cited by Paul (10:13) and some say this means Paul is calling Jesus YHWH in the phrase "Jesus is Lord."
3. It's often missed that Paul also cites Isaiah 28:16 from the LXX about the one believing upon Yeshua not being ashamed. Isaiah speaks of YHWH laying a cornerstone or precious stone, showing a distinction between YHWH and the stone.
4. The key is to realize that calling on the name YHWH includes doing what YHWH instructs you to do. In this case, he laid the stone (His son/servant), and you must not reject the stone

He laid. To confess Yeshua as Master (Acts 2:34-36; that YHWH made him Master) is to call on YHWH.

5. For direct texts in Romans on who Yeshua is: 1:3-4 “His Son; Son of God” / 1:9 “God’s Son” / 5:10 “reconciled to God by the death of His Son” / 8:3 “God sending His own Son.”

1 Corinthians 8:6 - Shema Re-Constructed?

1. The “one God” is identified as “the Father” in vs. 6. Paul does NOT say “one God, Father - Son - and Holy Spirit.
2. The “one Lord” here is Yeshua Messiah, but this one Lord is being *set alongside* the one God (resurrection and exaltation). This is the one whom God made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), a passage closely associated with Psalm 110:1 (quoted in Acts 2:34-35). There YHWH speaks to David’s Lord inviting him to sit at his right hand, which took place actually after Yeshua’s resurrection from the dead (Ephesians 1:20-23).
3. The word “kurios” in the Shema of Deut. 6:4 LXX is a circumlocution for YHWH, but there’s are other uses of kurios in the LXX that refer to human superiors (an ox’s owner - Ex. 21:28-29; the owner of a dug pit - Ex. 21:34; Abraham - Gen. 24:9).
4. The key here is reading vs. 6 in light of vs. 5 (LSV) “for even if there are those called gods, whether in Heaven, whether on earth - as there are many gods and many lords.” Paul acknowledges those called “gods” exist both in heaven and on earth, and then calls these gods “many gods” referring back to “in heaven,” and “many lords” referring back to “on earth.” Paul then says they have one heavenly God (YHWH) and one earthly, human Lord (Yeshua). He isn’t reinterpreting the Shema or splitting the Shema.

Jude 1:5 - Did Jesus lead the people out of Egypt?

1. Textual variant readings: Lord / God / God Christ / Jesus (Joshua) [Experts are divided; English translations differ; we shouldn’t base a doctrine on a disputed verse.]
2. Difficult readings are at times preferred, but not to the point of absurdity. No other NT author credits Jesus with the exodus; no NT author calls the “pre-incarnate Son” Jesus.
3. Every other occurrence in Jude = “Jesus Christ” (Vss. 1 [2x], 4, 17, 21, 25)
4. Jesus is the name of the human man from Nazareth - the human man from Nazareth didn’t lead the people out of Egypt.
5. Wasserman - “In sum, the external evidence [i.e. the array of surviving manuscripts] is divided and corruption occurred early on. The reading “Jesus” has the best manuscript support and is indeed a difficult reading to the point of impossibility. I find it very unlikely that this early Christian author would write the simple “Jesus” if he had the pre-existent Christ in mind, especially in light of his style, and of the whole context of vv. 5-7. The ambiguous “(the) lord” on the other hand, could explain all other readings, which may represent conscious alterations or else copying mistakes involving nomina sacra. Moreover, the typology Jesus-Joshua which became popular in the patristic era could have led a scribe to supply “Jesus.” I prefer the anarthrous form, “lord,” as original because of the weighty attestation of “Jesus” without the article.”

6. It's possible that Joshua (son of Nun) is to be understood here (same name in Greek): (1) that Joshua, a people out of the land of Egypt, having delivered [lit. Interlinear]; (2) he delivered the people into the promised land; (3) destroyed the majority of the Canaanites in genocide.

Revelation 1:8 - Is Jesus the Alpha and Omega?

1. It's the revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave him (1:1)
2. Verse 4 begins with Yahweh, then the seven spirits (probably arch-angels), then Jesus Christ.
3. Verse 6 shows Jesus made us a kingdom and priests to HIS God and Father. Just like he has a Father that he is not, he also has a God that he is not.
4. Verse 7 is still about Yeshua
5. Verse 8 goes back to verse 4 "who is, was, and is coming" - the Father is coming too in the Kingdom, not just Jesus. 4 and 8 are bookends.
6. Later, in 3:12, Jesus calls the Father "my God" 4x.

Yahweh Texts (Used of Yeshua)

- Precedent for applying "Yahweh Texts" to others is found in second Temple period Jewish literature.

1:: Hosea 5:14 is cited in 4Q167. The Hosea text ("For I am like a lion to Ephraim") is Yahweh talking of Himself (5:4, 6-7, 9, 10, 12, 15; 6:1-3). The 4Q167 text interprets the "I" as the last (eschatological) priest to strike Ephraim. The priest acts for Yahweh's judgment, but the authors of this Qumran text certainly did not believe this priest to actually be Yahweh.

2:: Isaiah 61:2 is cited in 11Q13. In Isaiah (61:1-3), it is the Spirit of Yahweh that is upon someone, to proclaim the year of Yahweh's favor. In 11Q13, it speaks of the time of the year of Melchizedek's favor, so there is a replacing of the Tetragrammaton with the name Melchizedek. Thus Melchizedek was seen by some as an authorized agent of Yahweh without him actually being the person of Yahweh.

There is actually Scriptural precedent prior to this, where something that is said of Yahweh is then said of the one Yahweh has authorized and empowered.

1:: Deuteronomy 31:3 has Moshe saying to the Israelites (LSV), "Your God YHWH—He is passing over before you; He destroys these nations from before you, and you have possessed them; Joshua—he is passing over before you, as YHWH has spoken." Joshua then represents Yahweh; when the Israelites saw Joshua (Moshe's successor) crossing over before them, it was a human depiction of Yahweh crossing over before them.

2:: In Joshua 1:13 Joshua says to Israel (HCSB) "Remember what Moshe Yahweh's servant commanded you when he said, 'Yahweh your God will give you rest, and He will give you this land.'" Yet in Joshua 1:14 he continues by saying, "Your wives, young children, and livestock

may remain in the land Moshe gave you on this side of the Jordan.” No one confuses Moshe with Yahweh; they recognize that Yahweh spoke through or by Moshe. (Also see a NT comparison where the name Moses is used interchangeably with God - Mt. 15:4 “For God said: Honor your father and your mother” vs. Mk. 7:10 “For Moses said: Honor your father and your mother.” Also see Exodus 18:15 where the people go to Moses to inquire of God.)