

## The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John

τῶ πατρὶ). The relationship that the Father and Son have, is notably not one where the Father is in the Son, but where the Son is in the Father. If Yeshua the Messiah were only a supernatural, but created entity, sent from the dimension of Heaven to the dimension of Planet Earth—then we might expect Yeshua to say that the Father, i.e., the Father’s presence, was in the Son. Yet, for the Son to be in a reciprocal relationship of being in the Father, is something that readers of John’s Gospel know is said by a figure who “was God” and “was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1, 2). In his book *Jesus and the God of Israel* Richard Bauckham offers some compelling thoughts on the interconnectivity, or intra-divine relationship, of the Father and Son, as not being in violation of the Deuteronomy 6:4 *Shema* of the One God of Israel—but certainly having to be portrayed as involving the internal makeup of this God:

“The Johannine Jesus’ claim to oneness with the Father amounts to including himself with his Father in the unique identity of the one God as understood in Jewish monotheism. Within this divine identity, there is the uniquely intimate relationship of the Father and the Son. The oneness statements are clearly related to the statements of reciprocity: ‘I am in the Father and the Father is in me’ (10:38; 14:10, 11; cf. also 14:20; 17:21, 23). The first of these, in 10:38, is the climax of Jesus’ defence of his earlier claim that ‘I and the Father are one’ (10:30). Both are taken to be blasphemous, and clearly they are, in some sense, equivalent claims. Evidently, this reciprocal indwelling—the closest conceivable intimacy of relationship—is the inner reality of the oneness of Father and Son. Their unity does not erase their difference, but differentiates them in an inseparable relationship. We should also notice that the terms ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ entail each other. The Father is called Father only because Jesus is his Son, and Jesus is called Son only because he is the Son of his divine Father. Each is essential to the identity of the other. So to say that Jesus and the Father are one is to say that the unique divine identity comprises the relationship in which the Father is who he is only in relation to the Son and vice versa. It is in the portrayal of this intra-divine relationship that John’s Christology steps outside the categories of Jewish monotheistic definition of the unique identity of the one God. It does not all deny or contradict any of these (especially since the *Shema*’ asserts the uniqueness of God, not his lack of internal self-differentiation) but, from Jesus’ relationship of sonship to God, it redefines the divine identity as one in which Father and Son are inseparably united in differentiation from each other.”<sup>200</sup>

### John 11:17-27

#### “Yeshua is the Resurrection and the Life”

“So when Yeshua came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off; and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning *their* brother. Martha therefore, when she heard that Yeshua was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house. Martha then said to Yeshua, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.’ Yeshua said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Yeshua said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?’ She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, *even* He who comes into the world.’”

The death and resuscitation of the deceased Lazarus (John 11:1-46) is certainly an important miracle for any reader of the Gospels to encounter! Within this scene, Lazarus’ sister, Martha, inquires of Yeshua as to why He had not been present, because if He had been there,

---

<sup>200</sup> Bauckham, pp 105-106.

Lazarus would not have died (John 11:21). Lazarus, who had been dead for four days (John 11:17) by the end of this, does come forth from the grave, resurrected to new life (John 11:43-44). In the record, the reader knows that Lazarus was permitted to die, for the precise reason that people might believe in Yeshua (John 11:15, 40, 42, 45). And, the reader should also know that this is not the only time that Yeshua has been involved in seeing someone brought back to physical life. The resurrection of the widow's son at Nain, for example (Luke 7:11-17), merited Yeshua being acknowledged as a prophet: "A great prophet has arisen among us!" (Luke 7:11).

Yeshua the Messiah, is, to be sure, a great prophet. But unlike the widespread public scene at Nain, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were those who were more closely associated with Yeshua. Lazarus was a friend of the Lord. Martha recognizes that as a friend, Yeshua would have seen to it that He had been healed of the disease that took his life (John 11:21). Martha also acknowledged that Yeshua had a special relationship with the God of Israel: "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You" (John 11:22). This is something that would go beyond Yeshua being a great prophet, and would place Him on a level essentially equal to that of a Moses or David. Martha, being a First Century Jew (and obviously not a Sadducee), affirms belief in the doctrine of resurrection (John 11:24).

While Yeshua Himself confirms to her, "Your brother will rise again" (John 11:23), Yeshua also says something profoundly significant—not just about His relationship to the future resurrection and Kingdom of God—but which bears importance on His nature:

"Yeshua said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life! Whoever believes in Me, even if he dies, shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11:25-26, TLV).

Many of us would rightfully take Yeshua's statement, "and everyone living and trusting in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:26, CJB/CJSB), as involving not only the future resurrection and participation in the Eternal State, but the present condition of Believers receiving Yeshua's salvation and being redeemed from a death-state in sin and condemnation. Born again Believers in Yeshua will physically die, but they are redeemed from the powers of death. What should not escape our notice, however, is how Yeshua declaratively insists, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life! Whoever puts his trust in me will live, even if he dies" (John 11:25, CJB/CJSB). Here, as the source text communicates, *egō eimi hē anastasis kai hē zōē* (ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωή).

It is to be recognized how John 11:25, as indicated by Kruse, "contains the fifth of seven different 'I am' sayings with predicates in the Fourth Gospel (6:35, 48, 51; 8:12; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14, 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5)."<sup>201</sup> Yeshua's statement "I AM the resurrection and the life" (PME) bears great significance on His nature and origins, with the "I am" *egō eimi* formula appropriated from the burning bush theophany (Exodus 3:14). A supernatural, yet created entity, would hardly be expected to declare "I am the resurrection and the life," in such a manner; **only God Himself, given the gravity of the future resurrection, could be expected to issue such an exclaim.** And indeed, it would not have been outside the realm of possibilities for Yeshua to have stated instead, "My Father is the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me whom He sent will live even if he dies" (John 11:25, NASU modified), which would make Yeshua out to only be a supernaturally empowered agent sent from Heaven, in a unique relationship with the Father. **But Yeshua did not say this.** *Yeshua is the resurrection and the life.* As Morris puts it, "Jesus does not say simply that He will give resurrection and life. So much are resurrection and

---

<sup>201</sup> Kruse, *John*, 251.

## The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John

life associated with Him that He says that He *is* the resurrection and the life.”<sup>202</sup> Yeshua being the resurrection and the life is sure evidence of His integration into the Divine Identity.

Martha confirms that she is one who trusts in Yeshua, saying, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world” (John 11:27, CJB/CJSB). Proponents of a low Christology of Yeshua being a created supernatural entity, may claim that Yeshua only being called “the Messiah, the Son of God” here, only supports their view, as Martha does not call Him “God.” But Martha’s confession is hardly made isolated from other confessions to or about Yeshua, and other claims made of His nature, appearing in the Apostolic Scriptures.

The title “Son of God” (John 11:27) is frequently taken to be a Messianic title, associated with royal kingship and the hopes of Israel. Yeshua the Messiah is the promised Deliverer of Israel, who has come onto the scene, and whose activity is definitely going to change various spiritual dynamics present on Planet Earth. Martha said, “that you are the Christ, the son – of God, the one into the world coming” (Brown and Comfort),<sup>203</sup> *hoti su ei ho Christos ho huios tou Theou ho eis ton kosmos erchomenos* (ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος). It cannot go unnoticed how Yeshua’s arrival, into the world is to be attended by the worship of the Heavenly host, something which does play a role in our understanding of His nature and origins (discussed further):

“For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU’ [Psalm 2:7]? And again, ‘I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME’ [2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Corinthians 17:13]? And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM’ [Deuteronomy 32:43, LXX; Psalm 97:7]” (Hebrews 1:5-6).

### John 12:27-36

#### “The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up”

“Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, “Father, save Me from this hour”? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came out of heaven: ‘I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.’ So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, ‘An angel has spoken to Him.’ Yeshua answered and said, ‘This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.’ But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. The crowd then answered Him, ‘We have heard out of the Law that the Messiah is to remain forever; and how can You say, “The Son of Man must be lifted up”? Who is this Son of Man?’ So Yeshua said to them, ‘For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.’”

When many of us think about the nature of Yeshua, and specifically the question, “Is Yeshua God?”, as humans we are naturally drawn to thinking of our Great God coming down to Earth in all of His power—a Supreme Being directly interacting with much smaller beings. Of course, in Ancient Near Eastern and classical Greco-Roman mythology, when gods and goddesses would come down to Planet Earth, it was often not just in their mighty, supernatural power, but often with the intention of enslaving humans and/or using them as pawns in some sort of battle or war with other gods and goddesses. In John 12:27-35, our

---

<sup>202</sup> Morris, *John*, 550.

<sup>203</sup> Brown and Comfort, 367.