

The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John

Yeshua is not an independent entity, who acts entirely on His own, as His origins and identity are based in the relationship He has with the Heavenly Father. In order to have eternal life, Yeshua says that one has to believe both what He says and to believe in the Father who sent Him: “Amen, amen I tell you, whoever hears My word and trusts the One who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed over from death into life” (John 5:24, TLV). Contrary to the accusation made against Him of “making Himself equal with God” (John 5:18), Yeshua has just presented Himself as being integrated into the Divine Identity, with the Father being “Him who sent Me” (John 5:24; *tō pempstanti me*, τῷ πέμψαντί με). The question of “From where was this Yeshua sent?” necessarily requires His origins to be not only not of this Earth, but not of this universe, and innately connected to the being of the Heavenly Father.

John 5:25-29

“The Son of Man Has Life in Himself”

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.”

Yeshua’s dialogue continues, as He has just asserted some of the significant interconnectivity that He, the Son, has with the Father (John 5:19-24). He speaks the profoundly important assertion, “Yes, indeed! I tell you that there is coming a time—in fact, it’s already here—when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who listen will come to life” (John 5:25, CJB/CJSB). While the terminology “the s/Son of God” need not always imply something supernatural, and instead be a regal title given to a monarch of Israel, the actions associated with “the Son of God” (*tou huiou tou Theou*, τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ) in John 5:25 decisively place Yeshua on the supernatural side here. Here, the actions of Yeshua the Messiah are associated with not just the future resurrection of the dead in the eschaton, but also a spiritual renewal taking place among those who encounter Him and receive His teachings. The actions of Yeshua have been associated with a variety of Tanach concepts by various examiners,⁹⁷ including Isaiah 55:3: “Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David” (RSV). Most important, though, would be Ezekiel 37:4: “Again He said to me, ‘Prophesy over these bones and say to them, “O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.””

That the resurrection life of the world to come is already accessible in the lives of Messiah followers—with obviously more to occur—is profoundly important to recognize for Believers’ present spirituality. In the narrative of John’s Gospel, one should also keep in mind the upcoming resurrection of the recently deceased Lazarus (John 11:43-44). But in John 5:25, it is explicitly declared from Yeshua, “the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live” (NIV), which is also an affirmation of the general resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:16). This statement undeniably affects how Bible readers approach the nature of the Messiah. Keener indicates, “That God’s voice brings life would not surprise Jesus’ hearers, though such a claim for a human voice would sound jarring.”⁹⁸ Could a mortal human be responsible for

⁹⁷ Bruce, *John*, 131; Carson, *John*, 256; Köstenberger, 189; Michaels, 317.

⁹⁸ Keener, *John*, 653.

causing the future, general resurrection of the dead? Certainly not. Could a supernatural, but ultimately created entity be responsible for causing the future, general resurrection of the dead? Carson astutely directs, “It is the voice of the Son of God...that calls forth the dead...Such a voice, such a life-giving word, is nothing other than the voice of God (cf. Is. 55:3), whose vivifying power mediates the life-giving Spirit (cf. 3:3, 5; 7:37-39) even to dry bones (Ezk. 37).”⁹⁹

Recognizing that Yeshua has just been accused of the crime of self-deification, much of what Yeshua has been saying has been for His detractors to recognize that His identity is tied directly to the identity of God the Father. The Son of God will be the One who initiates the resurrection (John 5:25), and as Yeshua further details, “For just as the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26, TLV). A paralleling statement is made in 1 John 1:2, regarding “the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us.” And earlier in John 1:4 it was said, “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.” In order to guide His audience toward recognizing that He is not some deranged mortal claiming some Divine status that He does not, or cannot, legitimately have—Yeshua has instead stated that this “life in Himself” has been granted to Him, the Son, by the Father. Such a being granted “life in Himself” is not isolated, but instead is qualified: “Also He has given the Son authority to judge, because He is the Son of Man” (John 5:27, TLV). Yeshua’s employment of the titular “Son of Man,” necessarily takes readers to its Tanach background in Daniel 7:13-14, of the figure to whom the Ancient of Days grants supreme authority, and to whom the entire Creation must worship and serve:

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (NIV).

While previously in John 5:25 it was emphasized, “that an hour is coming, and now is” (LITV), *hoti erchetai hōra kai nun estin* (ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν)—which can be used to recognize that future Kingdom realities break into the present spiritual experience of the Messiah’s followers—that Yeshua is responsible for the future general resurrection, is seen in John 5:28-29: “Do not be amazed at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out! Those who have done good will come to a resurrection of life, and those who have done evil will come to a resurrection of judgment” (TLV). Yeshua the Messiah, the Son of Man, will be responsible for the resurrection of the dead as specifically prophesied in Daniel 12:2: “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.”

John 5:30-41

“Yeshua Has Been Sent From the Father”

*“I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of John*; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father who sent Me, He has*

⁹⁹ Carson, *John*, 256.