

Messiah is a supernatural but created agent sent from Heaven by God, *or* the eternal and uncreated Son of God who is integrated into the Divine Identity? Noting the verb *epitimaō* (ἐπιτιμάω), “to express strong disapproval of someone, rebuke, reprove, censure also speak seriously, warn” (BDAG),⁶² in Mark 3:12, Edwards makes the strong observation,

“Characteristic of Jesus’ divine authority over evil is Gk. *epitiman* (‘he gave them strict orders’). Used in the OT of the word of God that prevails over both natural (Ps 106:9) and demonic (Zech 3:2) forces, *epitiman* represents the sovereign command of God to rebuke and subdue evil (1:25; 4:39; 9:25). Jesus’ authority over the demonic realm is total. Demonic forces are left with no other choice than to confess his sovereignty by their subjection.”⁶³

To examine what the Septuagint has for Psalm 106:9 and Zechariah 3:2, in employing the verb *epitimaō*, it is witnessed,

- “And he rebuked the Red Sea [*kai epetimēsen tē eruthra thalassē*, καὶ ἐπέτιμησεν τῇ ἐρυθρᾷ θαλάσῃ], and it became dry, and he guided them in the deep as in a wilderness” (Psalm 106:9, NETS).⁶⁴
- “And the Lord said to the slanderer, ‘The Lord rebuke you, O slanderer! And the Lord who has chosen Ierousalem rebuke you! [*epitimēsai Kurios en soi diabole kai epitimēsai Kurios en soi ho eklexamenos tēn Ierousalēm*, ἐπιτιμήσαι κύριος ἐν σοὶ διάβωλε καὶ ἐπιτιμήσαι κύριος ἐν σοὶ ὁ ἐκλεξάμενος τὴν Ἱερουσαλὴμ] Behold, is not this like a brand plucked from the fire?’” (Zechariah 3:2, NETS).⁶⁵

Recognizing these significant actions performed by the LORD or YHWH, *Kurios* in the LXX, involving the verb *epitimaō*—it is justified for us to wonder from Mark 3:12 whether the Lord Yeshua is to be regarded as being integrated into the Divine Identity, as He rebukes the demons quantitatively indifferently than what is seen in Psalm 106:9 or Zechariah 3:2. While not definitive, further investigation and deliberations are required, regarding the actions of Yeshua, as His nature is evaluated.

Luke 7:11-17

“Yeshua is Declared to be a Great Prophet”

“Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, ‘Young man, I say to you, arise!’ The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Yeshua gave him back to his mother. Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and, ‘God has visited His people!’ This report concerning Him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district.”

That Yeshua the Messiah had significant supernatural abilities, which few beings in the cosmos possess or have ever possessed, is recognized by advocates of either a high or low Christology. This is especially present in scenes where Yeshua the Messiah is overseeing the resurrection of a deceased person. In Luke 7:11-17, Yeshua resurrects the deceased son of a

⁶² BDAG, 384.

⁶³ Edwards, *Mark*, pp 104-105.

⁶⁴ “Thus He rebuked the Red Sea [*v’yigar b’yam-suf*, וַיִּגְעַר בַּיָּם־סוּף] and it dried up, and He led them through the deeps, as through the wilderness” (Psalm 106:9, NASU).

⁶⁵ “The LORD said to Satan, ‘The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! [*yigar YHWH b’kha haSatan v’yigar YHWH b’kha haboheir b’Yerushalayim*, וַיִּגְעַר יְהוָה בְּךָ הַבֹּהֵר בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם] Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?’” (Zechariah 3:2, NASU).

The Nature of Yeshua in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts

widow at Nain, and the response of those who witness this taking place, is important to note in developing an appropriate profile on the nature of the Messiah.

Statements made by the crowd in Luke 7:16, witnessing the resurrection of the widow's son, are: "A great prophet has risen up among us"⁶⁶ (LITV), and "God has visited His people"⁶⁷ (LITV). The statement "God has come to help his people" (Luke 7:16c, CJB/CJSB) is not isolated, as it is first qualified with, "A great prophet has appeared among us" (Luke 7:16b, CJB/CJSB). If "God has visited His people" was the only statement made by the crowds, then there would be very strong evidence that they considered Yeshua to be God Incarnate in human form. Instead, Yeshua is regarded to be a prophet, and hence, at least here, is concluded to be an agent of God overseeing this resurrection.

The power to resurrect people from the dead is one which explicitly rests with God: "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up" (1 Samuel 2:6). It is to be fairly recognized from the record of the Tanach, that various Prophets have been authorized by God, as His agents, to oversee resurrections from the dead, notably including Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-37). That Yeshua the Messiah is established to be a prophet from Luke 7:11-17, is certain. In his commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Craig A. Evans notes a significant, deliberate connection between Luke 7:11-17 and the widow's son resurrected in 1 Kings 17:17-24⁶⁸ by the Prophet Elijah:

"This story, found only in Luke's Gospel, reveals several points of contact with the Elijah/Elisha stories...The most noteworthy parallels include: (1) the setting in **Nain** (Luke 7:11), which may be an allusion to the ancient city of Shunem (2 Kings 4:8...); (2) arrival **at the town gate** (Luke 7:12; 1 Kings 17:10); (3) a grieving **widow** (Luke 7:12; 1 Kings 17:9, 17); (4) the death of **the only son** (Luke 7:12; 1 Kings 17:17; 2 Kings 4:32); (5) the speaking or crying out of the resuscitated son (Luke 7:15; 1 Kings 17:22); (6) the expression, borrowed verbatim from the LXX, 'he **gave him back to his mother**' (Luke 7:15; 1 Kings 17:23); and (7) the recognition that 'a great prophet has appeared among us' (Luke 7:16; 1 Kings 17:24). Although the widow in 1 Kings says, 'Now that I know that you are a man of God' (RSV), the Aramaic version (i.e., the Targum) inserts the word 'prophet,' thus bringing the Lucan and Kings passages into closer agreement..."⁶⁹

In his commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Morris, who certainly holds to a high Christology of Yeshua being God, considers Yeshua being regarded as a prophet in this scene to be inadequate, but that it definitely resulted in the news of Him spreading out:

"Those who saw this reacted as in the presence of God. *Fear*, which must be understood as awe, took hold of them. They *glorified God*, interestingly not Jesus. They recognized the hand of God in what had happened and gave praise where it was due. But they did salute Jesus, calling him *a great prophet*. This is an inadequate view of Jesus, but it probably represented the highest title the

⁶⁶ Grk. *hoti prophētēs megas ēgerthē en hēmin* (ὅτι προφήτης μέγας ἠγέρθη ἐν ἡμῖν).

⁶⁷ Grk. *hoti epeskepsato ho Theos ton laon autou* (ὅτι ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ).

⁶⁸ "Now it came about after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elijah, 'What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!' He said to her, 'Give me your son.' Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed. He called to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?' Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD and said, 'O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him.' The LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived. Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother; and Elijah said, 'See, your son is alive.' Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth'" (1 Kings 17:17-24).

⁶⁹ Craig A. Evans, *New International Biblical Commentary: Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 115.

townsmen could give anyone. It may have been called forth by the reflection that Jesus had just done what two great prophets did in days of old (1 Ki. 17:17ff; 2 Ki. 4:18ff.). The people further exclaimed, *God has visited his people!* This expression is not uncommon in the Old Testament, where it often denotes blessing, as here (e.g. Ru. 1:6; 1 Sa. 2:21), though sometimes also judgment. The inevitable result of all this was a further increase in the fame of Jesus as the news spread far and wide."⁷⁰

In his commentary on Luke, Green's attention is focused on Yeshua's seeming fulfillment of prophecy, and how He was to be called "great" by the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:32), further invoking the Deuteronomy 18:15-18 word of one like Moses who would arise. Green also notes how Yeshua being regarded as a prophet, while being correct, is an incomplete picture of Him:

"Gabriel had prophesied that Jesus would be called 'great' (1:32), and now the masses proclaim him 'a great prophet.' In doing so, they use language that is reminiscent of God's promise of a prophet-like-Moses whom God would 'raise up' (Deut 18:15-18). Jesus had already identified his baptism as the anointing of a regal prophet (4:18-19), his fate as that of the prophets (4:24), and the character of his ministry as continuous with that of Elijah and Elisha (4:25-27). Not without good reason, then, do the crowds, enlightened by what they have seen and heard, thus recognize him as a great prophet. Even if this epithet is incomplete for Luke, it is correct as far as it goes."⁷¹

For those of us who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua being God, we need to consider what it would mean for the Messiah, at an earlier stage in His ministry, to all of a sudden start performing acts which would clearly point to Him being God. What would be the reaction of the population to hearing about a figure, who *immediately* arrived on the scene—hardly known—and was performing activities that only God could perform? Should it not instead be wise for a figure such as Yeshua to establish commonality with those who preceded Him—such as the Prophets of Ancient Israel—and then *gradually* perform more and more actions which would indicate His Divinity? Not only would this help to establish credibility for the Messiah, but it would also help people process more of His teachings and messages of repentance and required spiritual change.

That a scene such as Luke 7:11-17 actually establishes that Yeshua is *more* than just a prophet, such as Elijah who preceded Him, is easy to overlook. In Luke's record, Yeshua directly says to the deceased, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" (Luke 7:14, NIV). Evans makes the astute observations, in view of 1 Kings 17:17-24, "Despite the parallels there is a major difference, however. Whereas Elijah must pray to God and stretch himself upon the dead lad three times before he revives, Jesus merely speaks the word of command and the dead one is raised up."⁷² This at least indicates that Yeshua possesses a greater power than prophets such as Elijah, and is also different from the Acts 20:9-10⁷³ resuscitation of Eutychus by Paul, which is similar to 1 Kings 17:17-24. And as Stein also indicates, "The title 'Lord' in 7:13 shows Luke's belief that Jesus was more than a great prophet."⁷⁴ Readers should be fair enough to consider that the scene of Yeshua raising the widow's son at Nain, invites further investigation into Yeshua's actions and abilities.

⁷⁰ Morris, *Luke*, pp 154-155.

⁷¹ Green, *Luke*, pp 292-293.

⁷² Evans, *Luke*, 115.

⁷³ "And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead. But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, 'Do not be troubled, for his life is in him'" (Acts 20:9-10).

⁷⁴ Stein, 223.

The Nature of Yeshua in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts

In Luke 7:11-17, Yeshua oversees the resurrection of a dead person, in a manner similar to prophets in Ancient Israel. But this is obviously not a complete picture when further Bible passages enter into the equation. Prophets such as Elijah only oversaw the resuscitation of an individual person; it is later recorded of Yeshua the Messiah that He has the power to resurrect all deceased humans *and* issue the final judgment. As Wellum properly summarizes in *The Deity of Christ*,

“The ability to raise the dead and to execute judgment not only rests with God alone (Deut. 1:17; 1 Sam. 2:6; Jer. 25:31; Rom. 14:10) but is also associated with the dawning of the future age (Ezek. 36:25-27; 37; Dan. 12:2). The New Testament not only records three cases in which Jesus restored persons to physical life (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44), but, more importantly, it also presents Jesus as *the* resurrection and the life (John 11:25-26) and assigns to him the unique role of resurrection and judgment on the last day (John 5:21-23, 28-29; cf. 6:39-44, 54; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 14:10 with 2 Cor. 5:10). Thus, as God’s Son, Jesus will raise and judge all persons (Matt. 7:22-23; 16:27) and those on whom he passes a verdict of condemnation will be eternally shut out from his presence (2 Thess. 1:8-9; cf. Matt. 7:23; 25:41).”⁷⁵

Would we expect any of this power and authority to be possessed by a supernatural, yet ultimately created being? Perhaps for the scene of Luke 7:11-17, we should recognize that in order for Yeshua’s power and authority to resurrect the dead and issue the final judgment **to have any modicum of validity to it**, that the Messiah certainly did need to resurrect a number of individual people during the time of His ministry on Planet Earth. For future scenes in the Gospels and testimonies in the Apostolic Writings, a case is steadily building, indicating that Yeshua is far more than just a supernatural agent of God.

⁷⁵ Stephen J. Wellum, “The Deity of Christ in the Apostolic Witness,” in *The Deity of Christ*, 144.