

call Satan, speak in the presence of the God of Creation, but contextually are clearly made by the mortal king of Babylon:

“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, *saying*, ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’” (Isaiah 14:12-17).

The Hebrew *heileil* (לַיְלֵי), “the **morning star** (or the crescent moon)” (*CHALOT*),⁹⁹ was rendered by the Latin Vulgate as *lucifer*, in Isaiah 14:12, and from this some theology surrounding Satan would emerge. While the surrounding verses of Isaiah 14 are clearly speaking about the mortal king of Babylon, it should not be dismissed that as a king who considered himself to be a god, that statements about the character and activities of the Devil are embedded in this prophetic taunt against him.

If indeed Yeshua’s statement, “I was watching satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18, TLV), is speaking of the Adversary’s fall from grace—which presumably occurred before the Creation of Planet Earth and humankind—then it can be used as a support for Yeshua’s pre-existence. The nature of Yeshua’s pre-existence is associated with many other statements by the Messiah and claims of His followers, though, requiring further investigation.

Matthew 11:25-30; Luke 10:21-24 **“Yeshua Offers Rest for Human Souls”**

“At that time Yeshua said, ‘I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*. Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS [Jeremiah 6:16]. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light’” (Matthew 11:25-30).

“At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, ‘I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*.’ Turning to the disciples, He said privately, ‘Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things you see, for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to see the things which you see, and did not see *them*, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear *them*’” (Luke 10:21-24).

That Yeshua the Son has a unique relationship, with God the Father, is something which He testified in the presence of His Disciples. It is to be recognized that the relationship that the Son has with the Father, and that the Father has with the Son, is one which no other being in the cosmos has. The Son knows the Father, and the Father knows the Son (Matthew 11:27; Luke

⁹⁹ *CHALOT*, 79.

The Nature of Yeshua in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts

10:22). The unique relationship that the Father and the Son have will be taken by proponents of a high Christology to be resultant of the Father and the Son as co-members of a plural Godhead. Advocates of a low Christology of the Son being a highly exalted supernatural agent of God, but ultimately created—but probably the first created being ever in Creation—would think that this relationship is the result of Yeshua’s uniqueness.

Frequently, the uniqueness of the Son is explained by proponents of a low Christology, along the lines of how the figure of Wisdom is depicted in Second Temple Jewish literature, as the figure of Wisdom was a created being which acted in tandem with the work of God as Creator (see previous discussion on **Proverbs 8:22-31**). Yeshua’s statement of Matthew 11:28-30, is often considered to have a connection with what is said of the figure Wisdom in Sirach 51:23-27.¹⁰⁰

“Draw near to me, you who are untaught, and lodge in my school. Why do you say you are lacking in these things, and why are your souls very thirsty? I opened my mouth and said, Get these things for yourselves without money. Put your neck under the yoke, and let your souls receive instruction; it is to be found close by. See with your eyes that I have labored little and found myself much rest” (Sirach 51:23-27).

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30, RSV).

It cannot go unnoticed how a variety of commentators on the Gospel of Matthew—who would broadly hold to a high Christology of Yeshua being God—do note that there is some association here between what Wisdom says in Sirach 51:23-27, and perhaps some other places. In the view of Hagner, “Jesus speaks here the way that Wisdom was regarded as speaking...and we have here another important element in wisdom Christology...where the Christ is identified with the Wisdom that existed with God from the beginning (cf. Prov 8:1-21, 32-36; 9:4-6).”¹⁰¹ France goes a little further than this, actually arguing that the teaching of Wisdom *is* the teaching of Yeshua:

“[I]t is possible to trace conceptual links with aspects of the Jewish Wisdom tradition, and so to see Jesus as, in Matthew’s view, himself taking the place of the personified divine Wisdom...The most obvious source for Jesus’ language here is Sir 51:23-27 (cf. Sir 6:23-30), in which the sage invites the unlearned to come near to him to find Wisdom, to put their necks under Wisdom’s yoke so that they receive instruction...Whereas the sage is himself the recipient of Wisdom’s blessings, and invites others to share what he has received from her, Jesus is no intermediary but issues ‘Wisdom’s’ invitation in his own person.”¹⁰²

Nolland is more reserved with what is seen here, arguing that while there is some connection to be made between Yeshua and the figure of Wisdom, that it goes too far to argue for a kind of “Wisdom Christology.” He asserts, “At some level this probably makes Jesus ‘Wisdom incarnate’, but while Matthew exploits the wisdom imagery, he is not specifically investing in a wisdom christology.”¹⁰³

None of us should fear some connection, direct or indirect, between what Wisdom says in Sirach 51:23-27 about receiving proper instruction and what Yeshua says in Matthew 11:28-30

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 164.

¹⁰¹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 323.

¹⁰² France, *Matthew*, 447.

¹⁰³ Nolland, *Matthew*, 475.

about taking on His easy yoke. That the figure of Wisdom, a close servant of God, and that Yeshua the Messiah, the Son of God, are depicted as performing similar duties, should hardly be a surprise. But whether Yeshua *is Himself* the figure of Wisdom, as many advocates of a low Christology can conclude, can be easily disputed. The definite quotation of Jeremiah 6:16 in Matthew 11:29¹⁰⁴ changes the dynamic of Yeshua offering His followers and those who believe in Him, rest. The subject of Jeremiah 6:16 is clearly witnessed to be the LORD or YHWH:

“Thus says the LORD [*koh amar YHWH*, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה], ‘Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you will find rest [Heb. MT *margoa*, מַרְגֹּיט; Grk. LXX *agnismos*, ἀγνισμός, ‘purification’] for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk *in it*.’”

Noting the presence of Jeremiah 6:16 in Matthew 11:29, Nolland offers the general thought, “The verse concludes with a quotation from Je. 16:16...The value to Matthew of the link with Je. 6:16 is that it connects the present offer of peace with God’s offer of peace which, when rejected, led to the Exile.”¹⁰⁵ France goes a little further than this, indicating some slight differences between the Hebrew MT of Jeremiah 6:16 and Greek LXX, stating, “‘You will find rest for your souls’ echoes the Hebrew text of Jer 6:16 (LXX has ‘purification’ instead of ‘rest’), where it is the reward Yahweh offers to those who find and walk in the good way. That Jesus now issues the same promise under his own authority says much for the christology underlying this extraordinary pericope.”¹⁰⁶ Hagner, however, goes the furthest, arguing that Yeshua takes the place of not only the figure of Wisdom in Matthew 11:28-30, but most especially the place of the LORD or YHWH:

“Jesus promises to give rest to those who come to him and thus speaks not only as Wisdom does (cf. Sir 6:28; 51:27) but as Yahweh does to Moses in Exodus 33:14...Astonishingly Jesus calls people in the first instance *to himself* and only subsequently to the yoke of discipleship. It is moreover *he*, rather than God, who gives rest. Jesus stands not only in the place of Wisdom and truth but even in the place of Yahweh...What Yahweh promised in the Jeremiah passage, Jesus now promises to those who come to him and follow him in discipleship: *he* will give them rest for their souls, i.e., a realization of a deep existential peace, a *shalom*, or sense of ultimate well-being with regard to one’s relationship to God and his commandments.”¹⁰⁷

It is fair to deduce that just as the figure of Wisdom offers people with the proper teachings which will provide them with rest and refreshment—so too will the teachings and direction of Yeshua the Messiah provide people with the rest and spiritual nourishment that they seek. But Yeshua offers more than Wisdom offers; Yeshua offers the rest promised by the Lord God of Israel in Jeremiah 6:16. Yeshua, in fact, speaks as the Lord speaks in Jeremiah 6:16. The only legitimate way that Yeshua could not just speak such a word but also offer the grand rest (*anapausis*, ἀνάπαυσις; Matthew 11:29) in His very person, is if Yeshua were integrated into the Divine Identity.

¹⁰⁴ Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th Edition* (New York: American Bible Society, 1993), 28; Kurt Aland, et. al., *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1998), 41; Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th Revised Edition* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, 2012), 32.

¹⁰⁵ Nolland, *Matthew*, 478.

¹⁰⁶ France, *Matthew*, 450.

¹⁰⁷ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, pp 323, 324.