

It is at all to be ruled out that “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (Isaiah 6:8, RSV), involves God speaking as a unified plurality? J.A. Motyer interjects his opinion, which incorporates the witness of later Scripture:

“The *us* in *who will go for us?* is a plural of consultation (cf. 1 Ki. 22:19-23). The New Testament, however, relates this passage both to the Lord Jesus (Jn. 12:41) and to the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25), finding here that which will accommodate the full revelation of the triune God.”<sup>131</sup>

## ISAIAH 9:6-7

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”

Those who believe in either a high Christology of Yeshua the Messiah being God, or a low Christology of Yeshua the Messiah as a created entity, are both going to read Isaiah 9:6-7 in a Messianic context, referring to Yeshua of Nazareth (cf. Luke 1:32-33). How one reckons with the titles of Isaiah 9:6-7, which both should agree are applied to this Messiah King, will force one to consider some significant things about His nature. The Hebrew source text of Isaiah 9:6[5] states, *v'yiqra sh'mo pele yo'eitz El gibbor avi'ad sar-shalom* (וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פֶּלֵא יוֹעֵץ אֱלֹהִים גִּבּוֹר אַבִּיעֶדֶר שַׂר-שְׁלוֹם), “and-he-will-call name-of-him Wonder-of One-Counseling God-of Might Father-of Everlasting Prince-of Peace” (Kohlenberger).<sup>132</sup>

That the Messiah will be a “Wonderful Counselor” (*pele yo'eitz*), taken by the NET Bible to be “Extraordinary Strategist,” makes light of His great wisdom and abilities.

The second title the Messiah is to have, asks some immediate questions about His nature, as it is *El gibbor* or “Mighty God.” This is a title used of God proper in Isaiah 10:21: “A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God [*el-El gibbor*, אֱלֹהִים גִּבּוֹר].” In the estimation of John N. Oswalt, “Wherever *‘el gibbôr* occurs elsewhere in the Bible there is no doubt that the term refers to God (10:21; cf. also Deut. 10:17<sup>133</sup>; Jer. 32:18<sup>134</sup>).”<sup>135</sup>

There were, in the Ancient Near East and classical Greco-Roman worlds, likely many kings and aristocrats who identified along the lines of being considered deified as “gods,” even though they were only mortal. When it comes to the Messiah, however, whose origins are certainly something beyond corporeal (Micah 5:2)—and with the spiritual and religious culture of Ancient Israel and Second Temple Judaism being decisively subversive to paganism—would the Messiah’s being titled as *El Gibbor* or “Mighty God” imply His being anything other than God? Isaiah 9:6 could have just said that the Messiah would be *gibbor* (גִּבּוֹר), “strong, mighty” (*BDB*),<sup>136</sup> akin to “mighty one,” and thusly one simply empowered by God or who had a special relationship with God. But when the title *El gibbor*, actually used of God proper, is a title

<sup>131</sup> J.A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 78.

<sup>132</sup> Kohlenberger, 4:19.

“and he will be given the name Pele-Yo'etz El Gibbor Avi'Ad Sar-Shalom [Wonder of a Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace]” (CJB).

<sup>133</sup> “For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty [*ha'gibbor*, הַגִּבּוֹר], and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe” (Deuteronomy 10:17).

<sup>134</sup> “who shows lovingkindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God [*ha'El ha'gadol ha'gibbor*, הָאֱלֹהִים הַגְּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר]. The LORD of hosts is His name” (Jeremiah 32:18).

<sup>135</sup> Oswalt, *Isaiah* 1-39, 247.

<sup>136</sup> *BDB*, 150.

## APPROACHING THE NATURE OF YESHUA FROM THE TANACH

possessed by the Messiah, then it is something which suggests something more than a supernatural yet created origin of Him; it suggests that the Messiah is, Himself, integrated into the Divine Identity.

The fourth of the four titles, *sar-shalom* or “Prince of Peace,” conveys the nature of the rule that the Messiah will be overseeing. Motyer’s remark on this title is something all should be able to agree with: “The *Prince of Peace* is himself the whole man, the perfectly integrated, rounded personality, at one with God and humankind, but also as a Prince, these are the benefits he administers to his people.”<sup>137</sup>

The third of the four titles of the Messiah is *avi’ad*, a compound noun which can admittedly confuse many who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua the Messiah being God. This term is composed of the noun *av* (אב), typically meaning “father,” and *’ad* (עַד), often involving “**continuing future, always**” (*CHALOT*).<sup>138</sup> What can cause many to be perplexed is how Yeshua the Son is actually designated as “the Father” here. While there are later debates to be explored in the Apostolic Writings, as to whether or not the Son is functionally subordinate or eternally subordinate or only subordinate in His human Incarnation to the Father—it is fair to recognize that for Isaiah 9:6, *av* needs to be approached from its larger array of applications, noted by *HALOT* to include “**progenitor, first of a class or profession,**” and “**chief magistrate of a place.**”<sup>139</sup> This would be akin to Yeshua being “Eternal Father” in the sense of Him being labeled along the lines of how many towns today have had various “city fathers.”

While there is certainly more to be evaluated, from both the Tanach and Apostolic Scriptures, about the nature and origins of the Messiah, the titles “**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace**” provide adequate witness to a Divine Messiah. Oswalt asserts, “The titles underscore the ultimate deity of this child-deliverer.”<sup>140</sup> Barry G. Webb also forthrightly concludes, “In the final analysis the language of verse 6 can apply only to one who is God incarnate.”<sup>141</sup>

### ISAIAH 37:16; 44:24; NEHEMIAH 9:6; PSALM 95:5-7

“O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, who is enthroned *above* the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth” (Isaiah 37:16).

“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, ‘I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth all alone’” (Isaiah 44:24).

“You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before You” (Nehemiah 9:6).

“The sea is His, for it was He who made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand...” (Psalm 95:5-7).

The uniform claim of the Tanach or Hebrew Scriptures is that the God of Israel is the One True Creator. Jeremiah 10:16 exclaims, “For the Maker of all is He” (also 51:19). This includes not

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<sup>137</sup> Motyer, *Isaiah*, 103.

<sup>138</sup> *CHALOT*, 264.

<sup>139</sup> *HALOT*, 1:1.

<sup>140</sup> Oswalt, *Isaiah* 1-39, 246.

<sup>141</sup> Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 69.