

SALVATION ON THE LINE
THE NATURE OF YESHUA AND HIS DIVINITY

VOLUME II

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THE NATURE OF YESHUA AND HIS DIVINITY
THE GENERAL EPISTLES, PAULINE EPISTLES,
AND LATER NEW TESTAMENT

J.K. MCKEE

MESSIANIC
APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

SALVATION ON THE LINE VOLUME II

THE NATURE OF YESHUA AND HIS DIVINITY

THE GENERAL EPISTLES, PAULINE EPISTLES, AND LATER NEW TESTAMENT

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“Have this mind among yourselves, which was also in Messiah Yeshua, who, existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human being, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a wooden scaffold. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Yeshua EVERY KNEE WILL BOW [Isaiah 45:23], in Heaven and on Earth and under the Earth, and every tongue will confess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:5-11 (PME)

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ABBREVIATION CHART AND SPECIAL TERMS

The following is a chart of abbreviations for reference works and special terms that are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as *TWOT* for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

Special terms that may be used have been provided in this chart:

| | |
|---|--|
| ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> | IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i> |
| AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i> | ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> |
| ANE: Ancient Near East(ern) | IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)</i> |
| Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament | Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature (Marcus Jastrow)</i> |
| Ara: Aramaic | JBK: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)</i> |
| ASV: American Standard Version (1901) | JETS: <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i> |
| ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996) | KJV: King James Version |
| b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>) | Lattimore: <i>The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore (1996)</i> |
| B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C. | LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible by Jay P. Green (1986)</i> |
| BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)</i> | LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon (Liddell & Scott)</i> |
| BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i> | LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)</i> |
| BECNT: <i>Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</i> | LXX: Septuagint |
| BKCNT: <i>Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament</i> | m. Mishnah |
| C.E.: Common Era or A.D. | MT: Masoretic Text |
| CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995) | NASB: <i>New American Standard Bible (1977)</i> |
| CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words (Barclay M. Newman)</i> | NASU: <i>New American Standard Update (1995)</i> |
| CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> | NBCR: <i>New Bible Commentary: Revised</i> |
| CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998) | NEB: <i>New English Bible (1970)</i> |
| CJSB: Complete Jewish Study Bible (2016) | Nelson: <i>Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words</i> |
| DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition | NETS: <i>New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)</i> |
| DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls | NIB: <i>New Interpreter's Bible</i> |
| ECB: <i>Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible</i> | NIGTC: <i>New International Greek Testament Commentary</i> |
| EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i> | NICNT: <i>New International Commentary on the New Testament</i> |
| eisegesis: "reading meaning into," or interjecting a preconceived or foreign meaning into a Biblical text | NIDB: <i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i> |
| EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> | NIV: <i>New International Version (1984)</i> |
| ESV: English Standard Version (2001) | NJB: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)</i> |
| exegesis: "drawing meaning out of," or the process of trying to understand what a Biblical text means on its own | NJPS: <i>Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)</i> |
| EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> | NKJV: <i>New King James Version (1982)</i> |
| Ger: German | NRSV: <i>New Revised Standard Version (1989)</i> |
| GNT: Greek New Testament | NLT: <i>New Living Translation (1996)</i> |
| Grk: Greek | NT: <i>New Testament</i> |
| <i>halachah</i> : lit. "the way to walk," how the Torah is lived out in an individual's life or faith community | orthopraxy: lit. "the right action," how the Bible or one's theology is lived out in the world |
| HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Koehler and Baumgartner)</i> | OT: <i>Old Testament</i> |
| HCSB: <i>Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)</i> | PME: <i>Practical Messianic Edition of the Apostolic Scriptures</i> |
| Heb: Hebrew | PreachC: <i>The Preacher's Commentary</i> |
| HNV: <i>Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible</i> | REB: <i>Revised English Bible (1989)</i> |
| ICC: <i>International Critical Commentary</i> | RSV: <i>Revised Standard Version (1952)</i> |
| IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> | t. Tosefta |
| | Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament |

Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

TEV: Today's English Version (1976)

TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)

TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TNTC: *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition

v(s). verse(s)

Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*

Vul: Latin Vulgate

WBC: *Word Biblical Commentary*

Yid: Yiddish

YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest issues which is staring right at the broad Messianic movement—to which no congregation, fellowship, family, or individual are entirely immune—is how to approach the nature of Yeshua (Jesus).ⁱ **Is Yeshua the Messiah God, or is He a created being?** While many affirm Yeshua of Nazareth to be the eternal, uncreated Son of God who is indeed God—there are many others who express various levels of doubt about this, and then others who think that Yeshua is a created being and not God. There are those who will affirm that Yeshua is a supernatural being to be sure—perhaps even the first created being in the cosmic order, pre-existent of our known universe—but nevertheless created and not God.

In our family’s experience with Outreach Israel Ministries for the past decade-and-a-half, we recognized how very early on in 2003, that while we encountered a few people here or there who denied Yeshua as God, there was enough of a guard or governor, of sorts, present—in how many knew that to deny Yeshua as God was to cross a very dangerous red line. *Hearing that a particular person denied Yeshua as God, was something that largely remained on the fringes.* But as the 2000s progressed, and new social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube really began to take hold—combined with the greater prevalence of an online bookseller like Amazon.com and the emergence of the eBook—ideas about the nature of the Messiah which would have stayed on someone’s obscure personal website or blog, could now be promoted rather easily. Individual people, in what would be considered the more mainstream of the Messianic community, would be found expressing opinions and perspectives which were not affirming of Yeshua as God. Many of these opinions and perspectives can circulate unknown to congregational leaders and teachers.

While we have surely been involved in our fair share of controversies over the years among people in the Messianic movement, and there have been issues that we are in disagreement about with various personalitiesⁱⁱ—no one has ever been able to accuse Outreach Israel Ministries of holding to a low Christology,ⁱⁱⁱ or the view that Yeshua of Nazareth is a created being. It might be said, instead, that our ministry holds to **some of the highest Christology witnessed in the Messianic movement.** Our ministry Statement of Faith forthrightly asserts,

ⁱ *Yeshua* (יֵשׁוּעַ) is the original Hebrew name of Jesus meaning, “He is Salvation” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus is derived from the Greek transliteration of Yeshua, *Iēsous* (Ἰησοῦς), originally employed by the Greek Septuagint.

ⁱⁱ A number of these are evaluated in the author’s book *Confronting Critical Issues: An Analysis of Subjects that Affects the Growth and Stability of the Emerging Messianic Movement.*

ⁱⁱⁱ **Christology** is a theological term usually applied to the study of the Messiah’s nature and origin. An excellent definition of “Christology” is provided by Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 25:

“Christology is the theological study devoted to answering two main questions: Who is Jesus? (the question of his identity) and What is the nature and significance of what Jesus accomplished in the incarnation? (the question of his work).”

We fully affirm the complete Divinity of Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ), that Yeshua pre-existed the universe and created the universe (John 1:1-3; Philippians 2:5-7; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2-3), that Yeshua is to be worshipped (Mark 5:6-7; Matthew 2:2, 8, 11; Matthew 14:32-33; 28:9, 17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38; Hebrews 1:6), and even though in Yeshua's human Incarnation the Father is greater than the Son (John 14:28), that the Son is genuinely God (John 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1). We believe that acknowledging Yeshua as LORD, meaning YHWH/YHVH, is mandatory for salvation (Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:10-11). We believe that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18, 20, 23, 25; Luke 1:26-33), and that He is the prophesied Messiah of Israel (John 1:45).

This publication, *Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity* (now released in two volumes) affirms a high Christology. Not only does it affirm a high Christology of Yeshua being God, it very much defends the view that while understanding all of the intricacies of Yeshua being God is not required of human beings for salvation, recognizing Yeshua as the Lord (YHWH/YHVH) of the Tanach Scriptures **most certainly is required for salvation** (Romans 10:9, 13; cf. Joel 2:32).

This project has been an open file for Outreach Israel Ministries since 2003, as we first directly encountered a number of people denying Yeshua as God. Certainly we have written many things defending Yeshua the Messiah as God, notably including the 2004 article, updated in 2011, entitled, "Answering the 'Frequently Avoided Questions' About the Divinity of Yeshua." This was an important composition to address some of the basic criticisms that arise among Messianic people who like to "talk" and pass around a great deal of information: from various articles, books, or posts on social media. This article had the intention to help calm people down, who had been "broad sided" by a plenitude of statements requiring an immediate response. I have certainly also written about the nature of Yeshua in our *for the Practical Messianic* commentary series,^{iv} when passages of importance have been encountered. Yet, I have known for quite some time that a lengthy and voluminous examination, of a high Christology for today's Messianic people, was in store for the future.

This resource has consulted and engaged with a wide array of resources and perspectives across the Messianic movement, into the more independent sectors of the Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement, the views expressed by various Christians labeling themselves as "Biblical Unitarians," and even those few theologians of note who hold to a low Christology. This involves an array of articles, books, commentaries, and even a few Bible versions. Most importantly, would be some of the excellent, thorough, and readable resources defending a high Christology, seen within the realm of broadly evangelical Christian theology.^v

The considerable bulk of this resource, while defending a high Christology, is necessarily spent going to the text of the Holy Scriptures (Genesis-Revelation). This is not only because the Holy Scriptures are to be regarded by God's people to be the Word of Life, but also because this

^{iv} As of 2017, complete books of the Bible which have been covered in *Messianic Apologetics' for the Practical Messianic* commentary series, include, in canonical order: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians-Philemon, Philippians, 1&2 Thessalonians, the Pastoral Epistles (1&2 Timothy, Titus), Hebrews, and James.

^v Some of the studies which have decisively and positively influenced me a great deal, notably include Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Robert M. Bowman, Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007); Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

All of these publications, in their own way, represent the Christological orientation of Yeshua of Nazareth being integrated into the Divine Identity. This would mean that the Son shares the same identity of the Father, largely being credited in the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament), often via some intertextuality, of performing the same function as the LORD (YHWH/YHVH) in the Tanach (Old Testament). To ascribe such a function to a created supernatural being, would be blasphemy to Second Temple Jewish monotheism, unless Yeshua of Nazareth is genuinely God.

is the venue where the rise and fall of theological concepts are to be found. None of us wants to be found holding to a view of Yeshua being God simply because of some kind of fundamentalist dogma—where if we hold to a different view our name will somehow end up on a list or in a white paper as being stigmatized as some kind of “cultists.” We want to be found holding to a view of Yeshua being God, precisely because that is where the witness of Scripture directs us, it is the genuine testimony of the Messiah and His early followers, **and because it is required for our redemption from sins as fallen human beings.** I firmly believe that such a principled case can be made in going to the text of Scripture, and that those who hold to a low Christology are decisively lacking in many areas.

Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity is a massive production, requiring it to be released in two volumes. The first release (2017) focused on the nature of Yeshua from the Gospels and Acts. This second release (2018) now covers the General Epistles, Pauline Epistles, and Later New Testament. The Bibliography for either volume covers only the quoted or referenced material for those specific releases, and is not cumulative.

Do be aware that there are also future volumes of *Salvation on the Line* presently in different stages of planning, which will be covering the Messiahship of Yeshua, presumed New Testament Difficulties, and Bible Difficulties.

J.K. McKee
Editor, *Messianic Apologetics*

THE NATURE OF YESHUA IN THE GENERAL EPISTLES

When many Bible readers turn to the General Epistles of James, 1&2 Peter, Jude, and 1-3 John, expositions on the nature of the Messiah, do not tend to immediately come to mind. Most of us have turned to the General Epistles to instead receive some kind of moral or spiritual exhortation for daily living, and for resisting the insidious influences of sin. We turn to the General Epistles to be admonished about the need to be demonstrating good works or loving neighbor, not necessarily to be directed about the nature of Yeshua. Still, there are statements issued in the General Epistles about Yeshua, which necessarily require our attention as we evaluate whether or not Yeshua the Messiah is a created being, or if He is genuinely God and integrated into the Divine Identity. The traditional authors of the General Epistles were either the close disciples of the Messiah (Peter, John), or actually half-siblings (James, Jude),¹ and their descriptions of and ascriptions to the Master, do bear some importance—even if their primary intention was to address the character formation of First Century Believers.

JAMES 1:1

“James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.”

James the Just, author of the epistle, affirms that he is a servant “of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah,” *Theou kai Kurios Iēsou Christou doulou* (θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δούλος) Here, there is a close association of the titles “God” (*Theos*, θεός) and “Lord” (*Kurios*, κύριος), with the latter used to refer to the Messiah, although in the Septuagint the title *Kurios* would most often render the Divine Name YHWH/YHVH (יהוה). It may be safely assumed that with titles used to describe God the Father applied to Yeshua the Son, that the Divine Lordship of Yeshua is affirmed. A selection of commentators on the Epistle of James conclude that, in view of the titles present in James 1:1, that a high Christology is present:

- J.A. Motyer: “We have become accustomed to the standard English translation, *a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ*. But the Greek could equally well sustain the rendering ‘a servant of Jesus Christ who is God and Lord’...Even...were it the case that [James] intended the meaning which the English versions express—that God and the Lord Jesus are co-owners of their ‘slaves’—yet it cannot have escaped his notice that his words were equally capable of ascribing deity to Jesus.

¹ If necessarily, do consult the entries for these letters provided in the author’s workbook *A Survey of the Apostolic Scriptures for the Practical Messianic*.

But he did not alter them. Some, today, find themselves satisfied 'to say...*He is "as-if-God" for me*'. But there is no 'as if' in James: Jesus Christ is *the Lord*."²

- Dan G. McCartney: "In this letter...James identifies himself simply as a 'servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.' Since James includes no definite or indefinite articles with these words, it is possible to read this phrase as 'servant of Jesus Christ, God and Lord.' But it is more likely that he is simply closely associating the two nouns: Lord Jesus Christ and God. In any case, we must remember that when a Jew put the words 'God' and 'Lord' together, the Lord in view could only be God (cf. 1:7, where 'from the Lord' means 'from God'). No matter how the verse is read, James is setting forth a very high Christology, identifying Jesus not just as Christ (Messiah) but also as Lord, mentioned in the same breath with God."³

The statement of James 1:1, "Jacob, a slave of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, To the twelve tribes in the Diaspora: Shalom!" (TLV), is perhaps something that most closely mirrors that of the Apostle Peter's dynamic preaching in Acts 2:36, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Messiah—this Yeshua whom you crucified." There are those who take the construction *Theou kai Kurious Iēsou Christou*, "of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah," to actually be "of Yeshua the Messiah, God and Lord." But perhaps more significant, is how the titles God and Lord are listed in such close proximity, with Yeshua the Messiah doubtlessly associated with one of them. As Douglas J. Moo concludes, "James's view of his half-brother Jesus had undergone quite a transformation since the days they grew up in the same household together!"⁴

The statement of James 1:1, "From: Ya'akov, a slave of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah To: The Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora: *Shalom!*" (CJB/CJSB), could have made more of an effort of separating out God the Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, if James did not consider Yeshua to be integrated into the Divine Identity. All that would need to be seen for v. 1 to be an issue of James' ministry as a servant, would be for him to have dropped the title *Kurios* or Lord, with him saying, "James, a bond-servant of God and of Yeshua the Messiah" (NASU modified). But instead, the Torah faithful, monotheistic Jew that James was, plainly sees him describe God the Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, by using titles which among his peers would have been reserved only for the latter.

JAMES 1:13-15

"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

In issuing an admonition to his audience to resist the lure of sin, James the Just makes it quite clear that a temptation to sin does not originate with God. As he communicates, "He himself tempts no one. But each one is tempted when he is dragged away and enticed by his own desire. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is full grown, it brings forth death" (James 1:13b-15, TLV). Even with demonic forces a likely factor in tempting people to sin, the enemy can only have success when people themselves want to sin, and crave

² J.A. Motyer, *The Message of James* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), pp 27-28.

³ Dan G. McCartney, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: James* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 78.

⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 49.

THE NATURE OF YESHUA IN THE GENERAL EPISTLES

something that is contrary to the will and commandments of God. When people fall into sinful behavior, all it can do is lead them into death, and into a state of being where they are separated or distanced from their Creator.

In discussions over the nature of Yeshua, it cannot go overlooked that sometimes James 1:13a is used by proponents of a low Christology, as proof against the Divinity of Yeshua, as the Messiah was tempted by Satan in the wilderness (Mark 1:12-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). James 1:13a says, "God cannot be tempted by evil," the adjective *apeirastos* (ἀπειραστος) meaning, "incapable of being tempted by a thing" (LS).⁵ The logic of many who hold to a low Christology, is that since Yeshua was clearly tempted by Satan, that He cannot be God. Such a method of argumentation, however, is severely flawed. It cannot be avoided how the Holy Scriptures record the fact that God the Father was tempted by the Ancient Israelites:

"He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD [they tempted the LORD, KJV], saying, 'Is the LORD among us, or not?'" (Exodus 17:7).

"Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times [and have tempted me now these ten times, KJV] and have not listened to My voice" (Numbers 14:22).

In the course of human history people have doubtlessly tempted God to inappropriate action, placing Him in the situation of being tempted. This often takes place via absurd claims such as, "If God truly exists, I demand that He now enact revenge on my enemies who have wronged me!" **Yet, because God may be situationally tempted, it does not all of a sudden make Him something less than an Eternal and Supreme Creator.** The point of James 1:13 is not that God cannot be in the situation of being tempted by some party; the point is that God can never succumb to temptation. Motyer's observations are excellent:

"God cannot be tempted with evil. The divine nature is of such unmixed holiness that it is impossible for him to be enticed to plot to harm us. There is nothing within his whole nature to which that or any other temptation could appeal, or which would respond to that or any other base suggestion. Secondly (and consequently) *he himself tempts no one*. He is of such unmixed goodness in his attitudes and actions that there is no room in motive, will or deed for that which would bring disaster, great or small, on any of his people. To be sure, he places tests in our pathway...But there is never an ulterior motive in all this, for his holiness offers no lodging-place for evil within his nature; neither is there the least impulse to trip us up, for his goodness forbids that he should seek our hurt. When he tests, it is so that we may pass the test and inherit the blessing. When the reverse happens, the blame lies elsewhere than in the God of all grace."⁶

No honest reader of the Apostolic Scriptures can avoid the fact that Yeshua the Messiah was situationally tempted. However, the character of Yeshua the Messiah is representative of a being whose perfect and sinless nature is revulsed at temptation. As Erik Thoennes summarizes in the *ESV Study Bible*,

"Jesus experienced *human temptation*: 'For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin' (Heb. 4:15; cf. Luke 4:1-2). While Jesus experienced every kind of human

⁵ H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 91.

⁶ Motyer, *James*, 51.

temptation, he never succumbed to sin (John 8:29, 46; 15:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5).”⁷

JAMES 2:1

“My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Yeshua the Messiah with an attitude of personal favoritism.”

In his epistle, James the Just emphasizes the fact that born again Believers are to have faith in Yeshua the Messiah, demonstrating proper actions and attitudes, particularly in their treatment of the poor (James 2:2-7). He admonishes, “My brothers and sisters, do not hold the faith of our glorious Lord *Yeshua* the Messiah while showing favoritism” (James 2:1, TLV). Apparently, for a sector of James’ audience, showing “snobbery” (Phillips New Testament) was an extreme problem, and it was disruptive for others trying to enter in. The CJB/CJSB offers the unique rendering for James 2:1, “My brothers, practice the faith of our Lord Yeshua, the glorious Messiah, without showing favoritism.”

The object of faith and trust is *tou Kuriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou tēs doxēs* (τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης), “our glorious Lord Yeshua the Messiah.” Associating Yeshua with the description of *doxa* (δόξα), the Greek Septuagint equivalent of the Hebrew *kavod* (כְּבוֹד), is Christologically important. *Kavod* appears in some critical Torah passages describing the Divine presence of God:

“The glory of the LORD [*kevod-ADONAI*, כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה] rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud” (Exodus 24:16).

“Then Moses said, ‘I pray You, show me Your glory [*kevodekha*, כְּבוֹדְךָ]!’” (Exodus 33:18).

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD [*kevod ADONAI*, יְהוָה] filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34).

The term *kavod* literally means “heavy,” and it has a wide variety of connotations. The most significant of these predominantly regards the presence of God manifested in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. *TWOT* describes the significance of the word *kavod*:

“The bulk of occurrences where God’s glory is a visible manifestation have to do with the tabernacle (Ex 16:10; 40:34; etc.) and with the temple in Ezekiel’s vision of the exile and restoration (9:3; etc.). These manifestations are directly related to God’s self-disclosure and his intent to dwell with men, to have his reality and his splendor known to them. But this is only possible when they take account of the stunning quality of his holiness and set out in faith and obedience to let that character be manifested in them (Num 14:10; Isa 6:3; Ezr 10, 11).”⁸

When James uses the Greek term *doxa*, *doxa* carries with it the same understanding of *kavod*. While *doxa* is a title of honor to be sure, much more than just appropriate honor and reverence to be issued toward Yeshua was intended. McCartney’s brief estimation is, “In calling Jesus ‘glorious Lord,’ James effectively ascribes the divine attributes and importance to Christ.”⁹ Peter Davids offers a much fuller thought on the title *doxa* ascribed to Yeshua, detailing how “this is

⁷ Erik Thoennes, “Biblical Doctrine: An Overview,” in Wayne Grudem, ed., *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 2517.

⁸ John N. Oswalt, “כְּבוֹד,” in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:427.

⁹ McCartney, 137.