

## THE NATURE OF YESHUA IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES AND HEBREWS

31:31-34, it is the New Covenant imperative that with remission of sin will come the supernatural capacity on behalf of God's people for them to truly follow His Torah/Law.<sup>90</sup> Even more so, for our purposes, we should especially appreciate the sentiment of Marshall & Towner, who comment that in Titus 2:14, "Christ here has the same roles as Yahweh; the 'high' Christology is maintained,"<sup>91</sup> as the Messiah is the One who has claimed His followers, and purified them for His own possession and purposes.

### TITUS 3:4-7

**"But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Yeshua the Messiah our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."**

The Creator has taken a definite interest in the well being of His human creations,<sup>92</sup> something manifested via His *philanthrōpia* (φιλιανθρωπία), an **"affectionate concern for and interest in humanity, (loving) kindness"** (BDAG).<sup>93</sup> Titus 3:4 appears in the Wesley New Testament with, "the kindness and philanthropy of God our Saviour appeared." In ancient times *philanthrōpia* was often a trait that benevolent rulers were to demonstrate to their subjects. The high priest Alcimus asked King Demetrius in 2 Maccabees 14:9, "Since you are acquainted, O king, with the details of this matter, deign to take thought for our country and our hard-pressed nation with the gracious kindness [*philanthrōpia*] which you show to all." Interestingly enough, though, if Messiah followers are to emulate God as Creator, then as Towner aptly explains, "qualities that Greco-Roman culture ascribes to the ideal 'ruler' are actually to be exhibited by ordinary [Believers] in society."<sup>94</sup> If the Cretans addressed via Titus could do this in their interactions with the Roman government, it would surely go a long way to them making a difference for the gospel!

Titus 3:4 includes a reference to "God our Savior," *tou Sōtēros hēmōn Theou* (τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ), with God the Father being in view. Later in Titus 3:6, though, Yeshua is recognized as Savior, which many take as a confirmation of how the Father and Son are so closely identified as both are part of the Godhead, the Son being integrated into the Divine Identity.

Taking action on behalf of His human creations, Paul testifies to Titus and the Cretans, "he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5, ESV). Paul is clear how actions cannot save people. What God has brought to the redeemed is *palingenesia* (παλιγγενεσία), which may be defined as "a being born again, new birth" (LS).<sup>95</sup> *Palingenesia* notably appears in Matthew 19:28, where Yeshua speaks of how "in the regeneration [*palingenesia*] when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne..."

While God the Father purposed to show His philanthropy for humankind (Titus 3:4), with the Holy Spirit washing people from their sins (Titus 3:5), it is in Yeshua the Son as Savior that things have become truly realized. Paul states, "He abundantly poured out on us through

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<sup>90</sup> Consult the author's exegetical paper "What is the New Covenant?", appearing in *The New Testament Validates Torah*.

<sup>91</sup> Marshall & Towner, 284.

<sup>92</sup> This entry has been adapted from the author's commentary *The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic*.

<sup>93</sup> BDAG, 1055.

<sup>94</sup> Towner, 779.

<sup>95</sup> LS, 587.

Messiah *Yeshua* our Savior” (Titus 3:5, TLV), employing *Iēsou Christou tou Sōtēros hēmōn* (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν). Romans 5:5 similarly says, “the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” The expectation of the Spirit being poured out itself is prophesied in Joel 2:28: “it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh [*al-kol-basar*, עַל-כָּל-בָּשָׂר]; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (RSV; cf. Acts 2:17).

What need not elude readers, is that when Titus 3:4-6 are taken together, we really do witness the work of God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Yeshua the Son together.<sup>96</sup> While some in today’s Messianic movement are critical of what they perceive to be errors in traditional Christian Trinitarianism (which itself is variant depending on denominational tradition or affiliation), the revealed tri-unity of God is not just some formula employed via religious dogma, but is actually something revealed via the actions of the Creator in the Biblical text. As Fee comments, “One should also note the inherent Trinitarianism in this clause (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-6; Eph. 1:3-14), which sees the Father, Son, and Spirit working conjointly for our salvation.”<sup>97</sup> Yeshua’s Divinity is especially seen in how He, just like the Father (Titus 3:4), is granted the title Savior. Mounce rightly concludes,

“It is once again significant that v 4 begins by applying the title of σωτῆρος [*sōtēros*], ‘savior,’ to God the Father and v 6 concludes by applying the same title to Jesus Christ. There is no question that here, as well as elsewhere in the PE, Paul holds to the full divinity of Christ.”<sup>98</sup>

As important as salvation and eternal life are for every born again Believer, Paul is likely combining the current and futuristic aspects of redemption (cf. Romans 8:17) in Titus 3:7 by saying, “so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.” Make no mistake about it: regenerated Believers in Messiah Yeshua *have* eternal life (Romans 3:24). Yet, eternal life is something which is consummated at the Second Coming and resurrection, specifically when “this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53; cf. Colossians 1:5). It insufficient for one to simply acknowledge Yeshua as “Savior,” without recognizing some of the realities of Him being “Savior” which come to those who trust in Him and His completed work.

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 206; Knight, 350; Mounce, 447.

<sup>97</sup> Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 206.

<sup>98</sup> Mounce, 450.