

The Nature of Yeshua in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts

Cornelius,"²⁴¹ meaning that even with Cornelius' apparent condition as a God-fearer, a friend of the Jewish people, and as one who observed God's Law on some important level—there were still some pagan ideas and concepts needing to be corrected. The Apostle Peter's response, in refusing worship, is notably the same as the servant in Revelation 19:10 and 22:8-9, where the Apostle John tries to give the angel worship. In the later narrative of Acts, Paul and Barnabas refuse worship as Hermes and Zeus by those at Lystra (Acts 15:11-15). The exact opposite response takes place regarding Herod, though (Acts 12:20-23).

Acts 10:34-43

"Yeshua the Messiah as Lord of All"

"Opening his mouth, Peter said: 'I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Yeshua the Messiah (He is Lord of all)—you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. You know of Yeshua of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.'"

Following the Apostle Peter's arrival at the home of the centurion Cornelius, the two of them both speak of how the God of Israel has brought them together (Acts 10:27-32), with Cornelius in particular very eager "to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord" (Acts 10:33). Peter opens up his message "to many people assembled" (Acts 10:27), with a recognition of how the God of Israel is gracious and welcoming of all human beings, which served as a significant compliment to his host, a Roman. He said, "It's become clear to me...that God really does show no favoritism. No: in every race, people who fear him and do what is right are acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-25, Kingdom New Testament). What Peter emphasizes was that he once had a prejudice toward those of the nations—those who were immoral idol worshippers, and unclean—which has needed to be replaced by a favorable tenor of thinking well of those of the nations at large, who will perform acts of goodness and kindness consistent with the ethos laid forth by the God of Israel. Peter had once shown partiality, in violation of God's Torah (Deuteronomy 10:17; cf. Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25), attitudes he has now repented of. Even people raised in paganism can be of a generally good disposition, especially those like Cornelius who became God-fearers (Acts 10:2, 22).

Peter declared the good news of Israel's Messiah to an audience invited by Cornelius involving "his relatives and close friends" (Acts 10:24). Presumably, many of this company were non-Jewish God-fearers just as he, who had already recognized the God of Israel and were nominally Torah obedient. But at the same time, many of those invited were seemingly also pagan worshippers of the Greco-Roman pantheon. Peter immediately says of the gospel, that it

²⁴¹ Schnabel, 496.

is “The word which He {the God of Israel} sent to the children of Israel, preaching good news of peace by Yeshua the Messiah (He is Lord of all)” (Acts 10:36, PME).

A high view of Yeshua is forthrightly witnessed in these statements, with Yeshua being called “Lord of everything” (CJB/CJSB) or *pantōn Kurios* (πάντων κύριος). Frequently Acts commentaries will take the position that Yeshua being “Lord of all” is representative of Yeshua as Israel’s Messiah being the Savior for all of humanity, and not just the Jewish people. Speaking to many Romans, who would have believed that Caesar was, or at least had been, the true *Kurios* or “Lord,” what Peter said would not just be considered subversive, but likely also scandalous. A criminal executed by the Roman Empire was the true Lord to which all people had to pay homage! As Bock fairly indicates in his Acts commentary,

“God brought peace through what Jesus did, and this Jesus is described as Lord of all (Rom. 10:12; Acts 2:36). This title presents the christological theme of the speech. Jesus is exalted and is Lord over all people. Since he is Lord of all, the gospel can go to all, including people of the nations (the Gentiles) such as Cornelius.”²⁴²

It is hardly incorrect to take Yeshua being *pantōn Kurios* or “Lord of all,” as Him being the Lord of all people. **The salvation available in Yeshua the Messiah is available to all people.** But what else is communicated about the nature of Yeshua in Him being titled “Lord of all”? It needs to be recognized, at least, how a commentator like Schnabel notes how “Lord of all” can be taken as something much more than just being the Lord of all people or humankind, but he limits Acts 10:36 to just this:

“Jesus, Israel’s Messiah, is ‘Lord of all’ (οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος [*houtos estin pantōn Kurios*]). While the adjective ‘all’ (πάντων [*pantōn*]) could be neuter and refer to the entire creation, it is preferable to take it as masculine and relate it to people. This means here that he is Lord not only of the Jewish people but also of the Gentiles.”²⁴³

As important as Yeshua being “Lord of all” is for Him being the Lord over both the Jewish people and the nations at large, it is arguably just as important to recognize how “Lord of all the earth” is a title for the God of Israel appearing in the Tanach:

“Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth [*Adon kol-ha’eretz, אֲדֹנָי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ*] is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan” (Joshua 3:11).

“The angel replied to me, ‘These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth [*Adon kol-ha’eretz, אֲדֹנָי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ*]’” (Zechariah 6:5).

“The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth [*Adon kol-ha’eretz, אֲדֹנָי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ*]” (Psalm 97:5).

It is hard to avoid how “Lord of all” is something that goes beyond just Yeshua being the Lord of both Jewish people and the nations equally; Yeshua being Lord of all is a statement of His supremacy and reign.

As Peter continued his message to Cornelius and his party, he recognized how many of them, in Caesarea, had heard of Yeshua of Nazareth and the broad events that led up to His execution. Apparently, enough was known factually of the figures of John the

²⁴² Bock, 397.

Also I. Howard Marshall, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 191; Ajith Fernando, *The NIV Application Commentary: Acts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), pp 334-335; Ben, Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp 356-357; David G. Peterson, *Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 336.

²⁴³ Schnabel, 501.

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Immerser/Baptism and his activities, but most especially Yeshua of Nazareth, His teachings, and His miracles, by figures such as the Roman Cornelius. Many of those gathered, however, likely thought there to be some truth to the figure Yeshua, while others dismissed Him as a troublemaker. Peter stated to the audience, “You know the message that has spread throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the immersion that John proclaimed. You know how God anointed Yeshua of Natzeret with the Ruach ha-Kodesh and power—how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him” (Acts 10:37-38, TLV). The activity of the Holy Spirit, of course, would confirm Yeshua’s authenticity as the promised Redeemer (Acts 10:44-47), as those gathered came to saving faith.

The emphasis on Yeshua being anointed has an Isaianic basis, and one which would be appealed to in Luke’s Gospel, his first volume:

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn *in* Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified” (Isaiah 61:1-3).

“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.’ And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing’” (Luke 4:18-21).

The scene of the Apostle Peter, one of Yeshua’s original Jewish Disciples—declaring of Him to the Roman centurion Cornelius, his family, and his friends—was sure proof of what was stated about the the Savior of Israel: “A light of revelation to the nations [Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; cf. 60:1-3]’ and the glory of Your people Israel” (Luke 2:32, TLV).

The Apostle Peter and his associates are stated to be “witnesses to all He did, both in the Judean countryside and in Jerusalem,” with it further acknowledged, “They put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree” (Acts 10:39, TLV), such a “they” contextually having to be the local political and religious leaders. Following Yeshua’s death, Peter communicates how following the Messiah’s resurrection, that He appeared to select witnesses—notably those like himself—who would be used to speak of Him in the future regarding His salvation:

“[B]ut God raised Him up on the third day and caused Him to be visible—not to all the people, but to us, witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God. We ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to proclaim to the people and to testify that He is the One ordained by God as Judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:40-42, TLV).

Yeshua being the Judge of the living and the dead is a theme deeply rooted in the Apostolic Writings (John 5:22, 27; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5). The One who is “Lord of all” is also designated in Acts 10:42 as *kritēs zōntōn kai nekron* (κριτῆς ζώντων καὶ νεκρών), “Judge of the living and the dead,” with the authority to determine the final disposition in the Eternal State of all people. Would a created being be expected to be permitted such authority? Or, should this rather be taken as a significant indicator of Yeshua being integrated into the Divine Identity? Yeshua being Judge of all is linked by Peter’s further statement, “All the prophets bear witness

to him, that everyone who puts his trust in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43, CJB/CJSB), which also bears importance on Yeshua’s nature, and whether a supernatural but ultimately created entity could offer permanent atonement for human transgression. Certainly with these claims being made of the Messiah, more investigation into His nature and origins is required.

It is likely that during Peter’s encounter with Cornelius and his party, particularly among those who were God-fearers associated with the Jewish Synagogue to some degree, that there was some discussion which occurred regarding various prophetic passages from the Tanach. It has been suggested, at least, that prophecies spoken of by Peter included: Isaiah 33:24; 53:4-6, 11; Jeremiah 31:31; Daniel 9:24.²⁴⁴

Acts 13:13-42

“Paul Declares Yeshua the Messiah”

“Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem. But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, ‘Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.’ Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, ‘Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—all of which took about four hundred and fifty years. After these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, “I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will” [1 Samuel 13:14]. From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Yeshua, after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, “What do you suppose that I am? I am not *He*. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.” Brethren, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled *these* by condemning *Him*. And though they found no ground for *putting Him to death*, they asked Pilate that He be executed. When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead; and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Yeshua, as it is also written in the second Psalm, “YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU” [Psalm 2:7]. *As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: “I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE blessings OF DAVID’* [Isaiah 55:3, LXX]. Therefore He also says in another *Psalm*, “YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY” [Psalm 16:10, LXX]. For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be

²⁴⁴ Marshall, *Acts*, 193.