

The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John

life associated with Him that He says that He *is* the resurrection and the life.”²⁰² Yeshua being the resurrection and the life is sure evidence of His integration into the Divine Identity.

Martha confirms that she is one who trusts in Yeshua, saying, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world” (John 11:27, CJB/CJSB). Proponents of a low Christology of Yeshua being a created supernatural entity, may claim that Yeshua only being called “the Messiah, the Son of God” here, only supports their view, as Martha does not call Him “God.” But Martha’s confession is hardly made isolated from other confessions to or about Yeshua, and other claims made of His nature, appearing in the Apostolic Scriptures.

The title “Son of God” (John 11:27) is frequently taken to be a Messianic title, associated with royal kingship and the hopes of Israel. Yeshua the Messiah is the promised Deliverer of Israel, who has come onto the scene, and whose activity is definitely going to change various spiritual dynamics present on Planet Earth. Martha said, “that you are the Christ, the son – of God, the one into the world coming” (Brown and Comfort),²⁰³ *hoti su ei ho Christos ho huios tou Theou ho eis ton kosmos erchomenos* (ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενος). It cannot go unnoticed how Yeshua’s arrival, into the world is to be attended by the worship of the Heavenly host, something which does play a role in our understanding of His nature and origins (discussed further):

“For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU’ [Psalm 2:7]? And again, ‘I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME’ [2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Corinthians 17:13]? And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM’ [Deuteronomy 32:43, LXX; Psalm 97:7]” (Hebrews 1:5-6).

John 12:27-36

“The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up”

“‘Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, “Father, save Me from this hour”? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came out of heaven: ‘I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.’ So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, ‘An angel has spoken to Him.’ Yeshua answered and said, ‘This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.’ But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. The crowd then answered Him, ‘We have heard out of the Law that the Messiah is to remain forever; and how can You say, “The Son of Man must be lifted up”? Who is this Son of Man?’ So Yeshua said to them, ‘For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.’”

When many of us think about the nature of Yeshua, and specifically the question, “Is Yeshua God?”, as humans we are naturally drawn to thinking of our Great God coming down to Earth in all of His power—a Supreme Being directly interacting with much smaller beings. Of course, in Ancient Near Eastern and classical Greco-Roman mythology, when gods and goddesses would come down to Planet Earth, it was often not just in their mighty, supernatural power, but often with the intention of enslaving humans and/or using them as pawns in some sort of battle or war with other gods and goddesses. In John 12:27-35, our

²⁰² Morris, *John*, 550.

²⁰³ Brown and Comfort, 367.

natural, human perception of what it means for God to come down to Earth, is definitely challenged.

Yeshua the human was submitted to the will of His Heavenly Father. Knowing that the time for His humiliation and execution was coming, Yeshua experienced some agony. As He is recorded as saying, “Now I am in turmoil. What can I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour” (John 12:27, CJB/CJSB). Rather than seeing some quick reprieve for the difficult task which needed to be done, the time for Yeshua’s work of sacrifice to be accomplished had arrived: “Father, save Me from this hour [of trial and agony]? But it was for this very purpose that I have come to this hour [that I might undergo it]” (The Amplified Bible). Yeshua recognized that the Heavenly Father would be glorified in the obedience of the Son (John 12:28a), and so He spoke from Heaven, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again” (John 12:28b).

When many heard the voice of God proper speak from Heaven, they thought it was either some form of loud thunder, or an angel speaking to Yeshua (John 12:29). Yeshua directed that they heard was not for Him, but them (John 12:30). Although Yeshua’s statement, “Now is the judgment of this world! Now the prince of this world will be driven out!” (John 12:31, TLV), has multiple dynamics to be considered—the principal ones involve how with Yeshua’s coming sacrifice for human sins, the stronghold that Satan has over the world will be decisively broken, and he will be effectively defeated (cf. Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14-15) until his final sentencing (Revelation 20:10). Yeshua’s sacrifice is something which will affect all of humanity, as He specified, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32, ESV). As it is narrated, “He said this to signify what kind of death He was about to die” (John 12:33, HCSB).

Yeshua’s audience was confused about what He was saying, as it is recorded, “The multitude therefore answered Him, ‘We have heard from the Torah that the Messiah abides forever; and how can You say, “The Son of Man must be lifted up”? Who is this Son of Man?’” (John 12:34, PME). Based on a number of Messianic expectations from the Tanach, these Jewish people no doubt expected the Messiah to come, defeat Israel’s enemies, restore the Davidic Kingdom, and reign on an Earthly throne for a perpetually long period of time. No one can totally blame Yeshua’s audience for not really understanding what would happen to Him. Yet, in their own questioning, “We have heard from the scripture that the Messiah will remain forever. So how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” (John 12:34, HCSB), their answer for considering the ultimate identity and purpose of Yeshua is found. The Danielic Son of Man is a figure brought before the Ancient of Days, being granted ultimate power over all of the redeemed Creation:

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14, NIV).

Once again, to consider that this exalted Son of Man—before whom the entire universe will need to pay homage (cf. Philippians 2:10-11)—would be humiliated and sacrificed, willingly, for human transgressions (John 12:27-28, 32-33), **significantly highlights the value of the salvation provided in Him**. We too frequently take these things for granted, because as Believers in Israel’s Messiah, we are beneficiaries of events which have already taken place in history. Those who were participating in these events in the First Century C.E., did not quite know what was going to happen with Yeshua being executed, His resurrecting from the dead, and His ascending into Heaven. So, given the limitations of His audience here, Yeshua simply

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admonished them to believe in Him while they still had the Light, Himself, so that they would be reckoned as children of light, and not be overtaken by darkness:

“Yeshua said to them, ‘The light will be with you only a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, or the dark will overtake you; he who walks in the dark doesn’t know where he’s going. While you have the light, put your trust in the light, so that you may become people of light.’ Yeshua said these things, then went off and kept himself hidden from them” (John 12:35-36, CJB/CJSB).

John 12:37-43

“Isaiah Saw the Glory of the Messiah”

“But though He had performed so many signs before them, *yet* they were not believing in Him. *This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: ‘LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED? [Isaiah 53:1]’ For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, ‘HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM’ [Isaiah 6:10]. These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”*

Having just admonished His audience to believe in Him, while Yeshua was still personally present with them as the light (John 12:35-36), it was sadly to be reported, “Even though he had performed so many miracles in their presence, they still did not put their trust in him” (John 12:37, CJB/CJSB). The Apostle John does not just say this as one who apparently observed this taking place; the prophecies of Isaiah are appealed to. These include famed word of Isaiah 53:1, as Yeshua being the arm of the Lord was not believed (John 12:38). It also included an appeal to the prophetic commissioning of Isaiah, and in how being sent to Ancient Israel, many would not be able to hear the message he declared, because of an inability to receive it. Notwithstanding some of the textual issues present between the Hebrew Masoretic Text, Greek Septuagint, and what is quoted in John 12:40 with adaptations likely made—the rejection of Yeshua’s message is associated to how the Prophet Isaiah was broadly rejected centuries earlier:

“In the year of King Uzziah’s death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.’ And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, ‘Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.’ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth *with it* and said, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’ He said, ‘Go, and tell this people: “Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand.” **Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed**” (Isaiah 6:1-10).