

heard from him.’ They did not understand that he was talking to them about the Father” (John 8:25-27, CJB/CJSB).

When many English Bible readers encounter Yeshua’s words of John 8:28, they may assume that it simply involves a recognition on the part of the Jewish religious leaders, that Yeshua may have been an important figure, prophet, or even the Messiah. As the RSV renders it, “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me.” That Yeshua has employed the Daniel 7:13-14 title of the “Son of Man,” alone demonstrates that He is no ordinary figure: “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 7:14, NIV). A point is coming in time when the religious leaders criticizing Yeshua, among others, will recognize Him as this Son of Man, even if for some with it being too late. The *Carmen Christi* hymn of Philippians 2:10-11 does state that “those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and...every tongue will confess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord,” some of which will come via coercion.

Yet, while the title of the “Son of Man” appearing in John 8:28 might be sufficient to place Yeshua into the Divine Identity, it is not only what appears. The source text of John 8:28a communicates *hotan hupsōsēte ton huion tou anthrōpou, tote gnōsethe hoti egō eimi* (ὅταν ὑψώσητε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τότε γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι), “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know who I am” (TLV). Burge points how “8:28 leaves off the predicate, making Jesus’ audience wonder and marvel at the amazing claims he is making.”¹⁴⁵ But while Yeshua can claim “I am,” once again invoking the burning bush theophany of Exodus 3:14, Yeshua is no independent agent off and alone to Himself. As the Father’s agent sent to Planet Earth, He is an obedient Son. Michaels indicates, “to know Jesus as the one who says ‘I am’ is to know him as the One sent from the Father, and thus finally to know his Father as well.”¹⁴⁶ Yeshua’s identity, origins, and nature are all to be determined from what it fully means for Him to be the One sent from the Father: “The One who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to Him” (John 8:29, TLV). Köstenberger further observes,

“Jesus, as the sent Son, again affirms his dependence on the Father, in keeping with the Jewish maxim that ‘a man’s agent [*šāliah*] is like the man himself’ (e.g., *m. Ber.* 5.5). The Father is with Jesus; he has never abandoned his Son...because he always does what pleases the Father (8:46; cf. 4:34). Hence, Jesus’ actions are proof of the Father’s presence with him.”¹⁴⁷

In spite of some of the limitations of His listeners in this scene (John 8:23-24, 26)—and by extension the ongoing challenges presented by us investigating what it fully means for Yeshua to identify Himself as “I am” (John 8:24, 28)—it is recorded “As He was speaking these things, many people put their trust in Him” (John 8:30, TLV). *Polloi* (πολλοί) is “many,” not just “some” to be taken as a few.

John 8:38-41

“Yeshua’s Origins Are From God”

“I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.’ They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ Yeshua said to them, ‘If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. But as it is,

¹⁴⁵ Burge, *John*, 258.

¹⁴⁶ Michaels, 492.

¹⁴⁷ Köstenberger, 260.

you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father.’ They said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.’ Yeshua said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.*”

In previous discussion, Yeshua spoke to His followers—which were notably indeed “those Jews who had believed Him” (John 8:31a)—about the need for abiding in His word and His truth (John 8:31b-32). Obviously as He was speaking to His followers, there were detractors nearby, as the Messiah would explain the difference between those in slavery to sin (John 8:33-34), and how a child of God has a different status than such a slave (John 8:35). Yeshua forthrightly declares, “So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36), as belief in Him will reckon men and women free from the condemnation and guilt of sin. Yeshua recognizes how many present regarded themselves as being of the seed or offspring of Abraham, and thus inherently free, yet they seek to kill Him (John 8:37)—surely something that is not becoming of those who regard themselves as demonstrating the faith example of the Patriarch.

The statements which follow in John 8:38-47, mainly have Yeshua comparing and contrasting the character and motives of His detractors—presumably among the Jewish religious leadership—and Himself. Yeshua is one who is “from God” (John 8:40, 42, 47); Yeshua’s opponents, thinking that they are children of Abraham (John 8:39), are actually out to serve themselves, and are in reality children of the Devil (John 8:44). While the discussion of John 8:38-47 mainly involves the motives of Yeshua versus those of His opponents, there are some statements which appear, which do beg some questions about the nature of the Messiah.

The sentence, “I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father” (John 8:38, RSV), is something which definitely begs a closer look. Here, you have Yeshua contrasting His experience of what He has seen with His Heavenly Father, *ha egō heōraka para tō patri lalō* (ἃ ἐγὼ ἐώρακα παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ λαλῶ), “the things I have seen with the Father I speak” (Brown and Comfort)—to the actions of the opponents, *kai humeis own ekousate para tou patros poieiete* (καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν ἃ ἠκούσατε παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ποιείτε), “and you therefore the things you heard from the (your) father you do” (Brown and Comfort).¹⁴⁸ As is witnessed in the slight extrapolation of the NIV, “I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence,” there are interpreters who have taken John 8:38a as reflective of Yeshua’s pre-existence. Bruce comments,

“Jesus’ claim to speak the things which he had ‘seen’ in the Father’s presence (verse 38) echoes his language in John 6:46: ‘he who comes from God, he has seen the Father’. The truth which he teaches is heavenly truth, although it is presented for acceptance by men and women on earth. But no one can speak of heavenly realities except one who has come down from

¹⁴⁸ Brown and Comfort, 354.

heaven and imparts to his hearers on earth what he has seen and heard in that transcendent realm (cf. John 3:11-13).¹⁴⁹

A second remark in this dialogue, necessary to probe regarding the nature of the Messiah, appears in John 8:42, which is mainly intended to highlight how His opponents—who think they were serving God—were really not: “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me” (RSV). Yeshua’s origins are stated in the source text as *egō gar ek tou Theou exēlthōn* (ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον), “for-I from – God came forth” (Brown and Comfort). Rather than being a child of fornication (John 8:41), Yeshua’s origins are from God. Morris describes, “He came out from God,” also stating “the tense points to a moment of time, the incarnation.”¹⁵⁰ That Yeshua is not out only for His own self-serving interests—in stark contrast to any of the gods, goddesses, or other supernatural entities which would come down from the Heavens to the Earth—is clear from the dialogue transcribed with *kai ekō oude gar ap’ emautou elēlutha, all’ ekeinos me apesteilen* (καὶ ἤκω· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπ’ ἐμαυτοῦ ἐλήλυθα, ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνός με ἀπέστειλεν), “and I come for-not from myself I have come but that one sent-me” (Brown and Comfort).¹⁵¹ Once again, our investigation into the nature of Yeshua, particularly as seen in the Gospel of John, is to widely involve what it means for Him to be sent to Earth from the Heavenly Father.

John 8:48-59

“Yeshua’s Pre-Existence of Abraham”

“The Jews answered and said to Him, ‘Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?’ Yeshua answered, ‘I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.’ The Jews said to Him, ‘Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, “If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.” Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?’ Yeshua answered, ‘If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, “He is our God”; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.’ So the Jews said to Him, ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?’ Yeshua said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.’ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Yeshua hid Himself and went out of the temple.”

Yeshua has just informed His opponents, “you are not of God” (John 8:47), which they doubtlessly took as not only an insult, but also as being rather impudent and arrogant from someone who had not been formally trained as a rabbi or religious leader (John 7:15). The Jewish leaders retort back with, “Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?” (John 8:48, NIV). Yeshua accused of being a Samaritan would immediately be taken as a slur, but more importantly regard how the Jewish leaders present thought that Yeshua was an aberration. The reason Yeshua was rejected, was because the religious leaders present did not want to recognize the truth He was teaching, and they could not comprehend the significance of His selfless mission of redemption:

“Yeshua replied, ‘Me? I have no demon. I am honoring my Father. But you dishonor me. I am not seeking praise for myself. There is One who is seeking it, and he is the judge. Yes,

¹⁴⁹ Bruce, *John*, 198.

¹⁵⁰ Morris, *John*, 462.

¹⁵¹ Brown and Comfort, 354.