

integrated into the Divine Identity. What the LORD or YHWH does in the Tanach, Yeshua does.¹³⁶

Mark 9:2-13; Matthew 17:1-13; Luke 9:28-36

“The Transfiguration of Yeshua”

“Six days later, Yeshua took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Yeshua. Peter said to Yeshua, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified. Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, ‘This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!’ All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Yeshua alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant. They asked Him, saying, ‘Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ And He said to them, ‘Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him’” (Mark 9:2-13).

“Six days later Yeshua took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Peter said to Yeshua, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, ‘This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!’ When the disciples heard *this*, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. And Jesus came to *them* and touched them and said, ‘Get up, and do not be afraid.’ And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Yeshua Himself alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Yeshua commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.’ And His disciples asked Him, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ And He answered and said, ‘Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist” (Matthew 17:1-13).

“Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while He was praying, the appearance of His face became different, and His clothing *became white and gleaming*. And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Yeshua, ‘Master, it

¹³⁶ One Messianic version, which is broadly reflective of a low, or at least lower, Christology, is The Messianic Writings, as it Capitalizes pronouns and possessive pronouns for the Father, but leaves pronouns and possessive pronouns for the Son in lowercase. This version does reflect, even noting various Tanach passages, the view that the Son will be enacting the recompense stated in Matthew 16:27:

“For the Son of Adam will come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and then he will give to each one according to his deeds. [Ps. 62:12, Prov. 24:12; Is. 62:11]” (Matthew 16:27, The Messianic Writings).

The Nature of Yeshua in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts

is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah’—not realizing what he was saying. While he was saying this, a cloud formed and *began* to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!’ And when the voice had spoken, Yeshua was found alone. And they kept silent, and reported to no one in those days any of the things which they had seen” (Luke 9:28-36).

The scene of Yeshua’s Transfiguration has to bear some importance in evaluating the nature of the Messiah. Yeshua took Peter, James, and John, and not only was He transfigured or metamorphosized¹³⁷ before them (Mark 9:2; Matthew 17:2; Luke 9:29), but He appeared alongside of Moses and Elijah (Mark 9:4; Matthew 17:3; Luke 9:30). The three Disciples present are in a seeming state of shock at the presence of their Master along with two, apparently deceased, figures in the history of Ancient Israel.¹³⁸ Not quite knowing what to do, Peter actually asks the Lord if tabernacles or tents can be set up for the three of them (Mark 9:5-6; Matthew 17:4; Luke 9:33). Immediately following this, a cloud surrounds them, with the voice of the Heavenly Father speaking forth (Mark 9:7; Matthew 17:5; Luke 9:35). It can be interjected how with the cloud present, that some previous Tanach scenes—such as God appearing in the pillar of cloud in the Exodus—are being invoked (Exodus 13:21-22).

The scene of Yeshua’s Transfiguration, and the explicit declaration of Him being the Chosen Son of God, does not directly imply Divinity for Yeshua. Luke 9:30-31 indicates that Yeshua, Moses, and Elijah all three appeared in glory (*hoi ophthentes en doxē, oī ôphthentes ên dôxē*; “who [plural] had appeared with glorious splendor,” Mounce and Mounce¹³⁹). But as the scene closes, it is narrated, “As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead” (Mark 9:9); “As they were coming down from the mountain, Yeshua commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead” (Matthew 17:9). Yeshua notably refers to Himself by the Daniel 7:9-14 title of the “Son of Man” (discussed previously), and with clouds featuring prominently in the declaration of the Father’s approval of His Son, it cannot go overlooked how Daniel 7:13 does say of the Son of Man presented before the Ancient of Days, “And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.”

Proponents of a low Christology, of Yeshua the Messiah being a created agent of God, would conclude that the scene of Yeshua’s Transfiguration should be taken as evidence that Yeshua has a distinct, supernatural nature. *No one can deny from Yeshua’s Transfiguration that the Messiah has a distinct, supernatural nature.* But narratively from what has been witnessed previously, the Disciples have only just affirmed that Yeshua is the Messiah (Mark 8:27-30; Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-20), consciously recognizing that He is more than just a reforming teacher or rabbi, and more than just a prophet like previous figures in Israel’s history. Now, with scenes like Yeshua being metamorphosized before Peter, James, and John—and present with Moses and Elijah, no less—can the case begin to be quantitatively established that Yeshua has a significant, supernatural nature, unlike any other human. *The Disciples are experientially witnessing more and more about who their Master truly is.* And, those who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua being God, should recognize that Yeshua being revealed as a

¹³⁷ Grk. verb *metamorphoō* (μεταμορφόω); “to change in a manner visible to others, be transfigured of Jesus, who took on the form of his heavenly glory **Mt 17:2; Mk 9:2**” (BDAG, 639).

¹³⁸ What the presence of Moses and Elijah at Yeshua’s Transfigure communicates about the post-mortem state, is discussed in the entry for Mark 9:4-5; Matthew 17:3-4; Luke 9:30-33, in the author’s publication *To Be Absent From the Body*.

¹³⁹ Mounce and Mounce, 261.

supernatural entity to His Disciples, is important, as it will later have to be confessed that He is not just some or any member of the Heavenly host who has been sent down to Planet Earth, endowed with special powers.

Mark 9:30-32; Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:43-45 **“The Son of Man Will be Killed by Sinners”**

“From there they went out and *began* to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *about it*. For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, ‘The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.’ But they did not understand *this* statement, and they were afraid to ask Him” (Mark 9:30-32).

“And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Yeshua said to them, ‘The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day.’ And they were deeply grieved” (Matthew 17:22-23).

“And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, ‘Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.’ But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement” (Luke 9:43-45).

What does this narrational data tell us about the nature of the Messiah? Yeshua is recorded as telling things to His Disciples that they could not handle and fully process (Mark 9:32; Matthew 17:23b; Luke 9:45). He specifically told His Disciples some bleak news about the future they were to anticipate: “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again” (Mark 9:31, NRSV); “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised” (Matthew 17:22-23a, NRSV); “Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands” (Luke 9:44, NRSV). Given the reaction of the Disciples—one of distress and bewilderment about what to do—they obviously paid more attention to their Teacher telling them that He would be betrayed and executed, than resurrected three days later.

As readers of the Gospels two millennia later, we admittedly benefit from knowing what happens, as Yeshua is delivered over to the Romans to be unjustly executed—but then raises from the dead. What cannot go overlooked in the records of Mark 9:30-32; Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:43-45 here, is how Yeshua refers to Himself via the title “Son of Man.” When the title “Son of Man” is correctly acknowledged as having a Tanach background, of the figure brought before the Ancient of Days, granted a Kingdom with no end and who the entire Creation must venerate—the gravity of Yeshua being betrayed, humiliated, sacrificed for human sins, and then resurrected, should be better appreciated. As Daniel 7:9-14 (discussed previously) says of the Son of Man,

“I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took *His* seat; His vesture *was* like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* ablaze with flames, its wheels *were* a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened. Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their