

But he did not alter them. Some, today, find themselves satisfied ‘to say...*He is “as-if-God” for me’*. But there is no ‘as if’ in James: Jesus Christ is *the Lord*.²

- Dan G. McCartney: “In this letter...James identifies himself simply as a ‘servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Since James includes no definite or indefinite articles with these words, it is possible to read this phrase as ‘servant of Jesus Christ, God and Lord.’ But it is more likely that he is simply closely associating the two nouns: Lord Jesus Christ and God. In any case, we must remember that when a Jew put the words ‘God’ and ‘Lord’ together, the Lord in view could only be God (cf. 1:7, where ‘from the Lord’ means ‘from God’). No matter how the verse is read, James is setting forth a very high Christology, identifying Jesus not just as Christ (Messiah) but also as Lord, mentioned in the same breath with God.”³

The statement of James 1:1, “Jacob, a slave of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, To the twelve tribes in the Diaspora: Shalom!” (TLV), is perhaps something that most closely mirrors that of the Apostle Peter’s dynamic preaching in Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Messiah—this Yeshua whom you crucified.” There are those who take the construction *Theou kai Kuriou Iēsou Christou*, “of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah,” to actually be “of Yeshua the Messiah, God and Lord.” But perhaps more significant, is how the titles God and Lord are listed in such close proximity, with Yeshua the Messiah doubtlessly associated with one of them. As Douglas J. Moo concludes, “James’s view of his half-brother Jesus had undergone quite a transformation since the days they grew up in the same household together!”⁴

The statement of James 1:1, “From: Ya’akov, a slave of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah To: The Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora: *Shalom!*” (CJB/CJSB), could have made more of an effort of separating out God the Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, if James did not consider Yeshua to be integrated into the Divine Identity. All that would need to be seen for v. 1 to be an issue of James’ ministry as a servant, would be for him to have dropped the title *Kurios* or Lord, with him saying, “James, a bond-servant of God and of Yeshua the Messiah” (NASU modified). But instead, the Torah faithful, monotheistic Jew that James was, plainly sees him describe God the Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, by using titles which among his peers would have been reserved only for the latter.

James 1:13-15 **“God Cannot Be Tempted By Evil”**

“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”

In issuing an admonition to his audience to resist the lure of sin, James the Just makes it quite clear that a temptation to sin does not originate with God. As he communicates, “He himself tempts no one. But each one is tempted when he is dragged away and enticed by his own desire. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is full grown, it brings forth death” (James 1:13b-15, TLV). Even with demonic forces a likely factor in tempting

² J.A. Motyer, *The Message of James* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985), pp 27-28.

³ Dan G. McCartney, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: James* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 78.

⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 49.

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people to sin, the enemy can only have success when people themselves want to sin, and crave something that is contrary to the will and commandments of God. When people fall into sinful behavior, all it can do is lead them into death, and into a state of being where they are separated or distanced from their Creator.

In discussions over the nature of Yeshua, it cannot go overlooked that sometimes James 1:13a is used by proponents of a low Christology, as proof against the Divinity of Yeshua, as the Messiah was tempted by Satan in the wilderness (Mark 1:12-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). James 1:13a says, "God cannot be tempted by evil," the adjective *apeirastos* (ἀπειράστος) meaning, "incapable of being tempted by a thing" (LS).⁵ The logic of many who hold to a low Christology is, that since Yeshua was clearly tempted by Satan, that He cannot be God. Such a method of argumentation, however, is severely flawed. It cannot be avoided how the Holy Scriptures record the fact that God the Father was tempted by the Ancient Israelites:

"He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD [they tempted the LORD, KJV], saying, 'Is the LORD among us, or not?'" (Exodus 17:7).

"Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times [and have tempted me now these ten times, KJV] and have not listened to My voice" (Numbers 14:22).

In the course of human history people have doubtlessly tempted God to inappropriate action, placing Him in the situation of being tempted. This often takes place via absurd claims such as, "If God truly exists, I demand that He now enact revenge on my enemies who have wronged me!" **Yet, because God may be situationally tempted, it does not all of a sudden make Him something less than an Eternal and Supreme Creator.** The point of James 1:13 is not that God cannot be in the situation of being tempted by some party; the point is that God can never succumb to temptation. Motyer's observations are excellent:

*"God cannot be tempted with evil. The divine nature is of such unmixed holiness that it is impossible for him to be enticed to plot to harm us. There is nothing within his whole nature to which that or any other temptation could appeal, or which would respond to that or any other base suggestion. Secondly (and consequently) he himself tempts no one. He is of such unmixed goodness in his attitudes and actions that there is no room in motive, will or deed for that which would bring disaster, great or small, on any of his people. To be sure, he places tests in our pathway...But there is never an ulterior motive in all this, for his holiness offers no lodging-place for evil within his nature; neither is there the least impulse to trip us up, for his goodness forbids that he should seek our hurt. When he tests, it is so that we may pass the test and inherit the blessing. When the reverse happens, the blame lies elsewhere than in the God of all grace."*⁶

No honest reader of the Apostolic Scriptures can avoid the fact that Yeshua the Messiah was situationally tempted. However, the character of Yeshua the Messiah is representative of a being whose perfect and sinless nature is revulsed at temptation. As Erik Thoennes summarizes in the *ESV Study Bible*,

"Jesus experienced *human temptation*: 'For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet

⁵ H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 91.

⁶ Motyer, *James*, 51.

without sin' (Heb. 4:15; cf. Luke 4:1-2). While Jesus experienced every kind of human temptation, he never succumbed to sin (John 8:29, 46; 15:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5)."⁷

James 2:1 "Our Glorious Lord Yeshua"

"My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Yeshua the Messiah with an attitude of personal favoritism."

In his epistle, James the Just emphasizes the fact that born again Believers are to have faith in Yeshua the Messiah, demonstrating proper actions and attitudes, particularly in their treatment of the poor (James 2:2-7). He admonishes, "My brothers and sisters, do not hold the faith of our glorious Lord *Yeshua* the Messiah while showing favoritism" (James 2:1, TLV). Apparently, for a sector of James' audience, showing "snobbery" (Phillips New Testament) was an extreme problem, and it was disruptive for others trying to enter in. The CJB/CJSB offers the unique rendering for James 2:1, "My brothers, practice the faith of our Lord Yeshua, the glorious Messiah, without showing favoritism."

The object of faith and trust is *tou Kuriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou tēs doxēs* (τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης), "our glorious Lord Yeshua the Messiah." Associating Yeshua with the description of *doxa* (δόξα), the Greek Septuagint equivalent of the Hebrew *kavod* (כְּבוֹד), is Christologically important. *Kavod* appears in some critical Torah passages describing the Divine presence of God:

"The glory of the LORD [*kevod-ADONAI*, כְּבוֹד יְהוָה] rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud" (Exodus 24:16).

"Then Moses said, 'I pray You, show me Your glory [*kevodekha*, כְּבוֹדְךָ]'" (Exodus 33:18).

"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD [*kevod ADONAI*, יְהוָה כְּבוֹד] filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34).

The term *kavod* literally means "heavy," and it has a wide variety of connotations. The most significant of these predominantly regards the presence of God manifested in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. *TWOT* describes the significance of the word *kavod*:

"The bulk of occurrences where God's glory is a visible manifestation have to do with the tabernacle (Ex 16:10; 40:34; etc.) and with the temple in Ezekiel's vision of the exile and restoration (9:3; etc.). These manifestations are directly related to God's self-disclosure and his intent to dwell with men, to have his reality and his splendor known to them. But this is only possible when they take account of the stunning quality of his holiness and set out in faith and obedience to let that character be manifested in them (Num 14:10; Isa 6:3; Ezr 10, 11)."⁸

When James uses the Greek term *doxa*, *doxa* carries with it the same understanding of *kavod*. While *doxa* is a title of honor to be sure, much more than just appropriate honor and reverence to be issued toward Yeshua was intended. McCartney's brief estimation is, "In calling Jesus

⁷ Erik Thoennes, "Biblical Doctrine: An Overview," in Wayne Grudem, ed., *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 2517.

⁸ John N. Oswalt, "כְּבוֹד," in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:427.