

received a purer and more immortal essence than ourselves" (*Decalogue* 64).⁷² Witherington interjects that the rebuke of John, attempting to worship the messenger or angel, would have been important, given the presence of some form of angel worship in Asia Minor (cf. Colossians 2:18):

"No one and nothing other than God should be worshiped, but John himself makes the same mistake many have made. The angel had given the prophet the word of God, but the messenger must not be mistaken for the sender of the message. Thus John is exhorted not to worship the angel. The angel is but John's fellow servant of God, and the brother of those having the witness of Christ. This verse may reflect John's awareness that there was a problem in Asia, even among syncretistic Jews, with the worship of angels (though Col. 2:18 may mean worship with rather than of angels)."⁷³

This is not the first time in the Scriptures where veneration as borderline worship, or outright worship, has been witnessed of the created being—and subsequently refused. Joseph refused the veneration of his brothers in Egypt (Genesis 50:19). Peter refused worship from the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:25-26). Barnabas and Paul were aghast at the Lystrans thinking that they were Zeus and Hermes (Acts 14:11-15). What is most important about all of these scenes, is that when worship is being issued to a created supernatural being or another human being, that it is refused. There are scores of scenes in the Apostolic Scriptures where worship is issued to Yeshua the Messiah, and it is not refused.

Revelation 19:11-16

"King of Kings and Lord of Lords"

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.'"

When the Messiah returns to Planet Earth, a scene of intense judgment will be witnessed (Revelation 19:11-15). The Messiah possesses an extreme distinction as He arrives and issues Divine vindication upon His enemies. It is frequently concluded that the description of the Messiah witnessed here is broadly taken from the description of God seen previously in Isaiah 63:1-4:

"Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, this One who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength? 'It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment. For the day of vengeance was in My heart, and My year of redemption has come."

Of significance is how Revelation 19:16 communicates, "On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords'" (TLV), *Basileus basileōn kai kurios kuriōn*

⁷² *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, 523.

⁷³ Witherington, *Revelation*, 233.

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(Βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ κύριος κυρίων). It is properly recognized how the title “King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” possessed by Yeshua the Messiah, is something directly appropriated from descriptions of the LORD or YHWH seen in the Tanach. Mounce generally summarizes how “This name emphasizes the universal sovereignty of the warrior Christ in his eschatological triumph over all the enemies of God. The title, as it occurs here and elsewhere in Scripture (Rev 17:14; I Tim 6:15; Dan 2:47), goes back to Moses’ declaration to Israel, ‘The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords’ (Deut 10:17; cf. *I Enoch* 9:4).”⁷⁴

It does have to be recognized how this is a title witnessed for human leaders in the Tanach:

“Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace” (Ezra 7:12).

“For thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, chariots, cavalry and a great army’” (Ezekiel 26:7).

“You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory” (Daniel 2:37).

Human monarchs are witnessed being called “king of kings,” even though the Lord God of Israel is actually the Only True King of Kings. For a commentator like Beale, “Just as the Babylonian king was wrongly addressed by this title, so that king of latter-day Babylon (Rome) in John’s day was similarly addressed.”⁷⁵ The original late-First and early-Second Century C.E. recipients of the Book of Revelation needed to be reminded that even though Caesar may have claimed supremacy, that Yeshua the Messiah was truly supreme. The status of “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” is most imperatively seen as a title for the One God of Israel as ruler:

“For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe” (Deuteronomy 10:17).

“Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for His lovingkindness is everlasting” (Psalm 136:3).

“The king answered Daniel and said, ‘Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery’” (Daniel 2:47).

“And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one” (Zechariah 14:9).

“...which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:15).

Recognizing how the One God of Israel is called “King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” the application of this title to Yeshua the Messiah should be taken as strong evidence of His integration into the Divine Identity. A supernatural yet ultimately created being or entity, should not be expected to be called “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” In the view of Aune, “Since the title ‘King of kings and Lord of lords’ is one associated primarily with Yahweh, the transfer of this title to the Messiah appears to cohere with the enhanced Christology...”⁷⁶ Osborne further details,

⁷⁴ Mounce, *Revelation*, 347.

⁷⁵ Beale, pp 963-964.

⁷⁶ Aune, 56c:1063.

“The Antichrist is ruler over his vassal kings (chap. 17), but Christ is sovereign over all...The title occurs in the LXX (Dan. 4:37 Theodotion; cf. Deut. 10:17; Dan. 2:37), intertestamental literature (1 Enoch 9.4; cf. 2 Macc. 13:4; 1 Enoch 63.4), and NT (1 Tim. 6:15), where it is always used of God. Thus, this is another place where the divinity of Christ is stressed—the Warrior Messiah is God himself!”⁷⁷

One interesting feature of Revelation 19:16 is deducing what is intended by “He wears upon his mantle and upon his thigh the name written...” (*Lattimore*). Frequently, this has been approached with these royal titles being embroidered on the clothing of the Messiah, as would likely have been the case of other ancient dignitaries.⁷⁸ There are, however, some who have suggested that the title “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” is actually branded on the physical thigh of Yeshua. Keener is one who thinks, “That the name was written on Jesus’ thigh need not have puzzled ancient hearers; thus, commentators observe that the Greeks sometimes branded horses on their thighs and some wrote names on statues in Rome.”⁷⁹ Morris takes the ascriptions of Revelation 19:16 in a more metaphorical direction, indicating, “That on the thigh is more difficult, but Psalm 45:3 speaks of the sword girded on the thigh and this may be a way of saying that the sword is the Word (vv. 13,15,21).”⁸⁰ Noting how some have proposed textual corruption issues for Revelation 19:16, Beale offers the further possibility,

“[A] conjectural emendation {suggests}...that the text originally had MITPAN (‘girdle’) in place of MHPON (‘thigh’), but that ‘thigh’ arose from ‘girdle’ by a confusion of IT with H...[T]he original two phrases of v. 16...[reflect] the same kind of parallelism found in Isa. 11:5: ‘he will have his loins girded with righteousness and his sides clothed with truth.’”⁸¹

Aune, noting some of the thoughts of C.C. Torrey, interjects another approach to Revelation 19:16:

“{Torrey} has proposed that since ר r and ד d are not distinguished in written Aram[aic], the translator has mistaken רגלה *dglh*, ‘his banner,’ for רגלה *rglh*, ‘his leg,’ and then has located the name inscribed as high on the ‘leg’ as possible, on the μηρός [*mēros*], the thigh.”⁸²

Here, it has been suggested that the title “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” being written on the thigh of the Messiah is not correct, and instead that this statement was originally communicated in a Semitic language, and later mistranslated. This thought has actually been picked up by the Sacred Name Only Bible, *The Scriptures* (2009). Noting the instruction of Leviticus 19:28 which prohibits tattooing, its publishers have claimed that the Book of Revelation was originally written in Hebrew, and that Revelation 19:16 contains a mistranslation, with the suggestion that “thigh” should actually be “banner.” In their view,

“If this word was written in Hebrew, it would have been *regel*. It’s possible though, that the copiers of Revelation could have overlooked the small extension on the *dalet* (ד), which would have made it a *resh* (ר). If the word was *degel* [דֵּגֶל]⁸³ it would have meant ‘banner.’”⁸⁴

It cannot go unnoticed how three major Hebrew New Testament versions render the Greek *mēros* or “thigh” with *yarekh* (יָרֵךְ); Salkinson-Ginsburg, Delitzsch, 1991 UBSHNT) in Revelation 19:16. This appears in Torah passages such as Genesis 24:2 or 47:29, where swearing to one’s elder takes place, or in Genesis 32:25 when Jacob’s hip is dislocated. Given the rather symbolic

⁷⁷ Osborne, *Revelation*, 686.

⁷⁸ Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 281; Ladd, 256.

⁷⁹ Keener, *Revelation*, 455.

⁸⁰ Morris, *Revelation*, 225.

⁸¹ Beale, 964.

⁸² Aune, 56c:1044.

⁸³ “standard, banner” (*BDB*, 186).

⁸⁴ *The Scriptures*, third edition (Northridge, South Africa: Institute for Scripture Research, 2009), 1229.

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or allegorical functions of much of the vocabulary of the Book of Revelation, it would seem somewhat out of place to insist on “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (which the Sacred Name ISR Scriptures has as, “SOVEREIGN OF SOVEREIGNS AND MASTER OF MASTERS”) being actually tattooed on the Messiah’s literal thigh. Some other, more representative interpretations of what the “thigh” represents, should be considered, such as His fidelity to Divine promises.

Revelation 20:6

“Priests of God and of Messiah”

“Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Messiah and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

In discussions over eschatology, there are certainly discussions and debates witnessed among differing schools of thought, regarding what “a thousand years” represents. While this writer is convinced that following the return of the Messiah, there will be a thousand-year Millennial reign on Planet Earth from Jerusalem—it is actually more important that this period is associated with how those who participate in the first resurrection, *esontai hierois tou Theou kai tou Christou* (ἔσονται ἱερεῖς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ), “they will be priests of God and of Christ” (Revelation 20:6, YLT). It is notably not just enough that those who participate in the first resurrection are priests of God; “they will be *cohanim* of God and of the Messiah” (CJB/CJSB). Mounce makes the general observation of how the vocation of being priests is taken directly from the original Tanach instruction about Ancient Israel being a kingdom of priests:

“At Sinai God promised the Israelites that if they would obey his voice and keep his commandments they would be to him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex 19:6). The faithful, by remaining true to Christ in the final trial by Antichrist, are thus priests of God and Christ. As a royal priesthood (cf. I Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10) they reign with him a thousand years.”⁸⁵

It would not have been out of place if Revelation 20:6 had simply read, “they will be priests of God and will reign for a thousand years” (NASU modified), but this is not what Revelation 20:6 says. The priestly service indicated in Revelation 20:6 is one which co-jointly serves both the Father and the Son. As Morris points out, “they are to be *priests of God and of Christ* (cf. 5:10; Is. 61:6; note also the close connection between God and Christ).”⁸⁶ Beale more clearly explains, “In 1:6 and 5:10 saints have been said only to be ‘priests to God,’ but now it is said that they will be ‘priests of God and of Christ.’ This suggests that Christ is on a par with God, which is underscored elsewhere in the Apocalypse (e.g., 5:13-14; 7:9-17).”⁸⁷ Fee directly concludes, “Here again the reader can hardly miss the high Christology, in which the Father and Son are once more brought together at the Eschaton.”⁸⁸ Would one actually expect a priesthood to service the interests of the Father and Son, unless they were both Divine, with the Son integrated into a plural *Elohim* Godhead?

⁸⁵ Mounce, *Revelation*, 360.

⁸⁶ Morris, *Revelation*, pp 231-232.

⁸⁷ Beale, 1003.

⁸⁸ Fee, *Revelation*, 284.