

# UPDATE

June 2017

For any one of us in full-time Messianic ministry, one of the worst experiences we have ever had is having to witness someone commit a severe act of apostasy. In the opening months of Outreach Israel Ministries in the Spring of 2003, I actually interacted with a number of people who were forthrightly convinced that Yeshua the Messiah was not God, and then later came to believe that He was not the Messiah. A few of them later ended up questioning the reliability of the Tanach Scriptures (OT). Because our ministry was so new at the time, we had to prioritize our various research projects—and so we simply opened a file, calling it “Salvation on the Line.”

In the course of my experience from 2003-2015, I was able to write things here and there about the nature of Yeshua and His Messiahship. This notably includes our mini-book *Confronting Yeshua's Divinity and Messiahship* and various passages in our *for the Practical Messianic* commentary series. Starting in 2016, progress began on what I originally believed would be a one-volume book on the nature of Yeshua, but now has actually opened up a whole new chapter of our ministry service. *Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity* will be released in two volumes (largely due to page count issues), with Volume I now available, focusing attention on passages from the Gospels and Acts. As I have been steadily working through many passages which inform us about the nature of Yeshua, one might think it is “overkill” to have to ask the question “Is this person/figure/being/entity a supernatural yet created being, or genuinely God?” However, as I have looked back on my time spent in Messianic ministry since 2003, our broad faith community has been literally “scraping by” in matters of its Christology (the study of the Messiah). A huge reference source on Yeshua's Divinity is long overdue! And, this will lead to further discussions on Yeshua's Messiahship and the reliability of the Bible.

Our family is fully dedicated to the work of the Lord, and in not only providing answers to the questions that today's Messianic people are urgently asking—but in providing stability for the long term effectiveness of the Messianic movement. It would not be possible for us to do the many things that we do **without your consistent, monthly financial support**. We have a great deal of spiritual pressure on us every day, and we do not need financial pressure as well. The biggest thing that our ministry actually needs from you, other than your prayers, is for you to sign up for a monthly offering via PayPal at [www.outreachisrael.net/support](http://www.outreachisrael.net/support), which can be easily done in regular \$25, \$50, or \$100 increments. Enclosed with this newsletter is also an insert and donation envelope, including an update on ongoing projects associated with our ministry.

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*J.K. McKee, editor Messianic Apologetics*

# EXODUS 3:1-16

reproduced from the new book by J.K. McKee

*Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity*

"Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, 'I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.' When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said also, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. The LORD said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?' And He said, 'Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.' Then Moses said to God, 'Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you." Now they may say to me, "What is His name?" What shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you."' God, furthermore, said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, "The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you." This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, "The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt.'"

The theophany of the burning bush, God's revelation to Moses, the presentation of the Divine Name YHWH/YHVH (יהוה), and most especially God's self-designation as the "I AM," all present something extremely important for later evaluations of the identity of Yeshua the Messiah. Moses, who would be commissioned as the leader of Israel, is witnessed pasturing the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro (Exodus 3:1), and experiences a significant supernatural encounter. It is recorded, *v'yeyra malakh YHWH eilayv b'labat-ish m'tokh ha'seneh* (וַיַּרְא מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה הַסֵּנֶה) "And YHWH's messenger was seen by him in the midst of a bush" (Exodus 3:2a, Fox). Noticing the marvel of the burning bush (Exodus 3:2b-3), the figure of the *malakh YHWH* (מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה), "the messenger/angel of the LORD," is stated to have been the entity present. John I. Durham fairly

informs us, “As often in the OT (Gen 18, Judg 6), there is in this passage a fluid interchange between symbol, representative, and God himself.”<sup>1</sup>

While the narrative could continue, stating that the *malakh YHWH* or “messenger/angel of the LORD” spoke to Moses from the burning bush, it is instead recorded that God proper is the One who spoke to Moses: *v’yar YHWH ki sar lir’ot v’yiqrā eilayv Elohim m’tokh ha’seneh v’yomer, Moshe Moshe* (וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה), “(וַיִּרְאֵה יְהוָה כִּי סָר לְרִאשׁוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסֶּנֶה), “When YHWH saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, he said: Moshe! Moshe!” (Exodus 3:4, Fox). God proper tells Moses to remove his sandals, as he is standing on holy ground (Exodus 3:5). And with the *malakh YHWH* or “messenger/angel of the LORD” originally having been noted to be the entity present (Exodus 3:2), this being proceeds to speak in the first person, *anokhi Elohei avikha, Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzchak, v’Elohei Ya’akov* (אֲנֹכִי יְצַחַק וְאַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְאַבְרָהָם), “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6a). It is then asserted of Moses, *ki yarei m’habit el-ha’Elohim* (כִּי יָרָא מִהַבֵּית אֱלֹהֵי־אֲבֹתָיו), “for he was afraid to look at God” (Exodus 3:6b, NJPS). God proper is recorded as being the figure which speaks to him of the present condition of the Israelites: *v’yomer YHWH ra’oh ra’iti et-’ani ami asher b’Mitrayim* (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה רָאֵה רָאִיתִי אֶת־עַנִּי עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם), “(וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה רָאֵה רָאִיתִי אֶת־עַנִּי עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם), “Now YHWH said: I have seen, yes, seen the affliction of my people that is in Egypt” (Exodus 3:7a, Fox). Discussion about the slavery of Israel in Egypt, God’s intention to deliver the people, and God’s assignments for Moses, continues with dialogue in the first person (Exodus 3:7b-12; cf. Acts 7:30-31).

In recognition of the mission that he is to perform for the God of his ancestors, Moses inquires about what name is to designate this God, as he will surely be asked about it from his fellow Israelites (Exodus 3:13). As it is recorded in the Hebrew text, *v’yomer Elohim el-Moshe ehyeh asher ehyeh* (וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה), a standard English translation being, “God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM’” (Exodus 3:14a). It is further stated, *v’yomer koh tomar l’vnei Yisrael ehyeh shelachni alei’khem* (וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶהְיֶה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם), “and He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:14b). There has certainly been some important discussion surrounding the meaning of *ehyeh asher ehyeh* (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה). Varied English translations of *ehyeh asher ehyeh* in Exodus 3:14,<sup>2</sup> beyond the relatively standard “I AM WHO I AM,” do need to be noted:

- “I Shall Be As I Shall Be” (ATS).
- “I-will-be-what-I-will-be” (Moffat).
- “I will be that which I will be” (Keter Crown Bible)
- “I AM the One Who Always Is” (WBC).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Exodus*, Vol 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), pp 30-31.

<sup>2</sup> The NJPS notably just leaves it as “Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh.”

<sup>3</sup> Durham, 35.

- “‘Ehyeh-‘Asher-‘Ehyeh, I-Will-Be-Who-I-Will-Be” (Alter).
- “EHEYE ASHER EHEYE (I will ever be what I now am)” (Jerusalem Bible-Koren).
- “EHYEH ASHER EHYEH/I will be-there howsoever I will be-there” (Fox).

It is widely agreed among Hebraists that the revelation of the Divine Name YHWH/YHVH (יהוה) further, is connected to *ehyeh asher ehyeh*: “Thus you shall say to the Children of Israel: YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitzhak, and the God of Yaakov, sends me to you” (Exodus 3:15, Fox). In his specialty translation of the Torah, Robert Alter draws the conclusion,

“‘I-Will-Be-Who-I-Will-Be’ is the most plausible construction of the Hebrew, though the middle word, ‘*asher*, could easily mean ‘what’ rather than ‘who,’ and the common rendering of ‘I-Am-That-I-Am’ cannot be excluded...Since the tense system of biblical Hebrew by no means corresponds to that of modern English, it is also perfectly possible to construct this as ‘I am He Who Endures.’ The strong consensus of biblical scholarship is that the original pronunciation of the name YHWH that God goes on to use in verse 15 was ‘Yahweh.’”<sup>4</sup>

Durham’s observations on Exodus 3:14 also need to be noted:

“אֲהִיֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיֶּה ‘I AM that I AM,’ replies God. The verbs are first person common qal imperfects of the verb הָיָה ‘to be,’ connoting continuing, unfinished action: ‘I am being that I am being,’ or ‘I am the Is-ing One,’ that is ‘the One Who Always Is.’ Not conceptual being, being in the abstract, but active being, is the intent of this reply. It is a reply that suggests that it is inappropriate to refer to God as ‘was’ or as ‘will be,’ for the reality of this active existence can be suggested only by the present: ‘is’ or ‘is-ing,’ ‘Always Is,’ or ‘Am.’”<sup>5</sup>

The Greek Septuagint took the Hebrew *ehyeh asher ehyeh* (אֲהִיֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיֶּה), “I AM WHO I AM,” and translated it as *egō eimi ho ōn* (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν), which Brenton’s English translation renders as “THE BEING,” and the 2007 NETS has as “I am The One Who Is.” The “I am” or *egō eimi* (ἐγώ εἰμι) formula is important for later statements made by Yeshua the Messiah appearing in the Gospels, detailing self-identification (i.e., Mark 14:62; John 8:58; 18:5-6), which many conclude are direct indicators of the Messiah identifying Himself as the YHWH God of the

<sup>4</sup> Robert Alter, trans., *The Five Books of Moses* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2004), 321.

<sup>5</sup> Durham, 39.

# ISAIAH 45:18-25

reproduced from the new book by J.K. McKee

*Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity*

"For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it *and* did not create it a waste place, *but* formed it to be inhabited), 'I am the LORD, and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, In some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, "Seek Me in a waste place"; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, declaring things that are upright. Gather yourselves and come; draw near together, you fugitives of the nations; they have no knowledge, who carry about their wooden idol and pray to a god who cannot save. Declare and set forth *your case*; indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear *allegiance*. They will say of Me, 'Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.' Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put to shame. In the LORD all the offspring of Israel will be justified and will glory."

Today's Bible readers, from the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries, can be at somewhat of a disadvantage, in that we all believe that the One God of Israel is a universal deity to which all of humankind should turn to for salvation and to worship. The scene of Isaiah 45:1-25, where the Lord used the Persian Cyrus to deliver His people, could have certainly struck a chord with many God-faithful Jews who originally heard it, as it would have forced many to recognize that the pagans at large were to turn to acknowledge, worship, and serve the same God as them. This is a God who was superior to any carved idols, which would be absolutely powerless to answer the true needs of a human being. The God of Israel decreed that as His people would see their Kingdom restored, that the nations at large would come to recognize Him and cast aside their idols. As Isaiah 45:13-15 exclaims,

"'I have aroused him {Cyrus} in righteousness and I will make all his ways smooth; he will build My city and will let My exiles go free, without any payment or reward,' says the LORD of hosts. Thus says the LORD, 'The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush and the Sabeans, men of stature, will come over to you and will be yours; they will walk behind you, they will come over in chains and will bow down to you; they will make supplication to you: "Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, no other God [*akh bakh El, v'ein 'od efes elohim, אַךְ בַּךְ אֱלֹהִים וְאֵין עֹד אֲפֶס אֱלֹהִים*]'". Truly, You are a God who hides Himself, O God of Israel, Savior [*Elohei Yisrael moshi'a, מוֹשִׁיעַ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*]'"

Benjamin D. Sommer's conclusions on Isaiah 45:1-25, in *The Jewish Study Bible*, are quite accurate:

“This speech focuses on the Persian king Cyrus as the tool through whom God brings salvation not only to Israel but to the whole world. After Cyrus allows the exiles to return to Jerusalem, peoples the world over will recognize the LORD’s faithfulness to the covenant made with Israel, and consequently they will join Israel in worshipping the one true God.”<sup>1</sup>

We should not have problems with recognizing that without the return of the Southern Kingdom exiles from Babylon, the reconstruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the subsequent emergence of Second Temple Judaism—that the mechanisms for a widespread exposure to the God of Israel to the nations at large would not have been in place. We commonly credit the spread of the good news of Yeshua (Jesus) of Nazareth being Israel’s Messiah, as being the cause of a broad, worldwide spread of monotheism (cf. John 17:3). This is something based in the return of the exiles, and in how participating in the rebuilding of Israel’s Kingdom, the nations will turn away from their worthless idols.

The word of the God of Israel to the pagans, of the nations at large, is one of welcome invitation: “Gather yourselves, come and approach together, O survivors of the nations, who do not know, who carry about the wood of their graven image, and pray to a god who cannot save” (Isaiah 45:20, ATS). And, He is absolutely forthright about His identity as the Only True God: “Proclaim and approach; even let [your leaders] take counsel together: Who let this be heard for aforesaid, or related it from of old? Is it not I, HASHEM? There is no other god besides Me [*v’ein-od elohim m’bal’adai*, וְאֵין-עוֹד אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלָעָדַי]; there is no righteous god besides Me and no savior other than Me” (Isaiah 45:21, ATS). The admonition of the God of Israel, to *kol-afsei-eretz* (כָּל-אַפְסֵי-אֶרֶץ) or “all the ends of the earth,” is that all might turn to Him to be saved, that every knee would bow to Him, and every tongue would swear allegiance to Him:

“Turn to Me and be saved, all ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other. I swear by Myself, righteousness has gone forth from My mouth, a word that will not be rescinded: that to Me shall every knee kneel and every tongue swear” (Isaiah 45:22-23, ATS).

Some universal recognition, of the God of Israel, still has not taken place in human history—whether by the free will choice of people, or by some forced acknowledgment. Jews and Christians alike believe that in the future Messianic Age—even with the latter believing Yeshua of Nazareth to be the Messiah—that there is a greater, worldwide recognition of the God of Israel as the Creator. The oracle of Isaiah 45:18-25 represents the LORD God (YHWH) as One who is inviting and welcoming of all of His human creations turning to Him for salvation and deliverance. As John N. Oswalt properly concludes in the *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, “God intends that the whole earth acknowledge him as God and come to

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin D. Sommer, “Isaiah,” in *Jewish Study Bible*, 875.

him to be saved. No one will be exempt (v. 23; cf. Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10-11). There is no other savior (v. 24; cf. Acts 4:12).”<sup>2</sup>

The statements of Isaiah 45:23 are quoted later, in the *Carmen Christi* hymn of Philippians 2:5-11, particularly in regard to the future, universal recognition of Yeshua the Messiah:

“[S]o that at the name of Yeshua **EVERY KNEE WILL BOW**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The reference to the oracle of Isaiah 45:18-25 in Philippians 2:5-11, certainly suggests that Yeshua the Messiah is involved in the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. Yeshua is also to certainly be the means by which there will be a universal recognition of the Lord God of Israel, whether by volition or by coercion, in the eschaton. (This is not a promise of universal salvation.) Yet, what is intended by every tongue confessing *hoti Kurios Iēsous Christos, eis doxan Theou patros* (ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς), “that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord—to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11, TLV)?

The key statement of Isaiah 45:23, *ki-li tik’ra kol-berekh* (כִּי-לִי תִכְרַע כָּל-בְּרָךְ), “To Me every knee shall bend” (Isaiah 45:23, NJPS)—rendered by the Greek Septuagint as *hoti emoi kampsei pan gonu* (ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ), “because to me every knee shall bow” (NETS)—is adapted by Philippians 2:10 to become, *en tō onomati Iēsou pan gonu kampsē* (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη). The personal pronoun “Me” of Isaiah 45:23—which is very clearly the Lord or YHWH (Isaiah 45:21)—is substituted with Yeshua or Jesus in Philippians 2:10. And, when this Yeshua is to be recognized as “Lord” by all of Creation, the only *Kurios* (κύριος) or Lord present within the oracle of Isaiah 45:18-25, is the One who declares *ani YHWH* (אֲנִי יְהוָה; Isaiah 45:21), as the title *Kurios* frequently rendered the Divine Name YHWH/YHVH in the LXX. **Yeshua the Messiah, is without question, integrated into the Divine Identity in the application of Isaiah 45:18-25 in Philippians 2:5-11.** One would not expect any supernatural yet created being, to be declared as the *Kurios*, the LORD or YHWH, to which all people must turn toward for their salvation. Yet, Yeshua the Messiah is identified in Philippians 2:5-11 to

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<sup>2</sup> John N. Oswalt, “Isaiah,” in D.A. Carson, gen. ed., *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, 2011 NIV (Grand

# DANIEL 7:9-14

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*Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity*

"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 dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. I kept looking in the night visions, 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. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

Far too frequently, many Christian Bible readers—and even a number of people within our Messianic faith community—come to the conclusion that when Yeshua the Messiah refers to Himself as the "Son of Man," that Yeshua is referring to Himself as a human. While it is to be observed that there are places in the Hebrew Scriptures where the terminology "son of man" (*ben-adam*, בֶּן־אָדָם; Psalm 8:5) can be used as an essential synonym of "human being," the title "Son of Man," employed by the Messiah, has a significant background in Daniel 7:9-14. Not only is a proper recognition of the Daniel 7:9-14 background of the title Son of Man critical for evaluating the nature of the Messiah, but is also imperative for understanding certain reactions witnessed when He invokes this title (i.e., Mark 14:53-65; Matthew 26:57-68; Luke 22:63-71). The Son of Man is a figure which appears in Heaven before God proper, and has a status and level of power which only God proper can seemingly possess.

The theophany of Daniel 7:9-14 is surrounded by the Prophet Daniel's vision of the four beasts (Daniel 7:1-8, 9-28). While these four beasts have been historically interpreted as representing the empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome—although with some disputes here and there—no Bible reader disputes how the four beasts are indicative of an anti-God and anti-people-of-God world system. Any survey of the theophany of Daniel 7:9-14 definitely provides the people of God—which for the Prophet Daniel's initial audience in the Sixth Century B.C.E. would involve his fellow Southern Kingdom exiles taken into Babylonian captivity—a word of hope and comfort. God as the Ancient of Days (Ara. *'Atiq Yomin*, עֲתִיק יְמִינִי), seated upon His throne in Heaven, sitting in judgment over the beasts (Daniel 7:9-12)—a surety of their ultimate defeat and God's ulti-

mate triumph—is paralleled by the description seen by the Prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 1:26-28:

“Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, *was* a figure with the appearance of a man. Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and *there was* a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so *was* the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.”

Within the theophany of Daniel 7:9-14, it is not only witnessed that the Ancient of Days oversees the judgment and ultimate defeat of the different beasts. It is also witnessed that a figure designated as the *bar enash* (בֶּר אִנָּשׁ) or “Son of Man,” is brought before the Ancient of Days, and given supreme power and an everlasting Kingdom:

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13-14, RSV).

Yeshua the Messiah referring to Himself constantly throughout the Gospels as the “Son of Man,” given the Danielic presentation of the *bar enash* before the throne of the Ancient of Days, would be quite severe. Yeshua the Messiah was not just claiming some sort of special status or relationship or association with the Ancient of Days; **Yeshua the Messiah was claiming a status of supreme authority over all humanity and all human kingdoms.** Yeshua the Messiah would claim to be one coming on the clouds of Heaven (Mark 14:62; Matthew 26:64), a status that God proper often demonstrates, when He comes in power to vindicate His own (Psalm 97:2; 104:3; Isaiah 19:1).

It would be enough to recognize the supreme power of Yeshua the Messiah, the Son of Man, present in how most English Bibles render Daniel 7:14a: “He was given authority to rule, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him” (HCSB). There are good reasons, however, to translate the verb *yiflechun* (יִפְלְחוּ) as “worshiped” (NIV) and not simply “serve(d).” (The Kohlenberger interlinear has “they-worshiped.”)<sup>1</sup> It is witnessed lexically how the Aramaic verb *pelach* (פִּלַּח), commonly thought to mean “serve; pay reverence to” (*A Reader’s Hebrew Bible*),<sup>2</sup> can indeed mean “to labour; hence to serve...specially, to worship God” (*Gesenius*),<sup>3</sup> “to serve, to revere, to wor-

<sup>1</sup> John R. Kohlenberger III, trans., *The Interlinear NIV Hebrew-English Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 4:464.

<sup>2</sup> A. Phillip Brown II and Bryan W. Smith, *A Reader’s Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 1473.

ship” (AMG),<sup>4</sup> “to serve (man or deity); to worship” (Jastrow).<sup>5</sup> Questions can legitimately be raised—in light of the status that this Son of Man is given, in order to enact vindication for the righteous—as to whether or not a supernatural yet created agent of God proper would have the exclusive veneration of all human kingdoms, and hence all Creation. Questions are significantly raised, if the Aramaic *pelach* in Daniel 7:14 is to be taken as “worship,” and not just “serve.”

Both Christian and Jewish examiners have certainly had to deliberate over the identity and nature of the *bar enash* or “Son of Man” seen in Daniel 7. In his useful resource, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament*, Wright weighs a number of different factors which can no doubt be in the mind of different Bible readers who encounter the terminology “Son of Man.” Is this a human figure or a supernatural figure? As Wright properly notes, it is ultimately the Divine aura surrounding the title “Son of Man” from Daniel 7, which was the significant factor in Yeshua being condemned of blasphemy against the God of Israel by the Jewish religious leaders, and not just His general claim to being the Messiah:

“In Daniel 7, Daniel sees the kingdoms of this earth, portrayed as ravaging beasts from the sea, given the freedom to oppress and harass the people of God. The people of God, described as ‘the saints of the Most High’, are attacked and devoured almost to the point of extinction. But then the visionary scene changes dramatically in verse 9. Instead of a picture of human history at ground level, we are transported into the presence of God (‘the Ancient of Days’) seated on his throne. There, through the presence of a human figure described as ‘one like a son of man’, the tables are turned. This son of man comes into the presence of the Ancient of Days, the beasts are stripped of authority and destroyed, and dominion, kingdom and authority are given to the son of man and the saints for ever.

“The ‘son of man’ figure in Daniel 7 has a curiously double point of reference. On the one hand, he appears to represent the saints – that is, the human people of God in history. The parallelism between verse 14 (where authority and kingdom are given to the son of man) and verse 18 (where the kingdom is given to the saints) shows this. The son of man, in the vision, represents or symbolizes the saints. It has been suggested that he may be an angelic figure, since in Daniel, nations can be represented in the spiritual domain by angels (e.g. 10:13, 20f.). Or perhaps he is simply a kind of corporate, representative human figure, embodying, in the vision, the people of God as a whole. From this point of view, the figure fitted in very well with Jesus’s identification of himself with Israel. As the Son of Man he represented them. He shared their experience. His destiny was theirs and vice versa.

“But on the other hand the son of man in Daniel 7 is closely associated with God himself. Daniel sees him ‘coming with the clouds of heaven’ (v. 13).

<sup>3</sup> H.F.W. Gesenius: *Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, trans. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 675.

<sup>4</sup> Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, eds., *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 901.

<sup>5</sup> Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (New York: Judaica Treasury, 2004), 1178.

That was very much part of the ‘ambience’ of deity in the Old Testament. Furthermore, he is given authority, glory, power and worship and his kingdom is eternal (v. 14)—all rather more than the normal lot of any son of Adam. In fact, there are Greek versions of the text which translate Daniel 7:13 in such a way as to *identify* the son of man with the Ancient of Days. And this tradition finds a strong echo in Revelation, where the description of Jesus in glory is a combination of the reference to the son of man and a virtual direct quotation of the description of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9f. (Rev. 1:7, 12-16). The two descriptions are conflated into one picture.

“So there was an air of divinity about the son of man figure also. Indeed, it may have been this aspect of the Danielic figure which clinched the verdict against Jesus on the grounds of blasphemy at his trial. When asked whether he was the Messiah, Jesus did not deny it, but went on to claim that his accusers would see the Son of Man in divine glory ‘coming on the clouds of heaven’—i.e. in the presence of God (Matt. 26:63f.). The shift from Messiah to Son of Man must be deliberate and the description is clearly Danielic.”<sup>6</sup>

One of the more provocative approaches to the figure of the “Son of Man” in Daniel 7 is seen in the 2012 book, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ*, by the broadly liberal Jewish scholar Daniel Boyarin. Boyarin, who is no Believer in Yeshua of Nazareth, and who dates the Book of Daniel to the Maccabean crisis of the Second Century B.C.E., is ultimately forced from the text of Daniel, to recognize how it serves not just as a legitimate Jewish background to Him being regarded as Divine by His followers, but also as source material for a plural God-head at least composed of the Father and the Son:

“In this remarkable text, we find the prophet Daniel having a vision in which there are two divine figures, one who is depicted as an old man, an Ancient of Days, sitting on the throne. We have been told, however, that there is more than one throne there, and sure enough a second divine figure, in form ‘like a human being,’ is brought on the clouds of heaven and invested by the Ancient of Days in a ceremony very much like the passing of the torch from elder king to younger in ancient Near Eastern royal ceremonial and the passing of the torch from older gods to younger ones in their myths: ‘I saw in the vision of the night, and behold with the clouds of the Heaven there come one like a Son of Man and came to the Ancient of Days and stood before him and brought him close, and to him was given rulership and glory and the kingdom and all nations, peoples, and languages will worship him. His rulership is eternal which will not pass, and his kingship will not be destroyed.’

“...What this text projects is a second divine figure to whom will be given eternal dominion of the entire world, of a restored entire world in which this eternal king’s guidance and rule will be in accord, completely and finally, with the will of the Ancient of Days as well. Although this Redeemer figure is not called the Messiah—this name for him will have to wait for later reflections on this Danielic vision, as we shall see below—it brings us close to at least some

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<sup>6</sup> Christopher J.H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1992), pp 151-152.

of the crucial characteristics of the figure named later the Messiah or the Christ.

“What are these characteristics?

“He is divine.

“He is in human form.

“He may very well be portrayed as a younger-appearing divinity than the Ancient of Days.

“He will be enthroned on high.

“He is given power and dominion, even sovereignty on earth.

“All of these are characteristic of Jesus the Christ as he will appear in the Gospels...Moreover, they have been further developed within Jewish traditions between the Book of Daniel and the Gospels. At a certain point these traditions became merged in Jewish minds with the expectation of a return of a Davidic king, and the idea of a divine-human Messiah was born. This figure was then named ‘Son of Man,’ alluding to his origins in the divine figure named ‘one like a Son of Man/a human being’ in Daniel. In other words, a simile, a God who looks like a human being (literally Son of Man) has become the name for that God, who is now called ‘Son of Man,’ a reference to his human-appearing divinity...

“....

“There are many variations and traditions about this figure in the Gospels themselves and in other early Jewish texts. Some Jews had been expecting this Redeemer to be a human exalted to the state of divinity, while others were expecting a divinity to come down to earth and take on human form; some believers in Jesus believed the Christ had been born as an ordinary human and then exalted to divine status, while others believed him to have been a divinity who came down to earth. Either way, we end up with a doubled godhead and a human-divine combination as the expected Redeemer...”<sup>7</sup>

Recognizing the veneration due to the Daniel 7:9-14 Son of Man is vital, for Bible readers who wish to properly recognize the significance of how Yeshua the Messiah calls Himself the Son of Man in the Gospel narratives. When it is recognized that the Son of Man is the figure brought before the Ancient of Days and given not only an eternal Kingdom—but is to be demonstrated the veneration, service, *and* worship one would assume would be exclusive to such an Ancient of Days—we have a figure who is indeed Divine. Most unfortunately, not enough Bible readers are too consciously aware of the Tanach background of Yeshua the Messiah being the “Son of Man.”

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: The New Press, 2012), pp 31-34.