

## This is My Beloved Son

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### Peter's Confession

I've had a lot of conversations about the person of Yeshua (Jesus). The text I generally begin and end with is found here:

**Matthew 16:13-16**<sup>1</sup> Now when Yeshua came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" They said, "Some say John the Baptizer, some, Elijah, and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."<sup>2</sup>

What makes this text unique is that it is a direct conversation about the identity of Yeshua. Not only that, the person asking the question about Yeshua's identity is Yeshua himself. We are blessed to have such an exchange recorded for us.

He begins by asking the disciples, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" In the gospels, "Son of man" is the title Yeshua uses most of himself. Its primary source is a prophetic vision

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<sup>1</sup> In all Scripture quotations, the proper Hebrew names of the Father and the Son, Yahweh and Yeshua, have been inserted. I've used the World English Bible predominantly, because it is much easier to read for the modern day person, yet still a formal equivalence translation, based on the 1901 American Standard Version. This Bible may be freely copied without written permission from the publisher: [worldenglishbible.org](http://worldenglishbible.org)

<sup>2</sup> I do not normally use the English word "God" when teaching scripture or writing about scripture. I have chosen to do so in this booklet for the sake of clarity, and because in general, people are more familiar with that title terminology. My reasons for not usually using the title "God" are found on my website.

(Daniel 7:13-14) where one like a son of man<sup>3</sup> approaches the Ancient of Days and is given dominion, glory, and a kingdom. Here in Matthew 16, Yeshua already uses "Son of man" to describe himself, so he must be looking for more of an answer than "Son of man."

They give him some of the answers that were going around at that time. Some people were thinking that Yeshua was somehow John the Baptizer, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.<sup>4</sup> So he looks at his disciples and asks the question in a little different way: "But who do YOU say that I am?" He had asked them what others were saying, but now he wanted to know if they have personal knowledge about who he is.

Peter answers, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." That's the answer Peter gave; no less, no more. "The Christ" means the Anointed One<sup>5</sup> of Yahweh; the man Yahweh anointed and sent to the people of Israel, or the man Yahweh commissioned to be the deliverer. "The Son of the Living God" means exactly that: you have the Living God<sup>6</sup> (that's Yahweh the Father), and *Son of the Living God*, means you are Yahweh's Son, a separate person or being that Yahweh caused to come into existence and has a special relationship with. That was Peter's answer, and here is Yeshua's response:

**Matthew 16:17-18** Yeshua answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. I also tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my assembly, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

Peter asked the question because the Father in heaven had supernaturally revealed to Peter who Yeshua was. Peter did not get the answer by "flesh and blood," (by human revelation). This is why Yeshua pronounces a blessing upon Peter. He knows that the Father has been working in Peter's heart and mind, producing the true revelation of who the man from Nazareth is. Remember that Yeshua is standing right in front of Peter. They are looking at each other. What a moment that must have been!

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<sup>3</sup> "Son of man" is a title that describes a human being in the Hebrew Bible. Compare Ezekiel (2:1) being called son of man. Also see Numbers 23:19 and 1 Samuel 26:19.

<sup>4</sup> Though these answers were incorrect, they were all legitimate. It was assumed by some that John the Baptizer had risen from the dead (Matthew 14:2), there was an ancient prophecy that Elijah would come back in some manner (Malachi 4:5), and it was believed by many that Jeremiah was the prophet like Moses from Deuteronomy 18:15 (and that he may rise from the dead and come on the scene in their day). The answers floating around about who Yeshua was were not ridiculous answers. People were wondering who he could be, because of his great teaching and miraculous power to perform miracles.

<sup>5</sup> I believe the best verse explaining how Yeshua was anointed by Yahweh is Acts 10:38: "Even Yeshua of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

<sup>6</sup> The phrase "living God" is used about 30 times in the King James Version of the Bible. I believe it references Yahweh's everlasting nature, not just in the now and future, but also in the past. In other words, Yahweh gives life to all things, has always been living, and will always will be living. There is no possibility of Yahweh ever dying.

Yeshua has been talking to all his disciples. He's right there in the flesh, yet he tells Peter, "Flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you, but rather my Father who is in heaven." Yeshua was standing upon the earth,<sup>7</sup> talking to Peter. Yeshua's Father was in heaven. It was the Father - not Yeshua - who revealed this great truth to Peter.

Yeshua ends by saying that he will build his assembly upon this rock. There are more detailed implications to "this rock" in verse 18, but one great implication is that "this rock" is the *revelation* that Peter just spoke. The assembly is built upon the solid rock revelation that Yeshua is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

You don't build on a partial foundation or a shaky foundation. You don't construct the church on a revelation that is only about *part* of who Yeshua is. You build on a firm foundation. This means Peter's revelation was full, sure, total, and firm. Peter's revelation was all of these things, because the Father in heaven gave it to Peter. The Father chose to reveal who Yeshua was, to Peter. If Yeshua stood before you and I today and asked us the same question, how could we be justified in answering differently than Peter? We couldn't. The Father isn't going to reveal one answer to Peter, and then reveal a different answer to you and I. Likewise, Yeshua isn't going to accept one answer from Peter, and then accept a different answer from us. I would look Yeshua right in the eyes and tell him, "I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." And you know what? He would tell me I was blessed just like Peter. I hope with all my heart that you would answer the same way, because I want you to be blessed as well.

Today men tell us we must believe all sorts of things about Yeshua. They tell us we must believe he is really the Father, or that he's actually the living God (the Almighty), or the second person of a co-equal, co-eternal Trinity.<sup>8</sup> The truth is that the Father in heaven gave Peter the confession unto salvation, and that's the confession we must have today. We must not pay lip-service to this confession, but really believe that Yeshua is the promised Messiah and Yahweh's Son. If we confess this with brother Peter we will be blessed.

**John 11:25-27** Yeshua said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will still live, even if he dies. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, God's Son, he who comes into the world."

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<sup>7</sup> In the gospel of Matthew, Yeshua speaks of his "Father in heaven" about 15 times. This would be an odd statement if Yeshua was really the Father - standing on the earth - with whomever he was talking to.

<sup>8</sup> It makes no sense for someone to say that you must believe in the Trinity to be saved, or that you must believe that Yeshua is Yahweh to be saved. Such doctrines were later developments within Christianity. They did begin to develop early on in the 2nd through 5th centuries A.D. but nonetheless they are post-apostolic developments. It is absurd to think that a later doctrinal development is an essential belief of the Messianic or Christian faith. Even if Trinitarians or Oneness proponents say that Peter (and others) had a fledgling understanding of Yeshua, they still must accept that Peter (and others) were forgiven and saved with that understanding. Yahweh forbid that we "throw people into hell" for not believing something that took many years of formulation by some adherents to Christianity.

**1 John 4:15** Whoever confesses that Yeshua is the Son of God, God remains in him, and he in God.

**1 John 5:5** Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Yeshua is the Son of God?

### **The Father-Son Relationship**

When people ask me who I believe Yeshua is, I tell them, "I believe he is the promised Davidic Messiah in Hebrew Scripture, the unique Son of Yahweh the Father." Scripture uses the terms "Father" and "Son" to convey to us the relationship that Yahweh and Yeshua have. It helps because we experience the father and son relationship in our own lives. I have one sibling, my sister, but I am the only son that my father has. My father begat me, loves me, has told me he is pleased with me, gives me hugs, hurts when I hurt, smiles when I smile, laughs with me, and is always there for me when I need him. I have a special relationship with my dad. I am his son, his beloved son.

What's neat is that the older I get (and the more I grow in mind and heart), I see more and more of my dad in me.<sup>9</sup> People have always told me how much I look like my dad. My sister once posted a photo of me on her Facebook page, and one of her friends who had never seen me before said something like, "Whoa, he looks just like your dad!"<sup>10</sup> It made me smile, because I've been hearing that my entire life. I now catch myself saying things my dad always said, walking and talking like my dad, and even sitting like my dad. None of this should surprise me though, because he's my father and I'm his son.

I'm now grown, with three sons of my own. This means that I am a father and they are my sons. I love my sons. I enjoy being around them. I love to see them laugh. I love to give them a hug and tell them "I love you son." I like taking them to work with me and teaching them my trade, and people are always telling me how there's no denying that they are my sons, because they look

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<sup>9</sup> This concept I experience always makes me think of what Luke 2:52 says: "And Yeshua increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Yeshua did not have all wisdom and favor from his birth. Yes, he was begotten by the power of the Holy Spirit of Yahweh, but after his birth he had to increase in these things. Luke writes that he increased not only in man's sight but in God's sight as well. I must point out here that even as an adult, Yeshua did not know everything that Yahweh knew. In Mark 13:32 Yeshua said himself that he did not know the day nor hour of his coming. He said that no man knows, neither the angels, nor the Son, but my Father only. People go to great lengths in attempt to explain how as the Son he doesn't know, but as God he does know. When Yeshua said he didn't know the day or hour of his coming I choose to believe him. I don't believe he could "flip a switch" and know all of a sudden (because he was really God or the Father). I really believe that he did not know, just like he said.

<sup>10</sup> What we experience in this way in our own lives helps us to understand what Yeshua meant in John 14:9 when he said, "he who has seen me has seen the Father." Yeshua didn't say, "I am the Father," but he was telling Philip that when he performed his miracles, people were actually seeing the Father (Whose fullness dwelt inside of Yeshua) perform those miracles (vss. 10-11). When someone looked at Yeshua, they were looking at the man who was more in the image of Yahweh than any other man that had walked the face of the earth before him, or would after him. The original Adam was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1), and all of Adam's descendants are said to be made in God's image (1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9). Yeshua is said to be THE image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15), and elsewhere is said to be the express image of God's person (Hebrews 1:3).

and act like me. I have now experienced all of the precious moments my dad experienced with me. I used to only know what it feels like to be a son; now I know what it feels like to be a father.

I am not saying that the relationship I have with my father (or my sons) is identical to the Father and Son relationship of Yahweh and Yeshua. What I am saying is that the Father and Son language used in Scripture (of Yahweh and Yeshua) is able to teach us something about their relationship, because we experience father and son relationships. Yahweh chose to use this language in Scripture, and it is used for the reason of helping us better comprehend His relationship with Yeshua. We should be thankful that Yahweh has given us a relationship in our own lives that helps explain the relationship He has with His Son. We should also accept this relationship that Yahweh and Yeshua have, and not try to distort it or downplay it. To be the only Son of Yahweh is not a small position. It's less than being Yahweh, yes, but it's so much more than being anyone else that has ever lived upon this earth.

### **This is My Son<sup>11</sup>**

We have two occurrences in Scripture where Yahweh directly spoke from heaven about Yeshua, and people heard His voice. In these cases we read that Yahweh said Yeshua was His beloved Son, He was well-pleased in him, and the people needed to listen to His Son, because Yeshua was the Chosen One that Yahweh had sent.

**Matthew 3:16-17** Yeshua, when he was baptized, went up directly from the water: and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming on him. Behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Yeshua was on the earth being baptized, while Yahweh was up in heaven. Yahweh was pleased in what Yeshua was doing, for Yeshua was fulfilling all righteousness (Matthew 3:14-15).<sup>12</sup> Yahweh loved Yeshua very much that day, and He has loved him ever since. Yahweh has always been

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<sup>11</sup> Although I will touch on this here and there throughout the book, my intention is not to go into great detail about whether or not Yeshua literally pre-existed his human existence. I take the position that his pre-existence was notional rather than literal, but I do see how a person can believe in literal pre-existence and still believe that Yeshua is Yahweh's Son, separate from Yahweh. A good discussion about this can be viewed in a debate (April, 2016) held at the Atlanta Bible College between Dr. Dustin Smith and Mr. David Barron. Search YouTube for the debate titled: "Debate on Jesus' Preexistence." You can also watch/listen to a discussion I had with a few brothers titled "Did the Son of God Pre-Exist (Roundtable Discussion)" on YouTube.

<sup>12</sup> Think about this in relation to how you feel, if you are a parent and you see one of your children walking in righteousness. There is no greater joy than to see my sons or daughters praising Yahweh, reading His Word, and following in His commands. That joy and emotion you feel when your children do this is a glimpse into the joy and emotion that overwhelmed Yahweh when He watched Yeshua be baptized that day. He loved it so much that He had to announce it from heaven to earth!

well pleased with Yeshua, because Yeshua always does that which pleases his Father (John 8:29). He is a faithful Son to his Father, never veering from His instructions.<sup>13</sup>

So at Yeshua's baptism, we have Yahweh the Father telling us about Yeshua, "This is My Son." What better witness or testimony could we have than the Father in heaven? Why would we want to believe less or more than what the Father said?

The other time Yahweh directly spoke from heaven about who Yeshua is was on the "Mount of Transfiguration." Peter, John, and James went up on a mountain to pray with Yeshua, and as Yeshua was praying, his appearance and clothing changed. He was transfigured before them, and they beheld a vision of Yeshua, Moses, and Elijah. As Peter began to speak to Yeshua, a cloud covered them all.

**Luke 9:34-35** ...and they were afraid as they entered into the cloud. A voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him!"

Here again we read about Yahweh, saying of Yeshua, "This is My Son." Yahweh really does have a Son, and Peter and the men with him heard the voice of Yahweh speak about His Son that day (2 Peter 1:16-18).

Yahweh spoke from heaven, towards earth, about Yeshua, twice. Both times He said, "This is My Son." Yahweh is not playing mind games with anybody. He was speaking the complete truth about who Yeshua is. Why then do people want to believe that Yeshua is really Yahweh the Father? Why do people push so strongly that Yeshua is Almighty God? I believe we should listen to the voice of Yahweh (with childlike faith) that speaks with authority: "This is My beloved Son."

People say that those of us who do not believe Yeshua is Yahweh are "taking away from Yeshua." I would admonish these people to listen to Yahweh's voice from heaven. You can do this right now by opening the bible and reading out loud these two texts again. Yahweh is the One who said, "This is My Son." To say more than Yahweh is to add to His inspired words. Adding to His words is just as wrong as taking away from His words. I believe we would be much better off believing exactly what Yahweh said about Yeshua on these monumental occasions.

## The Parable of the Vineyard

**Mark 12:1-12** He began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a pit for the winepress, built a tower, rented it out to a farmer, and went into another country. When it was time, he sent a servant to the farmer to get from the farmer his share of the fruit of the vineyard. They took him, beat him, and sent him

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<sup>13</sup> Even in Yeshua's darkest hour, as he began to experience the cup of wrath for the sins of the world, he prayed like this: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matthew 26:39b) Notice that there are two wills present, but Yeshua resisted his own will in favor of the Father's will. He was hurting, but he still submitted to the will of his Father.

away empty. Again, he sent another servant to them; and they threw stones at him, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. Again he sent another; and they killed him; and many others, beating some, and killing some. Therefore still having one, his beloved son, he sent him last to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But those farmers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' They took him, killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the farmers, and will give the vineyard to others. Haven't you even read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, It is marvelous in our eyes?'" They tried to seize him, but they feared the multitude; for they perceived that he spoke the parable against them. They left him, and went away.

In this parable (also recorded in Matthew 21 and Luke 20) we have imagery of: Yahweh, His people, His teachers, His prophets, and His Son. The landowner who planted the vineyard, set the hedge, dug the winepress, and built the watchtower, represents Yahweh the Father. The tenant farmers that He lent the vineyard out to, represent Yahweh's people Israel, but specifically the leaders and teachers among the people of Israel. The leaders in Israel were to work the vineyard (the people of Israel), and produce fruit from the vineyard. You can see this by comparing Matthew 21:23 with Matthew 21:45. Once the chief priests and Pharisee elders heard this parable, they knew that he had spoken it about them, the leaders. The servants that the landowner sent to the farmers (to collect the fruit) represent Yahweh's prophets (2 Kings 9:7; 17:13, 23; Jeremiah 7:25; 25:4). Each time the landowner would send one of His servants, the farmers would beat, or wound, or sometimes kill him. They would not receive the servants that were sent to collect the harvest.

After this we read that the landowner had one son, and this son is called his beloved. The landowner finally decided to send his only son to the tenant farmers. The landowner said, "They will reverence and respect my son." (Matthew 21:37; Mark 12:6; Luke 20:13) But what happened? The farmers killed the son, scheming among themselves, "This is the heir of the vineyard. Let's kill him so we can have his inheritance." They killed him and threw him out of the vineyard like trash. This beloved, only son represents Yeshua. Yeshua goes on to explain (Matthew 21:42; Psalm 118:22-23) that he is the chief stone of the corner that the builders (the chief priests and Pharisee elders) rejected. Yeshua is the stone that came from Yahweh.<sup>14</sup> Yahweh sent Yeshua, just like the parable depicted, but the "tenant farmers" did not receive him.

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<sup>14</sup> The cornerstone was a stone at the base corner of a building. It connected two walls, holding them securely together. Everything was pulled square from that cornerstone, and everything was dependent upon that cornerstone. Yeshua, the Son of the Landowner (Yahweh), is the cornerstone, but the builders (the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisee elders) rejected the cornerstone. Matthew 21:42 says "this came from Yahweh" (quoting Psalm 118:23). Yahweh is the one who laid that stone, meaning Yahweh is the one who sent Yeshua, and more so than all of Yahweh's servants the prophets. Yahweh sent them too, and yes, they are part of the foundation, as even the apostles are (Ephesians 2:20), but Yeshua is the chief stone of the corner, coming directly from Yahweh. He is the stone that Daniel (2:34, 45) prophesies of, that comes off of the mountain without the hand of a man. We might say he is a "chip off the ol' block."

This parable is beautiful in showing that Yahweh has one beloved Son. It is true that the farmers Yahweh leased the vineyard to (Israelites) were His children. It is also true that His servants, the prophets of Israel, could be called His children. However, none of these were like Yeshua. Yeshua is Yahweh's one and only Son. He is unique. He is special.

When the parable says that the landowner has one son, his beloved, it is echoing what Yahweh said about Yeshua at his baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration. Yeshua is Yahweh's beloved Son (John 3:35). Yahweh loves Yeshua. They have a strong relationship as Father and Son. Yahweh gives all things into Yeshua's hand. We must believe this to have eternal life. We must believe that Yahweh is Yeshua's Father, and Yeshua is Yahweh's Son.

**John 17:1-3** Yeshua said these things, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may also glorify you; even as you gave him authority over all flesh, he will give eternal life to all whom you have given him. This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Yeshua [the] Christ."

### **Yahweh's Unique Son**

We read in Scripture that Yahweh has sons (plural). Some of His sons (angelic, spirit beings) shouted for joy when He created the earth (Job 38:7). Yahweh Himself says (Exodus 4:22) "Israel is my firstborn son." He even calls His individual Israelite people (Hosea 1:10) "sons of the living God." The first man Adam is called "the son of God" in Luke 3:38.<sup>15</sup> So how can we speak of Yahweh's one and only Son? What makes Yeshua unique from all the other children of Yahweh? To begin to answer this question, let's turn to Luke chapter 1 where we find a narrative of the birth of Yeshua. If we want to learn something about who Yeshua is, I think that reading and studying his birth narrative is a great place to do so. I will center in on the points in the text that directly relate to who Yeshua is.

In Luke 1:26-31, an angel named Gabriel was sent from Yahweh to a young, virgin woman named Mary.<sup>16</sup> Mary was blessed in finding the favor of Yahweh. She was told that she would give birth to a son, and she was to call his name Yeshua. The more common, English name Jesus is derived from the Hebrew name Yeshua, which means "salvation" or "deliverance."

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<sup>15</sup> The first man Adam helps us to understand how there are many sons in Yahweh's family, yet some of them are unique. Luke 3 lists Yeshua's genealogy, tracing backwards all the way to Adam. Sons and their fathers are mentioned throughout. Towards the end, Enos is mentioned as son of Seth and Seth is mentioned as son of Adam. But who is Adam the son of? Adam had no earthly father (or mother). Yahweh directly created Adam from the dust of the earth (and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life), thus Adam is mentioned in this genealogy as the son of God. Adam is a unique being. While Seth may be termed a son of God (one of Yahweh's children), he is not a son of God like Adam. This helps us to see that when Yeshua is called "Son of God" there is yet another uniqueness applied to that phrase. Yeshua is much more special than Adam.

<sup>16</sup> For a detailed look at the virgin conception and birth of Yeshua, visit the book section of my website, and read "The Virgin Birth: Fact or Fiction?"

**Luke 1:32-33** He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom."

We see that Mary's child is going to be extremely important, because he is the Son of the Most High. Recognize this though: *he's not the Most High*. To be the Most High means that there is no one higher. Yahweh is the Most High, and Yeshua is the *Son of* the Most High.

Later in this chapter we read that Yochanan (John) the Baptizer will be called a prophet of the Most High (Luke 1:76), which means he is the Most High's prophet. No one misunderstands that statement about John. The statement about Yeshua is just as easy to understand. Whereas John is a prophet of the Most High, Yeshua is the Son of the Most High. Neither man is the Most High.<sup>17</sup>

Even the demons realize this position of Yeshua. In Mark 5, it is recorded that an unclean spirit inside of a man cried out to Yeshua (vs. 7) saying, "What have I to do with you, Yeshua, you Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, don't torment me." Notice that the unclean spirit recognized who Yeshua was, and who the Most High God was. James 2:19 lets us know that the demons believe in one God. Mark 5:7 lets us know that demons believe Yeshua is the Son of that one Most High God.<sup>18</sup>

Gabriel also says (Luke 1:32) that the Lord God (Yahweh) shall give unto him (Yeshua) the throne of his father David. Notice that Yeshua is given the throne,<sup>19</sup> and that Yeshua's ancestor is king David. Yeshua is a descendant of David; he is a human being, but a unique human being because of his conception. He is both the Son of man and the Son of God.

Luke 1:34-35 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, seeing I am a virgin?" The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born from you will be called the Son of God."

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<sup>17</sup> According to Luke 2:1-14, when Yeshua was born, they wrapped him in a snug cloth and laid him in a feeding trough. Angels spoke from heaven that night, announcing that a Savior had been born. These same angels then praised, saying, "Glory to God in the highest." So while the baby Yeshua was in the feeding trough, God was in the highest.

<sup>18</sup> When the Devil himself tempted Yeshua, he knew full well who he was tempting. He told Yeshua (Matthew 4:3), "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Satan knows who Yahweh is. Satan knew he wasn't tempting God there in the wilderness. He was tempting, or at least trying to tempt, God's Son.

<sup>19</sup> This reminds me of Matthew 28:18 where Yeshua says, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and earth." People are usually quick to point out that Yeshua has all authority, and I agree, but they fail to see that it is a given authority. An example of given authority can be found in the relationship between Pharaoh and Joseph. In Genesis 41:37-45 we are told that (1) Joseph was placed over Pharaoh's house, (2) all people would obey the commands of Joseph, (3) Joseph was placed over all the land of Egypt, and (4) the very signet ring upon Pharaoh's hand was taken off and placed upon Joseph's hand. Pharaoh said to Joseph (Genesis 41:40), "Only in the throne I will be greater than you." When Pharaoh gave Joseph this authority in Egypt, it did not mean that Pharaoh ceased to have authority. As he says, he was still greater than Joseph in the throne. It rather meant that Pharaoh took the authority that he had, and invested it in a vice-regent over Egypt.

Mary was a young virgin, but she was old enough to know how women get pregnant. It amazed her that the angel was saying she would birth a son, because she had never been intimate with a man. It wasn't humanly possible for such to happen.

When Gabriel answered her, he didn't say anything about Joseph becoming her husband and going in unto Mary. That's not how this conception would take place. Instead, the Spirit of Yahweh or the Power of the Highest would overshadow Mary. What happened inside of Mary's womb would be a miracle. She would become pregnant without the aid of a man. It would be a miraculous, virgin conception and birth.<sup>20</sup>

There had been miraculous births in Hebrew history. Sarah conceived and birthed Isaac, even though she was passed the age of child-bearing (Genesis 17:17-21). Yahweh had to perform a miracle upon old Sarah's womb in order for her to have a baby, but in that case, Abraham went in unto Sarah. He knew Sarah (sexually).<sup>21</sup> In this account, Joseph did not go in unto Mary. The parallel account in Matthew tells us that Joseph knew her not (a euphemism; compare Genesis 38:26; 1 Kings 1:4), until she had brought forth her firstborn son (Matthew 1:25 KJV). Joseph did not have sexual relations with Mary to produce Yeshua. The power or Spirit<sup>22</sup> of the Highest (Yahweh) is what caused Yeshua to be conceived or begotten in a womb.

After Gabriel explains to Mary how the conception would happen, he says "therefore," meaning "for this reason. (see NASB, LSB, GNB, TS2009, Weymouth)" It is because of the miracle upon the womb of Mary and how the conception of Yeshua took place. It is for this reason that he will be called the Son of God.

Do you think that after Mary heard these words from Gabriel, she thought she was going to give birth to the Most High? I think she believed exactly what Gabriel told her. She would give birth

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<sup>20</sup> We are not told exactly how the virgin conception of Mary took place. We do know that many of the false, pagan religions of antiquity had stories of "virgin conceptions," but these stories all included a sexual act between one of their gods and a virgin woman, producing a demi-god upon the earth (half-man and half-god). Satan tries his best to mimic the truth, seeing that he was once a beautiful, angelic creature before God in heaven (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28). A great difference between the pagan religions and what happened with Mary is that in the accounts of the virgin conception in Matthew and Luke, there is nothing ever said about any sexual activity between Yahweh and Mary. The child produced in Mary would not be half-God and half-man, but complete man, with the fullness of the Spirit of the Highest living inside of him. Mary's conception would be miraculous. When Yahweh steps in to miraculously make conception happen, He is not tampering with the woman in any way. He is performing a miracle for the woman.

<sup>21</sup> In Genesis 18:14 Abraham is asked, "Is anything impossible for Yahweh?" In Luke 1:37 Gabriel (the angel) says to Mary, "For nothing will be impossible with God." As Luke wrote this, I believe he was recollecting the miracle in Sarah's womb. Did Yahweh "take" Abraham's wife here? Of course not, it's a miracle. Yahweh "stepped down" into His creation and bypassed the normality of things. Sarah would have never conceived had not Yahweh supernaturally caused it to happen. This is why Isaac is called the "child of promise" in contrast to Ishmael the "child of the flesh" (Galatians 4:23, 28-29).

<sup>22</sup> In brief, the Holy Spirit is Yahweh's operational power and presence. The first mention of the Spirit in scripture is in Genesis 1:3 where God's Spirit is hovering over the face of the waters. Yahweh's Spirit (Exodus 31:3) is not a separate person from Yahweh, no more than the spirit of Elijah is a separate person from Elijah (2 Kings 2:15).

to the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:38).<sup>23</sup> This is why Yeshua is unique. This is why John can record that he is Yahweh's only begotten Son.<sup>24</sup>

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. [see also John 1:14, 18; 3:18; 1 John 4:9]<sup>25</sup>

There is only one Son of Yahweh, in this way. He holds this position all by himself. Yahweh chose to beget a Son directly by the power of His Spirit. He caused a miracle to happen upon a virgin woman. The first man Adam was made from the dust of the earth. Yahweh directly created him, so Adam is called God's Son (Luke 3:38), but Adam wasn't begotten by the Spirit of Yahweh in the manner that Yeshua was. Yeshua was Yahweh's word, the breath of His mouth (Psalm 33:6) made into a human being (John 1:14). That word that Yahweh spoke in the beginning (Genesis 1:3; John 1:1), coming from His intellect, mind, thought, and plan; that word took on human form in the person of Yeshua. Yeshua of Nazareth is what the word of Yahweh became.

If you sat across the dinner table from me, and asked me what my father does for a living, you'd get an answer you've probably heard before. If you sat across the dinner table from Yeshua and asked him what his Father does for a living, he could say, "My Father runs the heavens and the earth. He is the Creator." He is the only man that could say such in that manner, because he is the only man to be begotten by the Spirit of Yahweh, through the womb of a woman, without the aid of a man.<sup>26</sup> That is an amazing thought. Yeshua really is Yahweh's Son.

This is why Mark can begin his gospel (1:1) with: "The beginning of the gospel of Yeshua (the) Christ, the Son of God." This is why John the baptizer can say (John 1:34): "And I saw,

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<sup>23</sup> In the next chapter, Luke continues to record for us what took place after the birth of Yeshua. Luke 2:21-23 reads "When eight days were fulfilled for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Yeshua, which was given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. When the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.)" They presented Yeshua to Yahweh, as the law required. They weren't presenting Yahweh to Yahweh.

<sup>24</sup> There are other unique qualities that make Yeshua the only Son. After his birth he lived a perfectly righteous life (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22). Hebrews 1:8-9 links his sonship up with the fact that he always loved righteousness and always hated lawlessness. He's therefore anointed with the oil of joy above his companions (us, fellow men and women). Then there's the point about him being the first man to ever resurrect to immortality (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:20; Col. 1:18). This too makes him unique and "one-and-only."

<sup>25</sup> The Greek word translated "only begotten" in the KJV is monogenes. I've found it used nine times in the Greek New Testament. Five of these times it is used of Yeshua. The other times it is used of a parent's only child (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38), and of Abraham's unique son Isaac, his only son through the promised wife Sarah (Hebrews 11:17).

<sup>26</sup> It is my belief that this is how Yeshua could say "I came down from heaven (John 6:38, 51)." While it is true that every good and perfect gift comes from the Father above (James 1:17), I believe Yeshua is claiming something unique of himself. Seeing that he was begotten by the Spirit of Yahweh - from heaven - he could say that he came down from heaven. Take note here that similar language is used of the "baptism of John" in the gospels of Matthew (21:25), Mark (11:30), and Luke (20:4). Yeshua was speaking of this baptism's authority, from heaven.

and bare record that this is the Son of God." This is the revelation that Nathaniel had when he proclaimed to Yeshua (John 1:49): "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." This is the entire reason that John wrote his gospel:

**John 20:30-31** And many other signs truly did Yeshua in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Yeshua is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

### **Peter's First Salvation Sermon**

In Acts 2 we have a salvation sermon preached by the apostle Peter. It was the first sermon preached shortly after Yeshua went to heaven (Acts 1:9-11), and the man who preached it (Peter) was a direct disciple (student) of Yeshua. Peter walked with him, and was as familiar with him as any man could have been. Peter had been given the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:13-19), just after he spoke the revelation the Father gave to him: that Yeshua was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

**Acts 2:22** "Men of Israel, hear these words! Yeshua of Nazareth, a man approved by God to you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as you yourselves know."

These men of Israel were Jewish men, dwelling (abiding) in Jerusalem, because the Day of Pentecost (the second of the three major pilgrim feasts; Deuteronomy 16:16) was upon them (Acts 2:1, 5). Peter tells them to listen to what he is saying, and he begins by speaking of Yeshua of Nazareth, a man approved by God with miraculous signs that God did, through him, among them. Here in a salvation message, Peter begins by talking about how Yeshua was a man approved of God.

Think about it. This is a point that Peter brings out to the men of Israel, in a salvation message. Peter doesn't begin his dissertation about Yeshua by saying "Yeshua is Yahweh," or "Yeshua is the Almighty." Peter speaks of how God performed great and mighty signs through a special man. Yahweh did these miracles, but the way Yahweh did them was through Yeshua of Nazareth.<sup>27</sup> Even though Yahweh chooses to use vessels to carry out His work, it is still Yahweh that is ultimately performing the work.

**Acts 2:23-24** Him, being delivered up by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by the hand of lawless men, crucified and killed; whom God raised up, having freed him from the agony of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it.

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<sup>27</sup> I find it disturbing that in many of the articles I've read over the years about the identity of Yeshua, the authors often describe Yeshua as "the God-man." Such a term is never even used of Yeshua in scripture, much less used with the connotations of today's authors or commentators. Peter rather says that Yeshua was "a man approved of God." If we have a problem with Yeshua being called a man in this salvation message, we have a problem with the apostle Peter, an appointed and approved apostle of Yeshua.

Peter talks about how that Yeshua was delivered up to die by the counsel and foreknowledge of God, but it was "you," the men of Israel (vs. 22) that crucified him by the hands of the lawless. The Israelites were the ones who cried out, "Crucify him! (Matthew 27:15-26)"

After three days Yahweh raised up Yeshua from death, or as Christians today would say, God raised Jesus from death. Now, one would think that if the "doctrine of the Trinity" or the belief that "Yeshua is Yahweh" is of such importance, Peter would have centered in on one of those here. After all, he is preaching his first message of salvation, a message of repentance to the men of Israel; they need to hear what is of utmost importance. Peter is silent about a Trinity. Peter doesn't utter one word about Yeshua being Yahweh (Jesus being God). Peter instead drives home the point about Yeshua being a man approved of God, a man by whom God performed great miracles, and a man whom God raised from the dead.

**Acts 2:25-28** For David says concerning him, 'I saw Yahweh always before my face, For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced. Moreover my flesh also will dwell in hope; Because you will not leave my soul in Hades. Neither will you allow your Holy One to see decay. You made known to me the ways of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

The text from David (that Peter is quoting) is a prophecy that sounds like it's about David. In Psalm 16, David says that "Yahweh is at my right hand." That's a reference to David's right hand. David says, "My heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad." That's a reference to David's heart and David's tongue. David says, "You will not leave my soul in Hades (the grave)." That's a reference to David's soul. But notice how Peter interprets this Psalm:

**Acts 2:29-32** "Brothers, I may tell you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, he would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he foreseeing this spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was his soul left in Hades, nor did his flesh see decay. This Yeshua God raised up, to which we all are witnesses.

Peter begins by saying that David is dead, buried, and everyone knows where his grave is. So how could David have been talking about himself back in the 16th Psalm? Peter explains this by remembering that David was a prophet, and that Yahweh had sworn to David that from his physical progeny would come the Messiah. David saw this prophetically beforehand and thus spoke of the resurrection of Yeshua, that Yeshua's soul was not left in the grave. Verse 32 explains this by saying that God raised up Yeshua, David's descendant, and everyone there listening to Peter was a witness to that resurrection.

The understanding of Psalm 16 is to put Yeshua in the place of David. When David speaks, it is actually prophetic of Yeshua, the descendant of David. When he says, "I (David) foresaw Yahweh always before my face," that is prophetically the Messiah saying, "I (Yeshua) foresaw Yahweh always before my face." When David says, "You will not leave my soul in the grave," that is prophetically Yeshua saying "You will not leave my soul in the grave." The point Peter

continues to drive home is the resurrection of Yeshua. Peter sees it important to center in on a prophecy of David (Yeshua's ancestor), that speaks of the resurrection of the Messiah, in the salvation message he preached that day to the men of Israel.<sup>28</sup>

**Acts 2:33-35** Being therefore exalted by the right hand of God<sup>29</sup> and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this, which you now see and hear. For David didn't ascend into the heavens, but he says himself, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit by my right hand, Until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'"

It was Yeshua who was pouring out the Spirit upon the apostles in Acts 2, because he now had the authority to do so (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 28:18). Yeshua is mentioned as different or separate from the words "God" and "Father." Yeshua is not referred to as God, but he has been exalted to the right hand of God. Yeshua is not referred to as Father, but he has received the promised Spirit from the Father.

Then Peter brings up David again, but he is continuing to point out that David prophetically spoke about Yeshua in the Psalms. David is not the one whom Yahweh raised from the dead, or the one whom Yahweh allowed to ascend into heaven. We know this because it was David himself that said, "Yahweh said unto my Lord."

Acts 2:34b-35 is a quotation from Psalm 110:1. David writes of Yahweh speaking to his (David's) Lord. There are two Lords in Psalm 110. Yahweh is Lord over Yeshua and Yeshua is Lord over David. David is recognizing Yahweh (one person) talking to "my Lord" (another person). What Yahweh says to David's Lord is this: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." This shows that not only are two persons involved, but that one of them (Yahweh) is superior to the other (David's Lord). Yahweh is the One inviting David's Lord to sit at His right hand. Yahweh is the One who will make this Lord's enemies to be a footstool for his feet.

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<sup>28</sup> Both Isaiah 11:1-2 and Psalm 89:20-37 promise that a shoot would sprout forth from the stump or stock of Jesse, David's father, and Yahweh did not lie to David that He would be faithful to His descendant. Apostle Peter, and many other Israelites in the first century, understood Yeshua to be the fulfillment of these prophecies.

<sup>29</sup> Acts 7:55-56 (HCSB) says, "But Stephen, filled by the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven. He saw God's glory, with [Yeshua] standing at the right hand of God, and he said, 'Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'" How could Yeshua be standing on the right hand of God, and be the God he was standing next to? See also Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 10:12, and 1 Peter 3:21-22.

To be at the right hand of Yahweh is a very prestigious position. I'd say it is the second highest position in all the universe, but it is still not the highest position. Father Yahweh alone holds that highest position.<sup>30</sup>

This Lord that Yahweh is prophetically speaking to in Psalm 110:1 is Yeshua. That's Peter's point. David has not ascended into the heavens, his grave was with them in that day, but David's descendant, Yeshua of Nazareth, did ascend into the heavens. He was invited to sit at the right hand of Yahweh. This explains the next verse:

**Acts 2:36** "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Yeshua whom you crucified."

What does Peter want the house of Israel to know for certain? He tells us: that God (Yahweh) hath made this Yeshua, whom you (the men of Israel) crucified, both Lord and Christ. Had Yahweh not made Yeshua Lord and Christ, he would not be Lord and Christ. The word Lord here is explained by the verses we just went over. Yahweh spoke to David's Lord or Master (Psalm 110:1). Yeshua is then the Lord over all other men. The word Christ is the Greek translation of its Hebrew counterpart, Messiah, meaning "anointed one." Yahweh made Yeshua (1) the Lord of David (and all other men), and (2) His Anointed One (chosen to do His special work).

**Acts 2:37** Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

When the men heard this salvation message: about how Yeshua was a man approved of God, resurrected from death by God, and the Lord of David that ascended into heaven, their hearts were pricked, making them ask what they needed to do to receive this Yeshua they had rejected.

This is the salvation message the men of Israel heard on that day of Pentecost, and this message had nothing to do with a Trinity, or Yeshua being co-equal with Yahweh, or Yeshua being of the same essence as Yahweh, or Yeshua really being Father Yahweh. Peter proclaimed none of those points in his first salvation message, yet many preachers today think that this must be proclaimed in their salvation messages.

**Acts 2:38-40** Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Yeshua [the] Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all who are far off, even as many as the Lord our God will call to himself." With many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!"

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<sup>30</sup> In Ephesians 4:5, Paul writes that there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, but many people place a period after that statement, as though Paul was proclaiming that Yeshua was Yahweh. When the New Testament authors proclaimed Yeshua as Lord (the one Lord) they were speaking of the fact that he was the one (the only one) that Yahweh had exalted and proclaimed to be Lord. Yahweh made Yeshua Lord. Yeshua is Lord over all of us, including his ancestors (like king David). But Paul goes on to write in Ephesians 4:6 about the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. So the one Lord is Yeshua, but the one God is the Father, and he is above all.

Peter tells the men of Israel to repent and be baptized in the name of Yeshua. Repent of what? These men are devout and are at the feast of Pentecost. If you examined their lives you would see men who observed Yahweh's law.

Number one, no matter how law-observant a man is, he is still a sinner in need of salvation. All sons of Adam and daughters of Eve have sinned and fallen short of Yahweh's glory. We are all in need of His grace and mercy, daily.

Number two, the main message of repentance here is that they were to repent of their sin of rejecting the one whom Yahweh made to be Lord. Yahweh sent Yeshua. Yahweh approved of Yeshua. Yahweh did miracles and wonders through the man Yeshua. Yahweh raised Yeshua from the dead. Yahweh invited Yeshua to His right hand, and Yahweh made Yeshua both Lord and Christ. They had missed this, and they needed to repent of their rejecting him, and be baptized in his name. Being baptized in the name of Yeshua the Messiah meant that at their baptism, they were confessing with their mouth that Yeshua is the promised Messiah, the Lord of David, Yahweh's Anointed One, the resurrected King (see Acts 8:36-38 for a parallel).

Peter continues on, telling them that by doing this they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. I believe salvation and forgiveness of sins is what is in view here. Through repentance and baptism, they would be forgiven of all their sins and receive the gift of salvation that comes through the one Yahweh sent, Yeshua of Nazareth (Isaiah 53:5-6). That was a promise to them, their children, and to those who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.

Peter preached many other words that day. He continued to exhort the men of Israel to save themselves from the wicked generation alive at that time. But, the most important words that Peter preached, are here recorded for us by Luke. They contain nothing about a Trinity, or that Yeshua is actually Almighty Yahweh. If belief in a Trinity was an absolute necessity, or if believing that Yeshua is really Yahweh in disguise was an absolute necessity, why in the world did Peter not include any of that in his first salvation message to the men of Israel? The answer is this: *neither of those beliefs are a necessity*. Such doctrines were foreign to the early apostles, and remember, Peter (among others) knew Yeshua personally. He spent around three years learning under him. What is a necessity is that we believe Yeshua is the resurrected Lord of David, the promised Messiah, and the Son who sits at the right hand of his Father.

### **Peter's Second Salvation Sermon**

Peter's next recorded salvation message is found in Acts 3. Both Peter and John had visited the Jerusalem temple at the hour of prayer, and there was a man on the temple steps who had been lame since birth. He, unable to work, would sit there and beg for money. Peter told the man he had no money to give him, but he did have something else to give him. Peter spoke to the man, "In the name of Yeshua the Messiah of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" Immediately the man began walking, leaping, and praising Yahweh for his healing! Everyone around them saw this take place, and they were astonished because the man had been lame for over 40 years (Acts 4:22). We pick up the story in verse 11.

**Acts 3:11-12** As the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. When Peter saw it, he responded to the people, "You men of Israel, why do you marvel at this man? Why do you fasten your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him walk?"

Who is Peter speaking to here? Verse 12 tells us: the men of Israel, and it was probably some of the same men of Israel who had listened to him preach the message recorded in Acts 2. There were only 3,000 Israelites added to belief in Yeshua in Acts 2 (vs. 41), so that means the vast majority of Israelites there on the day of Pentecost did not accept Yeshua as the resurrected Messiah and Master.

Peter asks the men of Israel why they are so amazed at the miracle, even though it is rather amazing! His point is that he and John (as disciples of Yeshua) did not have the power or holiness in themselves to make this lame man walk. They were operating under the power of Yeshua, who had been given such authority from Yahweh (Matthew 28:18).

**Acts 3:13-15** The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his Servant [Son, KJV] Yeshua,<sup>31</sup> whom you delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, to which we are witnesses.

Pay close attention to what Peter says here. He says that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob<sup>32</sup> - the God of our fathers (the "our" stands for Peter, John, and the men of Israel listening) - has glorified his Son Yeshua, whom they had delivered up to death and denied in front of Pilate. Do you see how Peter separates Yahweh and Yeshua again in his second salvation message to the lost sheep of Israel? Yahweh is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Yahweh glorified his Son Yeshua. Yeshua is Yahweh's Son. Yahweh really does have a Son.

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<sup>31</sup> Many Bibles translate Acts 3:13 as saying "hath glorified His servant Yeshua." The Greek word here is pais, and is even translated as "servant" in the KJV (Matthew 8:6, 8, 13; Acts 4:25). Can the Greek word pais be accurately translated into English as "son?" One example is found in John 4:46-51. Here a man pleads with Yeshua to heal his son. In verses 46-47 the common Greek word for son is used, huios. In verse 51 the word pais is used in reference to the man's son, showing that huios and pais are sometimes used interchangeably (see also Luke 9:37-43). It is not wrong to translate pais as "servant" in Acts 3:13 (Yeshua is the suffering servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 42; 52-53), but neither is it wrong to translate pais as "son" in Acts 3:13. It may be that pais was chosen rather than huios because pais can cross the meaning of servant and son. The YLT puts this into English as "did glorify his child Jesus," while the NET footnote says, "The term servant has messianic connotations given the context of promise, the note of suffering, and the titles and functions noted in vv. 14- 15."

<sup>32</sup> The Old Testament speaks of the "God of Abraham" or "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (Genesis 26:24; 28:13; 31:42, 53; Exodus 3:6, 15-16; 4:5; 1 Kings 18:36; 1 Chronicles 29:18; 2 Chronicles 30:6; Psalm 47:9) Each time the God of Abraham speaks in these Old Testament texts, it is Yahweh and never Yeshua. Yeshua is the Son or Servant of the God of Abraham, per Acts 3:13. An interesting text in light of this is Luke 20:37 where Yeshua refers to Moses (at the burning bush) calling the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yeshua is speaking about Moses referencing Yahweh the Father.

The men of Israel had denied Yeshua, and Peter says they asked for a murderer to be granted unto them instead. Peter is referencing what took place in Matthew 27, where there was a custom at the Passover for Pilate to release one prisoner of the Jews. Pilate was wanting them to pick Yeshua (who is called Messiah) for release. Instead they chose the man commonly known as Barabbas, a notorious prisoner and murderer, as Peter calls him here in verse 14.

Peter goes on to say that they, the men of Israel, had killed the Prince of life, whom Yahweh raised from the dead. The Prince of life is Yeshua (the Son).<sup>33</sup> However, Yahweh vindicated him, by raising him from the dead.

**Acts 3:16-19** By faith in his name has his name made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which is through him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. "Now, brothers, I know that you did this in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But the things which God announced by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,

Peter tells his brethren (the men of Israel) that he knows they killed Yeshua in ignorance, just as the rulers (chief priests, elders) did. They didn't realize that Yeshua was the Prince of life. They didn't realize that Yeshua was the promised Messiah, the Son of Yahweh. Peter also goes on to mention how that this all had to take place because the prophecies of the suffering servant (Isaiah 52-53) had to be fulfilled. God was announcing these things all through the Hebrew scriptures, but the way He announced them was through the mouth of His servants, the prophets.

Peter then tells the men of Israel to repent, just like in Acts 2. The men that Peter tells to repent are the men who are guilty of murdering Yeshua. Peter tells them that they must repent of what they did to the Son of Yahweh, so that their sins can be blotted out, and times of refreshing can come from the Lord (Yahweh).

**Acts 3:20** and that he may send [the] Christ Yeshua, who was ordained for you before,

The "he" here is the "Lord" at the end of verse 19, Yahweh. Yahweh shall send Yeshua the Messiah, who had been ordained unto the men of Israel.

I have to point out again that nothing has been said about a Trinity in this second salvation message of Peter. There has also been nothing said about Yeshua actually being Yahweh wrapped in a robe of flesh, as the Oneness doctrine teaches. These doctrines aren't found anywhere in these first two salvation sermons preached by the apostle Peter.

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<sup>33</sup> Yeshua the Prince is differentiated from Yahweh the King in the parable of the wedding banquet. This parable comes right after the parable of the vineyard that I explained earlier. Matthew 22:1- 2 (HCSB) says: "Once more [Yeshua] spoke to them in parables: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.'" The king in this parable represents Yahweh, while the son (the prince) represents Yeshua. Also see Daniel 9:25.

**Acts 3:21-23** whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God spoke long ago by the mouth of his holy prophets. For Moses indeed said to the fathers, 'The Lord God will raise up a prophet for you from among your brothers, like me. You shall listen to him in all things whatever he says to you. It will be, that every soul that will not listen to that prophet will be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

Remember, at the time Peter is preaching this, Yeshua had recently went to heaven to be with Yahweh. Heaven has to receive Yeshua, meaning welcome him there, until the restitution that the Almighty spoke about, through His prophets, takes place. I believe this is another way of saying what Yahweh had already said to Yeshua (Psalm 110:1): "Come sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." When this happens, it will equal the times of the restitution of all things, and the heavens will no longer have to receive Yeshua, because he will be sent back to earth in the same manner in which he left (Acts 1:11).

Peter then quotes Deuteronomy 18:15-19, where Moses spoke of Yahweh raising up a prophet like himself, from among the brethren. Peter is applying Moses' promise of the prophet to the person of Yeshua. Yeshua is the prophet like Moses that Yahweh raised up from among the brothers in Israel. He is the fellow brother Israelite who they must listen to. He is the one they must follow, similar to how the children of Israel in the Old Covenant followed Moses. Yahweh sent Moses, and Yahweh sent Yeshua - a prophet like Moses. If the people of Israel didn't take heed to the words of Yeshua, they would be completely cut off from among the people.

Notice again the emphasis of Peter. There is no Trinity, Oneness, or "God-man." We only see Yahweh raising up His prophet from among the Israelite brothers, and they must listen to this prophet. In this entire sermon the emphasis has been upon Yeshua being Yahweh's Son and Messiah, the one Yahweh raised from the dead, and the one who the men of Israel must believe in to be in a right relationship with Yahweh, all because Yahweh had sent Yeshua (as He sent Moses in the past).<sup>34</sup>

**Acts 3:24-26** Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'In your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.' God, having raised up his servant, Yeshua, sent him to you first, to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from your wickedness.

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<sup>34</sup> Exodus 14:30-31 reads, "Thus Yahweh saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which Yahweh did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared Yahweh, and believed Yahweh, and his servant Moses." One action, believed, is ascribed to the people's response to both Yahweh and Yahweh's servant Moses. It might even be argued that the phrase "the people feared Yahweh" could also apply to the last phrase "and Yahweh's servant Moses." The point is that in receiving and following Yahweh, you must follow who He sends as His emissary. To reject the sent one is to reject the sender. None of this means that Moses was Yahweh (or that Yeshua is Yahweh). They are sent by Yahweh, but both had to be believed in and followed in their own times and respective ways. (You can see the same thing with Yahweh and His prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 12:16-18.)

Peter says that all the prophets have spoken beforehand about the days they were in (at that time), and he tells the men of Israel that they are children (physical descendants) of the prophets, and of the covenant that Yahweh made with Abraham and their fathers. They are the seed or offspring that all the families of the earth would be blessed in.

Then Peter says, "to you first," and I believe this points out that the men being preached to by Peter are Jewish men of Israel. The point is made in the Newer Testament that the good news about Yeshua goes to Judah first, and then to the nations (Acts 13:44-48; 28:17-29; Romans 1:6; 2:9-10).

Peter closes by saying that God (Yahweh), having raised up His servant (or Son) Yeshua, sent him to bless you (the men of Israel), in turning away every one of you (the men of Israel) from his wickedness. Yahweh sent His Son Yeshua so that the men of Israel could be forgiven of their transgressions. They would be forgiven, if they repented of murdering Yeshua, and received Yeshua for who he was: Yahweh's Son, the prophet like Moses, and the resurrected Messiah.<sup>35</sup>

### **A Prayer of the Early Believers**

In Acts 4, Peter and John have just faced the Jewish leadership of their day. They were being brought before the counsel and Sanhedrin, just as Yeshua said would happen to them (Matthew 10:16-20). Peter boldly proclaimed the same salvation message that he had been proclaiming, centering in on Yeshua being the resurrected Messiah. Peter does add one Older Testament passage that he had not yet mentioned, or at least has not been recorded up to this point. The passage he alluded to was Psalm 118:22-26. It talks about a stone that was rejected by builders. This rejected stone came from Yahweh and had become the cornerstone. Peter says that Yeshua is this stone. This makes perfect sense! The stone came from Yahweh - Yeshua came from Yahweh. You can read all about this in Acts 4:1-22.

After being questioned and released by the Sanhedrin, Peter and John went to tell their own fellowship about all that had happened to them while in front of the leaders of Israel. Once the fellowship heard the news, they lifted up their voices in prayer, and the prayer is recorded for us in Acts 4:24-30.

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<sup>35</sup> You can read Peter's third, fourth, and fifth (recorded) salvation sermons in Acts 4:8-12, 5:29-32, and 10:34-48. The emphasis remains the same as in Acts 2-3. None of these sermons contain a single word about a God-man, Trinity, or Yahweh wrapping himself in a robe of flesh. Peter went on to write two epistles to the dispersed Israelites (1 Peter 1:1), in which he referred to Yahweh as "the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua [the] Christ (1 Peter 1:3)." He also speaks of the knowledge of God and of Yeshua our Lord (2 Peter 1:2). Some attempt to say that Peter calls Yeshua "our God and Savior" in 2 Peter 1:1, but it can be accurately translated and read as separating (1) our God (Yahweh) and (2) our Savior Yeshua (as is the case in the KJV, ASV, CLNT, ONTS, IEB, and Weymouth). The footnote on 2 Peter 1:1 in the NAB reads in part, "The words translated our God and savior Jesus Christ could also be rendered "our God and the savior Jesus Christ," describing two different persons: God, and the sent Savior.

**Acts 4:24** When they heard it, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, "O Lord, you are God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them."<sup>36</sup>

The people are lifting up their voice to God saying, "Lord, you are God." They describe this Lord God as: "who made heaven, earth, sea, and everything in them." Who is this? There can be no doubt that this is Almighty Yahweh. The phrase "Lord God" is used so many times in the English versions of the Older Testament in reference to Yahweh the Father.

The reference to the Lord God making all things takes us back to the Ten Commandments. Every time I read Acts 4:24 I think about the 4th commandment about the Sabbath day, because in Exodus 20:11 we read about Yahweh making the heavens, earth, sea, and everything in them. Psalm 146:5-6 is another reference to this, where the Psalmist speaks of the God of Jacob and calls Him the Lord God (Yahweh Elohim). He then says that this God made heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them.

What we are seeing then, right here in the book of Acts, is a first century example of the earliest believers in Yeshua praying, NOT to Yeshua, but to Yahweh. That's who they are directing their prayer to, as Yeshua taught them to pray to "our Father which art in heaven (Matthew 6:9 KJV)." What's amazing about this is that the disciples had just spent three years with Yeshua. They had recently watched him ascend into heaven in Acts 1. They knew who he was, yet they did not lift their voice in prayer to him. They prayed to the Lord God, Yahweh.

**Acts 4:25-26** who by the mouth of your servant, David, said, 'Why do the nations rage, And the peoples plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth take a stand, And the rulers take council together, Against the Lord, and against his Christ.'

The prayer now tells of Yahweh speaking by the mouth of His servant David. An interesting point to notice is that Yahweh is doing the speaking here, but He speaks by or through someone else's mouth. This is such an important concept seen over and over in the Bible. We saw this earlier where Yahweh did miracles through Yeshua (Acts 2:22). Who did the miracles? Yahweh, but the miracles were done through an agent. Agency is going on here as well.<sup>37</sup> The believers pray and say that Yahweh spoke by the mouth of David.

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<sup>36</sup> In Exodus 20:11, Psalm 145:5-6, Acts 4:24, and Acts 14:15 Yahweh is described as creating the heavens, earth, seas, and all that is in them. Take special note of the inclusion of the seas in these verses. Yeshua is never described with this type of language in scripture: creating the heavens, earth, seas, and everything in them. See my website for a detailed exegesis article on Colossians 1:14-20, which some attempt to use to promote Yeshua as Supreme Creator.

<sup>37</sup> One of my favorite examples of agency is found in Exodus 7:14-25. Yahweh says that He is going to strike the Nile river with the rod in His hand, but then He tells Aaron to strike the Nile river with the rod in his (Aaron's) hand. Whose hand and rod struck the Nile river? It's not an either/or answer, it's both/and. Yahweh was the primary while Aaron was the agent.

They then quote a passage from David's second Psalm that speaks of heathens, kings, and rulers assembling against (1) Yahweh and (2) His Christ (Anointed One). That's two persons, with the first person superior to the second person.

The early fellowship of believers in Yeshua understood what had happened to Yeshua was a fulfillment of this Psalm.

**Acts 4:27-28** For truly, in this city against your holy servant, Yeshua, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever your hand and your council foreordained to happen.

First, the One they have been praying to has a holy servant (or child, KJV) named Yeshua. "For of a truth against THY holy child Yeshua (KJV)" they pray. This shows that the believers aren't praying to Yeshua, they are praying to Yahweh, and they mention His holy child. As we've seen in Acts 2, a person cannot be saved without believing upon Yeshua because he is the one Yahweh sent for our salvation.

Next notice what the early church saw as the fulfillment of Psalm 2. They mention that Herod, Pontius Pilate, the nations (or heathens), and the people of Israel, had all gathered together against Yahweh's holy child Yeshua. What did David prophesy in Psalm 2? That the heathens, people, and also kings and rulers would take their stand against Yahweh and against His Messiah.

**Acts 4:29-30** Now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of your holy Servant Yeshua.

When they pray, "Now Lord," it is still the same Lord they began praying to back in verse 24. We can know this because they ask that the Lord will perform signs and wonders, "through the name of Your holy servant/child Yeshua." They are asking the Lord Yahweh to look at how Peter and John were threatened by the Sanhedrin, and give them boldness to speak His word. "His word" is a reference to the word or message about Yeshua.

This prayer by the unanimous voice of the early church is just a continuing witness to Peter's salvation sermons in Acts 2 and 3. Yahweh answered this prayer. The early church received boldness to preach the word in spite of severe persecution (Acts 5:17-18; 40-42). Healings, signs, and wonders were performed through the hands of the apostles (Acts 4:33; 5:12-16). Yahweh was using those who received His Son Yeshua mightily.

This prayer is a model for us today. When we pray we should lift up our voice to the Lord God, Yahweh the Mighty One; the Mighty One who made the heavens, earth, sea, and everything in them. We should pray that He will use us to speak the message about His holy child Yeshua, no matter who or what we may encounter.

### Paul's First Salvation Sermon

After Saul of Tarsus (who is also called Paul, Acts 13:9) came to believe in Yeshua of Nazareth as the promised Messiah (Acts 9:1-19), he immediately began preaching Yeshua in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:20).

Prior to his conversion, if you were to ask Saul if he believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he would have answered yes. Saul was a Pharisee, from the tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the 8th day, and a strict adherent to the letter of the law of Moses (Philippians 3:4-6). Saul professed firm belief in the God of his forefathers, but he did not have knowledge of the Son of Yahweh until his Damascus road experience. As he wrote to the Galatians:

**Galatians 1:15-16** But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I didn't immediately confer with flesh and blood.

While Saul had been set apart from his mother's womb in God's plan, God did not choose to reveal His Son to Saul until later on in life. When Saul got the revelation, he preached the Son of Yahweh mightily. We see this in his first recorded salvation sermon in the book of Acts, 13:13-15. Here we read of Saul (also called Paul, Acts 13:9) and his companions journeying to Antioch, and attending the local synagogue on the Sabbath day. They sat and listened to the reading of the law and the prophets, and then the leaders of the synagogue spoke to them and said, "Brothers, if you have any message of encouragement for the people, speak." In verses 16-19 Paul begins speaking to the men of Israel, and to the God-fearers there that day. He spoke about the deliverance of the Israelites of old from Egypt. He tells his current fellow Israelites that God chose their forefathers, brought them out of the land of bondage, put up with them in the wilderness, destroyed the Canaanite nations, and gave their land to the Israelites as an inheritance.

Paul continues (vss. 20-22) by mentioning the time of the judges, Samuel the prophet, and then the first King in Israel, Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. After King Saul came King David, and Yahweh loved David very much and called him a man after Yahweh's own heart. Yahweh chose David in a special way to fulfill His plan and promise about the ultimate Messiah.

**Acts 13:23** From this man's [David's] offspring, God has brought salvation to Israel according to his promise.

**Acts 13:23 KJV** Of this man's [David's] seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Yeshua:

Yahweh raised unto the Israelites a savior named Yeshua, and Yeshua came from the seed of David. The Greek word translated as seed is *sperma*, partially defined by Mounce's Greek dictionary as "seed, semen, virile, offspring, posterity, a seed of future generations." The savior

that God raised up for Israel was a descendant of David. Yeshua had an ancestry or lineage that went back to King David.<sup>38</sup>

Here, in a salvation sermon to the men of Israel, Paul finds it necessary to bring up the lineage of Yeshua. Paul does not preach Yeshua as Yahweh, or as a "God-man" to these Israelites. Paul presents Yeshua as the human Messiah, a real flesh-and-blood man. This echoes the words of Peter in Acts 3, Yeshua was a prophet like Moses from among the brethren; he was a brother Israelite.

When I get into conversations with others about who Yeshua is, I often stress the point that he was a real man, a human being, because as I read the salvation sermons in the book of Acts I see the apostles stressing this. The savior that God raised up for Israel was an Israelite man himself.

If Yeshua was Yahweh, or an angelic being, or some other kind of spirit being prior to his birth, then he would not really be a man. He would instead be whatever he originally was. Let that sink in for a second. You could say that he *turned into a man*, or as many people say, became incarnate, but he would not *be a man* from the start. Whatever you are to begin with is what or who you are. Incarnation speech isn't found anywhere in this salvation sermon. Paul doesn't even give a hint about Yeshua starting out as Yahweh, or beginning as a spirit being and then later being incarnated into a human being. It amazes me that such is taught today as an essential element in salvation sermons when it cannot be found in first-century salvation sermons from the early apostles of the Lord.

**Acts 13:24-26** before his coming, when John had first preached the baptism of repentance to Israel. As John was fulfilling his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. But behold, one comes after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' Brothers, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, the word of this salvation is sent out to you.

Paul takes a moment to mention John's role in presenting the Messiah to Israel. John was a forerunner, pointing people to the one coming after him, Yeshua of Nazareth.<sup>39</sup> Then Paul says to the men in the synagogue: "To you is the word of this salvation sent." It's important to center in on verse 26 here. Paul is preaching a word or message of salvation. A salvation message means

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<sup>38</sup> The author of the book of Hebrews knew this well when he wrote (Hebrews 7:14), "For it is evident [obvious] that our Lord sprang out [is a descendant] of Judah."

<sup>39</sup> Some attempt to say that Yeshua is Yahweh by quoting John 1:23 and paralleling it with Isaiah 40:3. People read "prepare the way of Yahweh," and believe it means when Yeshua comes he is Yahweh. Open your Bible and read both verses again carefully. John was preparing *the way* of Yahweh. As Yeshua later says in John's Gospel (John 14:6), "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me." Luke's account of this prophetic fulfillment aids greatly in helping us understand what is going on, because Luke goes on to quote verses 4-5 of Isaiah 40, which give the context of exalting the humble (filling up valleys) and bringing down the prideful (making the mountains low). Luke quotes a vital point from the Septuagint translation of Isaiah 40:5 when he writes (Luke 3:6), "All flesh will see God's salvation." Yeshua means "salvation." He is the salvation of Yahweh that all flesh would see. He is the way of Yahweh.

that you preach what is of most importance for the saving of a person's soul from eternal punishment.

**Acts 13:27-30** For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they didn't know him, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. Though they found no cause for death, they still asked Pilate to have him killed. When they had fulfilled all things that were written about him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead.

The Jerusalem Israelites fulfilled the sayings of the prophets in condemning Yeshua. This is exactly what Peter proclaimed to the men of Israel earlier in Acts (3:17), when he told them, "Brothers, I know that you did this in ignorance, as did also your rulers." Yeshua committed no crime worthy of death, but the prophecies - the things God had predicted long ago (Acts 3:18) - had to be fulfilled. When all was fulfilled concerning his suffering and death, Yeshua was taken down from the tree and laid in a tomb. Then we read Paul saying, "But God raised him from the dead."

I've always known that the resurrection of Yeshua is important, but until studying and preparing this book I never saw just how important it is. It is stressed by the apostles when they preached sermons about salvation to unconverted people. We should never preach about the death of Yeshua without also preaching about how Yahweh raised him from the dead. Paul says in his epistle to the Romans (4:25), that Yeshua was, "delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." That refers to both his death and resurrection. Paul later tells these same Romans that their salvation confession is "Yeshua is Lord" (the Lord of David, Acts 2:32-36), and that they also must believe in their heart that Yahweh raised Yeshua from the dead (Romans 10:9). Tied to the resurrection of Yeshua is the promise of our own resurrection. We all die in this life because of our sin; we are fallen sons of Adam and daughters of Eve, but we do have a promise if we are believers in the second Adam that Yahweh sent. Just as Yahweh resurrected Yeshua from death, He will also resurrect believers in Yeshua from death at the consummating coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20-22; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14). What a glorious promise!

**Acts 13:31-33** and he was seen for many days by those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses to the people. We bring you good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled the same to us, their children, in that he raised up Yeshua. As it is also written in the second psalm, 'You are my Son. Today I have become your father.'

Paul mentions as proof of Yeshua's resurrection the witnesses that saw Yeshua alive after he had been put to death. Paul also mentions these witnesses in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, and numbers them at over 500 people. He proclaims the "glad tidings" or good news that the promise made unto the ancient fathers has been proclaimed to their progeny. The first century A.D. descendants of the Israelites of old (who were brought out of Egypt) were experiencing the promise first hand, because they lived during the time period of Yeshua's ministry, the ministry that included his resurrection from the dead.

Paul goes on to mention the second Psalm where Yahweh prophetically speaks to Yeshua by saying (KJV) "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."<sup>40</sup> Notice how Paul believes and proclaims Yeshua as the Son of Yahweh. That's the key, essential point. There's nothing about a Trinity here, or that Yeshua is somehow Yahweh in the flesh. The salvation message is all about how Yahweh calls Yeshua "My Son." Remember, after his conversion Paul immediately began proclaiming that Yeshua is the Son of God (Acts 9:20). He confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Yeshua was the promised Messiah (Acts 9:22).

**Acts 13:34-37** Concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he has spoken thus: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' Therefore he says also in another psalm, 'You will not allow your Holy One to see decay.' For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell asleep, and was laid with his fathers, and saw decay. But he whom God raised up saw no decay.

Yahweh granted Yeshua the sure mercies of David, the promise of not seeing corruption. This again is all in reference to the resurrection of Yeshua. Yahweh promised in both Isaiah 55:3 and Psalm 16:10 that His Anointed One would not remain in the grave after death; he would not decay like most people do when they are buried or entombed. After David served the people in his generation, he fell asleep (died), was buried with his fathers, and he decayed. That is the normal process of a person who dies, but it was bypassed in the case of Yeshua (the descendant of David), because he was the promised, ultimate Messiah. Yahweh did not allow his body to decay in the tomb! He was raised from death to immortality, destroying the power of death on the third day! (1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 55) Hallelujah!

**Acts 13:38-39** Be it known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man is proclaimed to you remission of sins, and by him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Through the man Yeshua the forgiveness of sins was being preached to those in the synagogue that day. Those who believed that Yeshua - the promised Messiah, Son of God, from the lineage of King David - died for their sins and was then raised again by Yahweh, they would receive forgiveness and justification. When they believed in this salvation message preached by the Apostle Paul they would be declared innocent in the sight of Yahweh, something that the law of Moses could not bring them. The law of Moses condemned them in their sins. It pointed out to them that they were transgressors. They needed to believe in the Messiah who had been sent to them, in order to be delivered from their offenses. Yeshua lived a perfect life according to the law (Isaiah 53:9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 7:26), and thus he was qualified to be the ant-typical unblemished lamb (John 1:29, 36; 1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 5:5-10). Yahweh brought him forth from the tomb on the third day, victorious over the Devil and the sting of death

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<sup>40</sup> Paul's reference to the begetting of the Son is not a reference to Yeshua's conception in Nazareth or his birth in Bethlehem. The context of what we are covering in Acts 13 is about Yeshua's resurrection. Paul is using the word begotten in the sense of being "brought forth." It is true that Yeshua was brought forth by Yahweh in the womb of the virgin Mary (Lk. 1:34-35). It is also true that Yahweh "brought forth" Yeshua His Son from the tomb or from the dead (Col. 1:18). That is the day of begetting spoken about here, as well as in Psalm 2. This is what Paul means when he writes that Yeshua was declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4).

(Hebrews 2:14-15). The man Yeshua was being preached to the men of Israel this day in Antioch, but they had the opportunity to accept this man or reject this man.

In Acts 13:40-41, Paul goes on to quote a passage from Habakkuk 1:5 concerning scoffing at this message. He applies the Older Testament saying of the prophet Habakkuk to the men of Israel there that day in Antioch. He is telling them to beware that what the prophet said doesn't happen to them. They could scoff at the message of salvation so much that they would get to the point of never being able to believe the message about Yeshua, even if someone explained it to them in the clearest of terms.

I am astounded over and over again that preachers do not preach salvation sermons like this today. I heard a preacher just the other day, preaching what he believed to be the salvation message. In his message was *some* truth, but he felt the need to stress his point about Yeshua being God or the "God-man," the incarnate Almighty come down to earth. You will search in vain for this point in the salvation sermons of the early apostles. They never mention it. They don't even give a hint about it.

Can a person be saved after listening to Paul's sermon in Acts 13, and then believing upon the human Messiah, Son of Yahweh? I don't see how anyone could answer no, because it is an inspired sermon, recorded for us right here in apostolic scripture. I am so weary of hearing men preach their own salvation sermons, sermons which veer away from the messages of Peter and Paul in the book of Acts. May we return to the early first-century salvation sermons in our preaching today.

### **Our Brother Yeshua**

One early morning I had a dear friend and fellow saint call me about a verse in Hebrews 2. I had probably read Hebrews 2 a few dozen times, but after discussing the text with him for a few minutes, I went back and slowly read through the chapter, and certain points jumped off the page like never before. Isn't it amazing how verses that have been in the Bible all along never really stood out until a certain point in your life? The words were so dear to me that I decided to add this section in the book.

Yeshua is not our Heavenly Father, Yahweh is.<sup>41</sup> When we pray the prayer that Yeshua taught his disciples to pray, we begin with "Our Father which art in heaven." That's prayer to the Father. Yeshua said (John 16:23), "Whatever you may ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to

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<sup>41</sup> Some people are quick to point out one text in Isaiah 9:6 that is possibly a reference to Yeshua as the "Everlasting Father." However, even Abraham is called "Father" around 15 times in the Bible (for example, see Romans 4:1, 12, 16), yet no one tries to make Abraham out to be the Heavenly Father. Father often carries with it the meaning of "the first" or "originator." Yeshua may be called *aviad* in Isaiah 9:6, but it doesn't mean he is the person of the Father, Yahweh. In other words, Yeshua is not his own Father. Some Bibles translate *aviad* as "Father of eternity," and that can be taken to mean the first or chief man to inherit eternal life by being raised to immortality (compare Acts 26:23). More information can be read concerning Isaiah 9:6 by consulting my website for the online book titled, "Who Then is This?"

you." So we are mentioning Yeshua in our prayer, but our prayer is still directed towards the Father, not Yeshua.

Yahweh is our loving Father, and we are His sons and daughters. Yeshua is our Brother, our elder or "big" Brother. He is our fellow or companion. He is the Brother we need to rely on, believe in, and love, because it's only through him that we inherit all of the Father's promises.<sup>42</sup>

**Hebrews 2:5-7 NKJV** For he has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying, 'What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of your hands.'<sup>43</sup>

Up to this point, the writer to the Hebrews has been emphasizing the superiority of the Son over the angels. Hebrews 1 proves that Yeshua is not an angel, meaning an angelic being like Michael or Gabriel. We know this because of Hebrews 1:5 (KJV): "For unto which of the angels has [Yahweh] said at any time, 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee?'" Yahweh never spoke those words to an angel, but He did speak them to Yeshua. Yeshua was made so much better than the angels. The HCSB says in Hebrews 1:4 that, "He [Yeshua] became higher in rank than the angels."

It is interesting then that in Hebrews 2 the Son is spoken of as being made a little lower than the angels. Which is it? Is he higher in rank than the angels, or is he lower than the angels? Well, it's both, but at different times or stages, when we take time to properly understand the text.

The first thing to recognize is that Hebrews 2:5-7 is a quotation of Psalm 8:5-7. Psalm 8 is about the works of the hands and fingers of Yahweh. As the Psalmist ponders upon the creation of the moon and the stars, he wonders what man amounts to. He wonders about the mindfulness Yahweh has for man. The author of Hebrews pulls from this Psalm, and points out that Yeshua is the man being spoken of here! Yahweh has not put the coming world under the headship of

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<sup>42</sup> Yeshua defeated the Devil for us (Mt. 4:1-11; Heb. 2:14-15; Gen. 3:1-5, 14-15). This can be illustrated in a young boy being bullied and a big brother stepping in and taking care of the bully. Yeshua reversed what happened back in the Garden of Eden. The Devil believed if he could kill the Chosen One (Lk. 9:35) his plan, power, and rule would be complete - and Yeshua accepted his Father's mention by heroically taking our place on the torture stake. What the Devil did not realize is the promise of the resurrection. Yeshua guaranteed his own resurrection by living a sinless life (Heb. 1:9). This is show beautifully in the book by the late Christian author C.S. Lewis, "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe."

<sup>43</sup> Some English translations do not contain the last phrase of verse 7, "and set him over the works of your hands." Some translations that do contain the phrase are the KJV, NKJV, YLT, ASV, DBY, DRC1752, and RV1885. I'm for retaining the phrase in Hebrews 2, because I believe the author is pulling from the Septuagint text of Psalm 8 which contains the phrase.

angels (Hebrews 2:5), but under the headship of a man that He crowned with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:7b), and set over the works of His (Yahweh's) hands (Hebrews 2:7c).<sup>44</sup>

Here's the key: Yeshua was made a little lower than the angels for a short time. The angels are spirit beings who possess immortality or deathlessness. Yahweh created them this way. Yeshua, in speaking of the resurrection of the righteous, said that it was impossible for angels to die (Luke 20:36). If you and I are counted worthy to take part in the coming age and the resurrection of the dead, we too will possess immortality, and will not be able to die anymore just like the angels. Yeshua was made a little lower than the angels, for a short time, for the purpose of being able to suffer death on behalf of mankind.<sup>45</sup>

**Hebrews 2:8-9** You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he subjected all things to him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we don't see all things subjected to him, yet. But we see him who has been made a little lower than the angels, Yeshua, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for everyone.

The phrases "a little lower than the angels" and "suffering of death" are linked. This is why Yahweh's Messiah had to be a human being. He had to be a flesh and blood Israelite (a descendant of King David), so that he could taste death for every man. Yeshua only became higher in rank than the angels *after* purging our sins and sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3-4). Once Yeshua was resurrected, he obtained immortality himself, and is now above the angels in authority. That Yeshua would one day be made higher than the angels was in Yahweh's plan all along, but the process had to take place so that Yeshua could pay the wages of sin for mankind, reversing what Adam lost in the Garden of Eden. He had to first be made as one of the Israelite brothers, and later be resurrected and exalted to a higher rank than the angelic, spirit beings. Yeshua is now a glorified, immortal spiritual man. His original make-up of flesh and blood humanity could not enter the kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:50). His resurrected, glorified, immortal being is what entered the heavenly realm to live with Yahweh at His right hand.

Notice also in Hebrews 2:8 that it says, "You [Yahweh] have put all things in subjection under his [Yeshua's] feet." This is one being (the Father) placing all things under the feet of another being (the Son). This again is an allusion to the great Psalm 110:1 passage that we saw Peter

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<sup>44</sup> Notice carefully that in Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2, man is set over the works of Yahweh's hands. This man, according to the author of Hebrews, is Yeshua. This shows that the creation is the works of Yahweh's hands, not Yeshua's hands. Yeshua is set over the works of Yahweh's hands.

<sup>45</sup> While a mortal can inherit immortality, I do not see how an immortal being can change from being immortal to mortal, else the word immortal doesn't really have a meaning. Think about it: the word immortal means "unable to die." If an immortal being, a being who is unable to die, loses that immortality, then there was always a possibility that the immortal being could have died in the first place. The only way for the word immortal to carry any strength is if an immortal being does not possess the possibility of death. This understanding shows the argument in Hebrews 2 to make all the sense in the world. Had Yeshua not been made a little lower than the angels (as man), he would not have been able to die for our sins.

quote from earlier (Acts 2:32-36). When the author says that there is nothing that isn't put under Yeshua, it should be obvious that the "all things" doesn't include Father Yahweh, because He is the One putting all things under Yeshua. Paul actually makes this point in 1 Corinthians 15:27 where he says that it is evident, certain, or manifest that Yahweh is the exception to the "all things."

So what we have so far is Yeshua being made lower than the angels to begin with (so that he could taste death for every man), and then being resurrected and exalted to Yahweh's right hand, to a superior position over the angels. This is why the author to the Hebrews quotes the Psalm 2 resurrection passage that I covered earlier in Acts 13. Yahweh says, "You are My Son, this day have I begotten you," or "brought you forth." Yahweh brought forth Yeshua from the dead, proclaiming Yeshua as the Son in the Psalms (Romans 1:4).

**Hebrews 2:10-11** For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many children to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brothers,

The first "him" here in verse 10 is Yahweh. We know that because this "him" makes the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings. Yahweh brings many sons to glory by making Yeshua perfect through sufferings. The captain of our salvation is Yeshua, and verse 9 just spoke of his suffering in death. That word "captain" is from the Greek word *archegos*, elsewhere used of Yeshua, and translated in the KJV as Prince or Author (Acts 3:15; 5:31; Hebrews 12:2). Yeshua is the Prince of our salvation. He leads the way.<sup>46</sup> Many sons are being brought to glory, but Yeshua is the first; he is the one who sanctifies, and we are the ones who are being sanctified. As verse 11 says, we are "all from one," and this is why Yeshua is not ashamed to call us brethren. The HCSB renders verse 11 as: "For the One who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. That is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers." Us brothers have the same Father as Yeshua, and the sisters do as well. Yeshua spoke of Yahweh directly to our sister Mary in John 20:17, and called Yahweh "My Father and your Father."

**Hebrews 2:12-13** saying, "I will declare your name to my brothers. In the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." Again, "I will put my trust in him." Again, "Behold, here am I and the children whom God has given me."

The author now quotes from a few more Older Testament texts, the first of which is Psalm 22:22. Psalm 22 is widely held as a Messianic Psalm and rightfully so. The author of Hebrews is showing us that when Psalm 22:22 says, "I will declare your name to my brothers. In the midst of the assembly, I will praise you," Yeshua is the "I" that is declaring Yahweh's name to his

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<sup>46</sup> According to the apostle Paul, Yeshua is the first man to receive eternal life by being resurrected to immortality. Acts 26:22-23 (HCSB), "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

brothers. Yeshua is in the midst of the congregation praising Yahweh! This is a Messianic prophecy where Yeshua is not ashamed to call us his brethren.

The other texts the author of Hebrews alludes to are all from the Septuagint. Isaiah 8:17-18, Isaiah 12:2, and 2 Samuel 22:3. In these texts Yeshua is proclaiming Yahweh as his God. He is trusting in Yahweh and speaking of the children that Yahweh gave to him (Hebrews 2:13b). These are Yahweh's children given to Yeshua as brothers and sisters.

Hebrews 2:14-15 Since then the children have shared in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death he might bring to nothing him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all of them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

The children are partakers of flesh and blood. You and I are human beings. We, like Adam, are the dust of the earth, plus the breath of life, which equals a living soul (Genesis 2:7). Yeshua partook of the same flesh and blood. He was made by Yahweh as a human being, and again the author links this with his death on the cross. Through death, Yeshua destroyed the Devil who held the power of death, but the only way Yeshua could die is if he was a partaker of flesh and blood like us. Seeing that Yahweh resurrected Yeshua from death, we do not have to be afraid of dying. The Devil holds no power over those who die in Christ. We too will be resurrected at a future time to immortality, just like Yeshua was.

**Hebrews 2:16-18** For most assuredly, not to angels does he give help, but he gives help to the seed of Abraham. Therefore he was obligated in all things to be made like his brothers, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

My personal Bible, from the HCSB, renders Hebrews 2:16 as: "For it is clear that He does not reach out to help angels, but to help Abraham's offspring."

The point again is that Yeshua was not an angelic, spirit being. His suffering and death doesn't give help to the angel family. Remember, they are in another class of being. Yeshua gives help to the descendants of Abraham, his brothers and sisters. It is a great feeling, a comforting thing, to know that our Messiah was a man like us. He had feelings like you and I. He hurt, suffered, bled, and died. He experienced pain in life, but he overcame. His victory reaches out to us. What he did was for us. He is reaching out to us who cannot help ourselves and saying, "Here, take hold of my hand, I will carry you through it all." Yahweh sent him to us for this purpose. Hebrews 2:17 says that he was made like his brothers so that he could be a merciful and faithful High Priest. Yahweh is not our High Priest. Yeshua is. Yahweh is the one who created Yeshua, and

appointed him as High Priest.<sup>47</sup> Yeshua is a merciful High Priest, because he knows first-hand what his brothers and sisters go through in life. He knows the pains of life, its ups and downs. He knows what suffering feels like, so he is full of mercy towards us when we suffer.

We also read that Yeshua makes reconciliation for the sins of the people. This again ties into his human being. It was his death that brought reconciliation, and he could not have died if he had been initially made higher than the angels, or even made equal to them, as an angel himself. He had to be made a man.<sup>48</sup>

Verse 18 ends by teaching us that since Yeshua was tested and has suffered, he is able to help his brothers and sisters who are also tested. Yeshua is sympathetic to us when we suffer. I think we sometimes forget that, because it has been preached in pulpits so much that Yeshua is really the Almighty, in a different class than us. The reality is that he was made a little lower than the angels and is in the same class as us. He was made a man like you and I. During his life he cried out to Yahweh in prayer, and shed many tears. He experienced pain and agony for his brothers and sisters. It's great to know we have a big Brother like Yeshua.

### **Yeshua, the Appointed High Priest**

It seems so clear to me that Yahweh anointed and appointed Yeshua to be our High Priest. That's One Supreme Being (Yahweh) appointing another being (Yeshua) to a high ranking position. An illustration would be something like a store owner appointing one of his employees to the position of store manager. That's not hard to understand. It is only the traditions of men that get in the way and jumble everything into incoherent contradictions.

Hebrews 5:1-10 teaches us that Yeshua is our appointed High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. I want to walk through this text in a moment, but first let me make a few comments concerning Melchizedek.

According to Genesis 14:18-20, Melchizedek was King of Salem and Priest of the Most High God, to whom Abraham paid a tenth of the spoils of war he acquired from rescuing his kidnapped relative. People have asked me in the past who I believe Melchizedek was. I always respond Biblically: "According to Genesis he was a Priest of the Most High God during the days of Abraham." It's amazing that people then try to add all sorts of things to that. I've heard many

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<sup>47</sup> Yeshua is also an Apostle. We don't normally think of him in that term, but Hebrews 3:1 says he is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. Hebrews 3:2 goes on to say that he was faithful to the One who appointed him. The One who appointed him is Yahweh, so Yeshua is the Apostle of Yahweh. Just as Yeshua had apostles that followed him and learned of him, Yeshua followed and learned of Yahweh. Yahweh sent him out to do his work in ministry, thus Yeshua is Yahweh's Apostle.

<sup>48</sup> It is certainly true that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19)." The word "in" here could be taken to mean (1) the Spirit of Yahweh dwelt inside of the Messiah, or (2) that God by means of Christ reconciled us to Himself. None of this means that God and Christ are identical beings. Just as the head of man is Christ, the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3). Yahweh chose to beget a Son directly by the power of His Spirit (Luke 1:32-35). Through this created Son we are reconciled back to Father Yahweh.

people say that Melchizedek was the "pre-incarnate Christ." Some even say that he was Yahweh Himself!

Hebrews 7:3 says that Melchizedek was made like the Son of God, and Hebrews 7:15 says that Yeshua is after the similitude (resemblance) of Melchizedek. So these two are like each other in some respect, but they are certainly not one and the same person. I have heard some people posit the belief that Yeshua is somehow Yahweh because of what Hebrews 7:3 states concerning Melchizedek.

**Hebrews 7:3** without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

Such an argument is a classic example of ripping one verse from its context in an attempt to make it fit a pre-conceived doctrine. We should never determine what we want to believe first, and then try to find a verse here and there that fits what we want. We should instead allow the Bible to guide us into our beliefs. This is easier said than done, and sometimes we do the former without even realizing it. I believe we can discipline ourselves to study properly, discerning the meaning directly from the text.

Stop and think for a second. The text under consideration (Hebrews 7:3) point-blank calls Yeshua the Son of God. Obviously then he has a Father, Yahweh. Yahweh is the One who miraculously moved upon the womb of Mary to create the holy child Yeshua (Luke 1:34-35). Then we have John 2:1-3 which refers to Mary as the mother of Yeshua. Matthew 1 and Luke 3 also list genealogies for Yeshua. Unless we want to contradict all of that Scriptural evidence (that Yeshua DOES have a father, mother, and genealogy) we need to look more closely at Hebrews 7 to see what the text means.

The author is pointing out that Melchizedek came long before Levi or Aaron, so his genealogy is not reckoned from that lineage. In other words, Melchizedek was a priest of the most high God, but not after the order of Aaron. Verse 11 goes on to say:

**Hebrews 7:11** Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people have received the law), what further need was there for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

Yeshua is the other priest that arises after the order of Melchizedek, based upon the oath sworn by Yahweh (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:17). Yeshua was not reckoned after the order of Aaron, for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14), not Levi.

This is how both Melchizedek and Yeshua do not have father, mother, or genealogy. ***They have no Levitical*** ancestry; you can't look at their genealogies and trace them back to Levi. Melchizedek is *like* the Son of God in this respect, and Yeshua is said to be after the *likeness* of Melchizedek. That's the author's point. The chapter has nothing to do with Yeshua being Yahweh or Melchizedek being Yeshua. Those concepts are foreign to the context. Yeshua is the Son of

Yahweh (Hebrews 7:3), we draw near to Yahweh through Yeshua (Hebrews 7:25), and the word of the oath appoints a Son (Hebrews 7:28).

I wanted to point that out about Melchizedek because Hebrews 5:10 mentions him, and speaks of Yeshua being our High Priest after his order. I'm going to pull here from the HCSB, because the translation is smoother and the points come across better.

**Hebrews 5:1-4 HCSB** For every high priest taken from men is appointed in service to God for the people, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this, he must make a sin offering for himself as well as for the people. No one takes this honor on himself; instead, a person is called by God, just as Aaron was.

The point I want to aim at is how the author speaks of God appointing High Priests. Each High Priest taken from mankind is appointed. No one can take the honor on himself. No one can just up and decide, "Hey, I want to be the next High Priest!" You have to be appointed by the specific, Divine command of Yahweh. The author states unequivocally in verse 4, "a person is called by God, just as Aaron was." If you are a High Priest, you are called and appointed by the command of God Almighty.

**Hebrews 5:5-6 HCSB** In the same way, the Messiah did not exalt Himself to become a high priest, but the One who said to Him, You are My Son; today I have become Your Father, also said in another passage, You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

I realize this is not a popular verse you hear used in conversations about the identity of Yeshua, but it should be. I for one will make certain I bring it up in future conversations. This is because verse 5 begins with "In the same way," meaning "In the same way that Aaron did not take the honor of High Priest upon himself, neither did Yeshua the Messiah." Yahweh appointed both Aaron (a Levite priest) and Yeshua (a priest after the order of Melchizedek). The Messiah did not exalt himself to be a High Priest. Rather, it was the One (Yahweh Almighty) who said to him, "You are my Son," and "You are a Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."

A Higher Being is doing the appointing here. Aaron was most certainly a high ranking man among the people of Israel in the Old Covenant. He was the first Levite Priest to officiate in the Tabernacle (Exodus 28). Until he died, he was the only man allowed to enter the Most Holy Place once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). Exodus 7:1 says that Moses was god to Pharaoh and Aaron his brother was the prophet of the god Moses, but Aaron did not appoint himself to be High Priest. Yahweh had to do that. In the same way, Yeshua did not appoint himself to be High Priest. Yahweh appointed Yeshua as High Priest. Just like Yahweh and Aaron are two separate persons, so are Yahweh and Yeshua.

**Hebrews 5:7 HCSB** During His earthly life, He offered prayers and appeals, with loud cries and tears, to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence.

If Yeshua was Yahweh, who in the world did he pray to? This verse says he offered prayers, appeals, loud cries, and tears TO THE ONE who was able to save Him from death. This One is Yeshua's God and Father, Yahweh. Yeshua really cried out, wept, and prayed to Yahweh. This was man speaking to God, as all prayer is. The author says that Yeshua was heard because of his reverence. Yeshua treated Yahweh with utmost veneration. He honored Yahweh the Most High God fully. Yahweh heard Yeshua's humble cries and saw his tears of agonizing love. Yahweh raised Yeshua from death on the third day, never to die again. I'm overwhelmed by this even as I sit here and type!

Some point out the phrase "During his earthly life," in verse 7 as proof that Yeshua existed up in heaven as either Yahweh or a spirit being prior to his earthly life. Is that the context of the book of Hebrews? Not at all. As we covered earlier in Hebrews 2, Yeshua was first made lower than the angels, and only later became higher in rank than the angels. "During his earthly life" is a reference to the time period *before* his exalted resurrected state and ascension to the right hand of the Father. He now lives in heaven, and he's been living up there with Yahweh for approximately 2,000 years. We speak a lot about our heavenly Father, but now that Yeshua is in heaven, we can also speak about our heavenly Brother!

**Hebrews 5:8-9 HCSB** Though a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. After He was perfected, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, and He was declared by God a high priest "in the order of Melchizedek."

Though a Son; a Son. Don't just skip on by that statement. Yeshua is Yahweh's Son, as I've emphasized through this entire book. I emphasize it because the Holy Bible emphasizes it. You can't get away from it. Yeshua is the unique Son of Yahweh, but even though he was a dear Son, he had to learn obedience through the things he suffered.

Have you ever had to suffer through something in your life? I know I have, and every time it is a difficult process. But, I learn something each time, and it does help me in my obedience. Lessons of obedience are learned in the furnace of affliction. We don't think of Yeshua experiencing the same in his life, but this verse says he did. He didn't just automatically know every thing from birth or childhood. Luke 2:52 says that he increased in wisdom, stature, and favor in the sight of God and man. He increased in these things, not just in the sight of people, but in the sight of God. Part of this increasing came about because of his sufferings. He learned about obedience through such, even to the point of death. Apostle Paul writes that he became obedient to death (Philippians 2:8). After he was perfected, meaning after he was raised from the dead and obtained immortality, he became the source of eternal salvation, and he was declared BY GOD to be High Priest of the Melchizedekian order.

I could say more about this, but this should be enough in continuing to show that Yeshua is not Yahweh. He's the Son of Yahweh, our elder Brother, the Lord of David, and the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Our Messiah is a human being, a very special human being yes, but nevertheless a human being. He is a kinsman redeemer. Yahweh is not a kinsman. Yahweh is Spirit. The angels are not kinsmen either, for they are created spirit beings. The Hebrew Yeshua is a kinsman. He is a son of Adam, a son of Abraham, and a son of David.

It is difficult to exalt Yeshua too much, unless we put him in the place of Father Yahweh. Yahweh deserves sole honor, praise, love, and submission as our Almighty, Ancient of Days, the Most High, and Awesome Creator. Yeshua is not to be given the praise that only Father Yahweh deserves, but Yeshua is to be honored as Yahweh's Servant (Isaiah 42:1),<sup>49</sup> Yahweh's Son (Matthew 3:16-17), and the Chosen One (Luke 9:35). He is the ONE MAN Yahweh called out to open blind eyes and bring out prisoners from the dungeon (Isaiah 42:6). Yahweh takes delight in him, and Yahweh has placed His Spirit upon him.

### **Yahweh is Yeshua's God**

Although people generally do not speak in these terms, Yeshua has Yahweh as God over him. Yeshua serves and worships the Almighty.

When the Devil came to tempt Yeshua, he began by asking him questions that started with, "If you are the Son of God," because the Adversary knew who he was, but he was trying to get Yeshua to renounce Yahweh as ruler and owner and receive the kingdom of darkness. The Devil was attempting to get Yeshua to forsake Yahweh his God, and pledge allegiance to himself (Satan) as God.

He told Yeshua that if he was really Yahweh's Son then he should be able to command the stones laying on the ground to turn into bread (Matthew 4:3). Yeshua responded by saying (HCSB), "It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of

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<sup>49</sup> In Matthew 12:15-21 we read the following: "Yeshua became aware of this, He withdrew from there. Huge crowds followed Him, and He healed them all. He warned them not to make him known, so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: Here is My Servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom My soul delights; I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not argue or shout, and no one will hear His voice in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed, and He will not put out a smoldering wick, until He has led justice to victory. The nations will put their hope in His name." Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-4, and proclaims Yeshua as the fulfillment of the Servant of Yahweh. I believe that Yeshua is the fulfillment of Yahweh's Servant in Isaiah 49:1-6 as well. In 49:1 we see that Yahweh called His Servant before he was born, and named him in his mother's womb. We see this of Yeshua in both Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38. Isaiah 49:2 goes on to say that Yahweh made His Servant's words like a sharp sword, and the Servant was like a sharpened arrow in Yahweh's quiver. In Luke 2:25-35 the prophet Simeon said of Yeshua, "This child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed - and a sword will pierce your own soul - that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." In Isaiah 49:3 it seems to say that the Servant is Israel, but in Isaiah 49:5 we see that "Israel" the Servant of Yahweh is chosen to bring back Jacob-Israel. Yahweh will use His Servant to restore the tribes, gathering them to Himself. The understanding is that the Servant "Israel" in Isaiah 49:3 is a singular man *from* Israel, which Yeshua was (of the tribe of Judah; Hebrews 7:14). Twice (Isaiah 49:4, 5) the Servant refers to Yahweh as "my God," and to top it all off, in Luke 2:28-32 and Acts 13:47 both the prophet Simeon and the apostle Paul quote Isaiah 49:6 in reference to Yeshua.

[Yahweh] (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3)." When Yeshua says, "man must not live on bread alone," he is talking about himself. He is the man that does not live on bread alone. He is the man that lives on every word that proceeds from Yahweh's mouth. In other words, Yeshua was proclaiming Yahweh as his strength, and as his Almighty God.

The Devil continued to tempt Yeshua by taking him up to the pinnacle of the temple (Matthew 4:5) and saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down." Satan went on to quote a text of Scripture from Psalm 91 that speaks of the angels supporting and protecting those who dwell in relationship with the Most High. The problem is that the Devil knows how to twist Scripture. While it is true that Yahweh will send His angels to protect His saints, it is also true that Yahweh's saints have been given the knowledge to not place themselves in harm's way purposefully. Yeshua knew the true interpretation of Psalm 91, so he quotes Deuteronomy 6:16 by saying (Matthew 4:7, HCSB), "It is also written: Do not test [Yahweh] your God."

Yeshua would have been testing or tempting Yahweh to jump off the pinnacle of the temple. It would be like you and I laying across a train track when we see a train coming in the distance, and proclaiming, "Yahweh has the power to save us!" Does Yahweh have the power to stop the train? Sure He does, but He also has given man the brain capacity to know not to place himself in such a circumstance purposefully.

Some people attempt to use Yeshua's words in Matthew 4:7 as a proclamation to the Devil. In other words, they think that when the Devil tempted Yeshua, he was actually tempting Yahweh, and thus Yeshua tells the Devil, "Do not test (tempt) me (Yahweh)." Such is just not the case at all. The command in Deuteronomy 6:16 was not written to the Devil. Yahweh gave that command to the children of Israel (Deuteronomy 6:3, 4, 10). Yeshua was a member of the children of Israel, being descended from the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14). When Yeshua quoted the law in Deuteronomy 6:16, he was quoting it to himself. **He** was not to tempt Yahweh his God.

While people normally view Yeshua (Jesus) as being Almighty God, the Scriptures are clear in showing that he served Almighty God. His life was devoted to Yahweh in service, obedience, prayer, and fasting. He kept the laws of Yahweh. It wasn't his own laws he was keeping. Sure, he did tell his students (disciples), "If you love me, keep MY commandments" (John 14:15), but his commandments were derivatives or offshoots of the authority of Yahweh's governing. In other words, Yahweh can give commandments to men through Yeshua, and Yahweh even gave Yeshua the authority to give out commands himself.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> We may liken this to the Scriptures that speak of the "Law of Moses" (Joshua 8:31-32; John 7:23). It is not that Moses gave out or commanded laws apart from Yahweh, but Yahweh chose to present his law through the man Moses. There are even times where the words "God" and "Moses" are used interchangeably. Compare Matthew 15:4 with Mark 7:10. Matthew's text has Yeshua saying that "God said" honor your parents, while Mark's text has Yeshua saying that "Moses said" honor your parents. Who said it? *Both* is the correct answer. Yahweh is the primary, Moses is the secondary. The key point is that it is not wrong to speak of the law of Moses or that Moses gave out the law. This is Scriptural speech. Likewise, it is not error to speak of Yeshua giving commandments, but such does not make him Yahweh.

Yeshua cried out to Yahweh while he was on the cross saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46) That was a man crying out to his God and Father in a time of affliction when he felt forsaken. Yeshua wasn't crying out to himself in agony that himself had forsaken himself. That's nonsensical.

After his resurrection, Yeshua told Mary Magdalene (who had mistaken him for the gardener) outside the sepulcher (John 20:17), "Don't touch me, for I haven't yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers, and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary had the same God and Father that Yeshua had. The same God she served and prayed to, he served and prayed to.

Even in his resurrected state, Yeshua referred to his Father as "my God" four times when talking to the church at Philadelphia (Revelation 3:12). The whole book of Revelation was a revelation of Yeshua the Messiah that God gave to him (Revelation 1:1). The apostle Paul writes about the God of Yeshua in his epistles.

**Romans 15:6** that with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua [the] Christ.

**2 Corinthians 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua [the] Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort;

**2 Corinthians 11:31** The God and Father of the Lord Yeshua [the] Christ, he who is blessed forevermore, knows that I don't lie.

**Ephesians 1:3, 17** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua [the] Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ... that the God of our Lord Yeshua [the] Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him;

**Colossians 1:3** We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Yeshua [the] Christ, praying always for you,

Yeshua is sometimes called God in scripture (John 20:28, Hebrews 1:8), but it must be understood that he is not the God that he has. In other words, Yeshua is not the God of Yeshua. Yeshua is referred to as God in a lesser sense than Yahweh. The word God carries the meaning of "Mighty One," and is not limited to Yahweh. Yahweh is the Most High, but there are other high beings in the universe. When scripture states that there is only one God it means there is only one Supreme Being or self-existent Being; Yahweh is species unique, in a authoritative position all by Himself.

There is no doubt that Yeshua is a Mighty One though. Remember, the angel Gabriel announced that he would be great (mighty) and be called the Son of the Highest (Luke 1:32), and Yahweh had already spoken through the prophet Isaiah (9:6) that one of Yeshua's titles would be "the mighty God." Yeshua had the Spirit of Yahweh inside of him without measure (John 3:34), and since his resurrection the fullness of God dwells within Yeshua (Colossians 2:9), and he is the

head of every man (1 Corinthians 11:3b). But, the head of Christ is still God (1 Corinthians 11:3c).

In one passage where the Father calls the Son "God," we are able to see that he still has the One Supreme God (the Most High) over him. Just after the Father says to the Son, "Thy throne O God is forever and ever" (Hebrews 1:8), we read in the very next verse:

**Hebrews 1:9** You [Yeshua] have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; Therefore God, your God [Yahweh], has anointed you [Yeshua] with the oil of gladness above your fellows.

Hebrews 1 is a great place to go to show that Yeshua is Yahweh's Son. Verse 1 says that Yahweh spoke in *the last days* by his Son. Verse 3 says that Yeshua sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High. And in verse 5 Yahweh says to him "You are my Son," and "I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son."

Yeshua is Yahweh's Son. He can be called God in the sense of being a Mighty One, second only to Yahweh, because of the power and authority Yahweh has given him, but he is not the only true God. He said that his Father holds that position (John 17:3). The man Yeshua is the mediator between us and the one God (1 Timothy 2:5). The word mediator carries the meaning of someone who goes between two parties for the purpose of reconciliation. Yeshua mediates, bringing peace between us (sinful humanity) and his Father (the one God).

## Conclusion

I wrote this short book as an introduction to the person of Yeshua. I've highlighted some key scriptures, points, and concepts. Much more could be said,<sup>51</sup> and much more detail could be covered in the texts I've mentioned, but my desire is to spark your interest in what the plain teaching of the Bible is: that Yeshua is the Messiah, the Son of Almighty Yahweh. There can be no doubt that this is the Biblical emphasis on the person of Yeshua.

I want this to become real to people: Yahweh has an only Son, and that it is through this Son that Yahweh has chosen to bring salvation. We don't get to choose how Yahweh brings salvation. We don't get to say, "No Yahweh, you have to save us all by yourself. No vessels, no agents, and

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<sup>51</sup> I have tried to keep this booklet short and concise, because I want it to be an introduction tool. For more detailed studies you may visit the companion material on my website and YouTube channel, as well as these websites: [biblicalunitarian.com](http://biblicalunitarian.com) and [christianmonotheism.com](http://christianmonotheism.com). I would also recommend the documentary titled "The Human Jesus" published under the Biblical Unitarian YouTube channel, and the Biblical Unitarian Podcast hosted by Dustin Smith. For in-depth books, check out "Christology in the Making" and "Did the First Christians Worship Jesus?" by James D.G. Dunn. "Born Before All Time: the Dispute Over Christ's Origin" by Karl-Josef Kuschel. "The Birth of the Messiah" by Raymond E. Brown. "The Doctrine of the Trinity, Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound" by Anthony Buzzard. "One God and One Lord: Reconsidering the Cornerstone of the Christian Faith" by Mark H. Graeser, John A. Lynn, and John W. Schoenheit. "Divine Truth or Human Tradition?: A Reconsideration of the Roman Catholic-Protestant Doctrine of the Trinity in Light of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures" by Patrick Navas. "A Man Attested by God, the Human Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels" by J. R. Daniel Kirk.

certainly no mediators."<sup>52</sup> That call is not for us to make. We are the creation. He is the Creator. Yahweh is in charge of deciding how He is going to save His people from their sins, and according to what we've read in a plethora of Bible verses, the way He did that was by begetting a Son, by His Spirit, and sending that Son, out from the womb of the virgin Mary into the world, to live a sinless life, preach the words God placed in his mouth, die sacrificially, be raised on the third day, and ascend into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

I grew up with the Oneness view, often called Modalism in theological circles. I grew up believing that Jesus was God wrapped in a fleshly robe. The emphasis I heard from preacher after preacher was that Jesus was really the Heavenly Father, the Almighty, the one God. I remember when I first started reading and studying the Bible (late 1995) as a teenager, and I saw hints of what I've explained throughout this book. I took those hints to a man who was older than me and expressed my concern. He quickly told me that Jesus said, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father." That was it. That was the answer I got that day. No explanation. No reading of the verses before and after. No solid exegesis of the context. Just that Jesus said, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father."<sup>53</sup> I had a lot of respect for the man who gave me that answer, so I just figured, "Well, Jesus must have been saying he was really the Father, so I'll go with that." It wasn't until later in my adult life that the issue came up again.

A good friend and brother of mine began sharing Biblical texts with me, texts that separated Yahweh and Yeshua, around 2003. At first, I was hesitant to even entertain the possibility that I could be wrong. As humans, we don't like our comfort zones to be intruded. I was comfortable with the Oneness view, and I knew all of the proof texts and "gotcha verses" to give to others who questioned me. However, I was at a point in my life where truth was paramount. I had made the decision that I was going to follow the lead of Holy Scripture, no matter where I ended up.

I soon saw that the Father and Son were distinct in scripture. I saw that the Son prayed to his Father, and always spoke of "me and my Father." I saw that the Father spoke about "My Son," and that in the greetings found in the New Testament epistles, the apostolic authors always separated God and Jesus. My first inclination was to study the doctrine of the Trinity, which I

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<sup>52</sup> Some people have asked me, "Couldn't Yahweh have come down and save us Himself?" The answer is: of course He could, but He didn't choose to do it that way. Yahweh could have also come down Himself and delivered the Israelites from Egypt, but he chose to commission Moses and Aaron, and work His wonders through them. In Exodus 3:8 Yahweh even says, "I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians," but that doesn't mean Yahweh jumped out of heaven and walked up to Pharaoh. The meaning is found in Exodus 3:10, "Come now therefore, and I will send you [Moses] to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." Yahweh worked through a vessel, and that was His decision. We should respect it.

<sup>53</sup> Sometimes I talk to Oneness believers and they still bring up this text from John 14:9 to me. I'm not trying to be disrespectful, but it is such an easy text to rightly understand if you just read the next verse (which I have never heard them quote when bringing up the verse). Yeshua says (John 14:10, HCSB) "Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on My own. the Father who lives in Me does His works." Yeshua's words and works came from the Father who lived inside him. His being "in the Father" has to do with him having the closest relationship with Yahweh that anyone has ever or will ever have. So when they saw Yeshua work, or heard Yeshua speak, they were watching and listening to Yahweh.

did. This doctrine teaches that there is one God, but within that one God *nature* there exists three distinct persons. The persons share equality in essence or substance, but have different functions and interact with one another.

I hesitantly became a “Trinitarian,” listening to numerous lectures and reading numerous books on the Trinity. I was bothered because the details and explanations were not found explicitly in the Bible. I wondered, "How could God base a person's salvation on concepts that are not stated anywhere in scripture?" There were far too many intricacies within later Christological discussions and councils that I couldn't locate anywhere in either the Older or Newer Testament. Doctrines like the dual-nature of Christ, or the Holy Spirit as a distinct person from the Father and the Son, or that God was a "what" rather than a "who."<sup>54</sup> To tell someone that they have to believe Jesus is God - not God the Father - but only God in essence (that is, Jesus is made up of the exact same "stuff" God is made up of), seemed very odd to me. I couldn't take someone to any Bible verses which said they must believe these concepts to have salvation from sin. If I witness to a lost sinner about how Yeshua died for sinners, it is easy to go to verse after verse and share the gospel with them. John 3:16 is as plain as it gets. God loved us by giving His only begotten Son. I could even camp out in the Older Testament text of Isaiah 53. The same goes for Yeshua's sinless life, or the fact that God raised him from the dead. I can show a person explicit texts where they must believe that "God raised Jesus from the dead" in order to be saved from their sins.

So after just under two years I gave up on the doctrine of the Trinity. I am not saying that I believe all those professing the Trinity (or Oneness) are lost. Yahweh is the Judge on what a man or woman believes from the heart. I'm just saying that I gave up believing that was the proper way to harmonize all of the scriptures on this subject. I soon learned that I could believe in Yahweh the Father (my God, my Creator, the Most High), and also in Yeshua (my Brother, my Kinsman Redeemer, my Messiah, the Son of Yahweh). It was a great feeling, and I believe the reason why is because there are literally hundreds of texts that are explicit in separating Yahweh and Yeshua (God and Jesus). I'm aware that there are some scriptures that take more time to examine and explain holding my view, but the weight of scripture is definitely on the side of Yahweh the Supreme God and Father, and Yeshua the only Son of the Father, our beloved elder Brother.

Never forget what the Father in heaven revealed to Peter. Peter got the revelation about who Yeshua was directly from Father Yahweh. Yeshua was right in front of Peter, looking straight at him, and Peter said to Yeshua, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." That would be an

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<sup>54</sup> In studying “church history” I found that the Trinity did not develop fully until the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. It’s often presented by church-men that everyone believed this way in the first century and then splinter groups developed over the next few hundred years. I found the exact opposite to be the case. There were all sorts of ideas about who Yeshua was early on, but the most primitive of those ideas were by the first century Torah observant Jews who believed in Yeshua. They did not abandon their faith. They continued to believe in the one God (of the Shema, Deut. 6:4) and guard Torah, they just now accepted Yeshua as the promised Messiah, descendant of King David. The deliverer prophesied about had arrived. No first-century Jew believed in the Trinity. John the Baptizer wasn’t preaching the Trinity at the Jordan River. That’s ridiculous.

awful strange thing for Yahweh to reveal to Peter if Yeshua was really the Father or the living God. Yeshua loved Peter's answer. Yeshua said, "You're blessed Peter!" The reason Peter was so blessed is because Yahweh had chosen to reveal the truth about Yeshua to Peter. The Father in heaven had shown Peter who Yeshua was.

This revelation from the Father, given to Peter, is what first convinced me of the view I now hold. Back in 2004-2005 I would lay in my bed at night before going to sleep and meditate upon Matthew 16:13-18. I can't remember exactly how many nights in a row this went on, but I know it was many. I was finally able to shake loose from what I had been taught the Bible says, and just submit to the clear and plain revelation that the Father gave to Peter. How could I go wrong believing the same thing about Yeshua that the Father revealed to Peter?

As I mentioned at the beginning of this book, if Yeshua stood in front of me and you today, and asked us the question, "Who do you say that I am?" - how would you answer? That's the question you need to ask yourself. I've already decided how I would answer. I see no other choice but to answer with the exact words of Peter, who got his answer from the Father in heaven: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

My prayer is that people have their hearts and minds opened to truly believe in Yahweh's one and only Son. I think many people who read and study the Bible do, but I think there are also many who spend more time wanting to agree with post-apostolic man-made dogma. There are those who seem bent on proving their creedal or denominational tradition rather than trusting direct texts of Scripture. We cannot hold onto something just because we are familiar with it or have an emotional attachment to it.

Yahweh has chosen to bring us life through His Son. Yeshua is the way, the truth, and the life. Yahweh is our destination. Yeshua is the path to our destination. There is no other path. No man can get to the right destination without using the proper map. No man can come to Father but through His beloved Son, Yeshua.

1 John 5:9-13 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Grace and Peace be to you from Yahweh the God and Father of Yeshua our Lord.