

Was Yahweh Pierced?

When you talk about *who Yeshua is* with a person of the Oneness persuasion, they often bring up a text in the Hebrew Scriptures that indicates that Yahweh was the being who was pierced, or would be pierced, while hanging upon the cross.

Zechariah 12:10a And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced...

The speaker in this text is definitely Yahweh. Verse 4 begins with, "In that day, saith Yahweh." So Yahweh is saying that the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem "shall look upon ME whom they have pierced." What is interesting is the very next part of verse 10, where Yahweh speaks of "him" rather than "Me."

Zechariah 12:10b ...and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

In the first part of verse 10, it sounds like Yahweh is saying that *He* will be the one that is pierced. In the second part of verse 10, it sounds like Yahweh is saying that it is *someone else* who will be pierced. The fulfillment of this passage is found in the gospel of John.

John 19:33-34 But when they came to Yeshua, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

Here we see that it was *Yeshua* who was pierced, but some say that Yeshua was really Yahweh, because of Zechariah 12:10a. What is interesting is that John goes on to quote the prophecy in Zechariah, but he does not quote it exactly as it reads in Zechariah.

John 19:35-37 And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

In verse 37, John is quoting a portion of Zechariah 12:10, but notice that John does not quote it as Yahweh saying, "They shall look on ME whom they have pierced." He rather quotes it as Yahweh saying, "They shall look on HIM whom they have pierced."

Why does John change the text when he quotes it? I believe the answer to that question is that John is not actually changing the text, in the sense of *distorting* the text. John is changing the text in the sense of giving us *the proper meaning* of the text. John is doing what the Septuagint often does: changing the *literal* text of the Hebrew into a Greek translation that conveys the original *meaning*. Anyone who has studied the Septuagint has seen that it often reads differently than the Hebrew, but upon further study, it is only translating the literal text in a way that "blossoms out" its meaning.

In the case at hand, we have already seen the concept of both "Me" and "him" right there in Zechariah. Then, we see a quotation of Zechariah (by John) that doesn't quote

Zechariah verbatim. These apparent discrepancies help us to know that we need to study deeper, and that's okay. There are several texts, on a variety of Biblical subjects, that require deeper meditation.

How is it that Yahweh can be the One who is pierced (they shall look upon ME; Zechariah 12:10a), but Yeshua is the one who is *really* pierced (they shall look on HIM; John 19:37)? Does this mean that Yahweh and Yeshua are one and the same person?

I do not believe it was Yahweh who was *literally* pierced. Yahweh is immortal.

Romans 1:23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

1 Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Timothy 6:16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

The words "incorruptible" and "immortal" (Romans 1:23; 1 Timothy 1:17) are from the Greek word *aphthartos* meaning "un-decaying in essence or continuance" (#862, Strong's Greek Dictionary). It is the same word used in the following passage which promises that believers in the Messiah will obtain immortality at their resurrection from death.

1 Corinthians 15:52-53 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible (*aphthartos*, G862), and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption (*aphtharsia*, G861) , and this mortal *must* put on immortality (*athanasia*, G110).

Currently, believers in Christ are corruptible beings. We are able to die, and thus able to be killed. At our resurrection, dead believers will be raised to immortality; to a new body which is unable to die or unable to be killed.

At the end of 1 Corinthians 15:53 we have a different Greek word for immortality or incorruptible, but it conveys the same meaning. *Athanasia* carries the meaning of "deathlessness" (Strong's Greek Dictionary). This is the Greek word used in the aforementioned passage of 1 Timothy 6:16. Yahweh is the only being who is *inherently* immortal (unable to die).¹

¹ It is interesting that when talking to people who believe that God died, from either the Oneness or Trinitarian persuasion, they still explain that although He died, He was still alive. Conversations I've had go something like this:

Me: "So if Jesus is God Almighty, then God died, right?"

Them: "Well, yes."

Me: "Who was running the universe at that time?"

Them: "Well, He died, but He was still alive in some sense."

Me: "How could He die, yet be alive?"

At this point, there are differences in how people attempt to explain this contradiction, and a contradiction it is. Some people enjoy calling it a paradox, and it seems that the word paradox is thrown around to cover up contradictory statements and beliefs as though there is not even such a thing as a contradiction. It is much better to believe the Scriptural information: Yahweh is immortal, thus He cannot die. Yeshua was mortal man, died, and then resurrected to immortality (which means he cannot die again).

Yeshua died. He was the one who was pierced upon the cross after his death. Upon resurrection 3 days later, Yeshua obtained immortality. This means that after his resurrection, it is impossible for Yeshua to die again. No one could kill him now, no matter how hard they tried, because He is in his immortal, incorruptible, glorified body. Yahweh has always been immortal, but not Yeshua. Yeshua was once mortal and then obtained immortality. It's the same with believers in the Messiah. We are now mortal, but will one day obtain immortality. That is how we will be able to live eternally, in the future.

If a person tries to say that Yahweh could have died even though He is immortal, then they will have to be consistent and say that Yeshua could die *again* now in his immortal state. To remain consistent, they would also have to say that believers, after being raised from death to immortality, still have the possibility of dying *again* in their future. This flawed reasoning makes the word immortal have no "bite" to it.

If the soldiers came up to the Messiah hanging on the cross and saw that he was already *dead* before they pierced him (John 19:34), there is no way that could have been Yahweh hanging on the cross, because Yahweh cannot die.² But we still have Zechariah 12:10a where Yahweh says, "They shall look upon ME whom they have pierced." We do not want to be guilty of pitting scripture against scripture. We need to find a harmony here.

The way to understand this is to believe John's *meaning-for-meaning* translation in John 19:37. John realized that Yahweh was not literally pierced upon the cross, so he translated Zechariah 12:10 as Yahweh saying "they shall look on HIM who they pierced." But, there is a way to properly understand that when Yeshua was *literally* killed and pierced, Yahweh was *figuratively* killed and pierced.

Remember, Yeshua is the Son of Yahweh, only begotten (John 3:16-18; 1 John 4:9-10). To Yahweh, when He saw them pierce His Son, it was as though He was being pierced. Yahweh the Father had sent Yeshua in His name, which means that Yeshua came with the backing or the authority of Almighty Yahweh. To receive Yeshua was to receive Yahweh. To reject Yeshua was to reject Yahweh.

Matthew 10:40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

In this text Yeshua is sending out his 12 disciples to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:1-15). Because Yeshua is the one who sends these men out, they are his emissaries; they carry his weight or authority. This is why Yeshua says, "He that receives you (12 disciples) receives me." It is not that the 12 disciples were literally Yeshua, but they did come with his approval. The same holds true for the last part of the verse where the people who receive Yeshua receive the One who sent Yeshua, which is Yahweh. It's not that Yeshua is literally Yahweh, it is that Yeshua comes with Yahweh's

² I've had at least one preacher accuse me in believing "God cannot" instead of "God can!" That sounds good and noble on the surface (in his favor), but ponder upon it for a bit longer. Is it such a bad thing to believe that there are some things God cannot do?

In studying the word immortal, we learn that God cannot die. We also read in the book of Hebrews (6:18) that is impossible for God to lie, thus God cannot lie. The things God cannot do are part of what make Him the unique Being that He is. They are not to be viewed as limits to His Being, but unique attributes that have always and will always make Him far above us.

approval. With this understanding, let me show you a text that I think will help make clear the meaning of Zechariah 12:10.

In Acts 9, Saul of Tarsus is on the road to Damascus with letters in his hand (from the high priest) that authorized him to bind and imprison believers in Yeshua of Nazareth. Saul was not

a believer at this time, he was a persecutor of the believers.

While Saul was heading to Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him, making him fall to the ground (Acts 9:3-4). Then a voice spoke to him from heaven. I want you to notice carefully one thing that was spoken to him.

Acts 9:4-5 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Yeshua whom thou persecutest: *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

Yeshua is in heaven, but he is talking to Saul who is on the earth. Yeshua asks Saul "Why do you persecute ME?" and then he tells Saul, "I am Yeshua whom you persecute."

Think about this: how could Saul have been persecuting Yeshua? Yeshua was in his resurrected state up in heaven. He was no longer walking and ministering on the earth. So there is no way that Saul could have been persecuting Yeshua, but yet Yeshua asks "Why do you persecute ME?"

The answer lies in the *meaning* of the text. In the text, Yeshua *says* "Why do you persecute ME?" but the *meaning* is "Why do you persecute MY FOLLOWERS?" Saul was not literally persecuting Yeshua, but he was figuratively persecuting Yeshua, because Saul was binding, imprisoning, and even stoning *the followers* of Yeshua. Yeshua spoke of the persecution of his followers as his own persecution.

This is how Yahweh was speaking in Zechariah 12:10. When Yahweh said, "They shall look upon ME whom they have pierced," He was not saying that He would be the one who was literally pierced. He was rather teaching us, that when His Son was persecuted, when His Son was literally killed and pierced through, it was a figurative killing and piercing of Yahweh the Father, because He had sent the Son.

John knew this, and this is why John quoted the textual *meaning* of Zechariah 12:10. John wrote (John 19:37) that what Yahweh *meant* was, "They shall look on HIM - *My one and only Son* - whom they pierced."

Brother Matthew Janzen
678-347-6240