

to call God a liar (*cf.* 12:44-50; 1 Jn. 5:10).⁶¹ Kruse, however, goes further in his conclusion, “Since Jesus’ words are the words of God, to accept them is to accept that God is truthful. Behind this statement lies the idea of the Jewish ‘envoy’ of whom it is said, ‘a man’s envoy is like himself’ (Mishnah, *Berakot* 5:5). The acts of a man’s envoy were regarded as the action of the man himself.”⁶²

Yeshua the Son is One who is “above all” (John 1:31), and a unique relationship exists between Yeshua the Son and God the Father: “the Father loves the Son and has put everything in his hands [*panta dedōken en tē cheiri autou, πάντα δέδωκεν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ*]” (John 3:35, CJB/CJSB). It is obvious enough by such a statement that the identity and nature of the Son is tied up in the identity and nature of the Father. But according to John the Immerser, it is not enough to recognize the Son as having a special relationship with the Father. As he directed, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him” (John 3:36, RSV). **Placing one’s belief or trust in the Son**—who is notably “above all” (John 1:31)—**is mandatory to not experience the everlasting wrath or condemnation of the God of Israel.** Disregard of Yeshua the Messiah can bring with it severe consequences. As Ben Witherington III highlights,

“God has placed all things in the hands of the Son whom he loves, the whole of the working out of the plan of redemption for humankind, and especially for God’s people. Therefore, everything of consequence, everything of eternal significance is on the line here—‘Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God’s wrath.’”⁶³

Yeshua the Son is not a figure who acts independently from, or without the authorization of, God the Father. In fact, non-belief in Yeshua the Son will result in people experiencing a very unpleasant eternity. The words of John 3:31-36 are by no means exhaustive in regard to the nature of the Messiah, but these words do invite readers to evaluate claims made of One whose very being is tied together with the very being of the Father. Given the themes present within the Gospel of John, such claims serve as strong evidence of Yeshua the Messiah being integrated into the Divine Identity.

John 4:6-26

“Yeshua Confirms that He is the Messiah”

“There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Yeshua said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Yeshua answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ She said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?’ Yeshua answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.’ He said to her, ‘Go, call your husband and come here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Yeshua said to her, ‘You have correctly said, “I have no

⁶¹ Carson, *John*, 213.

⁶² Kruse, 123.

⁶³ Ben Witherington III, *John’s Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 1995),

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husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.' Yeshua said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Anointed One); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.' Yeshua said to her, 'I who speak to you am *He*.'"

The scene recorded by John of Yeshua, speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well, is interesting, if for any other reason not only is the male Yeshua speaking openly to a female—but the Jew Yeshua is speaking to a female Samaritan. The Samaritans were "A Hebrew religious sect geographically focused on Mt. Gerizim and claiming to be descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh among the tribes of the northern kingdom. They believed they preserve[d] the original Mosaic religion" (*EDB*).⁶⁴ The Samaritans were the descendants of various Northern Kingdom Israelites not taken away as exiles by Assyria, and who intermingled with various transplanted pagans. Suffice it to say, Jews of the Second Temple period regarded the Samaritans as being little better than pagans, as they observed what, at best, would have been an aMosaic, Torah-styled religion, with various divergences from what was witnessed in mainstream Judaism.

It is narrated how Yeshua sits down at Sychar (likely Shechem), a Samaritan city, and while at Jacob's well (John 4:5) asks a Samaritan woman for a drink of water (John 4:7), who then proceeds to inform Him how Jews and Samaritans do not interact (John 4:9). Yeshua says to this woman, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water" (John 4:10, TLV). What Yeshua labels as "the gift of God" (*tēn dōrean tou Theou*, τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ θεοῦ), is rightly deduced to be Himself, He who provides living water (*hudōr zōn*, ὕδωρ ζῶν). The Samaritan woman then inquires, "Lord, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get living water? Are You greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" (John 4:11-12, PME). Speaking to the Samaritan woman, Yeshua informs her that the living water present via the gift of God, is something that not only He provides—but that it is something which will result in eternal life:

"Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never be thirsty. The water that I give him will become a fountain of water within him, springing up to eternal life!" (John 4:13-14, TLV).

The Samaritan woman desires this "water welling up to eternal life" (NIV), although it is apparent that at first she can only perceive it in materialistic terms: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may stop being thirsty and not have to make this journey to draw water any more!" (John 4:15, Phillips New Testament). Yeshua asks that she calls her husband over (John 4:16), as presumably such living water—as made available only in Him—is something that at least should concern her spouse as well. The Samaritan woman responds, informing Yeshua that she has no husband (John 4:17a). Yeshua then informs her that she has answered correctly, apparently having had five husbands, and was living with a man to whom she was not married (John 4:17b-18). No background into the woman's past is provided in John's record, as

⁶⁴ Robert T. Anderson, "Samaritans," in *EDB*, 1159.

some readers might speculate that the Samaritan woman had a string of husbands who died, a string of husbands who divorced her, or was even a prostitute of sorts. It is fair for readers to conclude that there were some relational challenges in her past, and that not all of her husbands just died. The Samaritan woman is keen enough, in encountering Yeshua the Jew, concluding that He is a prophet. As she asks of Him,

“Sir, I can see that you are a prophet...Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you people say that the place where one has to worship is in Yerushalayim” (John 4:19-20, CJB/CJSB).

Yeshua was interacting with a person, who apparently held the view, along with all Samaritans, that Mount Gerizim would have been the appointed place of the Lord, rather than the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Still, the Samaritan woman recognizes Yeshua to have at least been a prophet, as He could tell her things about her past. The Samaritan woman acknowledged the Jew Yeshua to have unique supernatural powers, and so wondered about why Jerusalem was the true center of worship. Yeshua’s response, while affirming the truths of Second Temple Judaism and the centrality of Jerusalem, also affirmed that all who served Israel’s God and Father had to worship Him in spirit and truth. Much of what Yeshua said, was representative of the future destruction of the Second Temple, but also the future provision of the Holy Spirit:

“Lady, believe me, the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Yerushalayim. You people don't know what you are worshipping; we worship what we do know, because salvation comes from the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed, it's here now—when the true worshippers will worship the Father spiritually and truly, for these are the kind of people the Father wants worshipping him. God is spirit; and worshippers must worship him spiritually and truly” (John 4:21-24, CJB/CJSB).

While the exact theology of the Samaritans on many issues was likely varied, John presents the Samaritan woman as one who was anticipating some kind of a Messiah figure. The Samaritan woman had to have agreed with Yeshua, that something was going to take place in the future, where worship of the God of Israel transcended Mount Gerizim, Sychar (Shechem), or Jerusalem. She says to the Jew Yeshua, “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called the Anointed One.) When He comes, He will explain everything to us” (John 4:25, TLV). So, this is a good enough indication that there were various Samaritans, who agreed with their Jewish neighbors that a Messiah was going to come and inaugurate a new future of sorts (cf. John 4:29).

Reading John 4:26 in an English version like the RSV, it is very easy to deduce that Yeshua simply responds with the affirmative, that He is the Messiah: “Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am he.’” The source text, however, says something a little more specific: *legei autē ho Iēsous egō eimi, ho lalōn soi* (λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἐγὼ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι). Within the source text of John 4:26 is the *egō eimi* or “I am” formula, employed by the LORD or YHWH at the burning bush theophany in the Septuagint version of Exodus 3:14. Many, given the setting of the exchange between Yeshua the Messiah and the Samaritan woman, simply conclude that *egō eimi* is only intended to convey “I am he” (TNIV/2011 NIV). Others, however, think that there is, even in a secondary capacity, an intended reference to not just Yeshua informing the Samaritan woman that He is the Messiah, but that He also bears a unique nature. The following summarizes a number of the thoughts offered by commentators on the Gospel of John:

- George R. Beasley-Murray: “On the woman’s affirmation of this hope in the Messiah, Jesus reveals himself to her: Ἐγὼ εἰμι, ‘I am,’ which may be

completed with 'he'; for the Evangelist, however, the formula has the overtone of the absolute being of God (cf. 6:20; 8:28, 58).⁶⁵

- Ben Witherington III: "Scholars debate whether or not *ego eimi* should be seen as a theophanic formula here, a means of Jesus' revealing that he is and can speak as God did to Moses, using the 'I am' formula. But the woman has spoken only of the one called the Christ/Messiah, and it is most natural to read Jesus' response to be, 'I am (he); the one who is speaking to you is that person.' In either case, this amounts to at least a partial revelation of who Jesus truly is."⁶⁶
- Gary M. Burge: "The Greek phrase of 4:26 (lit., 'I am—who speaks to you') holds a term that is peculiar in the Fourth Gospel and will recur with some frequency: 'I am' (Gk. *ego eimi*). This expression may be a mere self-identification (so the NIV, NRSV, etc.) but the pronoun 'he' in 'I who speak to you an *he*' does not exist in the Greek sentence. The phrase is emphatic and unusual. As we will see later (8:58), it is not always just a term of self-identification that bears a predicate (e.g., 'I am the bread of life,' 6:48). It is also the divine name of God uttered on Mount Sinai to Moses (see Ex. 3:14). When this term (Heb. *Yahweh*) was translated into Greek, it became *ego eimi* ('I am'), and throughout John we will see Jesus' absolute use of this phrase without a predicate to disclose more of his divine identity."⁶⁷
- Andreas J. Köstenberger: "Jesus now acknowledges frankly that he is the Messiah. The phrase ἐγὼ εἰμι (*egō eimi*, I am) here initially serves as a vehicle of self-identification (cf. 6:20; not the similar assertions in 6:35 and esp. in 9:37...), though on a secondary level it may also serve as a revelatory formula...in allusion to Isa. 52:6."⁶⁸
- Craig S. Keener: "Jesus' particular words, ἐγὼ εἰμι, are naturally construed to mean, 'I am (he),' as they normally would in such a dialogue (e.g., 9:9), but given the more explicitly christological use of ἐγὼ εἰμι in John's discourses elsewhere, we may suspect that we have here...[a] double entendre...(see 8:58; cf. 6:20; 8:28; 18:5). The entire phrase is quite close to the LXX of Isa 52:6."⁶⁹

While many have tended to associate *egō eimi* or "I am" to the Sinai theophany (see previous discussion on Exodus 3:1-16), it is appropriate that we note how various examiners have instead appealed to Isaiah 52:6: "Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore in that day I am the one who is speaking, 'Here I am.'" Here, the Hebrew *ki-ani-hu ha'medabeir hineini* (כִּי־אֲנִי־הוּא הַמְדַבֵּר הֵנִי), was rendered into Greek as *hoti egō eimi autos ho lalōn* (ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι αὐτὸς ὁ λαλῶν), an obvious statement of the Lord God of Israel identifying Himself. A connection with John 4:26, *legei autē ho Iēsous egō eimi, ho lalōn soi*, is easily discerned.

From the source text of John 4:26, while the primary intention of the Jew Yeshua was to affirm to the Samaritan woman that He was Israel's promised Messiah—that a secondary intention is seen to establish a unique identity for Yeshua, is definitely detected. There are a number of versions which take into consideration *egō eimi* in John 4:26 representing the "I am"

⁶⁵ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 62.

⁶⁶ Witherington, *John*, 121.

⁶⁷ Burge, *John*, 148.

⁶⁸ Köstenberger, 158.

⁶⁹ Keener, *John*, 620.

formula of either Exodus 3:14 (LXX) and/or Isaiah 52:6 (LXX): “Jesus said to her, I AM! the One speaking to you” (LITV); “Then Jesus told her, ‘I AM the Messiah!’” (NLT); “Yeshua said to her, ‘I, who speak to you, I AM!’” (PME). While Yeshua’s statement of John 4:26 is not conclusive evidence of Him being the “I AM” or LORD God, readers are certainly invited to continue their investigation of the statements and actions of Yeshua.

John 5:1-18

“Yeshua Was Working on the Sabbath, the Same as God”

“After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Yeshua went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, *waiting for the moving of the waters*; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted. A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Yeshua saw him lying *there*, and knew that he had already been a long time *in that condition*, He said to him, ‘Do you wish to get well?’ The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’ Yeshua said to him, ‘Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.’ Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and *began* to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, ‘It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.’ But he answered them, ‘He who made me well was the one who said to me, “Pick up your pallet and walk.”’ They asked him, ‘Who is the man who said to you, “Pick up your pallet and walk?”’ But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Yeshua had slipped away while there was a crowd in *that* place. Afterward Yeshua found him in the temple and said to him, ‘Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.’ The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Yeshua who had made him well. For this reason the Jews were persecuting Yeshua, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.’ For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”

John 5:1-18 records an important scene of Yeshua the Messiah taking the initiative to heal an invalid at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem.⁷⁰ Frequently for today’s Messianic people, their attention will be focused mainly on whether or not Yeshua’s healing of the man, was in violation of the seventh-day Sabbath/*Shabbat* or not. Within the narrative, Yeshua directs the invalid, “Stand up, take your mat and walk” (John 5:8, NRSV). A miracle takes place, as it is recorded, “Instantly the man got well, picked up his mat, and started to walk” (John 5:9a, HCSB). The challenge with what took place is that, “Now that day was *Shabbat*” (John 5:9b, CJB/CJSB). It is to be recognized that within the mainstream Jewish Sabbath *halachah*, much of which would be later detailed in the Talmud, that helping to heal someone of an ailment was not prohibited. But, one does see the opinion expressed that while short term, acute conditions, could be treated on *Shabbat*—particularly those which were life-threatening—more long-term illnesses or handicaps could wait. As it is summarized,

“Further did R. Matia b. Harash say, ‘He who has a pain in his throat —they drop medicine into his mouth on the Sabbath:’ R. Yohanan suffered from scurvy. He went to a certain

⁷⁰ This entry has been condensed from the entry on John 5:1-18 appearing in the *Messianic Sabbath Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.