

The Nature of Yeshua in the General Epistles

him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also” (1 John 4:20-21, NRSV).

1 John 5:1-5, 18 “Yeshua Born of God”

“Whoever believes that Yeshua is the Messiah is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Yeshua is the Son of God?...We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.”

Love for God and for God’s people, is an obvious, overarching theme of the Epistle of 1 John. The Apostle John admonishes his audience, “Everyone who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah is born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves the one born of Him” (1 John 5:1, TLV). A slightly more literal rendering of the aorist active participle *ton gennēsanta* (τὸν γεννήσαντα) in 1 John 5:1, often just appearing as “the Father,” is “the one having given birth” (Brown and Comfort).⁷² The Agent responsible for the new birth is God, who has brought about redemption via the sacrifice of His Son, the Messiah Yeshua. A true love of God, resultant of the new birth, will be obedience to God’s commandments, and will also involve victories over the forces of darkness (1 John 5:2-5).

Further on in 1 John ch. 5, it is communicated, “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not sin, but the One who is born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him” (1 John 5:18, HCSB). This is frequently interpreted by readers in how those “born of God” or born again, do not sin, as a result of their spiritual transformation. Yeshua the Messiah is “He who was born of God” in the Incarnation, and because of His sacrifice for sins and consequent resurrection, those who are in Messiah are kept or preserved. Believe it or not, there has been some discussion regarding the nature of the Messiah from 1 John 5:18, something witnessed in *The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation*, which unambiguously reflects a low Christology of Yeshua the Messiah being a created entity:

“We recognize that those who have been born of God do not keep on sinning. The one fathered and brought into existence, the Son of God, protects him and the Devil cannot harm him.”⁷³

1 John 5:18 employs two usages of the verb *gennaō* (γεννάω), “of the father, to beget, engender” (LS),⁷⁴ which most Bibles consistently render with “born” language: “We know that everyone **who has been born** of God does not keep on sinning, but **he who was born** of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him” (ESV). The first usage, the perfect passive participle *ho gegennēmenos* (ὁ γεγεννημένος), regards the one “having been born” (Brown and Comfort)⁷⁵ of God via His salvation, speaking of born again Believers. The second usage, the aorist passive participle *ho gennētheis* (ὁ γεννηθείς), regards “the one having been born” (Brown

⁷² Brown and Comfort, 839.

⁷³ Anthony F. Buzzard, trans., *The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation* (Atlanta: Restoration Fellowship, 2014), 595.

⁷⁴ LS, 162.

⁷⁵ Brown and Comfort, 841.

and Comfort)⁷⁶ of God, a reference to the birth of Yeshua. Smalley indicates the grammatical features present here:

“There is a logical change in tense from ὁ γεγεννημένος (perfect; ‘anyone who has been born,’ describing the generation of a child of God) to ὁ γεννηθεὶς (aorist; literally, ‘the one who was born,’ referring to the specific event, in the past, of the birth of Jesus).”⁷⁷

There should be little dispute that the aorist passive participle *ho gennētheis* refers to the birth of Yeshua the Messiah; what can be disputed is the conclusion drawn by Anthony F. Buzzard, “*Gennetheis* points to a moment in time when the Son came into existence.”⁷⁸ In his massive work *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Daniel B. Wallace points how how “Aorist participles usually suggest *antecedent* time to that of the main verb (i.e., *past* time in a *relative* sense.”⁷⁹ No responsible Bible reader thinks that Yeshua as *ho gennētheis* or “the One who was born” (TNIV) sits isolated and alone from other statements regarding the nature of Yeshua. The Prologue of the Gospel of John (ch. 1), immediately should come to mind, which speaks of “the only begotten God [*monogenēs Theos*, μονογενὴς θεός] who is in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18). While there was a point in time when the human Yeshua was born, there are ample evidences in the Apostolic Scriptures, and most especially John’s Gospel (previously addressed in **Volume I**) which point to His pre-existence, a definite and critical component of His Divinity.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Smalley, 303.

⁷⁸ *The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation*, 595.

⁷⁹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 555.