

relation to, or reflect characteristics of, a deity, including esp. helpfulness to one's constituencies, *divine*" (BDAG).⁴⁵ The *theios* of Yeshua provides Believers with the supernatural impetus that they need in order to have the right knowledge of Him (1 Peter 1:3). Believers are further labeled to be *theias koinōnoi phuseōs* (θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως), "participants of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4, NRSV) or "sharers in the divine nature" (Lattimore), particularly in terms of what it means to "escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" (NIV). While mortal Believers in Israel's Messiah are hardly going to find themselves titularly labeled "our God and Savior" (2 Peter 1:1), they do nevertheless because of the trust that they have placed in Him, benefit from the Messiah's Divine nature, and see their character transformed to be more like His:

"Now for this very reason, making every effort, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, love. For if these qualities are in you and increasing, they keep you from becoming idle and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah" (2 Peter 1:5-8, TLV).

The need for Believers to maintain their guard against sin, and continually mature in faith, is stressed by the Apostle Peter, communicating to his audience, "But anyone who lacks these qualities is blind—nearsighted because he has forgotten his cleansing from past sins" (2 Peter 1:9, TLV). Peter further admonishes, "Therefore, brothers and sisters, make all the more effort to make your calling and election certain—for if you keep doing these things, you will never stumble" (2 Peter 1:10, TLV).

The opening statements of 2 Peter end with a doxology, notably issued to Yeshua: "For in this way entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Messiah Yeshua, will be richly provided for you" (2 Peter 1:11, TLV). No one disputes the translation "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (RSV) for *tou Kuriou hēmōn kai sōtēros Iēsou Christou*. However, it cannot be avoided how Believers are to enter into *tēn aiōnion basileian* (τὴν αἰώνιον βασιλείαν) or "the eternal kingdom" of Yeshua. How does this reflect on the nature of the Messiah? Truly, no one would expect a supernatural, but ultimately created being, to have an eternal kingdom. It would seem most out of place, at best, for a doxology to be said along the lines of "the eternal kingdom of the Archangel Michael." Only if Yeshua were genuinely a being to be regarded as "our God and Savior" (2 Peter 1:1) and "our Lord and Savior" (2 Peter 1:11), would He likewise be expected to have "an eternal realm" (2 Peter 1:11, Moffat New Testament).

2 Peter 1:16-18

"Peter Testifies to the Transfiguration"

"For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased'—and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain."

The author of 2 Peter claims to be an eyewitness of Yeshua the Messiah, which, notwithstanding various secretaries or scribes being employed for the composition of the

⁴⁵ Frederick William Danker, ed., et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, third edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 446.

The Nature of Yeshua in the General Epistles

Epistle of 2 Peter, disregards the possibility of 2 Peter being pseudepigraphal and written long after the death of the Apostle Peter. He asserts to his audience that His encounter of Yeshua of Nazareth in person, was both dynamic and majestic: “For when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, we did not rely on cunningly contrived myths. On the contrary, we saw his majesty with our own eyes” (2 Peter 1:16, CJB/CJSB). Contextually, readers of the Apostolic Scriptures can deduce how Peter makes light of the scene of the Transfiguration:

“For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, a voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory: ‘This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased!’” (2 Peter 1:17, TLV; cf. Mark 9:7; Matthew 17:5; Luke 9:35).

Yeshua being glorified by God the Father, in and of itself, does not conclusively prove that He is God and integrated into the Divine Identity. However, Peter is one who has identified Yeshua as “our God and Savior” (2 Peter 1:1). Just as the disciple Thomas exclaimed “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28) when he encountered the resurrected Yeshua—clearly having to process who He fully was—so would the disciple Peter who encountered the transfigured Yeshua, been affected by His Transfiguration in such a way so as to later recognize Him as Divine. Peter witnessing supernatural phenomenon, doubtlessly played a role in his thoughts about the nature of Yeshua: “we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain” (2 Peter 1:18, RSV).

2 Peter 3:18

“To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity”

“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

The closing doxology of the Epistle of 2 Peter, certainly asks readers of Peter’s letter some significant questions. Doxologies are hardly uncommon to the Holy Scriptures, as Paul glorifies the Lord in Romans 11:36: “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” It is most common in doxologies in the Apostolic Writings, to see glory offered to the One God of Israel, through Yeshua the Messiah (Romans 7:25; 16:27; Ephesians 3:21; 1 Peter 4:11; Jude 25).⁴⁶ 1 Peter 4:11 preceding, has God proper in view:

“Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Yeshua the Messiah, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

1 Peter 4:11 states how *en pasin doxazētai ho Theos dia Iēsou Christou* (ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζεται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), “in all things may be glorified – God through Jesus Christ” (Brown and Comfort).⁴⁷ Here, God the Father is glorified by means of Yeshua the Son. In 2 Peter 3:18 following, however, Peter exclaims *tu Kurīou hēmōn kai sōtēros Iēsou Christou. autō hē doxa* (τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα), “of the Lord of us and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him [be] the glory” (Brown and Comfort),⁴⁸ with no doubt as to the fact that it is Yeshua the Messiah who is being extolled. The very glory that Peter ascribes to God the Father (1 Peter 4:11), is also ascribed to Yeshua the Son (2 Peter 3:18). The only way that the Apostle Peter, as a monotheistic Jew, could have come to such a conclusion, would be to see Yeshua integrated into

⁴⁶ Cf. Davids, *2 Peter*, pp 312-315 for a chart evaluating various doxologies.

⁴⁷ Brown and Comfort, 817.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 828.