

The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John

serve as strong evidence of a pre-existent Messiah, present in the dimension of Heaven—but it would also serve as strong proof of Yeshua being integrated into the Divine Identity. The NIV/TNIV/2011 NIV is notably reflective of this: “Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.”²⁰⁹ The Phillips New Testament similarly has, “Isaiah said these things because he saw the glory of Christ, and spoke about him.”

John 12:44-50

“Yeshua Does Not Act On His Own”

“And Yeshua cried out and said, ‘He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. I have come *as* Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment *as to* what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.’”

The mission of Yeshua the Messiah was profoundly different than many of the expectations of those who encountered Him. When readers encounter His declarations, particularly in a passage like John 12:44-50, they see how Yeshua the Son will frequently deflect the attention from Himself, and onto His Heavenly Father. The most significant reason for Yeshua doing this, was to decisively neutralize any claim that He was a self-aggrandizing independent actor—who had especially committed crimes of self-deification. Yeshua is instead the Son of God sent to Earth by the Father in Heaven. The obedience, of the Son to His Heavenly Father, is to be a model for His followers to emulate, in not only their commitments to the God of Israel, but also their service to one another and their fellow human beings.

A reader can be a bit taken aback by Yeshua’s statement, “Whoever puts trust in Me believes not in Me but in the One who sent Me!” (John 12:44, TLV). Is it not true that in order to receive salvation, we must each believe or put our trust in Yeshua? This word obviously includes some hyperbole, as it is not Yeshua alone in whom people must believe, but also the Heavenly Father who sent Yeshua to the Earth: “And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me” (John 12:45, NASB). This is to emphasize, once again, that Yeshua is not acting alone and all on His own. That belief in Yeshua is required—although belief in Yeshua is not exclusive to belief in the Heavenly Father who sent Him—is seen in His further direction, “I have come *as* light into the world, that whoever believes in Me [*ho pisteuōn eis eme, ó pisteuōn eis êmè*] would not abide in the darkness” (John 12:46, PME).

Yeshua further teaches, as His mission is to see people removed from the evil influence of darkness, that “As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it” (John 12:47, NIV). Yeshua’s explicit purpose was not to judge or condemn the world, but rather see people brought into the light of redemption. Yeshua specifies how He personally will not be the One judging people in the end, but rather how people reacted to His teachings will be what will judge people: “Those who reject me and don’t accept what I say have a judge—the word which I have spoken will judge them on the Last Day” (John 12:48, CJB/CJSB). And as it is seen, the word issued by Yeshua is not something that He spoke of Himself, but the authority He demonstrated in all of His activities is something which found its ultimate source in the Heavenly Father:

²⁰⁹ Also the Common English Bible: “Isaiah said these things because he saw Jesus’ glory; he spoke about Jesus.”

“For I did not speak on My own, but the Father Himself who sent Me has commanded Me what to say and speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting. Therefore what I say, I say just as the Father has told Me” (John 12:49-50, TLV).

What might John 12:44-50 inform us about the nature of Yeshua? In other passages, where Tanach or Old Testament passages are applied to Yeshua the Messiah, we tend to find ourselves evaluating significant supernatural actions that can only be performed by the LORD or YHWH, being performed by Yeshua—a sure sign of His being integrated into the Divine Identity. But let us not forget that another part of Yeshua being integrated into the Divine Identity is the close relationship that the Son has with the Father. And, when the close relationship that the Son and the Father have is considered, we tend to find that Yeshua is a very subversive figure, when it comes to much of our natural, human evaluation of what we often think the Messiah is to do.

John 13:1-20

“Yeshua Serves His Disciples at the Last Supper”

“Now before the Feast of the Passover, Yeshua knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*, to betray Him, *Yeshua*, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, ‘Lord, do You wash my feet?’ Yeshua answered and said to him, ‘What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Never shall You wash my feet!’ Yeshua answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.’ Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, *then wash* not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.’ Yeshua said to him, ‘He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all *of you*.’ For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’ So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined *at the table* again, He said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for *so* I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor *is* one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but *it is* that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME’ [Psalm 41:9]. From now on I am telling you before *it* comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am *He*. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

All readers of the Gospels should be innately impressed by the humility demonstrated by Yeshua the Messiah, not only in His ministry service, teachings, and example—but also in His willingness to give of Himself freely, as a sacrifice for sinful humanity. The moments leading up to His betrayal, trial, and execution are of particular importance—not only for what it means to those of us who desire to gain inspiration for our service as His followers today—but for probing much of the character and nature of Yeshua. There are important statements made by the Messiah, and claims made by the Messiah, in the classic scene of Yeshua washing His Disciples feet—a seemingly simple action which could have been performed by any ancient household servant, but here as an act of humility offered by their Master.