

## The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John

“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I don't go away, the comforting Counselor will not come to you. However, if I do go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will show that the world is wrong about sin, about righteousness and about judgment—about sin, in that people don't put their trust in me; about righteousness, in that I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; about judgment, in that the ruler of this world has been judged. I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now” (John 16:7-12, CJB/CJSB).

Within Yeshua's statements, we see some of the concentrated beginnings of recognizing that the Holy Spirit will have a substantial role to play in the work of Messiah followers. The Holy Spirit, by indwelling Messiah followers, is very much to be the presence of the Messiah within them. While much of the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit is to supernaturally change the character of human hearts and minds, it is also something which is to convey messages to Messiah followers—namely as the Holy Spirit is not an independent actor or agent, but conveys what the Father and Son direct. Yeshua describes some of this interconnectivity:

“But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on His own; but whatever He hears, He will tell you. And He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify Me, because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is Mine. For this reason I said the Ruach will take from what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:13-15, TLV).

The statements of John 16:13-15 hardly give us a comprehensive picture of supernatural phenomena in Heaven, nor do they give us a full scope of data on the Spirit, the Son, and the Father. But, what the statements of John 16:13-15 do for certain is that they depict a relationship present between the Spirit, the Son, and the Father. Even though it may be observed that there are many limitations to the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity, a revealed tri-unity of *Elohim* is something detectable in passages like John 16:13-15.

### John 16:23-33

#### “Yeshua Has Come Forth From the Father”

“In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full. These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; an hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but will tell you plainly of the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request of the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.’ His disciples said, ‘Lo, now You are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech. Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God.’ Yeshua answered them, ‘Do you now believe? Behold, an hour is coming, and has *already* come, for you to be scattered, each to his own *home*, and to leave Me alone; and *yet* I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.’”

Hints and clues about the identity of Yeshua the Messiah are dropped within His conversation with the Disciples at the Last Supper or Last Seder. That Yeshua has a very unique and significant relationship, with God the Heavenly Father, cannot be denied. He informs His Disciples, “In that day, you will ask Me nothing. Amen, amen I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you” (John 16:23, TLV). Here, this is rightly taken as meaning that a time is coming when the Disciples will not need to inquire or probe Yeshua about things beyond; the Disciples will instead have the knowledge that they need, and they will have the confidence to ask the Heavenly Father for provision, and He will give it. What needs to be recognized, in order for the Heavenly Father to give such provision, is that it needs to be requested via the name or authority of Yeshua, and cannot be asked directly without Yeshua’s work or activity in redeeming humans not being invoked. This is a new ability accessible to the Disciples, who are observed up to that time as not having asked the Heavenly Father for anything (John 16:24).

Some alterations are coming, in terms of how Yeshua will speak to His Disciples of His Heavenly Father—as He tells them “I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father” (John 16:25, NRSV). This will presumably be a time when, after having witnessed His execution and resurrection from the dead, that the Disciples will have progressed in enough of their experiential knowledge, so that they can handle more direct statements about God. So, it can be a bit perplexing for some readers to encounter Yeshua saying, “In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf” (John 16:26, NIV). It is commonly concluded among evangelical interpreters that the focus of statements appearing in Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; and 1 John 2:1 is on the meditational role of the Messiah in salvation, whereas John 16:26 focuses on the prayer requests of Believers issued to God.<sup>231</sup>

That the Father and Son have an interconnected relationship is clear enough from John 16:27-28. The relationship that the Messiah’s followers are to have with the Heavenly Father, is something dependent on the love that they have for the Messiah: “For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me” (John 16:27a, TLV). But, being a grand beneficiary, of the love of the Heavenly Father, is dependent on recognizing that Yeshua came forth from the Father: “and have believed that I from – God came forth” (John 16:27b, Brown and Comfort),<sup>232</sup> *kai pepisteukate hoti egō para [tou] Theou exēlthon* (καὶ πεπιστεύκατε ὅτι ἐγὼ παρὰ [τοῦ] θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον). An obvious reference to Yeshua’s birth or Incarnation (John 1:14) is seen in “I came from the Father and I have come into the world” (John 16:28a, Brown and Comfort),<sup>233</sup> *exēlthon para tou patros kai elēlutha eis ton kosmon* (ἐξῆλθον παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον).

A few questions might be raised when encountering the two common renderings that appear in English versions for John 16:28b: “I am leaving the world again and going to the Father” (NASU); “now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father” (NIV). The source text *palin aphīēmi ton kosmon kai poreuomai pros ton patera* (πάλιν ἀφίημι τὸν κόσμον καὶ πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα) appears in the Brown and Comfort interlinear as, “again I leave the world and go to the Father.”<sup>234</sup> The word of note in this clause is *palin* (πάλιν), “back; again, back again” (Mounce and Mounce).<sup>235</sup> While more versions than not simply take John 16:28b as a reference to “now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father” (Mounce and Mounce),<sup>236</sup> if *palin*

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Carson, in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, 2188.

<sup>232</sup> Brown and Comfort, 388.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Mounce and Mounce, 1130.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 429.

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is rendered as “again,” then what it could serve to indicate is that Yeshua’s return to Heaven anticipated here, is not the first time that He had returned to Heaven. Hence, John 16:28b, “I leave the world again and go to the Father” (LITV), should prompt an investigation of various passages from the Tanach or Old Testament, where there may very well have been pre-Incarnate manifestations of Yeshua the Messiah on Earth. As already explored, these may have involved the figure of the angel/messenger of the Lord, the supernatural figure present in the fiery furnace of Daniel, and even the Patriarch Abraham dining with God in human form, among others.

The Disciples, upon hearing this, respond favorably: “See, now You’re speaking plainly and not in metaphors. Now we know that You know everything and have no need to be asked anything. By this we believe that You came forth from God” (John 16:29-30, TLV). The Disciples acknowledge that Yeshua came forth from God: “by this we believe that from God you came forth” (Brown and Comfort),<sup>237</sup> *en toutō pisteuomen hoti apo Theou exēlthes* (ἐν τούτῳ πιστεύομεν ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθες). And indeed, we are reminded once again that our investigation, into the identity and nature of Yeshua of Nazareth, is very much contingent on us evaluating what it means for Him to have come forth from God.

After asking His Disciples if they truly believed (John 16:31), He informs them of an uncomfortable reality about to befall, namely as His betrayal, humiliation, and death are imminent: “Look, the hour is coming—indeed has come—when you will be scattered, each to his own, and you will abandon Me. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me” (John 16:32, TLV). In matters of His human Incarnation for certain (cf. John 16:38a), Yeshua is not alone and is very much reliant on His Heavenly Father: “and I am not alone, because the Father with me is” (John 16:32b, Brown and Comfort),<sup>238</sup> *hoti ho patēr met’ emou estin* (ὅτι ὁ πατήρ μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐστίν). This is the Father who would notably be responsible for resurrecting the Son from the dead. And so, it should hardly be surprisingly to see the Lord inform His Disciples, “I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world” (John 16:33, HCSB). What the Disciples are about to witness, while causing some momentary abandonment on their part, is actually something with significant cosmic, redemptive dimensions! It will give them the confidence in the future, to recognize the supremacy of Yeshua over worldly powers.

### John 17:1-26

#### “The High Priestly Prayer of Yeshua the Messiah”

“Yeshua spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Yeshua the Messiah whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. I am no

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<sup>237</sup> Brown and Comfort, pp 388-389.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 389.