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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),²³⁷ *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),²³⁸ *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

²³⁷ Brown and Comfort, pp 388-389.

²³⁸ Ibid, 389.

longer in the world; and *yet* they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, that they may be one even as *We are*. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil *one*. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as *We are one*; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

John 17 is frequently regarded as the High Priestly Prayer of Yeshua the Messiah. This is a prayer offered from Yeshua the Son, to His Heavenly Father, as it specifically involved what was going to happen to His Disciples, as Yeshua was about to leave them. The Disciples would have the important responsibility of proclaiming the good news of the salvation available in the Messiah to not only the Jewish community, but to all in the wider world. Much of the experience that was seen in the Messiah’s frequent rejection, humiliation, and impending death—would indeed be repeated in the Disciples’ own experience of serving the interests of the good news. While the prayer of John 17 is imbued with a great number of deeply consoling words, and statements of comfort for those in ministry service today—the prayer of John 17 does bear some significance for those trying to understand the nature and origins of Yeshua.

After praying, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, so the Son may glorify You” (John 17:1b, TLV), some significant indications about the identity and origins of Yeshua are witnessed. These not only involve the authority granted to the Son by the Father, but also involve the provision of eternal life to those who believe in Him. Yeshua testifies that His Father has given Him authority over all of humankind: “since you have given him authority over all flesh” (John 17:2a, ESV), *kathōs edōkas autō exousian pasēs sarkos* (καθώς ἔδωκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν πάσης σαρκός). Yeshua then exclaims “that [to] all which you have given him he may give to them eternal-life” (John 17:2b, Brown and Comfort),²³⁹ *hina pan ho dedōkas autō dōsē autois zōēn aiōnion* (ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκας αὐτῷ δώσῃ αὐτοῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον). There is definitely an interconnected relationship between the Father and Son stated here, in the salvation of persons—and so it is entirely legitimate to ask whether a supernatural yet ultimately created being would be able to grant people eternal redemption. While the terminology “Son of Man” is not present in John 17:2, the concepts of Daniel 7:13-14 are definitely detectable:

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

²³⁹ Brown and Comfort, 389.

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He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" (NIV).

No one who holds to a high Christology of Yeshua being God, integrated into the Divine Identity, thinks that Yeshua's provision of salvation to human beings is independent from the activity and approval of God the Father. However, advocates of a low Christology, of Yeshua the Messiah being a supernatural yet created agent, sent by God the Father in Heaven, strongly believe that Yeshua's following assertion in John 17:3 proves their case: "And eternal life is this: to know you, the one true God, and him whom you sent, Yeshua the Messiah" (John 17:3, CJB/CJSB). Too frequently in analyses involving Christology or the nature of the Messiah, John 17:3 has been glossed over by those who hold to a high Christology.

Does John 17:3, "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (NRSV), decisively rule against Yeshua being integrated into the Divine Identity? No. And the reason for this is because of the context of Yeshua's prayer, and how what is being anticipated from it needs to be considered. Yeshua has just stated in John 17:2 that His Heavenly Father has granted Him authority over "all flesh" (RSV), "all people" (NRSV), or "all mankind" (NASB). Yeshua has authority over the whole human race, but the whole human race needs to recognize the One God of Israel, and Yeshua as the Messiah whom He has sent.

Too many of us, as Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Bible readers—often in a Western society dominated by a Judeo-Christian religious tradition—take for granted the reality of monotheism. Even though more conscious for some than others, both Judaism and Christianity look to the One God of Israel as their only source of spiritual veneration. **This was not the case for many of the first, non-Jewish recipients of the good news.** There were non-Jewish people in the First Century, mainly Greeks and Romans, who had to *first* recognize the God of Israel as the only Supreme Deity, and then *second* could in turn recognize that He had promised a Deliverer or Messiah to come, who would restore both the Kingdom to Israel and welcome in the righteous from the nations (cf. Isaiah 49:6).

A survey of the Book of Acts, encountering the spread of the good news or gospel out into the Mediterranean basin, demonstrates how figures like the Apostle Paul had a far easier time declaring the good news to Greeks and Romans who had already been God-fearers associated with a local Jewish synagogue, than to Greeks and Romans directly. God-fearers had already, to a wide degree, recognized the One God of Israel, having turned away from dead idols, and in various degrees were familiar with the Messianic expectations of the Tanach, having been exposed to them in Synagogue teaching. However, there would be many people—as anticipated by John 17:3—who would turn to Israel's Messiah directly from paganism (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Many of these people had difficulties recognizing the One God of Israel (Acts 14:8-19; 17:16-34), and in not still feeling a pull to the gods and goddesses of the Greco-Roman pantheon (1 Corinthians 8:7). As Paul would communicate to non-Jewish Believers in Asia Minor, they once experienced a prior condition of estrangement from Israel's God, and hence knowledge of the covenants of promise and the expectation of a Messiah to come:

"Therefore remember, that once you, the nations in the flesh...*remember* that you were at that time separate from Messiah, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua you who were once far off, have been brought near in the blood of Messiah" (Ephesians 2:11-13, PME).

In his *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections*, having referenced John 17:3, Brown draws the appropriate conclusion,

“[O]ne of the central reasons why God sent his Son into the world, [was] that through Jesus the Messiah people in every nation and land would forsake their idols and dead religious traditions and turn to the living and true God. The New Testament is most definitely monotheistic, and it further clarifies the monotheism of the Hebrew Bible. The only true God is one, and yet his oneness is complex, unique, and beyond human understanding.”²⁴⁰

Michaels offers the concurring thought, “the definition of eternal life here upholds Jewish monotheism as the writer understands it, while at the same time reinforcing for the reader the Gospel’s opening line, that ‘in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ (1:1).”²⁴¹ Yeshua’s prayer, “that they may know You, the only true God, and Yeshua the Messiah whom You have sent” (John 17:3, PME), involves (a) a broad worldwide recognition of monotheism, and (b) a broad worldwide recognition of the promised Messiah of Israel. Those of us who affirm a high Christology see no issue here, as most frequently our conviction of Yeshua the Messiah being God, integrated into the Divine Identity, is predicated on investigating what it fully means for Yeshua the Son to be sent by the Heavenly Father.

As the prayer continues, Yeshua elucidates how there is a glory that the Son offers to the Father, via the completion of His ministry work on Earth: “I glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do” (John 17:4, CJB/CJSB). But as readers see in Yeshua’s following statement, it is not enough for the Son to ask the Father to glorify Him, as He is going to Heaven. The Son specifically asks the Father to glorify Him with the glory that He once had with the Father, before the Creation of the world: “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world came to be” (John 17:5, TLV). It is legitimately witnessed “along with yourself with the glory which I was having before – the world was with you” (John 17:5, Brown and Comfort),²⁴² *para seautō tē doxē hē eichon pro tou ton kosmon einai para soi* (παρὰ σεαυτῶ τῆ δόξῃ ἣ εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σοί).

There is no avoiding the fact from John 17:5b, “at your side with the glory that I had with you before [the] the world began” (Mounce and Mounce),²⁴³ that Yeshua the Messiah pre-existed the world. While Yeshua’s pre-existence of the world is not decisive evidence of Yeshua being God and integrated into the Divine Identity, pre-existence of the world is an absolute prerequisite in order for Yeshua to be God. The claim of Yeshua having glory with the Father in Heaven, prior to the Creation of the world, sits alongside of other claims appearing in the Gospel of John (1:1; 8:58), the declaration of Isaiah 48:2 that “I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images,” and how the *Carmen Christi* hymn of Philippians 2:6-7 speaks of Yeshua emptying Himself of something, presumably His glory in Heaven, in being incarnated as a human: “who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness” (NRSV).

Yeshua’s prayer to His Disciples is witnessed to be a reflection of how He as the Son, has been completely reliant on His Father, in the work He has been assigned to perform on Earth while as a human man. They are to be unified, just as the Father and son are unified (John 17:11).

“I made your name known to the people you gave me out of the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have

²⁴⁰ Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections*, 12.

²⁴¹ Michaels, 860.

²⁴² Brown and Comfort, 389.

²⁴³ Mounce and Mounce, 430.

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given me is from you, because the words you gave me I have given to them, and they have received them. They have really come to know that I came from you, and they have come to trust that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given to me, because they are yours. Indeed, all I have is yours, and all you have is mine, and in them I have been glorified. Now I am no longer in the world. They are in the world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, guard them by the power of your name, which you have given to me, so that they may be one, just as we are. When I was with them, I guarded them by the power of your name, which you have given to me; yes, I kept watch over them; and not one of them was destroyed (except the one meant for destruction, so that the *Tanakh* might be fulfilled)" (John 17:6-12, CJB/CJSB).

Yeshua continued to pray for His Disciples, specifically that they be kept from evil, as they were not of the world:

"But now, I am coming to you; and I say these things while I am still in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world—just as I myself do not belong to the world. I don't ask you to take them out of the world, but to protect them from the Evil One. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Set them apart for holiness by means of the truth—your word is truth" (John 17:13-17, CJB/CJSB).

While those adhering to either a high or low Christology, are likely to agree on approaches to the statements of John 17:6-12 for unity, and John 17:13-17 for protection from the world—John 17:18-26 is a place where there will doubtlessly be significant differences between those who hold to a high Christology, and those who hold to a low Christology.

Yeshua states that He is sending His Disciples into the world, just as the Father sent the Son into the world: "as you sent-me into the world, [so] also I sent them into the world" (John 17:18, Brown and Comfort),²⁴⁴ *kathōs eme apesteilas eis ton kosmon, kagō apesteila autous eis ton kosmon* (καθὼς ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, κἀγὼ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον). The key clause here is *eis ton kosmon*, and contextually this regards the anticipated service of the Disciples.

Yeshua's personal sanctification noted in John 17:19, involves the completion of the work that the Father gave Him to do on Earth: "And for their sakes I make Myself holy, so that they also may be made holy in truth" (TLV). Here, given the events which are impending, such a sanctification or being made holy, surely involves Yeshua's betrayal by Judas Iscariot, His humiliation, and His death. Yeshua's prayer is also clear, "I pray not only for these, but also for those who will trust in me because of their word" (John 17:20, CJB/CJSB). Not only will Yeshua's Disciples present be affected by what is about to transpire, but many others who will believe in Yeshua are also going to be affected, because of the word that the Disciples will declare of Him.

Bible readers of all varieties recognize Yeshua's words in John 17:21-24, as exempletive of the grand unity that all Believers in Him are to have with the Father and the Son. What can we detect about the unity of the Father and the Son from John 17:21-24, and in particular about the nature of the Son? Yeshua prays, "May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be one in Us, so the world may believe You sent Me" (John 17:21, HCSB). Is this an ontological or functional unity? For certain, the unity, that all Believers are to have, is a functional unity reflective of the functional unity that the Father and Son have. Yet, it does need to be probed, if the functional unity of the Father and Son is reflective of their ontological

²⁴⁴ Brown and Comfort, 391.

unity (cf. 10:30). If the ontological unity of the Father and Son is, to some degree, being floated in front of those who believe in Yeshua—then it presents a very high goal of unity, most unlikely and impossible to ever be reached (discussed further).

Yeshua prays, “I have given them the glory You have given Me. May they be one as We are one” (John 17:22, HCSB). This further intensifies the need for the Disciples to be one, or unified. Yet Yeshua says, “and I the glory which you have given me I have given them” (John 17:22a, Brown and Comfort),²⁴⁵ *kagō tēn doxan hēn dedōkas moi dedōka autois* (κἀγὼ τὴν δόξαν ἣν δέδωκάς μοι δέδωκα αὐτοῖς). Is this something in flat contradiction of Isaiah 42:8, where glory is associated with the exclusive praise due to the One God of Creation? In John 17:5 previously, glory is associated with the pre-existent origins and disposition of the Messiah. But in John 17:22, the Father’s glory, present in the Son and given to the Disciples, is rightly taken to involve the dimensions of His humiliation and death, something to be surely replicated in the Disciples’ experience of ministry service. No one, who holds to either a high Christology or low Christology, would honestly argue that the “glory” shared by Son and given to the Disciples, involved the worship and praise noted by Isaiah 42:8. Textually, Yeshua’s statement of John 17:22a is affected by 17:19 preceding, where Yeshua has consecrated Himself, and is subsequently glorified for His actions. That there is a difference between the glory of John 17:5 and John 17:22, is something correctly noted by a number of commentators:

- Leon Morris: “Jesus now says that He has given His followers the glory which the Father gave Him. That is to say, just as His true glory was to follow the path of lowly service culminating in the cross, so for them the true glory lay in the path of lowly service wherever it might lead them.”²⁴⁶
- Craig S. Keener: “Jesus receives glory...and gives it to believers (17:22) that they may glorify God (cf. 17:21, 23; 15:8); if they are to glorify God as Jesus does, however (17:4), they must love him and one another to the extent that he did, to the point of death (21:19 with 12:32-33). As in Paul’s theology, believers who would share Jesus’ glory must first share his suffering (Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:17; cf. Eph 3:13; 2 Thess 1:5-6, 10).”²⁴⁷
- Andreas J. Köstenberger: “The glory that the Father has given to Jesus and that he has passed on to his disciples is not Jesus’ preexistent glory, which he is yet to reclaim (see 17:5), but the glory that Jesus was awarded in order to carry out his earthly mission (e.g., 1:14; 2:11; 11:4, 40...)...As they continue his mission, Jesus wants his followers to share in the glory that has been a hallmark of his own ministry, including at the cross...This implies that the disciples’ path, too, entails lowly service and suffering on behalf of others.”²⁴⁸

The oneness or unity that Yeshua prays that His Disciples have, is something which is conditional: “I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:23, NIV). As the text communicates “I in them and you in me, that they may be completely {into} one” (Mounce and Mounce),²⁴⁹ *egō en autois kai su en emoi, hina ōsin teteleiōmenoi eis hen* (ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ σὺ ἐν ἐμοί, ἵνα ὦσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἓν), the unity that Yeshua prays for is not something that the human disciples or followers of Yeshua just get to have. The oneness or unity

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 391.

²⁴⁶ Morris, *John*, 734.

²⁴⁷ Keener, *John*, 1063.

²⁴⁸ Köstenberger, 498.

²⁴⁹ Mounce and Mounce, 432.

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presented here is something that they must be perfected into. Given the employment of the perfect passive participle *teteleiōmenoi* (τετελειωμένοι), it is seemingly a Divine action that Yeshua's followers must allow the Lord to work forth in their lives. The clause *teteleiōmenoi eis* (τετελειωμένοι εἰς), "they may be perfected into" (Brown and Comfort),²⁵⁰ is a trajectory that has to be manifest. **There is no hint, however, that Yeshua had to be "perfected" in order to attain oneness or unity with the Father.** The observations made by Craig L. Blomberg in the *The Apologetics Study Bible* are worth noting here:

"Obviously, believers cannot be one with either the Father or the Son in every way the persons of the Godhead are one with each other, for we are not God. On the other hand, the unity among Christians is more than invisible oneness of all believers; it is something that demonstrates itself in outward, tangible, loving cooperation for powerful evangelistic purposes and results."²⁵¹

If the statements of John 17:21 preceding, "that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You sent Me," are taken principally as a statement of ontological unity between the Father and Son—a unity to which disciples are to strive to reach toward—then it presents a unity which is very impossible for any mortal human to attain. But, the ontological unity of the Father and Son is something innately manifest in the functional unity of the Father and Son—which, although frequently met with many obstacles, is achievable in various ways. As Keener further observes,

"[T]he loving unity between the Father and the Son provides a model for believers, not necessarily a metaphysical, mystical ground for it. Jesus and the Father mutually indwell each other (17:21; also 10:38; 14:10); by Jesus dwelling in them and with the Father dwelling in him (cf. also 14:23), Jesus' followers would experience God's presence in such a way that unity would be the necessarily result (17:23). John would probably view the inability of believers to walk in accord with one another as, first of all, a failure to accede to the demands of the divine presence both share."²⁵²

Beasley-Murray raises the further, critical points, of how Believers can only be one or unified, via their connection to the Father via the Son, who serves as Mediator, and how such is a process:

"The nature of the relationship between the Father and the Son that determines the unity of redeemed humanity has already been stated in 14:10-11, 20: 'I in the Father and the Father in me'; it is a mutual indwelling of persons. In the prayer the relationship of the redeemed to the Father and the Son is stated in slightly different ways: in v 21, 'as you are in me, and i in you, that they may be in us'; in v 23, 'I in them, and you in me.' In the former case the redeemed become one by participating in the *koinonia* of the Father and Son; in the latter case that participation is through their union with the Son, a concept which is in harmony with representations within the entire Gospel of the mediatorial role of the incarnate Son of God. By this means redeemed men and women become 'perfected into one' (τετελειωμένοι); in this Gospel the latter term is chiefly used of Jesus *achieving* his work, so 4:34; 5:36; 17:4. Accordingly, the unity envisaged is possible only through the accomplished redemptive action of God in Christ, while it yet calls for an appropriate ethical response from those drawn into it."²⁵³

Contextually in the scope of statements made in John 17, the glory described in John 17:22 preceding involves the Disciples' emulation of their Master via future suffering. The glory

²⁵⁰ Brown and Comfort, 391.

²⁵¹ Craig L. Blomberg, "John," in *The Apologetics Study Bible*, 1607.

²⁵² Keener, *John*, 1062.

²⁵³ Beasley-Murray, pp 302-303.

described in John 17:24 following is properly associated with the glory that Yeshua is to once again receive as He returns to Heaven, noted in John 17:5: “Father, I also want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory—the glory You gave Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:26, TLV). Here, the verb *theōreō* (θεωρέω) is employed to describe the intended action of the Disciples: “to observe someth. with sustained attention, be a spectator, look at, observe, perceive” (BDAG).²⁵⁴ Yeshua having been the Son loved “before the creation of the world” (NIV) or “before the world’s foundation” (HCSB), *pro katabolēs kosmou* (πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου), and the fact that the glory is something that the Disciples are to witness manifested upon Yeshua, is indicative of how the Disciples will be present with Yeshua in the future Messianic Kingdom, where He will demonstrate His pre-existent glory. Yeshua’s Disciples are worthy of this, as Yeshua has obeyed His Father in the actions He was to perform while on Earth (John 17:25-26).

John 18:1-11

“Roman Soldiers Encounter the Supernatural Aura of Yeshua”

“When Yeshua had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Yeshua had often met there with His disciples. Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. So Yeshua, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ They answered Him, ‘Yeshua the Nazarene.’ He said to them, ‘I am He.’ And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. So when He said to them, ‘I am He,’ they drew back and fell to the ground. Therefore He again asked them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ And they said, ‘Yeshua the Nazarene.’ Yeshua answered, ‘I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,’ to fulfill the word which He spoke, ‘Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one.’ Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave’s name was Malchus. So Yeshua said to Peter, ‘Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?’”

Yeshua was betrayed by Judas Iscariot in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:2), who had led a group of Roman soldiers to arrest Him, with the approval of the Jewish religious leaders: “So Judah, having taken a band of soldiers and some officers from the ruling *kohanim* and Pharisees, comes there with lanterns, torches, and weapons” (John 18:3, TLV). As is it narrated, “Yeshua, who knew everything that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, ‘Whom do you want?’” (John 18:4, CJB/CJSB).

As John 18:5-6 is recorded in a common Christian version like the RSV, “They answered him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am he.’ Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When he said to them, ‘I am he,’ they drew back and fell to the ground.” In the source text, however, readers encounter *legi autois egō eimi* (λέγει αὐτοῖς· ἐγὼ εἰμι; John 18:5) and *hōs oun eipen autois egō eimi* (ὡς οὖν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἐγὼ εἰμι; John 18:6), which is more literally rendered as “said to them, I AM!” and “Then when He said to them, I AM” (LITV). While Yeshua’s statements in John 18:5-6 are surely representative of Him identifying Himself to the Roman cohort, it is undeniable that the *egō eimi* formula of Exodus 3:14 is employed here. And, not only is the *egō eimi* formula of the burning bush theophany employed here, but there is even an explanation given to readers: “When he said, ‘I AM,’ they went backward from him

²⁵⁴ BDAG, 454.