

be in place in statements about the Son being sent by the Father? What does it invite readers to be considering?

No evaluation of the nature of the Messiah would be sufficient without considering the testimony of the Gospel of John. Does the Gospel of John depict Yeshua of Nazareth as only a supernatural agent of God, as the Son doubtlessly has a unique relationship with the Father, but one where the Son is ultimately created? Or, is the agency of the Son as the Father's uniquely Sent One into the world of humans, indicative of qualities and traits that only God is capable of possessing and performing? Too frequently, while Messianic people who hold to a high Christology rightly appeal to various statements appearing in the Gospel of John, there are other statements appearing in the Gospel of John which do not often receive attention—and are then exploited by proponents of a low Christology. A more comprehensive approach to statements about the nature and self-identification of Yeshua of Nazareth is doubtlessly needed, in order for today's Messianic people to adequately understand the Messiah as both Lord and God (John 20:28).

John 1:1-18 **"The Word Was God"**

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light. There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, "He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me." For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Yeshua the Messiah. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*."*

The Johannine Prologue of John 1:1-18 is one of the most frequently quoted and referenced passages, *made by those* who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua being the eternal, uncreated Son of God, who is indeed God, *to those* who hold to a low Christology of Yeshua and think that Yeshua is a supernatural yet created being. To many, who read John 1:1-18 that Yeshua the Messiah must be God, it seems pretty clear from a straightforward reading of the text. Those, who hold to a low Christology, know the importance that those who hold to a high Christology give to John 1:1-18—and it is not as though they are not without some proposals, which can frequently catch people off guard. What does John 1:1-18 actually communicate to Bible readers? Does the Johannine Prologue truly support a high Christology, or not? What are some key details and claims asserted by John 1:1-18, which we need to each be consciously aware of?

The opening statement of John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God" (TLV), is something which undeniably echoes the opening statement of the Holy Scriptures in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here, it is to be presumed that a second entity, other than God proper, was present

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with God at the beginning of the universe. Those who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua being God, integrated into the Divine Identity, believe that John 1:1 unambiguously associates the Word, Yeshua, being present with God at the creation of the universe, and directly identifies Him as God—necessarily a plural *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) Godhead composed of at least the Father and the Son.

From the source text of John 1:1, Yeshua the Messiah is actually labeled to be the *logos* (λόγος; pronounced with a short *o* as *lōgōs*), which in a general sense basically means “the word or that by which the inward thought is expressed” (LS).⁴ The term *logos*, to be sure, has many varied uses across both the Greek Septuagint and Apostolic Scriptures, each contingent on context, and frequently being the equivalent of the Hebrew *davar* (דָּבָר). In the Hebrew Tanach itself, the *davar* of God or of the Lord is closely associated with His creative activity (Genesis 1:3-4; Psalm 33:6), His revelation (Isaiah 9:8; Jeremiah 1:4; Ezekiel 33:7; Amos 3:1, 8), and His deliverance (Psalm 107:20; Isaiah 55:1).⁵ Ultimately, if one were to consult the text of Scripture alone, one would have to associate John’s *logos* with the Tanach’s *davar*, and assume that a significant force present in the Tanach is now manifesting itself again in John 1:1-18 in the person of Yeshua of Nazareth.

The term *logos* is, however, widely and correctly recognized, by a variety of examiners across the spectrum, to have a background rooted in Hellenistic Judaism, as being representative of the core operating principle of reason which governs the universe. In some strata of Second Temple Jewish literature, the *logos* of God is associated with the figure of Wisdom, and/or with God’s power and supremacy. The following entry on “Logos” from the *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*—notably a broadly liberal resource—properly summarizes the different classical and Jewish approaches to the *logos*/word, which can and do affect one’s reading of John 1:1-18:

Logos, literally, the Word; notion of knowable divine first principle derived from ancient Greek philosophy that became a key theological concept of Hellenistic Judaism (especially in the thought of Philo of Alexandria), from which it was adopted by early Christianity. The Greek word *logos*, usually translated as “word,” comes from the root *leg-*, meaning (1) to gather or count and (2) to speak. From the former, the noun comes to mean ratio, proportion, order; from the latter; a wider separation of meaning results, including (from concrete to abstract): word, saying, account, oracle, speech, conversation, dialogue, definition, argument, theory, reason, or rationality. The term is very common in Greek philosophy, signifying the cosmic order (Heraclitus), the divine principle that causes and maintains that order (the Stoics), or more generally the principle of reason or rationality in man (Philo, Aristotle).

In Jewish tradition, the term first appears in the Septuagint, where it most often translates *dabar* in the Hebrew Bible. This results in a more dynamic element not present in the ordinary Greek usage, for example, when “the word of the Lord comes” to one of his prophets. Significantly, *logos* was used to indicate God’s act of creation and his maintenance of the cosmic order (e.g., at Ps. 33:6 [LXX 32:6]: “By the *logos* of the Lord the heavens were established,” where *logos* clearly refers to the “and God said” of Gen. 1). In Hellenistic Judaism, the cosmological and theological use of *logos* is further developed, especially through the identification of the Logos with the figure of Sophia from the Wisdom literature (e.g., at Wisd. of Sol. 9:1-2). The term thus becomes to some degree personified (hence “Logos,” with a capital letter).

The concept is most prominent, however, in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, who further exploits its Greek philosophical connotations. The Logos is a theological principle: it can

⁴ LS, pp 476-477.

⁵ Cf. D.A. Carson, *Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991),

be described as that aspect of God that stands in relation to his creation. It is also a cosmological principle: God uses his Logos as an instrument in the act of creation or as the location for its ideal blueprint or model. Finally, it is also an anthropological principle: humankind is created “according to the image” (Gen. 1:26), which is the Logos. Through their reason (*logos*), humans are related to the Logos, and thus can attain to the knowledge and vision of God (through not of his essence). Philo’s conception of the Logos is not easy to interpret. Sometimes it seems primarily aspectual, virtually a metaphor for God’s power and presence in the world. Sometimes it is presented as a hypostasis (self-subsistent entity), separate from God Himself. There are even a few texts (favored by later Christian readers) in which Philo calls the Logos “God’s first-begotten Son” or “Man of God.” In other texts, angels are described as *logoi* (plural). These divergences are probably to be explained through the diversity of traditions in earlier Jewish tradition upon which Philo is drawing.

Because the term *logos* is tied to the use of the Greek language, its presence in Judaism is curtailed by the reduction in preserved Jewish writings in Greek after the first century C.E. An important continuation occurs in early Christian thought. In the Prologue to the Gospel of John (1:1-18), the Logos is identified with Jesus Christ as the incarnated Son of God. Such a degree of personification goes beyond anything found in Hellenistic Judaism (although Philo regards the high priest as representing the Logos). This line of theological reflection is continued in the Christian Apologists (especially Justin Martyr) and Alexandrian theologians (Clement, Origen, Arius, Athanasius).⁶

Closely related to issues surrounding the Greek term *logos* or “word,” at least functioning as a significant quality of God or principal operating factor in the cosmos, are discussions surrounding the Aramaic term *memra* (מִמְרָא), frequently employed in the Targums, paraphrases of the Hebrew Scriptures into Aramaic, often with various theological value judgments interjected. In many places where the LORD or YHWH/YHVH is seen to be the main actor, this is instead substituted with “the word/*memra* of the LORD.” As is detailed in the *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*,

memra (Aram., from Heb.: *amar*, to speak, to say) Usually translated as “word,” the term *memra* appears throughout the targums, but is unknown in rabbinic literature and other Jewish writings of the biblical period. It is usually associated with the name of God, either attached to the name, as in “the *memra* of the Lord,” or replacing a reference to God. The targum to Isaiah 1:2 reads “they have rebelled against my *memra*” instead of the Hebrew text’s “they have rebelled against me.” It designates the active attribute of God—usually linked to commanding. Under that general rubric, it can be used to describe him speaking, creating, acting, punishing, or receiving worship. It does not constitute a separate entity, personality, or hypostasis.⁷

If, in the Aramaic Targums, there are various places where “the word/*memra* of the LORD” performs actions, as a seemingly separate entity—but one obviously inseparable from God proper—it can understandably be most inviting for various theologians who hold to a high Christology to look for some significant theological background surrounding the *logos* of John 1:1-18 in the *memra*.⁸

The considerable bulk of the debate, between those who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua being God, and those who hold to a low Christology of Yeshua being supernatural but

⁶ “Logos,” in *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*, pp 387-388.

⁷ “memra,” in *Ibid.*, 422.

⁸ For a further review, consult Daniel Boyarin, “Logos: A Jewish Word, John’s Prologue as Midrash,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, pp 546-548.

A more extensive study is provided by John Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John’s Logos Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

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ultimately created, surrounds the term *logos* in John 1:1. Those who hold to either a high or low Christology correctly recognize that the *logos*, and hence the main subject, of John 1:1-18, is Yeshua the Messiah. That Yeshua the Messiah is to also be associated, to some degree, with God's power and supremacy, is something that those who hold to either a high Christology or low Christology generally agree upon. How the entire Johannine Prologue of John 1:1-18 is read, however, very much involves how one approaches the Greek text of John 1:1:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος

En archē ēn ho logos, kai ho logos ēn pros ton Theon, kai Theos ēn ho logos.

Most of your mainline English Bibles will render John 1:1 with, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (RSV; also KJV/NKJV, ESV/NRSV, NASB/NASU, NIV).⁹ This even extends to Messianic versions like the TLV quoted previously, and the CJB/CJSB: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."¹⁰ *Many reading this conclude that Yeshua the Messiah being God is a fairly straightforward conclusion to draw.* It is to be noted, though, that among a number of lesser known English Bible versions—which to various degrees are often regarded as being mainstream, being produced by reputable academic Protestants—that some notable alternatives can be encountered:

- Moffat New Testament: "THE Logos existed in the very beginning, the Logos was with God, the Logos was divine."
- Goodspeed New Testament: "In the beginning the Word existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was divine."

These two versions were produced at the turn of the last century, and their intention was probably to simply stress the Divine, supernatural nature of the Messiah, in less-than-formal language than the dominant King James Version at the time. Still, the question could be raised, from John 1:1, as to whether or not it could be translated differently. *The Restored New Testament* by Willis Barnstone, a comparative literature professor, has a slight twist on John 1:1: "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and God was the word."¹¹ In our own Messianic faith community, the 2011 Messianic Writings version has, "The Word existed in the beginning, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word." Why might these versions have the variant rendering of, "and God was the W/word"? Much of it has to do with the Greek word order of John 1:1:

En archē ēn ho logos, kai ho logos ēn pros ton Theon, kai Theos ēn ho logos

"In [the] beginning was the word, and the word was with – God, and God was the word" (Brown and Comfort).¹²

Two points, often made by those who hold to a low Christology, are (1) that the clause *kai Theos ēn ho logos* lacks the definite article, and (2) the actual word order when translated into

⁹ A specialty version like the Kingdom New Testament has, "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was close beside God, and the Word was God." The NET Bible actually goes a little further, having, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God."

¹⁰ A Sacred Name version like the ISR Scriptures-2009, has the similar rendering, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim," as it only substitutes the Hebrew *Elohim* for the English *God*.

¹¹ Willis Barnstone, trans., *The Restored New Testament* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 448.

¹² Brown and Comfort, 317.

English would be “and God was the word.” Hence, *kai Theos ēn ho logos* should be viewed as the term “God” demonstrating an adjectival quality, with *theos* (θεός) or “G/god” meaning something akin to “Divine” or “supernatural,” but by no means requiring the Logos or Word to actually be God, but instead only possessing a unique relationship with God.

As is witnessed in the Jehovah’s Witnesses New World Translation, “In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.” This conclusion is often drawn from the thought that the clause *kai Theos ēn ho logos* lacks the definite article *ho* (ὁ) with *Theos*. But were the definite article *ho* to appear, i.e., “the Word was *the* God,” it would mean that the Word was all that exclusively composed God, with F.F. Bruce notably describing it in his commentary on John, as “the Word was *the* Godhead.”¹³ If John 1:1 communicated “the Word was *the* God,” then the preceding claim “the Word was with God,” *ho Logos ēn pros ton Theon* (ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν), would be unsustainable. Leon Morris directs, “John is leaving open the possibility that there may be more to ‘God’ than the ‘Word.’”¹⁴ Those, who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua the Messiah being God, hardly believe that Yeshua as the Logos/Word, is all that composes the Godhead. Those, who hold to a high Christology, would read John 1:1-18 as affirming a plural Godhead of *Elohim*, composed of at least the Father and the Son, with John 1:1 communicating that Yeshua the Son is integrated into the Divine Identity.

Secondly, the Greek clause *kai Theos ēn ho logos* being rendered into English as, “and God was the word,” does not all of a sudden make the term *theos* or “G/god” take on an adjectival quality akin to “Divine” or “supernatural,” perhaps allowing for the Messiah to be a created entity. Greek is a case driven language, meaning that the forms of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives all change to indicate what part of speech they are in a sentence.¹⁵ The word order does not matter, as long as the cases indicating the parts of speech align. *Theos*, appearing in the clause *kai Theos ēn ho logos*, is nominative masculine singular, the nominative case indicating that *Theos* is the subject. If John the son of Zebedee, a Jewish monotheist and likely composing his Gospel to those in the vicinity of Ephesus and Asia Minor, wanted to stress that Yeshua of Nazareth were only supernatural in John 1:1, but ultimately created, there were Greek adjectives that he could have used to make this point. This most notably would have included *theios* (θεῖος), “of or from the gods, sent by the gods, issuing from them, divine” (LS),¹⁶ “gener., of that which exceeds the bounds of human or earthly possibility, *supernatural!*” (BDAG).¹⁷ A number of commentators on the Gospel of John notably concur:

- George R. Beasley-Murray: “καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος; θεὸς without the article signifies less than ὁ θεός; but it cannot be understood as ‘a god,’ as though the Logos were a lesser god alongside the supreme God; nor as simply ‘divine,’ for which the term θεῖος [*theios*] was well known (in 2 Pet 1:4 believers are said to be θεῖα κοινωνοὶ φύσεως [*theias koinōnoi phuseōs*], ‘sharers of the divine nature’); nor as indicating the exercise of divine *functions* without possessing the divine nature;

¹³ F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 31; also Carson, *John*, 117.

¹⁴ Leon Morris, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 78

¹⁵ From the two textbooks I was assigned, when studying Biblical Greek at Asbury Theological Seminary (2005, 2007): David Alan Black, *Learn to Read New Testament Greek* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), pp 24-31; *It’s Still Greek to Me* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), pp 43-56.

¹⁶ LS, 360.

¹⁷ BDAG, 446.

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rather it denotes *God in his nature*, as truly God as he with whom he ‘was,’ yet without exhausting the being of God.”¹⁸

- D.A. Carson: “*the Word was God*. That is the translation demanded by the Greek structure, *theos ēn ho logos*. A long string of writers has argued that because *theos*, ‘God’, here has no article, John is not referring to God as a specific being, but to mere qualities of ‘God-ness’. The Word, they say, was not God, but divine. This will not do. There is a perfectly servicable word in Greek for ‘divine’ (namely *theios*).”¹⁹
- Craig S. Keener: “...It certainly cannot connote ‘a god,’ as in ‘one among many,’ given Jesus’ unique titles, role, and relationship with the Father later in the Gospel. Nor should it mean ‘divine’ in a weaker sense distinct from God’s own divine nature...Had John meant merely ‘divine’ in a more general sense, the common but more ambiguous expression τὸ θεῖον [*to theion*] was already available; thus, for example, Philo repeatedly refers to the divine Word (θεῖος λόγος [*theios logos*; *Flight 13*]) and Aristeas refers to ‘the divine law’ (τοῦ θεοῦ νόμου [*tou theiou nomou*; *Letter of Aristeas 3*]).”²⁰

The rendering, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (PME), is absolutely correct for John 1:1. The assertion that the Logos or Word was God or *theos*, and not just Divine or supernatural, is realized in how a term like *theios* could have been employed instead. The Logos or Word, Yeshua the Messiah, is God.

The Johannine Prologue begins with the significant claim that the Word, while being genuinely God (John 1:1), is to be slightly differentiated from God proper, namely the Father (John 1:14, 18). The place of the Logos or Word, as it concerns the history of the universe, is that “He was with God in the beginning” (John 1:2, TLV). Those who hold to a low Christology, may compare the Logos or Word to the figure of Wisdom here (also frequently referred to by the Greek *sophia*, σοφία in many theological works), as it is witnessed in Wisdom 9:9 in the Apocrypha, “With thee is wisdom, who knows thy works and was present when thou didst make the world, and who understands what is pleasing in thy sight and what is right according to thy commandments.” Wisdom, as a created force (cf. Proverbs 8:22-31 [see esp. LXX]; Sirach 1:4; 24:8), according to this, was apparently present with God at the creation of the universe, and assisted with the creation of the universe, but was certainly not God.

Those, who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua being uncreated and integrated into the Divine Identity, cannot deny how there might indeed be some themes or echoes of Wisdom, within the activity ascribed to Yeshua the Messiah. But, that the activity and purpose of what the Logos or Word is responsible for, is witnessed as going very much beyond the figure of Wisdom. For the purposes of John 1:3, the Apostle communicates how “All things were made through Him, and apart from Him nothing was made that has come into being” (TLV). In Proverbs 8:23-30, the figure of Wisdom is noted as only participating in the creation of various things associated with *this universe*,²¹ with no claim of “all things” being the result of Wisdom’s

¹⁸ George R. Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary: John*, Vol 36 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), pp 10-11.

¹⁹ Carson, *John*, 117.

²⁰ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), pp 372-373.

²¹ “From everlasting I was established, from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills I was brought forth; while He had not yet made the earth and the fields, nor the first dust of the world. When He established the heavens, I was there, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, when He made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed, when He set for the sea its boundary so that the water would not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth; then I was beside Him, as a master workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him” (Proverbs 8:22-30).

presence in early creation. How should we approach *panta di' auto egeneto* (πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο), “all things were made through him” (RSV)? While the claim of John 1:3 is rather strong, Colossians 1:16 stresses even further, “For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him,” indeed describing multi-dimensional creative actions to the Messiah (discussed further).

A significant claim about the Logos or Word, in addition to just creating “all things” (*panta*), as it appears in most Bibles, is, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4, TLV). The first statement, *en autō zōē ēn* (ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν) or “In Him was life” (John 1:4a), has significant dynamics to it, given how in Genesis 1:20-25²² God alone is witnessed as being the only entity capable of creating life forms. It is Christologically significant how Yeshua will say that the life of the Father, is something that the Son too is granted to have (John 5:19-29). The claim of John 1:4 is probably further rooted in the sentiment of Tanach passages such as Psalm 36:9, “For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.” In the first statement of John 1:4, “In Him was life,” it can be deduced that the Apostle John is affirming that Yeshua was responsible for not just the creation of multiple dimensions in the cosmos, but was responsible for possessing the life nature required by an Eternal Being to create humans.

That it is to be understood that there are multiple components of the life present within the Logos or Word, Yeshua, is seen in the second statement of John 1:4: *kai hē zōē ēn to phōs tōn anthrōpōn* (καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων), “and the life was the light of people” (PME). Given the further uses of the theme of “light” (*phōs*), it does too little to say that “his life brought light to everyone” (NLT) only means that human beings have a unique consciousness and intellect that other beings do not possess. Instead, it might be better to recognize that the life present in the Logos/Word or Yeshua goes beyond humans having distinct reasoning capacities, and that it involves their spiritual enlightenment and redemption. As Bruce fairly evaluates in his commentary,

“In John 5:19-29 it is because the Son shares this self-existent life with the Father that he is able to impart life to others; so the statement that ‘in him was life’ probably implies a life-giving agency on the part of the Word...But the life which inheres in the Word is here expressly said to have a special importance for one part of the creation—the human race. ‘The life was the light of men’ (human beings, *tōn anthrōpōn*). This is true both of the natural illumination which accompanies the new birth: neither can be received apart from the light that resides in the Word. But what the Evangelist has in mind here is the spiritual illumination that dispels the darkness of sin and unbelief.”²³

George R. Beasley-Murray further concludes, “ζωὴ [*zōē*] (life) and φῶς [*phōs*] (light) include the life and light which come to man in *both* creation *and* new creation. Our Gospel emphasizes the latter aspect, since it is concerned with the saving action of the Logos-Son for humankind, but the new creative work presupposes the original creative action of the Logos and its goal.”²⁴

²² “Then God said, ‘Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.’ God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’ There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind’; and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:20-25).

²³ Bruce, *John*, 33.

²⁴ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 11.

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Ultimately, when reading the statement, “In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind” (John 1:4, CJB/CJSB), this is not the sort of claim that could be made about a supernatural yet ultimately created being. Yeshua as the Logos/Word, integrated into the Divine Identity (John 1:1-2) with God and as God, could only in His intrinsic nature possess a light which was intended to provide a significant power not just as intellectual reason—**but most especially of salvation**—to all people. The grand supremacy of the Logos/Word, Yeshua, is realized in John’s assertion, “The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:5). Here, the verb *katalambanō* (καταλαμβάνω), “to seize upon, lay hold of” (LS),²⁵ is also often rendered as “overcome” (RSV, NIV, et. al.) or “overpowered” (TLV). It has, at times, been thought that some themes contrasting light and darkness, seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 3.13-4.26), are being employed here—but textually in John 1:5 the contrast is obviously one of good versus evil. The Light of Yeshua, is supreme to, and most definitely overpowers, the evil present in the cosmos. The concurring thought of 1 John 2:8b is, “the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.”

The Johannine Prologue does not just introduce readers to the figure of the Logos/Word or Yeshua, but also to the figure of John the Immerser or Baptist, a person whose arrival preceded that of Yeshua to the First Century Jewish community in Israel. It is unambiguous from John 1:6-8, that this John or Yochanan was *anthrōpos, apestalmenos para Theou* (ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ), which can definitely be rendered as “a mortal sent from God” (John 1:6, my translation), as the general *anthrōpos* (ἄνθρωπος) does mean “**a person of either sex, w. focus on participation in the human race, a human being**” (BDAG).²⁶ This John the Immerser is often regarded to be the last in the line of Tanach or Old Testament Prophets (cf. Luke 16:16), and as is recorded, he came as an authorized human agent of God, so that people might believe in the light of truth:

“There was a man sent from God whose name was Yochanan. He came to be a testimony, to bear witness concerning the light; so that through him, everyone might put his trust in God and be faithful to him. He himself was not that light; no, he came to bear witness concerning the light” (John 1:6-8, CJB/CJSB).

The Gospel of John opens with some description about the transforming power of the good news or gospel, depicted in terms of the light of the Logos/Word, making its way into the world. John 1:9 says, “There was the true light, which enlightens every human being, coming into the world” (PME). The first emphasis, seen in John 1:10, is how the world at large—which was created by the Logos/Word or Yeshua—did not know Him when they encountered Him: “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him [*kai ho kosmos di’ autou egeneto, kai o kosmos di’ autou ēgēneto*]; but the world did not know Him” (TLV). The second emphasis, seen in John 1:11, is that Yeshua’s fellow Jews, on the whole, did not receive Him: “He came to his own homeland, yet his own people did not receive him” (CJB/CJSB). The statement of John 1:11, when read in concert with the overall record of the Apostolic Scriptures, is not to be taken as a blanket statement of all Jews that Yeshua encountered having rejected Him—as this could actually disqualify the Twelve Disciples as having accepted Him! While the stress of John 1:11 is textually on a corporate Jewish rejection of Yeshua as Messiah—notably preceded by corporate worldwide rejection of Yeshua as the Savior of humanity in John 1:10 (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:8)—some have detected in John 1:11 themes appropriated from the figure of Wisdom, as seen in both the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha:

²⁵ LS, 409.

²⁶ BDAG, 81.

“Then the Creator of all things gave me a commandment, and the one who created me assigned a place for my tent. And he said, ‘Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance’” (Sirach 24:8).

“Then Wisdom went out to dwell with the children of the people, but she found no dwelling place. (So) Wisdom returned to her place and she settled permanently among the angels” (1 Enoch 42:2).²⁷

Thematically, the figure of Wisdom as a force or virtue of God, going to the community of Israel, and then returning to Heaven after being rejected—could be compared to Yeshua the Messiah coming to the Earth, being widely rejected, and then returning to Heaven. But the redemptive activity of Yeshua the Messiah, to those who did receive Him, *goes far beyond* any of the positive qualities of the figure of Wisdom: “But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in His name, to these He gave the right to become children of God. They were born not of a bloodline, nor of human desire, nor of man’s will, but of God” (John 1:12-13, TLV). It is by belief, faith, or trust in Yeshua the Messiah, that people can be born again and be reckoned as redeemed children of the Most High!

What is commonly labeled as the “Incarnation” of Yeshua is witnessed in passages like John 1:14, appearing in many Bibles as, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (ESV). It is to be noted how the verb *skēnoō* (σκηνώω), “to dwell in a tent” (LS),²⁸ the related noun being *skēnōma* (σκηνώμα), the Greek equivalent via “the Septuagint for אהל [ohel] and מִשְׁכָּן [mishkan]” (Thayer).²⁹ A notable alternative translation of John 1:14 is seen in, “And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. We looked upon His glory, the glory of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth” (TLV),³⁰ as Messianic people may try to offer some comparison to the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:9) and/or God’s glory which dwelled in the Tabernacle (Exodus 16:10), and perhaps even argue from this that Yeshua the Messiah was born sometime during *Sukkot* or the Feast of Tabernacles.³¹ In view of additional statements which follow (John 1:18) Yeshua as the Logos/Word is labeled in John 1:14 as *monogenous para Patros* (μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός), “only begotten from the Father” (LITV), as the Son was born as a human being (cf. Philippians 2:6-7).

A profound statement, issued by John the Immerser/Bapist, and definitely involving the nature of the Messiah, is seen in John 1:15: “John bore witness to him, and cried, ‘This was he of whom I said, “He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me”’” (RSV; cf. John 1:30). The adverb *emprosthen* (ἐμπροσθεν) “**pert. to a position in front of an object,**” notably involving “rank before (i.e. higher than) someone” (BDAG).³² The reason why John the Immerser/Baptist says Yeshua “has surpassed me” (NIV), is because *hoti prōtos mou ēn* (ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν), “because prior to me he was” (Brown and Comfort),³³ which in light of the statements of John 1:1-3 preceding, should be taken as confirmation of the Messiah’s pre-

²⁷ E. Isaac, “1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 33.

²⁸ LS, 733.

²⁹ Thayer, 578.

³⁰ Also LITV: “And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from the Father, full of grace and of truth.”

³¹ Consult the FAQ, “Birth of Yeshua.”

Cf. “*Sukkot* (Tabernacles): New Testament Observance,” in *The Complete Jewish Study Bible*, 1520.

³² BDAG, 325.

³³ Brown and Comfort, 318.

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existence, a significant and critical component of His Divinity. Beasley-Murray concurs, “The Messiah is superior to John in ‘might,’ in that he has been accorded a *priority of status* (ἐμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν [*emprosthen mou gegonen*]) in accordance with his *priority in time* (ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν [*hoti prōtos mou ēn*]). The Logos-Christ participates in the eternal priority of God.”³⁴ Some further, important observations, are made by Andreas J. Köstenberger:

“The Baptist was six months older than Jesus (Luke 1:24, 26) and began his ministry before Jesus did (Luke 3:1-20). The OT generally (though not without some exception) supports the notion that rank and honor are tied to one’s age (e.g., Gen. 49:3; Prov. 16:31)...Because of the Baptist’s age and earlier ministry, both he and the evangelist are at pains to show that Jesus really was ‘before’ John and therefore rightfully to be honored above Him....The Baptist, presumably unaware of Jesus’ preexistence as the Word, may simply have intended to affirm that Jesus ‘surpassed him.’...[I]n the context of John’s opening words (where Jesus is portrayed as having existed with God from eternity), the Baptist’s confession also points to Jesus’ eternal origin (1:14; cf. 8:58; 12:41) and thus preeminence.”³⁵

The significance of not just the salvation from sins, but of the transformation which is to take place, as a result of believing in Yeshua, is asserted in the word, “Yes: its out of his fullness that we have all received, grace indeed on top of grace” (John 1:16, Kingdom New Testament). While there was grace surely present within the Torah or Law of Moses, grace has come to its climax in Yeshua the Messiah (John 1:17).³⁶

Although there are exceptions witnessed throughout the Tanach (discussed previously), the general experience for people, up to the arrival of Yeshua for sure, was “No one has seen God at any time” (John 1:18a). The Apostle John then makes a baffling statement—so baffling that there are two major textual variants, which one can encounter. The younger variant, appearing in manuscripts such as the Textus Receptus, the source text behind the KJV/NKJV, reads *monogenēs huios* (μονογενῆς υἱός), in the statement, “The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*” (John 1:18b, NKJV). The older reading, which appears in critical editions of the Greek New Testament,³⁷ is *monogenēs Theos* (μονογενῆς θεός), which despite some difficulty for some,³⁸ really does mean “only begotten God” (Marshall).³⁹ In favor of the authenticity of *monogenēs Theos*, Philip W. Comfort notes in his *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*, “It is now clear that μονογενῆς θεός is the earlier—and preferred—reading. This was changed as early as the beginning of the third century, if not earlier, to the more ordinary reading, μονογενῆς υἱός.”⁴⁰

A version like the NASU has rendered John 1:18 properly as, “No one has seen God at any time; **the only begotten God** [*monogenēs Theos*] who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.” As Comfort further explains, “What is important to note in this passage is that Jesus’ deity is affirmed in the same manner as it is in 1:1. He is unique in that he is God and

³⁴ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 15.

³⁵ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 45.

³⁶ Consult the entry for John 1:17 in the author’s book *The New Testament Validates Torah*.

³⁷ Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th Edition* (New York: American Bible Society, 1993), 248; Kurt Aland, et. al., *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1998), 314; Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th Revised Edition* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, 2012), 293.

³⁸ This often involves how to approach *monogenēs* (μονογενῆς) in John 1:18, which earlier in John 1:14 means “only begotten.”

Mounce and Mounce, 1116 define *monogenēs* with, “only-begotten in respect of peculiar generation, *unique*.”

³⁹ Marshall, *Interlinear KJV-NIV*, 265

⁴⁰ Comfort, 255.

with God, his Father. Jesus' deity is a major theme in John's gospel, affirmed in 1:1; 5:17-18; 8:58; 10:30-36; 14:9-11; and 20:28."⁴¹

The Johannine Prologue of John 1:1-18 is a classic text employed to affirm not only the pre-existence of Yeshua the Messiah, but also His integration into the Divine Identity as God. Indeed, there are details within John 1:1-18 that cannot be made of any created being. But our understanding of the nature of the Messiah hardly begins and ends at John 1:1-18, as there are many more statements appearing in the Gospel of John, which do require investigation and analysis, many of which will indeed uphold a high Christology of Yeshua being God.

John 1:19-24

"John the Immerser Preparing the Way for the Lord"

"This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' They asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' And he said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet?' And he answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, "MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD" [Isaiah 40:3], as Isaiah the prophet said.' Now they had been sent from the Pharisees."

Contextually in John 1:19, *hoi Ioudaioi* (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) or literally "the Jews," is to be regarded as those who "had been sent from the Pharisees" (John 1:24), so it is not improper for some versions to have the slight paraphrase "the Judean leaders" (TLV) or "the Jewish leaders" (NLT, TNIV). Various priests and Levites go out into the wilderness, and inquire of John the Immerser/Baptist as to his identity (John 1:19). It is narrated, "he was very straightforward and stated clearly, 'I am not the Messiah'" (John 1:20, CJB/CJSB), which the source text records as *egō ouk eimi ho Christos* (ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ὁ χριστός). **What did being the Messiah mean for many of the Jewish people in the Second Temple period?** Bruce Milne offers the following, useful thoughts:

"Due to the Roman occupation many cast him in a military role and saw him as leading the overthrow of the Roman yoke and, beyond that, securing the world-wide prominence of the Jewish nation. For some he would be a clearly supernatural visitant from God, for others a human prince from David's line."⁴²

When further inquired as to perhaps being the Prophet Elijah, or some other anticipated prophet, John the Immerser responds in the negative: "'Then who are you?' they asked him. 'Are you Elijah?' 'No, I am not,' he said. 'Are you 'the prophet,' the one we're expecting?' 'No,' he replied" (John 1:21, CJB/CJSB). The Jewish religious leaders who went out to encounter John, are then recorded as asking him to give them some indication as to who he actually was, which they could then report back to their superiors in Jerusalem: "So they said to him, 'Who are you? Give us an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?'" (John 1:22, TLV). The response issued by John the Immerser/Baptist to these priests and Levites, is that he associates himself with the prophetic voice speaking in Isaiah 40:3. As Isaiah 40:3 appears within the wider context of Isaiah 40:1-5,

"'Comfort, O comfort My people,' says your God. Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.' **A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the LORD in the**

⁴¹ Ibid., 256.

⁴² Bruce Milne, *The Message of John* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 52.

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wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

John the Immerser’s appeal to Isaiah 40:3, with him being a voice crying in the wilderness, obviously represents that his work is preparatory to something rather big and significant. As will be detailed further on, readers know that John’s work preceded the arrival of Yeshua the Messiah on the scene. But what cannot escape readers of Isaiah 40:3 and John 1:23, is factoring in whether any assertions about the nature of the Messiah are being made here—the same Messiah who has just been called “God” (John 1:1) and “the only begotten God” (John 1:18).

The Hebrew statement of interest in Isaiah 40:3 is, *b’midbar pannu derekh YHWH* (יְהוָה יִהְיֶה פָּנֵינוּ בְּמִדְבָּר), “Prepare in the desert a way for Yahweh” (New Jerusalem Bible). This is translated in the Septuagint as, *hetoimasate tēn hodon Kurīou* (ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου), “Prepare the way of the Lord” (NETS), with the Divine Name YHWH/YHVH rendered with the title *Kurios*. Is “the Lord” or *Kurios* of Isaiah 40:3, a reference to the arrival of the Messiah? There are a variety of commentators on the Gospel of John, who would absolutely affirm that “the LORD” of Isaiah 40:3, is to be associated with Yeshua the Messiah in John 1:23:

- D.A. Carson: “[T]he voice of John the Baptist...cried in the desert, preparing a way for the Lord, and thereby announcing the coming of Jesus Messiah.”⁴³
- Colin G. Kruse: “John saw himself, like Isaiah did, as a voice calling in the desert, in John’s case calling upon people to ‘make straight the way of the Lord’, i.e. to ready themselves for the coming of the Messiah.”⁴⁴
- J. Ramsey Michaels: “To the delegation, ‘the Lord’ is simply the God of Israel, but John will soon alert them that someone else is in the picture (vv. 26-27).”⁴⁵

It would not have been out of place at all, if in his quotation of Isaiah 40:3, the verse had been adapted slightly to read “Make straight the way of the Lord’s *Messiah*.” In this case, then, the entity which would be arriving on the scene, in the person of Yeshua, could be approached as a supernatural agent sent from Heaven, which could be a created being, enacting the expectations foretold by Isaiah 40:1-5. Instead, “the Lord” or *Kurios* being spoken of is contextually the One arriving, described by John the Immerser/Baptist as follows:

“I baptize in water, *but* among you stands One whom you do not know. *It is* He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie” (John 1:26-27).

J. Ramsey Michaels issues the further, critical indication,

“That Jesus is ‘Lord’ (κύριος [*Kurios*]) is the view not only of the Gospel writer at several points in the narrative (4:1; 6:23; 11:2; 20:20; 21:12), but of Jesus’ disciples (13:13; compare the repeated address κύριε [*kurie*]), above all in the setting of Jesus’ resurrection (20:2, 13, 18, 25, 28; 21:7).”⁴⁶

If Yeshua is the *Kurios* of Isaiah 40:3, quoted in John 1:23, then the underlying Hebrew of Isaiah 40:3 serves as evidence that He is to be regarded as YHWH/YHVH, integrated to the Divine Identity.

⁴³ Carson, *John*, 144.

⁴⁴ Colin G. Kruse, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp 76-77.

⁴⁵ J. Ramsey Michaels, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 101.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 101 fn#26.

John 1:29-34

“Yeshua Existed Before John the Immerser”

“The next day he saw Yeshua coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He on behalf of whom I said, “After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.” I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.’ John testified saying, ‘I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, “He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.” I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.’”

Some of the supernatural activity, associated with Yeshua the Messiah, is narrated, with the dialogue issuing some significant statements from John the Immerser/Baptist. When he sees Yeshua from afar, John the Immerser testifies, “Behold, that is God’s Lamb, who takes and bears away the sin of the world” (John 1:29, Montgomery New Testament), with likely associations with Isaiah 53:7, 10 and Genesis 22:8, 13, but almost certainly the Exodus 12 Passover lamb. A repetition of what was previously said in John 1:15 is seen in John 1:30: “This is He about whom I said, After me comes a Man who has been before me, for He was preceding me⁴⁷.” Within the scope of what has been communicated in this Gospel, Yeshua ranking before John—who was notably born after John—is something predicated on Yeshua’s pre-existence and Yeshua’s creation of the universe (John 1:1-3). While Yeshua and John the Immerser were both related as cousins, and had doubtlessly encountered each other multiple times before, John had not known that Yeshua was the promised Messiah, until He had been immersed by him in water: “I myself did not know who he was, but the reason I came immersing with water was so that he might be made known to Isra’el” (John 1:31, CJB/CJSB).

John the Immerser states how “I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of Heaven, and He abided upon Him” (John 1:32, PME), something which was recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 1:10; Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:22), and was a fulfillment of Tanach prophecy (Isaiah 11:1; 42:1; 61:1). John further acknowledges how he did not know that Yeshua was the Messiah, but how he had such a truth Divinely revealed to him. As he says, “I myself did not know who he was, but the one who sent me to immerse in water said to me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining, this is the one who immerses in the *Ruach HaKodesh*’” (John 1:33, CJB/CJSB). The entity labeled as “He who sent me to immerse in water” (PME) is obviously God proper, the Father. Yeshua, the Son, “is the One who immerses in the Holy Spirit” (PME), an anticipation of how resultant of His sacrificial work, the decisive presence and bestowal of the Holy Spirit would be granted to His followers (i.e., John 7:37-39; 14:15-17, 26; 15:26; 16:5-15; 20:22; also Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4, 38-39). John concludes, “I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34, RSV).

It is very easy for many Bible readers to encounter John 1:29-34, appreciate the testimony of John the Immerser, recognize some of the activities of Yeshua the Messiah, and continue reading on. However, when we read John 1:29-34, it cannot be avoided how we encounter the presence of God the Father (John 1:33a), Yeshua the Son (John 1:29-31, 32b, 33b, 34), and the Holy Spirit (John 1:32a, 33c). While there are many who today’s Messianic people will encounter, who will claim that the concept of a triune Godhead is completely pagan and non-Biblical, a (revealed) triune Godhead of Father, Son, and Spirit is something that can be

⁴⁷ Grk. *opisō mou erchetai anēr hos emprosthen mou gegonen, hoti prōtos mou ēn* (ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἄνθρωπος ὅς ἐμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν).

deduced from reading the Scriptural text. Father, Son, and Spirit are certainly all present in John 1:29-34.

John 1:43-51

"Angels Ascending and Descending on the Son of Man"

"The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Yeshua said to him, 'Follow Me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote—Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' Yeshua saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Yeshua answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' Nathanael answered Him, 'Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.' Yeshua answered and said to him, 'Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.' And He said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'"

Within John's record of the calling of the Twelve Disciples (John 1:40-44), Yeshua's encounter with Nathanael does beg a few questions (John 1:45-46). While Nathanael's question of Yeshua, "Nazareth? Can anything good come from there?" (John 1:46, CJB/CJSB), is then countered with Yeshua's own declaration, "Look, a true Israelite! There's nothing false in him" (John 1:47, TLV), the dialogue which follows merits some closer observations.

Nathanael asks how Yeshua knew of him. Yeshua was likely at prayer under a fig tree, and saw Nathanael and his friend Philip interacting with one another, as Yeshua states, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you" (John 1:48, NIV). Yeshua had a perceptiveness about Him, which caused Him to declare Nathanael "truly an Israelite in whom is no guile!" (John 1:47, LITV). All that this required, on the part of Yeshua, was an internal discernment or ability to ascertain character. It was not as though in this scene Philip and Nathanael were on the other side of the country, or even the other side of town, making it impossible for Yeshua to view their actions only by unique supernatural means.

The supernatural dynamics in play, however, had wooed Nathanael far enough for him to recognize that just as his friend had declared Yeshua to be "the One that Moses in the Torah, and also the prophets, wrote about" (John 1:45, TLV), so could he too exclaim, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Isra'el!" (John 1:49, CJB/CJSB). Here, Nathanael's calling Yeshua *Ben-Elohim* (TLV; בן־אלהים, Delitzsch), probably has less to do with Yeshua's Divine origins, and more to do with "Son of God" as a regal or Messianic title (cf. 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:6)—although with the definite article "the" appearing in the source text of *ho huios tou Theou* (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ), Yeshua's status as *the* Son of God highlights an importance which requires further evaluation and inquiry. Yeshua informs Nathanael that if he believed in Him because He saw Him from the fig tree, that he will see even greater things (John 1:50).

Yeshua informs Nathanael about some of the greater things which will be witnessed: "Amen, amen I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God going up and coming down on the Son of Man!" (John 1:51, TLV). Here, the Genesis 28:10-12 scene of Jacob's ladder is invoked:

"Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. He had a dream, and behold, a ladder