

## John 3:31-36

### "Belief in the Son Results in Eternal Life"

"He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set his seal to *this*, that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

It is easy to encounter John 1:31-36, and then automatically assume that Yeshua the Messiah is speaking of Himself—but this is actually dialogue from John the Immerser/Baptist (John 1:22-30). The testimony offered by John, about Yeshua, is rather significant, and necessarily raises questions as to whether or not a created being could be said to possess these qualities. After saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30), an assertion about the primacy of Yeshua the Messiah in one's life, John then says, "The One who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he speaks. The One who comes from heaven is above all" (John 3:31, TLV). The two clauses of definite importance are *Ho anōthen erchomenos epanō pantōn estin* (Ὁ ἀνωθεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν), "The one coming~from above over all is" (Brown and Comfort),<sup>57</sup> and *ho ek tou ouranou erchomenos [epanō pantōn estin]* (ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος [ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν]), "the from - heaven coming [over all is]" (Brown and Comfort).<sup>58</sup> With statements claiming that Yeshua is "above all" or "above all things" (Common English Version), the supremacy of Yeshua is something being acknowledged. That an entity being classified as "above all," is supernatural, is for certain. But could an entity being classified as "above all" ultimately be a created entity— or is this indeed a claim of supreme sovereignty?

The message, that Yeshua the Messiah brings from Heaven, is something which needs to be heeded according to John: "And what He has seen and heard, He testifies to that; yet no one receives His testimony. Whoever receives His testimony has certified that God is true" (John 1:32-33, TLV). That this Yeshua is not an independent operator, is something to be recognized. Yeshua as an agent of the God of Israel, is indicated by John's statement, "The One whom God has sent speaks the words of God" (John 3:34a, TLV). There is a difference, however, in that Yeshua is labeled along the lines of *hon gar apesteilen ho Theos* (ὃν γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεός), "for-[he] whom sent – God" (Brown and Comfort),<sup>59</sup> with John the Immerser, in contrast, being labeled along the lines of *anthrōpos, apestalmenos para Theou* (ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ), "a man having been sent from God" (Brown and Comfort).<sup>60</sup> Yeshua is not regarded as being an *anthrōpos* or "mortal" sent from God, unlike John the Immerser.

Yeshua has been sent from God in Heaven to speak His words, and He acts via the direction of the Spirit (John 1:32-33; cf. Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1). A fairly standard approach to this is offered by Carson, who says, "the one whom God has sent speaks of words of God. Jesus so completely says and does all that God says and does, and only what God says and does (e.g. 5:19-30; 6:37-40; 8:29), that to believe Jesus is to believe God. Conversely, not to believe Jesus is

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<sup>57</sup> Brown and Comfort, 327.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 328.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 317.

to call God a liar (*cf.* 12:44-50; 1 Jn. 5:10).<sup>61</sup> Kruse, however, goes further in his conclusion, “Since Jesus’ words are the words of God, to accept them is to accept that God is truthful. Behind this statement lies the idea of the Jewish ‘envoy’ of whom it is said, ‘a man’s envoy is like himself’ (Mishnah, *Berakot* 5:5). The acts of a man’s envoy were regarded as the action of the man himself.”<sup>62</sup>

Yeshua the Son is One who is “above all” (John 1:31), and a unique relationship exists between Yeshua the Son and God the Father: “the Father loves the Son and has put everything in his hands [*panta dedōken en tē cheiri autou, πάντα δέδωκεν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ*]” (John 3:35, CJB/CJSB). It is obvious enough by such a statement that the identity and nature of the Son is tied up in the identity and nature of the Father. But according to John the Immerser, it is not enough to recognize the Son as having a special relationship with the Father. As he directed, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him” (John 3:36, RSV). **Placing one’s belief or trust in the Son**—who is notably “above all” (John 1:31)—**is mandatory to not experience the everlasting wrath or condemnation of the God of Israel.** Disregard of Yeshua the Messiah can bring with it severe consequences. As Ben Witherington III highlights,

“God has placed all things in the hands of the Son whom he loves, the whole of the working out of the plan of redemption for humankind, and especially for God’s people. Therefore, everything of consequence, everything of eternal significance is on the line here—‘Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God’s wrath.’”<sup>63</sup>

Yeshua the Son is not a figure who acts independently from, or without the authorization of, God the Father. In fact, non-belief in Yeshua the Son will result in people experiencing a very unpleasant eternity. The words of John 3:31-36 are by no means exhaustive in regard to the nature of the Messiah, but these words do invite readers to evaluate claims made of One whose very being is tied together with the very being of the Father. Given the themes present within the Gospel of John, such claims serve as strong evidence of Yeshua the Messiah being integrated into the Divine Identity.

## John 4:6-26

### “Yeshua Confirms that He is the Messiah”

“There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Yeshua said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Yeshua answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ She said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?’ Yeshua answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw.’ He said to her, ‘Go, call your husband and come here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Yeshua said to her, ‘You have correctly said, “I have no

<sup>61</sup> Carson, *John*, 213.

<sup>62</sup> Kruse, 123.

<sup>63</sup> Ben Witherington III, *John’s Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 1995),