

Approaching the Nature of Yeshua from the Tanach

Yeshua the Messiah surely employed the message of Psalm 82:6-7 against His detractors: as God proper had once called corrupt judges in Ancient Israel “gods,” so the (broadly) corrupt Jewish religious leaders of the First Century were also “gods.” These leaders would meet a fate of rejection from God proper *and death*, despite bearing such an honorific.

So, recognizing that corrupt mortals can be called “gods”—the same ones who accused Yeshua of a crime of self-deification—this should at least have *merited a pause* on their part, with the Messiah truly asking them to consider whether or not He has committed such a crime. Far from usurping the position of God proper, as a standard human might in trying to make himself out to be God—Yeshua’s self-identity is predicated on His being sent from the Father, and in His detractors *probing His personal origins* associated with Him being “the Son of God.”

Psalm 97:5-7

“Supernatural Beings are Enjoined to Worship”

“The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen His glory. Let all those be ashamed who serve graven images, who boast themselves of idols; worship Him, all you gods.”

Psalm 97 is a significant exclaim of not just the majesty and power of the God of Israel, but also of His exclusiveness—in contrast to all other entities of veneration. Psalm 97:1-2 declares forth, “The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad. Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.” The absolute supremeness of the God of Israel, to any other apparent gods or goddesses, is also proclaimed: “For You are the LORD Most High over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods²¹³.” When reviewing the statements of Psalm 97:5-7, specifically, God as Creator is certainly lauded (Psalm 97:5-6), but it is most imperatively directed that not just idol worshippers, but that all the deities which sit behind the idols, worship Him as the One True God:

“All worshippers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship him, all you gods!” (Psalm 97:7, ESV).

There is some variance witnessed among English versions on how to render *hishtachavu-lo kol-elohim* (הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לֹוּ כָּל־אֱלֹהִים), as it does appear as: “all gods bow down before him” (RSV); “all divine beings bow down to Him” (NJPS); “bow to Him all you powers” (ATS). Psalm 97:7 does employ the verb *chavah* (חָוָה; or *shachah*, שָׁחָה), which in terms of veneration to be properly directed toward the LORD or YHWH, should be rendered as “worship.” The identity of the *elohim*, specified to worship the Lord as the One True God, is rightly taken to be false gods and goddesses worshipped by the pagans of Planet Earth at large. The Greek Septuagint rendering of *hishtachavu-lo kol-elohim* is *proskunēsate autō pantes hoi angeloī autou* (προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ), “worship him, all ye his angels” (LXE).²¹⁴ Here, *elohim* (אֱלֹהִים), the Hebrew word typically meaning “G/god(s),” is understood to be “divine beings” or “powers,” which the Septuagint translators understood to mean “angels” (Grk. sing. *angelos*, ἄγγελος).

Whether in the canonical Hebrew Masoretic Text or an ancient Jewish translation like the Greek Septuagint, Psalm 97:7 conveys the critical point that **all supernatural powers are to worship the LORD God of Israel as the Supreme Creator**. What makes Psalm 97:7 so important, is not just how it is an affirmation that the LORD or YHWH is to be the sole object of veneration

²¹³ Heb. *me'od na'aleita al-kol-elohim* (מְאֹד נִעְלִיתָ עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים).

²¹⁴ “Do obeisance to him, all his angels!” (NETS).

and worship—both of mortals and supernatural entities—but how Bible readers are to approach how this is later associated with Yeshua the Messiah in Hebrews 1:6, where the author states,

“And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM’” (Hebrews 1:6).

The employment of the title “firstborn” is rightly recognized to be a designation of a first status or rank, as seen throughout the Tanach (Exodus 4:22; Psalm 89:27; Jeremiah 31:9). While it is likely that the Septuagint version of Deuteronomy 32:43²¹⁵ could also be quoted or alluded to in Hebrews 1:6, the presence of Psalm 97:7 being quoted, from the Greek LXX, is agreed. The Septuagint version of Psalm 97:7, “worship him, all ye his angels” (LXE), intends to convey to supernatural powers that exclusive veneration is to be directed to the Lord God of Israel (*ho Kurios*, ὁ κύριος; Psalm 97:1, LXX). But in Hebrews 1:6, this veneration is to be directed to Yeshua the Messiah.

Psalm 97 demands that the world at large and all supernatural forces acknowledge the God of Israel as the One True God. Hebrews 1:6 guides the worship due to this One True God to Yeshua the Messiah (discussed further). If Yeshua the Messiah is a created being of some sort—a supernatural entity to be sure, but only the highest ranking member of the Heavenly host—than to apply Psalm 97:7 to Him would be blasphemy against the God of Israel. The only way that Psalm 97:7 can be legitimately applied to Yeshua the Messiah, is if He is integrated into the Divine Identity as the uncreated, eternal Son of God.

Psalm 102:25-27

“The Eternality of God”

“Of old You founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. Even they will perish, but You endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end.”

A cursory reading of Psalm 102 reveals the character of not only a God who will respond to those who cry out to Him for help (Psalm 102:1-2ff), but a God who is everlasting and constant, in contrast to mortals which are not (Psalm 102:11). Messianic readers are naturally drawn to the word, “You will arise and take pity on Tziyon, for the time has come to have mercy on her; the time determined has come” (Psalm 102:14, CJB/CJSB), as we will certainly make this appeal regarding the end-times and anticipated salvation of the Jewish people. Within the Psalmist’s declarations, it is anticipated that the Lord God of Israel will indeed look down from Heaven, offer redemption to His own, and be acknowledged as the Eternal One with absolute mastery over the universe:

“But You, O LORD, abide forever, and Your name to all generations. You will arise *and* have compassion on Zion; for it is time to be gracious to her, for the appointed time has come. Surely Your servants find pleasure in her stones and feel pity for her dust. So the nations will fear the name of the LORD and all the kings of the earth Your glory. For the LORD has built up Zion; He has appeared in His glory. He has regarded the prayer of the destitute and has not despised their prayer. This will be written for the generation to come, that a people yet to be created may

²¹⁵ “Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and let all the angels of God worship him; rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people, and let all the sons of God strengthen themselves in him; for he will avenge the blood of his sons, and he will render vengeance, and recompense justice to his enemies, and will reward them that hate him; and the Lord shall purge the land of his people” (Deuteronomy 32:43, LXE).