

who are committed to believing in the *Shema*, and who believe that Yeshua is the Messiah who provides eternal salvation to redeemed human beings, then have a duty to take such faith and demonstrate appropriate deeds.

To James the Just, a Believer cannot just say that he or she acknowledges the existence of God, go through a few religious motions, but then fail to act in the key works which should be present in all Believers. If a mental recognition of God is sufficient, then demons can apparently be saved—*which they obviously cannot*. James’ argument is, admittedly, somewhat extreme, but it proves a valid point. If all that is required for salvation is a recognition that Yeshua died and rose again, then demons who likewise recognize this fact can be saved and redeemed from their fate. *This is why a human being’s faith has to be more*. A man or woman’s faith has to be evidenced in a transformation of heart and mind, which will enable the individual to carry out the good works that the Heavenly Father expects from each one of His children.

1 Peter 1:1-2

“The Father, the Spirit, and the Son”

“Peter, an apostle of Yeshua the Messiah, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Yeshua the Messiah and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.”

In discussions which frequently take place between those who hold to a high Christology of Yeshua being God, and integrated into the Divine Identity, and those who hold to a low Christology of Yeshua being a created entity—the latter will frequently claim that the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity is absolutely pagan, and foreign to the Scriptures. Notwithstanding the fact that there are various limitations to the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, in that it can be seen as placing limits onto an Eternal God, it is unavoidable that the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity—God made manifest in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is ultimately based upon some reading of the Bible. In the opening greeting of the Epistle of 1 Peter, one encounters how Believers are “chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father and set apart by the Spirit for obeying Yeshua the Messiah and for sprinkling with his blood” (1 Peter 1:2, CJB/CJSB). Honest Bible readers cannot dart around the fact that the Apostle Peter has just referenced God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Yeshua the Messiah the Son in 1 Peter 1:2.

While they may use Christian jargon that employs the term “Trinity,” the following thoughts from commentators on 1 Peter cannot go overlooked here, for our deliberations on the nature of Yeshua:

- Peter H. Davids: “[O]ur author now describes [the] choice of God in terms that...relate it to the three persons of the Trinity.”¹³
- Wayne Grudem: “[T]he verse mentions the three persons of the Trinity: *God the Father...the Spirit...Jesus Christ*. Peter specifies them uniting to bring about a common goal, the eternal, full salvation of these ‘chosen sojourners’.”¹⁴
- I. Howard Marshall: “The basic description of...God’s chosen people is developed in a clear trinitarian structure.”¹⁵

¹³ Peter H. Davids, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 47.

¹⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 51.

¹⁵ I. Howard Marshall, *IVP New Testament Commentary Series: 1 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 31.

The Nature of Yeshua in the General Epistles

- Ben Witherington III: “Peter refers to Father, Spirit and Christ, in that order. The implication is clear that all three are in some sense God, and involved in the divine choosing.”¹⁶

It certainly goes too far so as to suggest that “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, set apart by the *Ruach* for obedience and for sprinkling with the blood of Yeshua the Messiah” (1 Peter 1:2, TLV) presents a comprehensive view of the composition of God to Bible readers. Likewise, the order present of Father, Spirit, and Son should prompt readers to recognize that there is no neatly packed formula present in the Holy Scriptures of God revealing Himself to mortals. Indeed, as is immediately seen in what Peter communicates following, the Holy Spirit is actually referred to as “the Spirit of Messiah” (1 Peter 1:11), an indication that the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity does have various limitations, and there may indeed be more overlap in the functions and roles of the Godhead than is customarily understood or approached.

1 Peter 1:3-12

“The Spirit of Messiah”

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead, to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Yeshua the Messiah; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Messiah within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Messiah and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.”

The Apostle Peter lauds the great redemption that the members of his audience have experienced via Yeshua the Messiah, as he not only praises God the Father, but details how those encountering his letter have been “born again” (1 Peter 1:3a). The salvation provided in Yeshua is hardly independent of the activity of God the Father, who is noted to be the causal agent of Yeshua’s resurrection from the dead (1 Peter 1:3b). The salvation provided in the Son does not just cleanse people of their sins, but provides them with an inheritance in Heaven (1 Peter 1:4), and vindication in the future eschaton (1 Peter 1:5). The multiple dimensions of the salvation of Believers were to provide encouragement for the various trials experienced by Peter’s First Century readers (1 Peter 1:6). Difficulties experienced on behalf of the good news or gospel, were to properly refine the genuineness of faith, similar to the refinement of gold (1 Peter 1:7).

It is quite significant, as Peter testifies, that members of his audience were suffering for a Messiah that they had not seen in person. Yet, in spite of not having seen Yeshua in the flesh—

¹⁶ Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1-2 Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 68.