

The Nature of Yeshua in the Pauline Epistles and Hebrews

him to accomplish.”³⁶ So are these all the things, even if on a much smaller scale, that Messiah followers are to be out performing.

Yeshua the Messiah, the Man, in His accomplishments as the Mediator, “gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time” (1 Timothy 2:6, RSV). Such a ransom is a debt that has been paid. Yeshua’s role as described here is often connected to His own words, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28; cf. Mark 10:45). The concept of substitutionary atonement, where the Lord has had to experience the penalties which fallen sinners deserve, is fully Biblical as stated in His own words. All that those who desire redemption have to do is acknowledge the Messiah event, His payment for our sins, confess their sins, and ask for the complete forgiveness it provides.

1 Timothy 6:13-16

“King of Kings and Lord of Lords”

“I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Messiah Yeshua, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.”

The closing doxology to 1 Timothy, was doubtlessly inserted to continue to uplift Timothy in the midst of the difficult circumstances he had been facing in Ephesus.³⁷ It is used to highlight the great significance of God and His majesty, and the smallness of mortals by comparison—but still what He has accomplished for humanity via the work of His Son. Paul writes, “I charge you before God who gives life to all things and Messiah *Yeshua* who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate” (1 Timothy 6:13, TLV).

1 Timothy 6:13 claims a number of important things about the Father and the Son. God as Creator, of course, is the Source of all life,³⁸ but is also the One who can “*preserve alive*” (LS),³⁹ as one definition of *zōogoneō* (ζωογονέω) indicates. Mounce describes, “The linear aspect of ζωογονοῦντος [*zōogonountos*], ‘who gives life,’ emphasizes the continuing presence of God as a witness.”⁴⁰ Such a provision of life could also be viewed in terms of God’s sustaining the universe (Ephesians 1:11, 23).

In 1 Timothy 6:13, Yeshua is said to have “made the good confession” before Pontius Pilate (John 18:34-37; 19:11), asserting His authority. Marshall & Towner describe how references to Pontius Pilate “the Roman governor naturally became a stock part of the description of Jesus’ passion and were used to date it historically.”⁴¹ This is probably why “Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried” appears in the later Apostles’ Creed.⁴² Before their own deaths, in a similar way to how Yeshua testified of Himself before Pilate, so were the Apostles Peter and Paul able to testify of their faith to the authorities (1 *Clement* 5:4, 6).

³⁶ Bruce A. Ware, “The Man Christ Jesus” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Vol. 53 No. 1 (2010):9.

³⁷ This entry has been adapted from the author’s commentary *The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic*.

³⁸ Nehemiah 9:6; Wisdom 16:13; Romans 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45.

³⁹ LS, 345.

⁴⁰ Mounce, 357.

⁴¹ Marshall & Towner, 663.

⁴² Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder, eds., *Documents of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 26.

Being charged or ordered in the presence of Messiah Yeshua, Timothy is told by Paul “to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 6:14, RSV). What is this “commandment” or *entolē* (ἐντολή) considered to be? Such a “commandment” is best taken to be the instruction of 1 Timothy 6:11-12⁴³ previously specified, involving Timothy’s personal faithfulness to his commission as a minister and servant of the good news.

While the timing issues are debated to be sure, Timothy is directed to maintain his ministerial charge *mēchri tēs epiphaneias tou Kuriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou* (μέχρι τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), “until the appearing of the Lord of us, Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 6:14, Brown and Comfort).⁴⁴ All readers are agreed that Believers, such as those like Paul’s disciple Timothy, are to live their lives faithfully performing the Lord’s service expected of them, in anticipation of the Second Coming. All work in the Kingdom of God performed right now, steadily edges human civilization to the return of Yeshua. 1 Timothy 6:14 certainly would remind Timothy that his ministry service in Ephesus has much greater implications than just solving the problems of a group of Messiah followers in a city or district of the Roman Empire. *What Timothy will do will have a resonating effect on salvation history. Slacking off is by no means something permissible.* On the contrary, Believers, in whatever capacity of service to the Lord, are to remember how what they do has a long-term significance as the Divine plan of God steadily takes form—culminating in the restoration of Israel and the epiphany of Yeshua.

It is most important to recognize what the appearing or *epiphaneia* (ἐπιφάνεια) would have meant in terms of the First Century Roman Empire, not just because Yeshua will one day appear in the clouds and defeat His enemies. The term *epiphaneia* was employed within the Imperial Cult, described by Towner “for communicating the political-social-religious ideals of Rome.” He observes for us, “Its presence in Ephesus at the time is certain, and its influence reached to all levels of society. Paul’s use of epiphany language...forces a rethinking of common cultural categories as it tells God’s story...present[ing] a christology complement to the vivid counter-Imperial claims expressed in the striking multi-tiered description of God to come.”⁴⁵ One might view Timothy’s work in Ephesus as something that will be directly responsible for defeating the world system and all of its false gods and false philosophies, which will be surely shown to be nothing when the Lord Yeshua appears.

The main substance of the doxology closing 1 Timothy is witnessed in 1 Timothy 6:15-16, something which has already been described in part, earlier in 1:17.⁴⁶ The Apostle Paul himself does not actually know when Yeshua will appear, as he can only say “this will be made manifest at the proper time” (RSV) or “in his own time” (NIV), *kairois idiois* (καιροῖς ἰδίους). Yet while it may be true that only the Lord Himself knows the time of the Second Coming, Marshall & Towner make reference to how “one has the impression that the clause was created not to stress that the timing of the epiphany is in the hands of God but rather to provide an occasion for the remarkable description of God which now follows.”⁴⁷ The attention of Timothy, the Ephesians who would also hear this, and certainly us today—should primarily be on what is to come and who is to return. Towner offers his point, “There is no reason to doubt that both Paul and Timothy could well have envisioned the event occurring in their lifetime. But even its delay

⁴³ “But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:11-12).

⁴⁴ Brown and Comfort, 735.

⁴⁵ Towner, pp 418-419.

⁴⁶ Cf. Mounce, 352 chart.

⁴⁷ Marshall & Towner, 666.

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was not a cause for disappointment, for the shape and timing of the entire project of faith are under God's direction."⁴⁸

The One described in 1 Timothy 6:15b "is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords." Is this referring to Yeshua the Messiah, or just God the Father? What kind of claims are being made of God here? Yeshua is specifically designated as King of Kings and Lord of Lords elsewhere (Revelation 17:14; 19:16; cf. Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 136:2-3). It would seem that once again (1 Timothy 1:17) the language of the claims, or even the creedal statement being asserted, is so tightly packed together **that it is difficult to separate out the Father and the Son**. The Son is the One who has made the Father truly known to limited humanity (John 1:18; cf. Job 42:1-6). 1 Timothy 6:14-16, when recognized to incorporate the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, places the Son on a level of no mere supernatural agent of the Father, but that of an entity which is an integral part of the Divine Identity.

The doxology ends with the declaration that God is One "who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:16, TNIV). What this attestation about God is intended to do—**including both the Father and Son**—more than anything else, is to reveal the mortality and sinfulness of fallen humanity, which is clearly hopeless without Him. Knight confirms, "Paul is reflecting the OT truth that God is so holy that sinful mankind cannot see God and live,"⁴⁹ just as the Lord had told Moses, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" (Exodus 33:20).⁵⁰ The Creator being depicted as unapproachable light, a consuming fire, or just sheer holiness is seen in the Tanach (Exodus 24:17; 1 Kings 8:11; Psalm 104:2), most notably depicted in the theophanies around the throne of God witnessed in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1. One might also legitimately consider the Daniel 7:9-14 theophany of the Son of Man. And as it is testified of Yeshua the Messiah, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God [*monogenēs Theos*, μονογενής θεός] who is in the bosom of the Father {Yeshua}, He has explained *Him*" (John 1:18).

2 Timothy 1:1-2 "Opening Greetings"

"Paul, an apostle of Messiah Yeshua by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Messiah Yeshua, to Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Messiah Yeshua our Lord."

The second correspondence composed by the beloved Apostle Paul,⁵¹ to his dear friend and ministry colleague Timothy, is introduced with an assertion about who he is and how the Lord has chosen him: "Paul, an emissary of Messiah *Yeshua* through the will of God, according to the promise of life in Messiah *Yeshua*" (2 Timothy 1:1, TLV). The principal recipient of 2 Timothy is Paul's dear friend and ministry colleague Timothy, as is stated in 2 Timothy 1:2: "To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord" (NIV). The contents of this epistle, of course, would eventually be heard by the Ephesian Believers (2 Timothy 2:18; 4:22). Just like the opening of Paul's first correspondence to Timothy (1 Timothy

⁴⁸ Towner, 419.

⁴⁹ Knight, 270.

⁵⁰ The term Paul employs for "unapproachable" in v. 16, *aprositos* (ἀπρόσιτος), is similarly used by Philo in describing Moses' ascension of Mount Sinai:

"[H]aving gone up into the loftiest and most sacred mountain in that district in accordance with the divine commands, a mountain which was very difficult of access [*aprositos*] and very hard to ascend" (*On the Life of Moses* 2.70; *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, 497).

⁵¹ This entry has been adapted from the author's commentary *The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic*.