

The Nature of Yeshua in the General Epistles

Epistle of 2 Peter, disregards the possibility of 2 Peter being pseudepigraphal and written long after the death of the Apostle Peter. He asserts to his audience that His encounter of Yeshua of Nazareth in person, was both dynamic and majestic: “For when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, we did not rely on cunningly contrived myths. On the contrary, we saw his majesty with our own eyes” (2 Peter 1:16, CJB/CJSB). Contextually, readers of the Apostolic Scriptures can deduce how Peter makes light of the scene of the Transfiguration:

“For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, a voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory: ‘This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased!’” (2 Peter 1:17, TLV; cf. Mark 9:7; Matthew 17:5; Luke 9:35).

Yeshua being glorified by God the Father, in and of itself, does not conclusively prove that He is God and integrated into the Divine Identity. However, Peter is one who has identified Yeshua as “our God and Savior” (2 Peter 1:1). Just as the disciple Thomas exclaimed “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28) when he encountered the resurrected Yeshua—clearly having to process who He fully was—so would the disciple Peter who encountered the transfigured Yeshua, been affected by His Transfiguration in such a way so as to later recognize Him as Divine. Peter witnessing supernatural phenomenon, doubtlessly played a role in his thoughts about the nature of Yeshua: “we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain” (2 Peter 1:18, RSV).

2 Peter 3:18

“To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity”

“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

The closing doxology of the Epistle of 2 Peter, certainly asks readers of Peter’s letter some significant questions. Doxologies are hardly uncommon to the Holy Scriptures, as Paul glorifies the Lord in Romans 11:36: “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” It is most common in doxologies in the Apostolic Writings, to see glory offered to the One God of Israel, through Yeshua the Messiah (Romans 7:25; 16:27; Ephesians 3:21; 1 Peter 4:11; Jude 25).⁴⁶ 1 Peter 4:11 preceding, has God proper in view:

“Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Yeshua the Messiah, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

1 Peter 4:11 states how *en pasin doxazētai ho Theos dia Iēsou Christou* (ἐν πᾶσιν δοξάζεται ὁ θεὸς διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), “in all things may be glorified – God through Jesus Christ” (Brown and Comfort).⁴⁷ Here, God the Father is glorified by means of Yeshua the Son. In 2 Peter 3:18 following, however, Peter exclaims *tu Kurīou hēmōn kai sōtēros Iēsou Christou. autō hē doxa* (τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα), “of the Lord of us and Savior, Jesus Christ. To him [be] the glory” (Brown and Comfort),⁴⁸ with no doubt as to the fact that it is Yeshua the Messiah who is being extolled. The very glory that Peter ascribes to God the Father (1 Peter 4:11), is also ascribed to Yeshua the Son (2 Peter 3:18). The only way that the Apostle Peter, as a monotheistic Jew, could have come to such a conclusion, would be to see Yeshua integrated into

⁴⁶ Cf. Davids, *2 Peter*, pp 312-315 for a chart evaluating various doxologies.

⁴⁷ Brown and Comfort, 817.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 828.

the Divine Identity of a plural *Elohim* Godhead. Those who hold to a high Christology properly direct how ascribing the glory that is due of the One God of Israel, also given to Yeshua the Messiah, is acceptable only if Yeshua is God.

It is worthwhile to catalogue the thoughts of a number of commentators on 2 Peter 3:18, who likewise recognize the presence of a high Christology in the doxology offered:

- Michael Green: “In this incidental phrase we have the highest possible Christology. For glory belongs to God (Rom. 11:36; Jude 25). But Peter had learnt that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father (see Jn. 5:23).”⁴⁹
- Richard J. Bauckham: “The concluding doxology addressed to Christ corresponds to the high Christology of 1:1 (‘our God and Savior Jesus Christ’), and shows the importance which the Christian attitude of praise and worship toward Christ had for the recognition of his divine status.”⁵⁰
- Douglas J. Moo: “Normally glory is ascribed to God; only here, in 2 Timothy 4:18, and in Revelation 1:5-6 do we find doxologies directed to Christ—although we do find a ‘blessing’ of Christ, as God, in Romans 9:5. But this certainly fits the high view of Jesus Christ that Peter presents from the very beginning of his letter (see esp. 1:1).”⁵¹
- Ben Witherington III: “This doxology, unlike many in the New Testament (see only 2 Tim 4:18; cf. Rev 1:5-6), is to Christ, which confirms what we have already seen from 1 Peter 1: our author believes that Christ is divine or part of the Godhead and thus worthy of worship and praise, since only God should be praised in this way. Indeed he is the Lord and Savior of all humankind.”⁵²

Jude 24-25

“To the only God our Savior, through Yeshua the Messiah our Lord”

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Yeshua the Messiah our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

In the closing salutation of the Epistle of Jude, glory is issued *monō Theō sōtēri hēmōn dia Iēsou Christou tou Kuriou hēmōn* (μόνω θεῷ σωτηρι ἡμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν), “to [the] only God [the] Savior of us through Jesus Christ the Lord of us” (Jude 25, Brown and Comfort).⁵³ As is seen throughout Jude, Yeshua the Messiah is not an independent entity, who performs actions in disassociation from the Father:

“Jude, a bond-servant of Yeshua the Messiah, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Yeshua the Messiah: May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you” (Jude 1-2)

“For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Yeshua the Messiah” (Jude 4).

⁴⁹ Green, *2 Peter*, 164.

⁵⁰ Bauckham, *2 Peter*, 338.

⁵¹ Moo, *2 Peter*, pp 214-215.

⁵² Witherington, *1&2 Peter*, 390.

⁵³ Brown and Comfort, 850.