

FAQ VOL II

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Frequently Asked Questions

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Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament
Ara: Aramaic
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)
CJSB: Complete Jewish Study Bible (2016)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls
ECB: *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)
Ger: German
GNT: Greek New Testament
Grk: Greek
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
Heb: Hebrew
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)
JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
KJV: King James Version
Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
LXX: Septuagint
m. Mishnah
MARV: Messianic Apologetics Revised Version*
MT: Masoretic Text
NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)
NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*
NEB: New English Bible (1970)
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*
NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*
NIV: New International Version (1984)
NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)
NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)
NKJV: New King James Version (1982)
NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)
NLT: New Living Translation (1996)
NT: New Testament
OT: Old Testament
REB: Revised English Bible (1989)
RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
t. Tosefta
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version (2014)
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

* This is a modified and adapted edition of the public domain World Messianic Bible (WMB).

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New
Testament revised edition
v(s). verse(s)
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New
Testament Words*

Vul: Latin Vulgate
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)
WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

Only God is Good

Yeshua was seen to dismiss the claim that He was somehow “good,” instead stating that only God was good. Would this not imply that the Messiah was not God?

The following material has been adapted from *Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity*

“And He was going out into the way, one ran to Him, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ Yeshua said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good except one—God’” (Mark 10:17-18, MARV).

“And behold, one came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘Why do you ask Me about what is good? There is only One who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments’ Lev 18:5” (Matthew 19:16-17, MARV).

“A certain ruler asked Him, saying, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ And Yeshua said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good, except one: God’” (Luke 18:18-19, MARV).

The interchange which took place, between Yeshua the Messiah and the rich young ruler, is one which has challenged many people seeking God throughout the centuries. The requirement of the Messiah is that in order for rich people to be on the path toward the Kingdom of God, they cannot just keep the commandments of the Torah, which are intended to facilitate the proper way to walk and conduct oneself, but that the rich must give their possessions to the poor (Mark 9:19-23; Matthew 20:18-24; Luke 18:20-25). It is easy to deduce how financial wealth and great assets can be a significant deterrent for those intending to walk on a path of faith—as rich people can place their confidence in their various holdings, and not totally in the Divine. When the presumed security of wealth can be removed, then rich people can be freed to completely rely upon God to move in their lives.

As the rich young ruler approached Yeshua, and asked Him what He was to do in order to receive eternal life, Yeshua responded in a perplexing manner, and with a statement which proponents, of a low Christology of Yeshua being a created supernatural entity, believe is reflective of such a position. The rich young ruler asked, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17, TLV; also Luke 18:20). Yeshua responded, “Why are you calling Me good?...No one is good except One—that is God” (Mark 10:18, TLV; also Luke 18:21).

Only God is Good

As it appears in the source text of both Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:19, *ti me legeis agathon? oudeis agathos ei mē heis ho Theos*; “why do you call-me good? no one [is] good except one – God” (Mark 10:18, Brown and Comfort).¹ Proponents of a low Christology consider that Yeshua, in the affirmation “No one is good but One, *that is*, God” (Luke 18:19, NKJV), has denied that He is God.

Proponents of a high Christology, of Yeshua being God, have obviously had to address the statements appearing in both Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:19. In his commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Craig A. Evans summarizes a number of the significant options which have been at interpreters’ disposal:

“Why do you call me good?: This question has prompted numerous interpretations down through the centuries...A favorite interpretation among early church fathers is that Jesus wanted the man to stop and realize that in recognizing Jesus as ‘good’ he was really ascribing deity to Jesus (since only God is truly good). Others have suggested that Jesus has rejected the compliment as cheap flattery. Another suggestion has been that Jesus actually acknowledged his sinfulness. To be preferred {in Evans’ estimation}, however, is the approach that understands Jesus question as ‘directing the man’s attention to God and his will as the only prescription for pleasing him’ (Fitzmyer, p. 1199; similarly Marshall, p. 684; Tiede, p. 311).”²

Various contemporary commentators, on the Gospel of Mark³ and the Gospel of Luke,⁴ will conclude that Yeshua’s response, in Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:19, is to be taken as a dismissal of an inappropriate flattery and insincere honors being stated by the rich young ruler. Other examiners, for both Mark⁵ and Luke,⁶ have taken the question posed by Yeshua as one of a distinct inquiry to the rich young ruler, leading to an evaluation of His Divine nature. The rich young ruler, only recognizing Yeshua as some good teacher (*didaskale agathe*; both Mark 10:17 and Luke 18:18), was asked why he was saying this, when “No one is good except the one God” (Luke 18:19, Common English Bible). The rich young ruler *did recognize* goodness present in Yeshua. And so, with the rich young ruler having asked Yeshua how he could have eternal life, he was posed with an inquiry about *why* Yeshua was being called good by him.

¹ Robert K. Brown and Philip W. Comfort, trans., *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1990), 160.

² Craig A. Evans, *New International Biblical Commentary: Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), pp 275-276.

³ William L. Lane, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), pp 365-366; Larry W. Hurtado, *New International Biblical Commentary: Mark* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), pp 168-169.

⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 684; E. Earle Ellis, *New Century Bible Commentary: Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 218.

⁵ R. Alan Cole, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 233.

⁶ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 292.

Yeshua's response, perhaps reminding the rich young ruler that only God was good, was to surely provoke some reflection on who Yeshua was in relation to this Good God. As Rikk E. Watts indicates for Mark 10:17,

"The life-giving goodness of God is one of the great themes of Scripture (e.g., 1 Chr 16:34; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3, 10; 30:18; Ezra 3:11; Pss 25:7, 8; 34:8; 86:5; 100:5; 118:29; 145:9; cf. Deut 10:13; 12:28; Pss 16:2; 34:10). Jesus is not denying his own goodness but wants the man to recognize that since God alone is good and alone gives life (Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6), only God can answer this question (even as only God alone can forgive sin, cf. 2:7). Hence, Jesus recites the commandments (v. 19). That Jesus then goes on to add his own requirement (vv. 21) implies his equality with God...The man's address ('Good teacher,' v. 17) is appropriate only if he realizes this fact" (*NIV Zondervan Study Bible*).⁷

Yeshua was approached by the rich young ruler by only being called a "Good Teacher." Yeshua asked him why he said that He was "good," when only God was good (Mark 10:18). Yeshua then prescribed some actions to be performed, if the rich young ruler was to say on an appropriate path of faith, which would result in eternal life:

"You know the commandments: '**Do not murder,**' '**Do not commit adultery,**' '**Do not steal,**' '**Do not bear false witness,**' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and mother'" **Exo 20:12-16; Deu 5:16-20; 24:14**. And He said to him, 'Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth.' And Yeshua, looking upon him, loved him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack. Go, sell as much as you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven; and come, follow Me.' But his face fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one who had great possessions. And Yeshua looked around and said to His disciples, 'How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter into God's Kingdom!'" (Mark 10:19-23, MARV).

That obedience to God's commandments is expected if one intends to remain steadfast, on the path toward eternal life, is easily seen in Yeshua's response. For the rich young ruler, it would also require him giving up his fortune, which could have been a major source of human confidence and pride. That this is not easy, for many rich people to do, is obvious from rich young ruler departing in sadness. What is far too easily overlooked in Yeshua's response is how He said, "Go, sell as much as you have, and give to the poor; and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me" (Mark 10:21, TLV; also Luke 18:22). In order for the rich young ruler to enter into the Kingdom and have eternal life, **he would have to follow Yeshua**, which is very much a statement of Yeshua's being good. *What does this prompt people to think about, as it concerns the nature of Yeshua?* Yeshua could have just as well have said, "One thing you lack:

⁷ Rikk E. Watts, "Mark," in D.A. Carson, gen. ed., *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, 2011 NIV (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 2036.

go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and go and seek after the true riches of God” (Mark 10:21, NASU modified).

Commenting on Luke 18:19, David W. Pao asserts, “Jesus is not denying that he is ‘good’; rather, Jesus challenges the ruler to see if he actually considers Jesus to be good (i.e., God). The ruler shows that he does not consider Jesus to be God by refusing to follow him (v. 23)” (*NIV Zondervan Study Bible*).⁸ Robert M. Bowman and J. Ed Komoszewski concur in their book *Putting Jesus in His Place*,

“Jesus was not denying being good; he was pointing out that human beings are not good and therefore, since the young man who approached Jesus regarded him as a merely human ‘teacher,’ he should not have addressed him flatteringly as ‘good teacher’ (Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18). If anything, Jesus’ statement in context implies that Jesus is more than human, since Jesus goes on to summon the young man to *follow him* in order to be complete (Matt. 19:18-21; Mark 10:19-21; Luke 18:20-22)” (*Putting Jesus in His Place*).⁹

The rich young ruler approached Yeshua from a low position of Him just being a good *human* teacher. Yeshua challenged the rich young ruler to recognize that only God is worthy of being called *good*. Yeshua later informed the rich young ruler that if he truly wanted eternal life, that he would have to *follow Him*. What does this indicate about *the goodness of Yeshua*? Leon Morris astutely concludes for Luke 18:19,

“Jesus proceeds to show the shortcomings in the young man’s position. *No one is good but God alone* is not to be understood as a repudiation of the epithet *good* as applied to himself. If that was his meaning, Jesus would surely have said plainly that he was a sinner. Rather he was inviting the ruler to reflect on the meaning of his own words. What he has just said had implications for the Person of Jesus. If he was good and if only God was good, as all rabbinic teaching agreed...then the ruler was saying something important about him. So far from repudiating the deity of Jesus as some hold, the question seems to invite the young man to reflect on it.”¹⁰

⁸ David W. Pao, “Luke,” in *Ibid.*, 2116.

⁹ Robert M. Bowman, Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), pp 304-305.

¹⁰ Morris, *Luke*, 292.