

In the past, the big issue which has faced the Messianic movement has understandably been the Messiahship of Yeshua of Nazareth, widely connected to the purposes of Jewish evangelism. *For the present*, the big issue which is staring right at the broad Messianic movement—to which no congregation, fellowship, family, or individual is entirely immune—is how to approach the nature of Yeshua (Jesus). Is Yeshua the Messiah God, or is He a created being? While many affirm Yeshua of Nazareth to be the eternal, uncreated Son of God who is indeed God—there are many others who express various levels of doubt about this, and then others who think that Yeshua is a created being and not God. There are those who will affirm that Yeshua is a supernatural being to be sure—perhaps even the first created being in the cosmic order, pre-existent of our known universe—but nevertheless created and not God.

This publication, *Salvation on the Line: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity*, affirms a high Christology. Not only does it affirm a high Christology of Yeshua being God, it very much defends the view that while understanding all of the intricacies of Yeshua being God is not required for salvation, recognizing Yeshua as the Lord (YHWH/YHVH) of the Tanach Scriptures (Old Testament) most certainly is required for salvation (Romans 10:9, 13; cf. Joel 2:32).

This resource has consulted and engaged with a wide array of resources and perspectives across the Messianic movement, into the more independent sectors of the Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement, the views expressed by various Christians labeling themselves “Biblical Unitarians,” and even those few theologians of note who hold to a low Christology. This involves an array of articles, books, commentaries, and even a few Bible versions. Most important, would be some of the excellent, thorough, and readable resources defending a high Christology, seen within the realm of broadly evangelical Christian theology.

The considerable bulk of *Salvation on the Line*, while defending a high Christology, is necessarily spent going to the text of the Holy Scriptures (Genesis-Revelation). This is not only because the Holy Scriptures are to be decisively regarded by God’s people to be the Word of Life, but also because this is the venue where the rise and fall of theological concepts are to be found. None of us wants to be found holding to a view of Yeshua being God simply because of some kind of fundamentalist dogma—where if we hold to a different view our name will somehow end up on a list or in a white paper as being stigmatized as some kind of “cultists.” We want to be found holding to a view of Yeshua being God, precisely because that is where the witness of Scripture directs us, it is the genuine testimony of the Messiah and His early followers, and because it is required for our redemption from sins as fallen human beings. The author firmly believes that such a principled case can be made in going to the text of Scripture, and that those who hold to a low Christology are decisively lacking in many areas.

SALVATION ON THE LINE
THE NATURE OF YESHUA AND HIS DIVINITY

VOLUME I

SALVATION ON THE LINE

VOLUME I

The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity
Gospels and Acts

J.K. McKee

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

SALVATION ON THE LINE VOLUME I

The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity

Gospels and Acts

© 2017 John Kimball McKee

All rights reserved. With the exception of quotations for academic purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission of the publisher.

Cover Image: Ig0rZh via Istockphoto

ISBN 979-8316393077 (paperback)

ASIN B072PPVVMY (eBook)

Published by Messianic Apologetics, a division of Outreach Israel Ministries

P.O. Box 516

McKinney, Texas 75070

(407) 933-2002

outreachisrael.net / outreachisrael.blog

messianicapologetics.net / messianicapologetics.blog

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard, Updated Edition* (NASU), © 1995, The Lockman Foundation.

Unless otherwise noted, quotations from the Apocrypha are from the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV), © 1952, Division of Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Quotations marked WMB are from the *World Messianic Bible*, published at <ebible.org/engwmb>.

Fair Use Notice: This publication contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We make use of this material as a matter of teaching, scholarship, research, and commentary. We believe in good faith that this constitutes a “fair use” of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law, and is in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. For more information go to: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/17/107>

Outreach Israel Ministries is a non-profit 501(c)3. All prices listed on the publications of Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics are suggested donations.

Table of Contents

Introduction	xv
Answering the “Frequently Avoided Questions” About the Divinity of Yeshua	1
What Does the Shema Really Mean?.....	41

PART I: THE STATE OF CHRISTOLOGY IN THE CONTEMPORARY MESSIANIC MOVEMENT

The State of Christology in the Contemporary Messianic Movement.....	65
Approaching the Nature of Yeshua from the Tanach.....	87
Genesis 1:26-28; 3:22-23; 11:7-8: “God Speaking as ‘Us’”	88
Genesis 16:7-13: “Hagar Encounters the Angel of the Lord”	91
Genesis 18:1-33: “Abraham Encounters the Lord”	94
Genesis 21:17-21: “Hagar Encounters the Angel of the Lord”	99
Genesis 22:6-18: “Abraham Offers Up Isaac to be Sacrificed”	100
Genesis 24:7, 40: “The Angel of the Lord Will Watch Abraham’s Servant”	102
Genesis 31:10-13: “The Angel of the Lord Speaks to Jacob”	102
Genesis 32:24-30: “Jacob Wrestles With a Divine Figure”	105
Genesis 48:15-16: “Jacob Testifies That He Has Walked With God”	108
Exodus 3:1-16: “The Burning Bush and ‘I am who I am’”	109
Exodus 4:14-17; 7:1-5: “Moses Will Be Like God”	112
Exodus 13:21; 14:19: “God Moving as the Pillar of Cloud”	116
Exodus 20:1-4; Deuteronomy 5:6-9: “The First and Second Commandments”	117
Exodus 23:20-24: “The Angel Guarding the People of Israel”	119
Exodus 24:9-11: “The Leaders of Israel See God”	121
Exodus 32:34-33:6: “The Angel Will Go Out Before Israel”	123
Exodus 33:7-23: “Moses Sees God”	125
Numbers 22:22-38: “Balaam Encounters the Angel of the Lord”	127
Deuteronomy 4:14-18: “The Lord Spoke to Israel Without Any Form”	131

Deuteronomy 6:4-5: "The Shema, The Lord is One"	133
Joshua 5:13-6:2: "Joshua Encounters the Captain of the Lord's Host"	138
Judges 2:1-5: "The Angel of the Lord Speaks to Israel"	141
Judges 6:11-23: "Gideon Interacts With the Angel of the Lord"	143
Judges 13: "Manoah Interacts With an Elusive Angel"	146
Isaiah 6:1-8: "Isaiah Encounters God's Heavenly Throne"	150
Isaiah 9:6-7: "Titles of the Messiah"	152
Isaiah 37:16; 44:24; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 95:5-7: "God is the Maker"	153
Isaiah 42:8: "The Exclusive Glory and Praise to be Given to the Lord"	155
Isaiah 44:5-8: "God as the First and the Last, the Only God"	156
Isaiah 45:18-25: "Every Knee Will Bow Before the Lord"	158
Isaiah 63:9: "The Angel of the Lord Saved Israel"	161
Daniel 3:24-26: "Nebuchadnezzar Witnesses the Fiery Furnace"	162
Daniel 7:9-14: "The Exalted Son of Man Whom All Creation Must Worship"	165
Joel 3:11-13: "The Lord as Supreme Judge"	168
Micah 5:2: "Messiah Originating from the Days of Eternity"	173
Psalm 2: "Messiah as the Lord's Anointed King"	175
Psalm 23:1-4: "The Lord as Shepherd"	178
Psalm 45: "The King Enthroned Forever"	180
Psalm 82:1-8: "God Calls Mortal Beings 'gods'"	185
Psalm 97:5-7: "Supernatural Beings are Enjoined to Worship"	187
Psalm 102:25-27: "The Eternality of God"	188
Psalm 110: "The LORD said to my Lord"	191
Proverbs 8:22-31: "Introducing the Figure of Wisdom"	194

PART II: THE APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY ON THE NATURE OF YESHUA

The Nature of Yeshua in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts.....	201
Luke 1:26-38: "The Child as Son of the Most High God"	202
Luke 1:67-79: "John the Immerser Preparing the Way for the Lord"	205
Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:10-11: "The Child Born as God With Us"	208

Matthew 2:1-12: "Yeshua the Child Worshipped by the Magi"	212
Mark 1:1-3; Matthew 3:2-3; Luke 3:3-6: "John the Immerser Preparing the Way for the Lord"	216
Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-22: "The Holy Spirit Rests Upon the Immersed Yeshua"	218
Mark 1:12-13; Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13: "Yeshua is Tempted in the Wilderness by Satan"	220
Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37: "Demons Confess Yeshua as the Holy One of God"	224
Mark 2:1-12; Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 5:17-26: "Yeshua Forgives Sin"	227
Mark 3:7-12: "Demons Confess Yeshua to be the Son of God"	231
Luke 7:11-17: "Yeshua is Declared to be a Great Prophet"	234
Luke 7:36-50: "Yeshua Forgives Sin"	237
Mark 4:35-41; Matthew 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25: "Yeshua Calms the Winds and the Sea"	242
Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39: "Yeshua Casts Out Legion"	245
Mark 5:25-34; Matthew 9:20-22; Luke 8:43-48: "A Woman is Healed by Touching Yeshua's Garment"	249
Luke 10:18: "Yeshua Saw the Fall of Satan"	251
Matthew 11:25-30; Luke 10:21-24: "Yeshua Offers Rest for Human Souls"	253
Mark 6:45-52; Matthew 14:22-33: "Yeshua Walks on the Water and is Worshipped"	256
Matthew 15:29-31: "God is Glorified by Yeshua's Miracles"	263
Mark 8:27-30; Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-20: "Yeshua's Disciples Confess Him to be the Messiah"	264
Mark 8:31-9:1; Matthew 16:27-28; Luke 9:21-27: "Yeshua Will Return in Glory to Triumphantly Judge"	267
Mark 9:2-13; Matthew 17:1-13; Luke 9:28-36: "The Transfiguration of Yeshua"	269
Mark 9:30-32; Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:43-45: "The Son of Man Will be Killed by Sinners"	272
Mark 10:17-18; Matthew 19:16-17; Luke 18:18-19: "No One is Good Except God Alone"	273
Mark 10:32-34; Matthew 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34: "The Son of Man Will be Killed by Sinners"	277
Mark 11:15-19; Matthew 21:12-16; Luke 19:45-48: "Yeshua is Praised as the Son of David".	278
Mark 12:28-37; Matthew 22:35-46; Luke 20:41-44: "David Calls the Messiah 'Lord'"	280
Mark 13:23-27; Matthew 24:27-31; Luke 21:25-28: "Yeshua's Return to Planet Earth"	284
Mark 13:6; Matthew 24:5; Luke 21:8: "The Rise of False Messiahs"	287
Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36: "Why Does the Son Not Know the Time of His Return?"	289

Matthew 25:31-34: "The Future Kingdom of the Son of Man"	292
Mark 14:53-65; Matthew 26:57-68; Luke 22:63-71: "Yeshua is Condemned of Blasphemy by the Sanhedrin"	292
Mark 15:16-20; Matthew 27:27-31; Luke 22:63-65: "Roman Soldiers Mock Yeshua"	300
Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46: "Yeshua Cries Out at His Death"	301
Mark 15:39; Matthew 27:54; Luke 23:47: "Yeshua Dies"	303
Matthew 28:8-10: "The Resurrected Yeshua is Worshipped"	304
Matthew 28:16-20: "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"	306
Luke 24:44-53: "The Resurrected Yeshua is Worshipped"	310
Acts 2:14-36: "Peter's Shavuot Message Declaring Yeshua the Messiah"	312
Acts 3:1-26: "Peter Declares Yeshua the Messiah"	315
Acts 4:1-22: "Miracles Performed in the Name of Yeshua"	319
Acts 5:27-32: "Yeshua as Prince and Savior"	322
Acts 7:36-39: "The Angel Present With Israel in the Wilderness"	326
Acts 7:54-60: "Stephen Sees the Son of Man in Heaven"	327
Acts 9:1-6: "Saul Encounters Yeshua on the Damascus Road"	330
Acts 10:19-26: "Cornelius Attempts to Worship Peter"	331
Acts 10:34-43: "Yeshua the Messiah as Lord of All"	333
Acts 13:13-42: "Paul Declares Yeshua the Messiah"	337
Acts 14:8-20: "Paul and Barnabas Are Worshipped as Hermes and Zeus"	343
Acts 16:7: "The Spirit of Yeshua"	347
Acts 17:16-34: "To the Unknown God"	348
Acts 20:17-28: "The Assembly Purchased With God's Own Blood"	351

The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John..... 355

John 1:1-18: "The Word Was God"	356
John 1:19-24: "John the Immerser Preparing the Way for the Lord"	368
John 1:29-34: "Yeshua Existed Before John the Immerser"	370
John 1:43-51: "Angels Ascending and Descending on the Son of Man"	371
John 3:10-18: "The Son of Man Who Descended From Heaven"	374
John 3:31-36: "Belief in the Son Results in Eternal Life"	376
John 4:6-26: "Yeshua Confirms that He is the Messiah"	378
John 5:1-18: "Yeshua Was Working on the Sabbath, the Same as God"	382

John 5:19-24: "Honoring the Son the Same as the Father"	387
John 5:25-29: "The Son of Man Has Life in Himself"	391
John 5:30-47: "Yeshua Has Been Sent From the Father"	392
John 6:16-21: 'Yeshua Walks on the Water"	396
John 6:26-40: "Yeshua is the Bread of Life"	399
John 6:41-59: "Yeshua is the Living Bread from Heaven"	403
John 6:60-69: "Yeshua's Disciples Recognize Him as the Holy One of God"	407
John 7:14-18: "Yeshua Does Not Seek Self-Serving Glory"	410
John 7:28-30: "Yeshua is the Sent One"	411
John 8:12-20: "Yeshua is the Light of the World"	414
John 8:21-30: "The Son of Man Will Be Lifted Up"	417
John 8:38-47: "Yeshua's Origins Are From God"	420
John 8:48-59: "Yeshua's Pre-Existence of Abraham"	422
John 9:35-38: "Yeshua is Worshipped as the Son of Man"	431
John 10:7-21: "Yeshua is the Good Shepherd"	434
John 10:22-39: "I and the Father are one"	439
John 11:17-27: "Yeshua is the Resurrection and the Life"	446
John 12:27-36: "The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up"	449
John 12:37-43: "Isaiah Saw the Glory of the Messiah"	451
John 12:44-50: "Yeshua Does Not Act On His Own"	453
John 13:1-20: "Yeshua Serves His Disciples at the Last Supper"	454
John 13:31-35: "The Son of Man Will Be Glorified"	458
John 14:1-14: "Believe in Yeshua, the Same as God"	459
John 14:15-31: "The Father is greater than I"	461
John 15:1-11: "Yeshua is the True Vine"	467
John 15:18-27: "Hatred of Yeshua is Hatred of the Father"	469
John 16:1-15: "The Spirit, the Son, and the Father"	471
John 16:23-33: "Yeshua Has Come Forth From the Father"	473
John 17:1-26: "The High Priestly Prayer of Yeshua the Messiah"	475
John 18:1-11: "Roman Soldiers Encounter the Supernatural Aura of Yeshua"	483
John 19:1-9: "Yeshua is Mocked for His Claims"	487
John 20:11-18: "My God and your God"	489

John 20:19-23: "The Resurrected Yeshua Appears"	491
John 20:24-29: "My Lord and my God!"	492
John 20:30-31: "Belief in Yeshua, the Son of God"	496
About the Author	499
Bibliography	501
Statement of Faith.....	517

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
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
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*
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)

Introduction

One of the biggest issues which is staring right at the broad Messianic movement—to which no congregation, fellowship, family, or individual are entirely immune—is how to approach the nature of Yeshua (Jesus).ⁱ **Is Yeshua the Messiah God, or is He a created being?** While many affirm Yeshua of Nazareth to be the eternal, uncreated Son of God who is indeed God—there are many others who express various levels of doubt about this, and then others who think that Yeshua is a created being and not God. There are those who will affirm that Yeshua is a supernatural being to be sure—perhaps even the first created being in the cosmic order, pre-existent of our known universe—but nevertheless created and not God.

In our family's experience with Outreach Israel Ministries for the past decade-and-a-half, we recognized how very early on in 2003, that while we encountered a few people here or there who denied Yeshua as God, there was enough of a guard or governor, of sorts, present—in how many knew that to deny Yeshua as God was to cross a very dangerous red line. *Hearing that a particular person denied Yeshua as God, was something that largely remained on the fringes.* But as the 2000s progressed, and new social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube really began to take hold—combined with the greater prevalence of an online bookseller like Amazon.com and the emergence of the eBook—ideas about the nature of the Messiah which would have stayed on someone's obscure personal website or blog, could now be promoted rather easily. Individual people, in what would be considered the more mainstream of the Messianic community, would be found expressing opinions and perspectives which were not affirming of Yeshua as God. Many of these opinions and perspectives can circulate unknown to congregational leaders and teachers.

While we have surely been involved in our fair share of controversies over the years among people in the Messianic movement, and there have been issues that we are in disagreement about with various personalitiesⁱⁱ—no one has ever been able to accuse Outreach Israel Ministries of holding to a low Christology,ⁱⁱⁱ or the view that Yeshua of Nazareth is a created being. It might be said, instead, that our ministry holds to **some**

ⁱ *Yeshua* is the original Hebrew name of Jesus meaning, "He is Salvation" (Matthew 1:21). Jesus is derived from the Greek transliteration of *Yeshua*, *Iēsous*, originally employed by the Greek Septuagint.

ⁱⁱ A number of these are evaluated in the author's book *Confronting Critical Issues: An Analysis of Subjects that Affects the Growth and Stability of the Emerging Messianic Movement*.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Christology** is a theological term usually applied to the study of the Messiah's nature and origin. An excellent definition of "Christology" is provided by Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 25:

"Christology is the theological study devoted to answering two main questions: Who is Jesus? (the question of his identity) and What is the nature and significance of what Jesus accomplished in the incarnation? (the question of his work)."