

The WildBranch Ministry

...*thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Romans 11:18*

The Deity of Messiah

Part 6

by Brad Scott

I thought perhaps it might be a prudent idea to introduce this next teaching with a few very up front comments that may be a matter of semantics to some. I have found that many times it is the terminology and phraseology we use that causes some of our differences. Language is the principle symbol of the thoughts and intents of the heart. How we define words and phrases can cause division and misunderstanding. I feel that some of the misunderstanding in the "deity" issue stems from carrying traditional, "trinitarian" doctrines into the equation. Let me state clearly that I do not teach the "God is three persons" doctrine. I do not hold to the Christian teaching of the "trinity". Let me be more succinct. I do believe that the *Father* (you know who I mean) is God, the *Holy Spirit* is God, and the *Son* is God in the flesh. I believe that the Son of God is the manifestation of God in the flesh. The God I worship is perfectly capable of such a simple and logical feat. God is not limited to three of anything, much less three persons. I have stated very emphatically that I believe there is a technical and somewhat semantical difference between the statement that Yeshua' *is* God, and the statement that Yeshua' is God in the flesh. When most of my fellow brethren make the statement that Yeshua' *is* God, I know what they mean. But, technically, I take issue with the literalness of the statement. The essence of YHVH is spirit.

Yochanan (John) 4:24

God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

We are all familiar with that verse. Messiah helped define for us what *spirit* is, one chapter earlier in Yochanan. He tells us that *spirit* is like the wind, "thou canst hear the sound of it, but canst not tell from where it cometh." Without going into boring technical detail, most of us already have a human grasp of the fact that the nature and essence of God is invisible, untouchable, and all three *omni*'s. So let's move past that. The nature of God had to make Himself of no reputation, take upon the form of a servant, and be made in the likeness of man (Philippians 2:7). Why did God have to do these things? Because God, by nature, *has* a reputation, is *not* a servant, and is *not* in the likeness of man. To be our eternal sacrifice and living example, He had to manifest Himself as these things. According to Yochanan 17:5, it seems that the infinite God had to leave behind His glory in order to become a

man. What does that mean? I have not a clue. It is just one of those things that tells me that God as a man, is not *all* that God is. Something about the nature of the eternal God had to be different in order to take upon flesh. The nature of God is that He is omnipresent. God as a man (Yeshua') was not omnipresent. An invisible, omnipresent entity cannot be a scriptural sacrifice nor our living example of righteousness. As I mentioned before, Paul tells us specifically that Yeshua' was the fullness of God *bodily* and not the fullness of God. Why did Rav Sha'ul (Paul) state it that way? Could it be because there is a difference between the omnipresent God and God taking upon flesh and dwelling among us. Keep in mind that this omnipresent God remained omnipresent while still dwelling upon the earth.

Some might ask, "Well, how can that be?" What do you mean how can that be? We are dealing with an incorruptible God here and not an image like unto corruptible man. Plainly spoken, if what I am saying is true, then God is not sharing His glory with another, and there is no idol worship here, and all the statements made by the gospel writers are in complete harmony with the prophecies of the Tanakh. We are told in Y^esha'yahu that YHVH will not give His glory to another.

Y^esha'yahu (Isaiah) 42:8

I am YHVH, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to carved images.

The context here demonstrates what I believe to be a basic, fundamental statement about idol worship and other gods. I believe that the Scriptures are revealing the plea of our Creator to worship Him alone, to obey Him alone, and that He, in reality, is the only true God, and that all other so-called gods are really no gods at all. I do not believe that the statements made concerning the worshipping of other gods, taking His name in vain, or idol worship, were meant to be used as grammatical weapons for dissecting the nature of the one true God. None of us have cornered the market on the precise and detailed, meticulous anatomy of the God of Israel. I believe the same is true concerning the Messiah, as well. Do you believe that the first 12 disciples of Messiah are and were in the kingdom? Do you know for a fact whether all 12 of them had the Messiah's nature pinned down to a gnat's derriere? Do you believe that any of them are in hades because they failed to nail down perfectly some aspect of His nature?

I remember distinctly stating that before this treatise ended I wanted to deal with some of the most quoted New Testament verses that cause confusion. These are the verses that are often sent to me.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 3:16-17

And Yeshua', when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

A logical conclusion, from a human point of view under the sun, would be that there are three different entities here. How could Yeshua' be the Father if He is the Son? How could Yeshua' be God if Yeshua' is standing there while God is speaking from heaven? Once again I ask, can God manifest Himself as a man and yet still remain God, yes or no? It is true that limited, finite humans are not capable of performing such a feat. In our three dimensional, finite world a father cannot be his son, and so because of this finite reality, the conclusion by many is that the Son cannot possibly be God in the flesh. So there. But if the term Son of God is simply a title used to express the relationship that our living example has with the infinite, eternal source (the Father), then this is certainly within the abilities of an all present Creator. The purpose of the terms Father and Son are to express one of the pertinent reasons for God becoming man. God reaches out to man using human, physical terms to help us to understand eternal, spiritual realities. There are dozens of familial relationships and analogies that can be reaped from viewing a righteous demonstration here on earth of a love between a father and a son. To conclude from this *similitude* (Hoshea (Hosea) 12:10) that God and the Messiah *really* are a literal father and son in the same way that we are is stretching the similitude way beyond its limits. God uses many anthropomorphisms to express His incomprehensible self to ignorant man. God protects us under the shadow of His wings. Now there are many things to be learned and understood by studying the way a majestic, mother bird treats her young, especially when danger lurks. This does not mean that we are to conclude that God is a Peregrine falcon or an affectionate hen.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 22:2

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

Once again we are supposed to naturally conclude that the King makes a marriage for His son and not Himself. The king, we are told, is not the son, therefore, Yeshua' cannot be God in the flesh. I still call upon the same background to understand the anatomy of this parable. First of all, the purpose of this parable is to teach us about our responsibilities right now as members of the kingdom and the ramifications of disobedience in the future. This parable is not told to teach us about the differences between a king and his son. Like many teachings of the Messiah, God does not call or demand that we be God, but He does call His people to take upon His name, His thoughts, and His ways. He accomplishes this by

becoming the very example He *does* expect us to be: The Son. After all, if *all* sin and fall short of the glory of God, who else could come and save us and remain sinless.

Personally, I believe exactly what the Scriptures teach. There is only one who can save us from our sins, only one who could be a spotless sacrifice, and only one who can forgive sins. There is only one I AM, only one Holy One of Israel, and only one Redeemer. Now, are there other saviors and redeemers in the Scriptures? Yes, there are, but there is only *one* Savior and Redeemer from sin and damnation. (One of the arguments against God being the *only* Savior is that the word *savior* is used of humans, as well, i.e. B^ere'shiyt (Genesis) 47:25, M^elakhiym Bet (2 Kings) 13:5). As I go through several more scriptures, I would like you to keep something in mind. If God took upon flesh and dwelt among us to be our living, eternal sacrifice and example, then I would expect there to be distinctions between the one who was sent and the one who sent Him. I do not believe that God came to earth just to show off. His purpose was to show His people what obeying Torah means. What better example of obeying Torah than the one who *wrote* Torah! Especially to those who had strayed away from His laws and covenants and began manufacturing their own.

Acts 7:55-56

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Yeshua' standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

The argument here is similar to dozens of other so-called prooftexts. "See! There are two people here." (No, actually there are 4 - Stephen, Holy Spirit, God, and Yeshua'. We will deal with the Spirit later.) The position is that the Son of Man (Messiah) is *standing* on the right hand of God, so how could Yeshua' be God? Well, first of all, I never said Yeshua' was God, I have stated repeatedly that Yeshua' is God in the flesh. Here is another example of taking the incorruptible God and making Him unto an image like unto corruptible man. The nature of God is that He is spirit and omnipresent, so how could *anybody* be standing next to something that is everywhere at once? Obviously, anyone with even a hint of gray matter can see that this vision of Stephen is much more than seeing two people hanging out at the throne. It seems some have a perception of God the Father as one guy and Yeshua' as another guy. I suppose, since the text mentions that the Holy Spirit was there, that these people would envision a trio somewhat like Peter, Paul and Mary. Without the Holy Spirit, these people must conclude that this vision looked somewhat like the Smothers Brothers. I know that I am being overly sarcastic here, but come on people, Yeshua' isn't standing next to another *person* in this vision. This is simply

a typical King James way of expressing the Messiah in the midst of the presence, glory, and power of an omnipresent, unseen God (i.e., right hand of God). The only *person* Stephen saw was the Messiah.

The idea of the expression of the one true God in different terms at the same time is all over both Covenants. We express the same thing in the English language, so this way of speaking is not specific to Hebrew. When the leader of our country is introduced, he most often is announced as, "... ladies and gentlemen, introducing the Commander in Chief, and the President of this great country, blah, blah, blah." Paul uses the same way of speaking in some of his salutations.

1 Corinthians 1:3

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from Adonai Yeshua' the Messiah.

Ephesians 1:2

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from Adonai Yeshua' the Messiah.

1 Timothy 1:2

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Yeshua' the Messiah our Adonai.

One of the most oft quoted prooftexts from both sides of this issue is found in Philippians:

Philippians 2:6-11

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Messiah Yeshua': Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Yeshua' every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Yeshua' the Messiah is Adonai, to the glory of God the Father.

I have previously dealt with much of this text. I would like to take this verse a little further. The subject of this verse is the Messiah Yeshua'. Paul did not write these verses off the top of his head, but rather he was quoting from the prophet Isaiah.

Y^esha'yahu (Isaiah) 45:20-25

Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I YHVH? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in YHVH have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In YHVH shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

Once again we are reminded that there are those who pray to gods that cannot save. There are lords many and gods many, as Paul states in 1 Corinthians 8:5. There is, however, only one God who can save, for there is only *one Savior* from sin and only *One God* in whom we find our righteousness. This true God will not give His glory to another. As I stated before, idolatry and worshipping a false god is to serve, follow, and give glory to a god *other* than the one true God. Once again, the one true God reminds us of this reality. The one true, infinite, unlimited God is a just God and a Savior. We look only to Him to be saved for there is none else. Only *in* YHVH (vs 24-25) can there be righteousness and justification. Now, according to Rav Sha'ul, at the name (*shem* - authority) of whom will every knee bow and every tongue confess? Has God given His glory to another or is Yeshua' simply God manifest in the flesh, therefore making YHVH's statements in Y^esha'yahu inviolate? Once again I ask, is this an absurd conclusion to make, or is our infinite, limitless God perfectly capable of becoming a man without violating His word?

It is my contention that virtually all the attributes, titles, and characteristics ascribed to God are also given to Messiah. Is that because the Messiah is acting as God's agent and representative, or could it be because they are one and the same. I am going to focus the next teaching on these attributes and why I believe the deliverer of mankind *had* to be God or there could be no deliverer. As you might have already noticed, I do not approach these kinds of subjects the same way most others do. I could have dealt with this issue with a myriad of verses and prooftexts that seemed to support the deity of Messiah. These would have been answered by a myriad of verses that seemed to support the teaching that Yeshua' was not God in the flesh. These would have been answered by a few more prooftexts, which in turn would have spawned another group of prooftexts from the other side of the issue. And on and on and on. The result would have been something like a

debate on television between a Republican and a Democrat. How many times have you seen one side convince the other of anything? I am not trying to convince anyone of the deity of Messiah Yeshua'. I am attempting to address some incredible, hyperbolic statements on this issue made by some brethren. Statements such as "there is not one thread of evidence that Yeshua' is God in the flesh", or the idea that "God became a man" is utter nonsense. I would remind all of us that one can only output what one has inputted. It is still an amazing human phenomenon that two people can read the same English words to the 1st amendment of the constitution, and come to two different conclusions. This issue is no different. All of us, I said *all* of us, drag our preconceived biases and presuppositions into every text. It is a fact of life. If you already contend that Yeshua' was not God in the flesh, but simply an agent of God, then you will summarize Philippians 2 much differently than I.

I would like to close with this thought. I been asked in the past, "If Yeshua' was God in the flesh, why didn't He just say so?" Interesting thought. I would ask the same question. If God had no intention of taking upon the likeness of men and dwelling among us, why didn't He just say so. The fact that both sides of this issue ask that question is part of the evidence of what I have been saying all along. Let me ask another question. If God knows the end from the beginning, and He knows exactly when He will return, why didn't He just say so? Why the parables, the idioms, the similitudes and the double entendres? HmMMM.

Shalom Alecheim!

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