

**CONFRONTING
YESHUA'S DIVINITY AND
MESSIAHSHIP**

BOOKS BY J.K. McKEE

The Messianic Walk

*Salvation on the Line, Volume I: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity—
Gospels and Acts*

*Salvation on the Line, Volume II: The Nature of Yeshua and His Divinity—
General Epistles, Pauline Epistles, & Later New Testament*

*Confronting Critical Issues: An Analysis of Subjects that Affects the Growth
and Stability of the Emerging Messianic Movement*

Confronting Yeshua's Divinity and Messiahship

To Be Absent From the Body

Why Hell Must Be Eternal

Introduction to Things Messianic

The New Testament Validates Torah

The New Testament Validates Torah MAXIMUM EDITION

Torah In the Balance, Volume I

Torah In the Balance, Volume II

When Will the Messiah Return?

The Dangers of Pre-Tribulationism

Israel in Future Prophecy

Are Non-Jewish Believers Really a Part of Israel?

Men and Women in the Body of Messiah: Answering Crucial Questions

CONFRONTING YESHUA'S DIVINITY AND MESSIAHSHIP

J.K. McKee

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS
messianicapologetics.net

CONFRONTING YESHUA'S DIVINITY AND MESSIAHSHIP

© 2012, 2021 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 imagery: joshblake/Istockphoto

ISBN 978-1537324821 (paperback)

ISBN 979-8742090700 (hardcover)

ASIN B008PVQGRC (eBook)

Published by Messianic Apologetics, a division of Outreach Israel Ministries

P.O. Box 516

McKinney, Texas 75070

(407) 933-2002

www.outreachisrael.net

www.messianicapologetics.net

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.

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

INTRODUCTIONxi

ANSWERING THE “FREQUENTLY AVOIDED QUESTIONS” ABOUT THE DIVINITY OF YESHUA 1

Answering these “Frequently Avoided Questions”8

False Claim #1: God cannot die. If Yeshua the Messiah is God, then how could He die on the cross?9

False Claim #2: God cannot be tempted. Yeshua the Messiah was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. How can Yeshua be God if He was tempted?.....12

False Claim #3: The New Testament Scriptures always present a difference between the Messiah and God, proving that they are not one and the same. Because of the separation of the Messiah and God, how can He be God?14

False Claim #4: To worship Yeshua as God is to worship another god. This is idolatry. How can you worship Yeshua as God? We are only supposed to honor or bow down to Yeshua.....18

False Claim #5: Yeshua the Messiah had to be born to exist. He did not exist until He was born. How can Yeshua be God if He had to be born to exist?25

False Claim #6: The demons never confessed Yeshua to be God. How can Yeshua be God if the demons never confessed Him as such?29

False Claim #7: The Scriptures tell us that God is a spirit and that He cannot be seen. How can Yeshua be God if He could be seen by human people?31

False Claim #8: Psalm 110:1 is a proof text that Yeshua the Messiah is not God, and has been purposefully misrepresented by those trying to make the Messiah God. How can Yeshua be God when adon is a Hebrew title given only to human masters?34

False Claim #9: Yeshua the Messiah never said “I am God.” How can Yeshua be God if He never said “I am God”?37

False Claim #10: God says that “I am not a man.”43

The Ongoing Issue of Yeshua’s Divinity in the Messianic Movement....45

WHAT DOES THE SHEMA REALLY MEAN? 49

Deuteronomy 6:4-9.....51

The Shema for Ancient Israel.....51

Does the Shema allow for a plural Godhead?57

1 Corinthians 8:5-665

The Messianic Shema: One God and One Lord65

The Truth About the Trinity and Messianic Handling of the Shema.....68

**ANSWERING THE “FREQUENTLY AVOIDED
QUESTIONS” ABOUT THE MESSIAHSHIP
OF YESHUA 75**

Answering these “Frequently Avoided Questions”84

False Claim #1: Numbers 23:19 clearly states that God is not a man, yet Christianity considers Jesus to be God, when at most he was just a human teacher.85

False Claim #2: Psalm 22:17(16) uses “lion” and not “pierced” in the Hebrew. Christian Bibles have purposefully mistranslated the verse to prove the Messiahship of Jesus.87

False Claim #3: Matthew 2:23 is wrong. There is no single prophecy that states that the Messiah will be called a Nazarene.89

False Claim #4: Matthew 2:15 has deliberately misapplied Hosea 11:1, as it calls the people of Israel out of Egypt, not Jesus out of Egypt.92

False Claim #5: Jesus is not the “greater prophet” spoken of by Moses...95

False Claim #6: The genealogies of Jesus in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 do not align with the genealogies of the Tanach.99

False Claim #7: Isaiah 7:14 has been purposefully mistranslated with “virgin” in Christian Bibles, to fit a pagan concept of a virgin giving birth, specifically to Jesus.104

False Claim #8: Matthew 27:9 has deliberately misreferenced the Tanach. The text says that “Jeremiah” spoke a prophecy that should really be a word credited to Zechariah.110

False Claim #9: The suffering servant of Isaiah 53 is Israel, not Jesus.112

False Claim #10: Human sacrifice is deplorable to God. How can Jesus be “the sacrifice” for all humanity when God Himself would never accept it?116

The Criticism Only Messianics Can Respond To.....119

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 127

BIBLIOGRAPHY 129

Abbreviation Chart and Special Terms

The following is a chart of abbreviations for reference works and special terms that 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.

Special terms that may be used have been provided in this chart:

ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>	understand what a Biblical text means on its own
AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>	EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)	Ger: German
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	GNT: Greek New Testament
Ara: Aramaic	Grk: Greek
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	<i>halachah</i> : lit. "the way to walk," how the Torah is lived out in an individual's life or faith community
b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>)	HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.	HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	Heb: Hebrew
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
BECNT: <i>Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</i>	ICC: <i>International Critical Commentary</i>
BKCNT: <i>Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament</i>	IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.	IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i>
CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995)	ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>
CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)	IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)</i>
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>	Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature</i> (Marcus Jastrow)
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)	JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition	JETS: <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls	KJV: King James Version
ECB: <i>Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible</i>	Lattimore: <i>The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore</i> (1996)
EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>	LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986)
eisegesis: "reading meaning into," or interjecting a preconceived or foreign meaning into a Biblical text	LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell & Scott)
EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>	LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)	
exegesis: "drawing meaning out of," or the process of trying to	

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*
NIGTC: *New International Greek Testament Commentary*
NICNT: *New International Commentary on the New Testament*
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
orthopraxy: lit. "the right action," how the Bible or one's theology is lived out in the world

OT: Old Testament
PreachC: *The Preacher's Commentary*
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*
TEV: Today's English Version (1976)
TLV: Tree of Life Messianic Family Bible—New Covenant (2011)
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)
TNTC: *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*
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
WBC: *Word Biblical Commentary*
Yid: Yiddish
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

Introduction

There is no more pressing issue for Believers in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ), than understanding who their Lord actually is. There are many statements appearing in the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament, which give witness to who He is. Yeshua is the Word made flesh (John 1:1, 14), He is the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36), He is One who had the audacity to say “before Abraham was born, I am” (John 8:58, NASU), and He is One “existing in the form of God” (Philippians 2:6, ASV). Yeshua is the Savior of the world, whose sacrifice for human transgressions provides permanent atonement and forgiveness. Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel, is the One “of whom Moses in the Law and *also* the Prophets wrote” (John 1:45, NASU). Yeshua the Messiah is One who the Scriptures definitely regard as no ordinary man, as He performed miracles, had control over the weather, and who was recognized as unique by the forces of evil. He is “the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Revelation 22:13, NASU).

While there is much about the nature of the Messiah that is difficult for mortals to fully comprehend, He is portrayed as the One in whom “all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” (Colossians 2:8, NASU), and He is “our great God and Savior (Titus 2:13, NASU). He is the prophesied Messiah of Israel, and He is God made manifest in the flesh. Recognizing Yeshua as God, and as the prophesied Messiah from the Tanach or Old Testament, are two concepts that have been under continual attack by many outside *and* inside forces in today’s broad Messianic movement—and the attacks continue to grow in intensity. There are people who have been caught easily unaware by poor arguments against Yeshua’s Divinity and Messiahship. **There are answers to the claims against these foundational truths that are available for those who need an immediate shoring up of their faith.**

Confronting Yeshua’s Divinity and Messiahship has compiled a number of key articles that I have written, which are intended to directly combat errant ideas that circulate here and there within sectors of the broad Messianic community. Common claims that are issued against Yeshua being the Divine Savior, and Yeshua being the Messiah,

Confronting Yeshua's Divinity and Messiahship

are directly responded to with poignant observations and exegetical detail. If you have been in a situation where a rogue individual you have encountered makes a statement or two against who Yeshua is, as communicated to us in the Holy Scriptures, then this publication should serve as some useful ammunition against those claims. The most frequent statements that one will hear, which are made against Yeshua's Divinity and Messiahship, are directly confronted and responded to.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that you find *Confronting Yeshua's Divinity and Messiahship* to be a useful tool, that will aid many of you in your defense of not only the truth of who He is—but of your salvation!

*J.K. McKee, Editor
Messianic Apologetics*

Answering the “Frequently Avoided Questions” About the Divinity of Yeshua

answering the claims of the anti-Divinity Messianics

Anyone who has surveyed the broad Messianic movement—whether it be Messianic Judaism or the independent Hebrew/Hebraic Roots movement—knows that it is very diverse. There is a huge array of theologies and opinions evident in the Messianic movement, just as in Christianity or Judaism. There are those who are theologically conservative, and those who are theologically liberal. There are those who believe that God has the ultimate control over their lives, and those who believe that they can determine their own destiny and dictate to God who He is, ignoring His direction. There are those who think deeply, and there are those who think simplistically. There are those who let themselves be tossed and swayed by religious politics, and there are those who do not allow entangling alliances to have an influence over them.

Since the 1990s and 2000s, it is not surprising that an age-old theological controversy, going back to the Second and Third Centuries C.E., has arisen in the broad Messianic movement: *Who is Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ)? Is He God—or is He just a human man?*

This has now developed into a debate that is not so easily delineated along any kind of denominational, organizational, ministry, or even at times congregational lines, *as it affects everybody*. While various Messianic associations and ministries have rightfully taken strong stands against those who would deride Yeshua the Messiah as being the Divine Savior—the fact is that individual people who may attend congregations which officially affirm Yeshua as God, may themselves only think of the Messiah as a good man who was

Confronting Yeshua's Divinity and Messiahship

connected to God in a special way, or some kind of exalted supernatural being, yet ultimately created. It is certainly true that there are many Christian people who attend church every week, being members of denominations which officially affirm the Divinity of Jesus, who themselves do not believe in it and only think that Jesus was a good teacher. So, individual people denying Yeshua's Divinity is not at all an isolated incident, nor is it uncommon to the world of Christian religion, at least.

What can make things in the Messianic movement much different, though, is our relatively small size, and the fact that many sub-groups and cliques have become quite reliant on promoting themselves via social media. It is very easy for an outspoken individual in the assembly, who does not believe that Yeshua is Divine, to cause quite a stir. In the past, this would have only taken place by a person passing out questionable literature on the side, not too different from a dealer offering free samples of illegal drugs. What happens now is usually seeing various opinions expressed via a personal blog page, YouTube channel, or Instagram feed. All too often, individuals are caught broadsided when various arguments are made or encountered, not quite knowing what to do. Too many can be persuaded, even if just for a little while, into thinking that Yeshua the Messiah might not really be God.

Sadly, too many of today's Messianic congregational leaders do not know what to do about this. And, given the fact that apostasy is indeed prophesied to be a sign of the Last Days (2 Thessalonians 2:3), people denying major tenets of our Messianic faith is something that we are all going to have to deal with in increasing numbers as the Second Coming draws nearer. Pockets of individuals here and there denying Yeshua's Divinity is sure to be followed by much larger groups, and in time it will be found in some Messianic congregations' leadership and whole ministries. Those of us who are true to what the Scriptures tell us about Yeshua the Messiah, however, **can have confidence that He is indeed the LORD God, and He is indeed Divine!** There are fair-minded, Biblically-rooted answers for the questions and criticisms being made. *You do not have to be broadsided by some of the main, yet decidedly weak arguments, that are being bantered around.*

Approaching the Debate: Why does the Messiah have to be Divine?

The question of whether or not Yeshua the Messiah is Divine, God in the flesh, has been a cause of considerable debate and dissension in various periods, since His ascension into Heaven. The Apostolic Scriptures record ancient hymns and creeds affirmed about Yeshua by the First Century Believers themselves (i.e., Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Timothy 3:16), some of which may have been formulated to not only make key statements about who He is, but also subvert errant ideas that had circulated in various sectors of the *ekklēsia*.

In much of theological study since the First Century and ministry of the Apostles, we encounter the views of people who strongly believed that Yeshua (Jesus) must be God, and that any diversion of believing that He is not God must be viewed as theological heresy. There are also those who have strongly believed that Yeshua was only a human man, that He had some kind of special relationship with God and was quite possibly even the Messiah empowered by God, but was never God in the flesh.

Whether Yeshua the Messiah is Divine is an old debate, and while there are discussions about what this group of Christian leaders insisted, or what that sect did—**this is an issue that ultimately tries a reader’s loyalty to the claims of the Biblical text**. How Medieval Roman Catholic leaders handled those who they considered to be “heretics,” for example, *should not* be what guides our thoughts about this issue. What should guide our thoughts about this issue is understanding the wide-sweeping Biblical ramifications of: “these have been written so that you may believe that Yeshua is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31, NASU). What matters for our deliberations is whether or not the Divinity of Yeshua **is a clear teaching of Scripture**, that the Divinity of Yeshua is something reflected in the testimony of the Apostles, and how the Divinity of Yeshua is something which affects our salvation.

As I approach the issue of whether or not Yeshua is the Divine Savior, my reasons for believing in His Divinity are firmly based within the text of Scripture. From Scripture, we see stated in numerous places that only God can save human beings from their diverse trials, and allow His people to enter into His blessed purpose for them. The LORD