

The Deity of Yeshua

Messianic Jews 1:1-4

Letter to the Messianic Jews

In my last post, I introduced us to this new study on the **Letter to the Messianic Jews**. To the extent possible, I will be taking smaller portions of the scripture to examine using the outline in my old Harper Study Bible (RSV). Quotations, unless otherwise indicated, will be from the Complete Jewish Bible (CJB). In this post, we learn that **Yeshua** is the final revelation of God. [**NOTE:** Don't forget to look at the Glossary tab for any Hebrew words that aren't familiar.]

¹ In days gone by, God spoke in many and varied ways to the Fathers through the prophets. ² But now, in the acharit-hayamim, He has spoken to us through His Son, to whom He has given ownership of everything and through whom He created the universe. ³ This Son is the radiance of the Sh'khinah, the very expression of God's essence, upholding all that exists by His powerful word; and after He had, through Himself, made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of HaG'dulah BaM'romim. ⁴ So He has become much better than angels, and the name God has given Him is superior to theirs. ~ Hebrews 1:1-4 (CJB)

These opening sentences are one of the most magnificent passages in the Bible, comparable in grandeur to the introductory sentences of **Bresheet** and **Yochanan's** Gospel. **Yeshua**, in His deity and His inexpressible glory, is the Creator, Preserver, and Heir of the universe. By an eternal act of God, **Yeshua** made purification for the sin of humanity, once and for all, and brought everlasting salvation.

Barclay adds: ¹

This is the most sonorous [deep or resonant] piece of Greek in the whole New Testament. It is a passage that any classical Greek orator would have been proud to write. The writer of Hebrews has brought to it every artifice of word and rhythm that the beautiful and flexible Greek language could provide...The writer to the Hebrews felt that, since he was going to speak of the supreme revelation of God to men, he must clothe his thought in the noblest language that it was possible to find.

God spoke in many and varied ways, directly and indirectly, in dreams and stories, history and prophecy, poems and proverbs, **to the Fathers** of the Jewish people **through the prophets** from Moses to Malachi, and, before Moses, to Avraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

According to Jewish tradition, **Malachi** was the last of the **Tanakh** prophets. For the next four centuries, to use the remark of an earlier prophet, **"The word of Adonai was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision"** (1 Samuel 3:1). **But in the acharit-hayamim**, the **Tanakh's** "latter days," which the **Brit Hadashah** regards as already here (see 1 Corinthians 10:11), **he has spoken** again, not to Fathers long dead (v. 1), but **to us** in the 1st century, **through his Son**.

By implication, **his Son** is **better** than the Prophets. A significant purpose of the author is to show that **Yeshua** and everything connected with Him is better than what was available previously. He uses this word, **"better,"** twelve times in Messianic Jews to compare the **Messiah** and His era with what there was before. It appears first in v. 4, and last at 12:24, as the author summarizes this comparison of old and new (12:18-24).

There follow in verses 2-3 seven features of **God's Son** which demonstrate his superiority:

1. God **has given** Him **ownership of everything**.
2. God **created the universe through** Him.

¹ Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT) by William Barclay.

3. ***This Son is the radiance of***, literally, "the glory," best rendered Jewishly as **the *Sh'khinah***.
4. The ***very expression***, used only here in the Brit Hadashah, delineates even more clearly that ***God's essence*** is manifested in the **Messiah**.
5. **Yeshua** not only **is** the Word (Yochanan 1:1), but he **has** a ***powerful word upholds all that exists***.
6. The writer turns from the **Messiah's** cosmic functions to His functions in relation to humanity: ***through himself***, he **made purification for sins**, which, is explained a little at a time throughout the rest of the book, no one else and nothing else could do.
7. Finally, **after** that, ***he sat down at the right hand of*** God. Psalm 110:1 is frequently quoted in this book and elsewhere in the Brit Hadashah. In the Hebrew of Psalm 110:1, it is God speaking: ***"YHVH said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand.'" "The right hand of God"*** is **not** a place but refers to the **Messiah's** exalted status and to His intimate involvement with God as ***cohen gadol*** interceding for those who trust in Him. God is referred to as a euphemism, ***HaG'dulah BaM'romim*** ("the Greatness in the heights").

So, it is evident, since He is at God's right hand, that ***he has become much better than angels*** ~ even though ***"He was made, for a little while, lower than the angels"*** (2:9).

Stern's writes: ²

*Although today some non-Messianic Jews, reacting against Christianity, insist that Judaism has never expected the **Messiah** to be different from any other man, there can be no question that in the first century many Jews, both those attracted to **Yeshua** and those repelled by Him, understood that the **Messiah** would be more than human. But how much more? As much as angels? Which angels? ~ Jewish angelology had become very complex during the six centuries before **Yeshua**; where among the angelic orders did the **Messiah** fit? The decisive answer given here is: nowhere. He is above them all ~ as the verses from the **Tanakh** cited in the rest of the chapter are intended to prove.*

The name God has given him which ***is superior to*** that of angels could mean His reputation but more likely signifies an actual name.

In my next post, we'll explore more in-depth on this topic of **Yeshua** being superior to angels in Messianic Jews 1:5-14 ~ **Yeshua, the Son of God**.

² Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern.