

fore despised and rejected. But He is now and forever seen and known to be the Lord of all. And Adonai (YHVH) is the One Who has made this universal proclamation. The Son in Whom the Father was well-pleased is and always has been the exalted King, heralded by the heavenly host and proclaimed to have all of the majesty and glory that only such a position possesses.

10 – so that at the name of Yeshua EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

The result of the now unrestrained revelation of Yeshua as the Sovereign of the universe results in the necessity for every person to bow to His sovereignty. The One Who was completely obedient unto death must now be completely obeyed. The hymn uses the name Yeshua here rather than Lord (as in v. 11) in order to emphasize that it is the same incarnate Son of God Who poured Himself out as a Servant of Adonai and of men, Who now reigns above all. The exalted King is not someone unknown or unseen, but is the very One Who bears in His human body the scars acquired in His atoning work for sinners.

Indeed, the historical record of Yeshua's birth teaches us that the name He would be given in His incarnation was not something chosen by Mary and Joseph, but was given and commanded by the angelic being who appeared to him as he was intending to divorce Mary who was betrothed to him.

But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Yeshua, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matt 1:20–21)

Here we are given the very meaning of the Name "Yeshua" (יֵשׁוּעַ, *ieshū'a*) for the angel of the Lord states: "for He will save (יִשְׁעֵהוּ, *iōshi'a*) His people from their sins." Thus, it is clear that the Name "Yeshua" ("Jesus") means "Savior," for it is based upon the *hiphil* form of the Hebrew verb יָשַׁע (*yasha'*) which carries the meaning "to help, to save."¹

Some have questioned whether the act of worship, here described as "every knee will bow," is offered directly to Yeshua or rather to

¹ HALOT, "יָשַׁע," p. 448.

the Father with Yeshua as the mediator of such worship. The reason for this question is the Greek construction. The verb κάμπτω (*kamptō*), “to bend the knee, bow,” is sometimes accompanied by the preposition πρὸς (*pros*), “to, toward.” Here, however, it is literally “in the name of Yeshua” (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ) that every knee will bow.

This fact has led some to translate the expression “so that in the name of Jesus everyone should kneel” (RV, Goodspeed) and to conclude that this clause means not that homage is to be paid directly to the name of Jesus but that in Jesus homage is to be paid to God. Jesus is “the mediator through whom created beings offer their worship to God”; for it is to God, not Jesus, that every knee shall bow (Beare, Caird).¹

But the context of this verse hardly can sustain such an interpretation. Yeshua has been given a name (Lord, κύριος) which is above all names, and the connective *hina* (ἵνα), “in order that,” with which our verse begins, makes it clear that the result of having such a Name is that every knee bows to the One Who bears that Name. Moreover, the Lxx uses ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου (“in the name of the Lord”) to translate אֲדֹנָיִם (to Adonai) in 1Ki 8:44 in the phrase “they pray to Adonai,” showing that for the Lxx translators, to “pray to Adonai” is to “pray in the name of Adonai.” Likewise, in Ps 63:4 (MT 63:5, Lxx 62:5), the parallel lines show a similar usage of the phrase “in Your name:”

So I will bless You as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name. (Ps 63:4)

כִּי אֶשְׁבַּח אֶת־שִׁמְךָ יְיָ בְּחַיֵּי בְּרַכָּתְךָ אֲבָרְכֶךָ בְּנֶפֶשׁ (Ps 63:5)

οὕτως εὐλογήσω σε ἐν τῇ ζωῇ μου,
ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἀρῶ τὰς χεῖράς μου. (Ps 62:5)

Here, to lift up hands “in Your name” is equivalent to “I will bless You.” “In Your name” therefore carries a locative sense, i.e., action directed toward an object. Note a similar usage in 44:8 (Lxx 43:9) and 105:3 (Lxx 104:3).

¹ Hawthorne, *Philippians*, p. 127.

In God we have boasted all day long,
And we will give thanks to Your name forever. Selah. (Ps 44:8)

בְּאֱלֹהִים הִלְלֵנוּ כָּל־הַיּוֹם וְשִׁמְחָה לְעוֹלָם נִדְּבָה סֶלָה: (Ps 44:9)

ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἐπαινεσθησόμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν καὶ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου
ἐξομολογησόμεθα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. διάψαλμα. (Ps 43:9)

Similarly, we may note 1Ki 18:24 and the time when Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal. Here, to “call upon the name of ...” (ἐγὼ ἐπικαλέσομαι ἐν ὀνόματι) means “to call to the one bearing the name.”

Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” And all the people said, “That is a good idea.” (1Ki 18:24)

καὶ βοᾶτε ἐν ὀνόματι θεῶν ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐγὼ ἐπικαλέσομαι ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ ἔσται ὁ θεός, ὃς ἐὰν ἐπακούσῃ ἐν πυρί, οὗτος θεός, καὶ ἀπεκρίθησαν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς καὶ εἶπον Καλὸν τὸ ῥῆμα, ὃ ἐλάλησας. (1Ki 18:24)

וְקָרָאתֶם בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְאֲנִי אֶקְרָא בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה וְהָיָה הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־
:יַעֲנֶה בְּאֵשׁ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים וַיַּעַן כָּל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ טוֹב הַדָּבָר: (1Ki 18:24)

Thus, there is no warrant to see in our hymn-text anything other than worship directed to Yeshua as the exalted One. It is to Yeshua that every knee will bow because He has revealed Himself to be the Lord over all.

...EVERY KNEE WILL BOW – This phrase, “every knee shall bow” along with “and every tongue confess” of verse 11, are taken from Is 45:23.

I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. (Is 45:23)

Here, the speaker is יהוה, yet the words of this verse are applied to Yeshua in our text. Indeed, in the previous verse (Is 45:22), Adonai makes this clear with the following unambiguous statement:

Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. (Is 45:22)

ἐπιστρέψατε πρὸς με καὶ σωθήσεσθε, οἱ ἀπ' ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς· ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ θεός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλος. (Is 45:22)

פְּנוּ-אֵלַי וְהוֹשְׁעוּ בְּ-לֹא-אֶפְסֵי-יְרֵךְ בִּי אֲנִי-אֱלֹהִים וְאֵין עוֹד: (Is 45:22)

Note, then, the verse which follows this bold declaration of God as the one and only God.

I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.

That such a bold statement could be in the immediate context of the very text which our hymn applies to Yeshua shows beyond doubt that the Apostles viewed the incarnate “now-exalted” Son as One with God in a real and absolute way, so much so that they could apply to Him what the prophet clearly spoke of יהוה. There is no other conclusion one can reach if one is willing to let the inspired text speak for itself, and it is this: Yeshua, our Messiah and Lord, is YHVH in the flesh.

This, along with the other data offered, makes it clear that the worship rendered in the bowing of the knee and the confession of the tongue is directed to Yeshua as One with Adonai (יהוה, YHVH). If this boggles our minds or offends our theological categories, then we have simply come face to face with the unexplainable mystery of God.

By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. (1Tim 3:16)

But though we cannot give adequate explanations to satisfy our rational thought processes, we must still affirm and confess that Yeshua is worthy of our worship, and even more, that He demands the worship of all because He has the right to do so. He has this right because He is the I AM (יהוה, YHVH) Who is Sovereign over all the universe.

In this regard we are reminded of the time when Judas went to betray Yeshua to the Roman cohort and was leading them to where he knew Yeshua would be. We read of the event in John’s gospel:

So Yeshua, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered Him, "Yeshua the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. So when He said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell to the ground. (Jn 18:4–6)

Even though most English Bibles have Yeshua saying "I am He," the fact is that the pronoun "He" is not in any of the extant Greek manuscripts. Rather He simply stated: "I am" Interestingly, the Greek text has ἐγώ εἰμι (*egō eimi*), "I am," which is what the Lxx has in Ex 3:14 when God reveals to Moses His name. It is true that the Greek *egō eimi* can be used in a common sense, but the fact that it is used in the Lxx to translate "I will be what I will be" in Ex 3:14 (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, *'ehiyeh asher 'ehiyeh*) may also explain the overwhelming reaction of the soldiers when Yeshua used the same expression, for "they fell to the ground." This clearly would indicate that as Yeshua spoke these words, He was proclaiming Himself to be the eternal God incarnate and that therefore power went forth from Him which subdued the Roman cohort, causing them to fall to the ground.

...of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth – The extent to which Yeshua's Sovereignty extends and thus the further definition of "every knee," is given in a series of three plural nouns, thus literally "of heavenly [beings], of earthly [beings], and of under the earth [beings]." In the Greek, these three plural nouns ("in heaven," ἐπουρανίων; "on earth," ἐπιγείων; and "under the earth," καταχθονίων) could be read as either masculine plural or neuter plural, the forms being the same. However, the context favors that they be construed as masculine, since only rational beings can confess something.¹

That these three designations are given, in the first place, to indicate a complete and comprehensive inventory of creation, is without dispute. In antiquity many people believed the universe was constructed in a three-storied arrangement and the inclusion of all three is equivalent to saying "every being everywhere."² Such an all-comprehensive

1 The KJV translation, "of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" seems to reflect the decision of the translators to construe the nouns as neuter.

2 On the ancient idea that the cosmos was viewed as being made up of three levels, see J. Guhrt, "Earth" in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan, 1975), 1.522–23.

statement thus includes not only human but also spirit beings as well as angels, whether good or evil. Thus Yeshua, the victorious Sovereign, is viewed in His full exaltation as subduing all principalities and powers to His rule and reign (cp. Col 1:16, 20; 2:15; Eph 1:10; 3:10).

11 – and that every tongue will confess that Yeshua Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The connective “and” (*καί, kai*) most likely makes this clause a second part of the *ἵνα* (*hina*, “in order that”) opening in v. 10. Yeshua was exalted and given a name above all names in order that (1) every knee would bow to Him, and (2) every tongue confess that Yeshua Messiah is Lord. Thus, if the bowing of the knee bespeaks sovereign rule over all beings, confessing bears the picture of adoration and acceptance. As in the former “every knee,” so here “every tongue” emphasizes the universal reality of Yeshua’s sovereignty. For “every knee” and “every tongue” is a strong way of encompassing all peoples. Thus, all will confess Yeshua is Lord, whether willingly (all who are His redeemed ones) or under divine mandate (all who are lost). Those from all of mankind who have been brought to faith in Yeshua and thus are forever His, will be comprised of people from every family or nation. Paul represents this fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Gen 12:3; 18:18).

Here we are finally given the Name conferred upon Yeshua. It is “Lord” (*κύριος, kurios*). The fact that *kurios* is the most often used Greek term in the Lxx to translate יהוה should not be overlooked. God, by openly bestowing the Name upon Yeshua, has declared the indescribable yet absolute oneness the Father has with the Son, and has obliquely announced that the One Who existed in the very nature of God is God. Yet paradoxically the One Whose Name is above all names neither displaces nor rivals God, but affirms the glory of the triune God Who is infinitely and eternally One yet is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Spirit.

This oneness or infinite unity is expressed by the fact that Yeshua our Messiah is revealed to be *kurios*, “Lord,” and in this revelation of the truth, the Father is fully glorified.

For Paul this confession is the line of demarcation between believer and nonbeliever (Rom 10:9). Such confession, he argues in 1 Cor 12:3, can come only by way of the Spirit; hence the crucial role of the Spirit in conversion. This confession in Rom 10:9 is linked with conviction about the resurrection of

Jesus; that same combination is undoubtedly in view here. When at the End all creation beholds the risen Jesus, they will on that basis declare that Kyrios is none other than the Jesus who was crucified and whom Christians worship. But the confession will not then be that of conversion, but of final acknowledgment that “God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

Thus, the worship and adoration of Yeshua, Who as Messiah is also Lord, in no way detracts from the glory of the Father. Rather, it is the purpose of the Father that the Son be glorified.¹

He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. (Eph 1:9–10)

Therefore, in the very act of confessing Yeshua to be Lord; in praising His Name which is above all names; in bowing before Him, the Father is glorified together with the Ruach. And to praise and worship the Father; to offer Him the glory due to His name, in no way detracts from the glory of the Son, for to honor the Father is to honor the Son.

For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (Jn 5:22–23)

1 cp. Jn 11:4; 12:23; 13:31; 14:13; 17:1.