

PARASHAH: Va'etchanan (I pleaded)
ADDRESS: D'varim (Deuteronomy) 3:23-7:11
READING DATE: Shabbat
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(Note: all quotations are taken from the Complete Jewish Bible, translation by David H. Stern, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., unless otherwise noted)

Let's begin with the opening blessing for the Torah:

***“Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-‘Olam,
asher bachar banu m’kol ha-amim,
v’natan lanu eht Torah-to.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn.”***

(Blessed are you, O' LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have selected us from among all the peoples,
and have given us your Torah.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.
Ameyn.)

This week's portion contains two of the most fundamental concepts in Judaism: the **Asarat HaD'varim** (the Ten Words, also known as the Ten Commandments), and the "**Shema**."

This is **Parashat Va'etchanan**. Moshe is still outlining some familiar reminders of Isra'el's disobedience and the awesome fact that HaShem nevertheless has brought them this far! In fact, they are right at the eastern side of the Yarden (Jordan) River!

Call to Greatness

Chapter four contains what I like to call the "Jewish Great Commission." Here in verses 1-14 Moshe carefully instructs the community to live out the Torah in such a way that the surrounding nations will see and learn about the unique and awesome mercy of the One and Only True God. Because of its significance, I want to quote some of this passage at length:

"See! I have taught you rules and laws as God my Lord has commanded me, so [that you] will be able to keep them in the land to which you are coming and which you will be occupying.

Safeguard and keep [these rules], since this is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations. They will hear all these rules and say, "This great nation is certainly a wise and understanding people."

What nation is so great that they have God close to it, as God our Lord is, whenever we call Him?

What nation is so great that they have such righteous rules and laws, like this entire Torah that I am presenting before you today?

Only take heed and watch yourself very carefully, so that you do not forget the things that your eyes saw. Do not let [this memory] leave your hearts, all the days of your lives. Teach your children and children's children about

the day you stood before God your Lord at Horeb.

It was then that God said to me, "Congregate the people for Me, and I will let them hear My words. This will teach them to be in awe of Me as long as they live on earth, and they will also teach their children."

You approached and stood at the foot of the mountain. The mountain was burning with a fire reaching the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud and mist.

Then God spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no image; there was only a voice.

He announced to you His covenant, instructing you to keep the Ten Commandments, and He wrote them on two stone tablets.

**At that time, God commanded me to teach you rules and laws, so that you will keep them in the land which you are crossing [the Jordan] to occupy."
(D'varim 4:5-14, Pentateuch)**

What makes this passage stand out is Isra'el's position and influence among the surrounding people groups! Such a legacy—to be the vessels to share the precious Word of HaShem with those who have not heard! Doesn't this remind you of the intents and purposes of the Great Commission? In the **TaNakH** the Torah "emanated" from Isra'el for the entire world to see; in the Apostolic Scriptures Yeshua's talmidim actually took the Torah to the world! Indeed, it is the very same good news that is contained within the Torah, the message of the mercy and grace of an all-loving, all-forgiving God, who is intimately interested in the well-being of his created subjects, both Jew and non-Jew!

Asarat HaD'varim

Moshe mentions the Ten Words in 4:13, and chapter 5 is easily given over to mostly repeating what we have already read about in Exodus chapter 20. Allow me to recall my comments from their more familiar location in Exodus chapter 20.

" The themes surrounding the giving of the Torah, embodied in the Ten Words, is one of the most—if not the most—significant events in the history of the offspring of Avraham. Surely, it carries the most impact, even for Jewish folks today. Our sin nature, however, makes us prone to disobedience. The Torah of HaShem serves to remind us of how short we fall, when we try to measure up to God's righteousness. While it is true that no one alive could have ever "systematically" (as compared to "conceptually") kept all of the commandments of God, it is also true that HaShem never expected anyone to systematically be able to! The Torah doesn't demand systematic perfection, else, there would be no need of the upcoming details concerning sacrifices for sin. What the Torah expects from its followers is genuine trusting faithfulness to the giver of the Torah, who is the Holy One of Isra'el! Today, that implies placing one's complete trust in his Only, Unique Son Yeshua! The Torah is a document of grace, not "Law." We need to begin to understand that this is the true nature and function of the Torah. Translator David H. Stern, in his Complete Jewish Bible stated it succinctly when he explained, "For the goal at which the *Torah* aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts." (Romans 10:4)"

In an open commentary to a well-known Messianic Colorado forum, I supplied these comments about the Ten Words:

" We in the 20th Century have a tendency to reduce the Torah into numbers (i.e., the TEN Commandments), because it conveniently serves our intellect to present something so (seemingly) "monumentally complex" into "bite-sized" chunks that we can handle. This remains one of the primary roots of our problem in our approach to the Torah: it is a complete, functional document; it is designed for us to receive it as a whole, or not at all. ("Do we divide the Messiah up this way? Of course not." Then why do it to the "written messiah"?) If we think that only TEN belong to "this group," or that the New Covenant only spells out these TWO to "that group," or even, that we should only focus on these FOUR (hint: Acts 15, 21), then we have missed the point! The Torah is a UNIT document. Only the LIVING Torah, Yeshua, could "improve," that is, modify the original. We have no authority dissecting it."

Hear O' Isra'el!

*This next section is a truncated version of my very lengthy, three-part series (word-play intended) on the topic of the "Trinity," which can be read in its entirety at these links:

<http://www.graftedin.com/images/Parashot/Shema1.pdf>

<http://www.graftedin.com/images/Parashot/Shema2.pdf>

<http://www.graftedin.com/images/Parashot/Shema3.pdf>

The most notable feature of this week's portion is the Shema. The word "shema" means "hear," "listen intently." It is a Hebrew imperative that carries the notion of an action-oriented command. In other words, "Now that you have heard, go and do something about it!" My commentary on the Shema will introduce the difficult concept of the "tri-unity" of our unexplainable God. The ancients called HaShem "Eyn-Sof," a term which quite literally means "without borders." Our God is infinitely unknowable. Yet because of our finite minds, he has chosen to express himself in ways that we can perceive. However we shall have to wait to gain a fuller perception of him, once we put off this corruptible flesh and our eyes are able to see through this mirror clearly instead of darkly.

I want to share with you what I believe the "Shema" (basically a quote from Deuteronomy 6:4) can be hinting at, using the typical Jewish answer first, and then going on to explain how a non-Jewish believer can better "defend" himself against such an answer. This is simply an exercise designed to explain to some why many Jewish People are unwilling to give up their monotheism. This commentary set is not to be used as a standard witnessing technique among my people, but if the material proves helpful in explaining the difficult topic to unbelievers and anti-missionaries, then the commentary will have served its purposes.

"God is ONE. There is no other god (or God) worthy of worship aside from YHVH." This is a typical, monotheistic answer, based on a traditional Jewish view of Deut. 6:4, a.k.a., the Shema.

This subject will continue to baffle many Jews and Christians alike: how can God be "One" and yet somehow "three." The matter is really made clear when Christians explain that correct Christianity does not believe in three gods! We believe in ONE God who expresses himself in a "unity of three."

God is indeed one! The Shema affirms this. The characters of the Scriptures, both "Old and New Testaments" confirm this. The Shema is the "watchword of Jewish monotheism." The Shema is foundation!

The "trinity" is a doctrine that has long been characterized by misunderstanding, both among my people, as well as a few Christians. I believe that most of the confusion actually stems from the language that we choose to use when describing the unified nature of our somewhat incomprehensible God. However, the Torah does not expect us to label God and stuff him in box. Nor are we so smart that our systematic theological viewpoints of him will ever fully describe his wonderful glory. Yet the revelation that has been graciously granted to us is a complete one, in that, all that we need to know to maintain a right-standing

relationship with HaShem is found within the pages of his Word, and most specifically, in the person of his only and unique Son Yeshua our Messiah.

Let us first read the actual pasuk (verse) itself:

"Sh'ma Yisra'el, ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad [Hear, Isra'el! ADONAI our God, ADONAI is one]."

Anyone with some knowledge of the Hebrew text will realize that the word translated ADONAI is the four-letter name for HaShem, YHVH, also known as the "Tetragrammaton." The Jewish people use this name only in a very sacred and personal way. To be sure, today Torah-observant Jews, in reverential fear of misuse never speak it. Because of the understanding that the Shema "defines" the oneness of YHVH (which is what the Hebrew word **echad** implies), many Jews are fiercely monotheistic. After all, is this not what the plain sense (**p'shat**) of the verse in Deuteronomy is teaching?

The word "echad" teaches us that God is the ONLY God that we are to serve. To be sure, some translations render this verse as, "Hear Isra'el, the LORD is our God, the LORD alone." This is the primary meaning conveyed by the use of this word "echad." That God is our only God is paramount to correctly understanding any revelation of him in his Word.

"Blurring the Lines"

According to some scholars every instance when a mortal encountered the divine God they were in some way beholding Yeshua! In this understanding Yeshua is the common factor in every single revelation of God in the Scriptures. To be sure, they declare that "No one has ever seen God; but the only and unique Son, who is identical with God and is at the Father's side," (read John 1:18).

Yet Yeshua is also uniquely the Son of Man. Yeshua is NOT the Father, nor is God Yeshua. Rather, and I'm stretching human language to its limits to explain this, Yeshua is the Word made flesh, the Word which was WITH God, and the Word which WAS God! It is not as if Yeshua became God somehow. It is rather that God the Word became a human being and we beheld such glory in the person and work of the Messiah named Yeshua. Such profundity!

So, by understanding what the B'rit Chadashah (New Covenant) teaches believers about the unity of Yeshua and the Father (John 10:30), we are given the ability to interpret the Shema in a more theologically correct light. ADONAI is echad.... Yet, according to Yeshua's own testimony, He and the Father also constitute an echad. Is HaShem more than one?! No! Is Yeshua "meshugga" (Yiddish for "crazy")? Of course not! This relationship of the Father to the Son has long since been a problem for my people to grasp.

It also continues to baffle anyone attempting to put God in a neat, theological box.

Do we believe in three gods? No. That is the heresy called "Tritheism." Do we believe in one God who simply wears three different "masks" to interact with mankind? No. That is the heresy called "Modalism." What we believe in is ONE God who expresses his existence in a "unity of three." The mystery is that each expression is uniquely God and yet uniquely single. Ontology is defined as: "a branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature and relations of being; a particular theory about the nature of being or the kinds of existents." The ontological implications of the very words, names, and "titles" used in the Scriptures help us to relate to God himself. Observe: All of what the word "God" implies is not exhausted in the use of the words "his Son"; all of what the name "Yeshua" implies is not exhausted in the term "the Father"; all of what the term "Ruach HaKodesh" implies is not exhausted in "the Man Yeshua" and so on and so forth. We cannot logically collapse each name, phrase, and title into the others without doing damage to the import of the Scriptural references. Indeed to attempt to do so is to approach the Scriptures from an incorrect mindset. Historically, the Hebraists thought of God in concepts of "this" and "that"; conversely, the historic Greek mindset approached God in concepts of "this' or "that." Some scholars refer to this as "Hebrew tension."

Yeshua is God veiled in flesh and the Spirit of God is God himself. The matter of authority comes into play when I examine some of the roles of each deity. The role of God is as head over Yeshua and the role of the Ruach is as witness to Yeshua. Yet the role of Yeshua is as witness of the Father and the role of the Spirit is as active agent of the Father as well. Obviously this list is not exhaustive. The part that brings it all together is when we remember that true worship belongs to God and God alone! As such, whenever Yeshua or the Ruach is also worshipped we catch a glimpse of the "oneness" of the "three-ness" of God.

It is arrogant for anyone to think that he or she can grasp the mystery of the Godhead! So the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity is not readily understandable in terms of human reason should not worry us. This is what the proper Christian's response should be to any polemic against the doctrine of the Trinity. We, in all humility and submission to God can only say this: God has revealed himself as Trinity, i.e. the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We do not rationally understand this; any explanation that we come up with will be flawed. But since God has revealed himself as Trinity, we submit to Him as Trinity even if we do not completely understand how he can be Trinity! It is blasphemy to "reduce" God to something we can understand. The purpose of theology is not to "cut God down" to the size of human reason but to elevate human reason to the contemplation of the Divine Mystery -- the Mystery that teaches us that the One God -- ineffably, incomprehensibly -- exists in a unity of "Three."

"The Word" According to Judaism

Let us take a turn in a different direction. I try to remain aware of various textual sensitivities and preferences in both the Jewish and Christian communities. Therefore, I shall freely provide a lengthy and direct quote from a well-known Jewish source of information, the Jewish Encyclopedia, originally published between 1901-1906. What do the non-Christian sources say about the very same "Word" (of Jewish notoriety), mentioned so clearly in Yochanan (John) 1:1?

Quote from the Jewish Encyclopedia (pp. 464-465):

"The Word," in the sense of the creative or directive word or speech of God manifesting His power in the world of matter or mind; a term used especially in the Targum as a substitute for "the LORD" when an anthropomorphic expression is to be avoided.

—Biblical Data:

In Scripture "the word of the Lord" commonly denotes the speech addressed to patriarch or prophet (Gen. xv. 1; Num. xii. 6, xxiii. 5; I Sam. iii. 21; Amos v. 1-8); but frequently it denotes also the creative word: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made" (Ps. xxxiii. 6; comp. "For He spake, and it was done"; "He sendeth his word, and melteth them [the ice]"; "Fire and hail; snow, and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling his word"; Ps. xxxiii. 9, cxlvii. 18, cxlviii. 8). In this sense it is said, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. cxix. 89). "The Word," heard and announced by the prophet, often became, in the conception of the seer, an efficacious power apart from God, as was the angel or messenger of God: "The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Isra'el" (Isa. ix. 7 [A. V. 8], lv. 11); "He sent his word, and healed them" (Ps. cvii. 20); and comp. "his word runneth very swiftly" (Ps. cxlvii. 15).

—In the Targum:

In the Targum the Memra [an Aramaic term that refers again to the "Word"] figures constantly as the manifestation of the divine power, or as God's messenger in place of God Himself, wherever the predicate is not in conformity with the dignity or the spirituality of the Deity.

Instead of the Scriptural "You have not believed in the Lord," Targ. Deut. i. 32 has "You have not believed in the word of the Lord"; instead of "I shall require it [vengeance] from him," Targ. Deut. xviii. 19 has "My word shall require it." "The Memra," instead of "the Lord," is "the consuming fire" (Targ. Deut. ix. 3; comp. Targ. Isa. xxx. 27). The Memra "plagued the people" (Targ. Yer. to Ex. xxxii. 35). "The Memra smote him" (II Sam. vi. 7; comp. Targ. I Kings xviii. 24; Hos. xiii. 14; et al.). Not "God," but "the

Memra," is met with in Targ. Ex. xix. 17 (Targ. Yer. "the Shekinah"; comp. Targ. Ex. xxv. 22: "I will order My Memra to be there"). "I will cover thee with My Memra," instead of "My hand" (Targ. Ex. xxxiii. 22). Instead of "My soul," "My Memra shall reject you" (Targ. Lev. xxvi. 30; comp. Isa. i. 14, xlii. 1; Jer. vi. 8; Ezek. xxiii. 18). "The voice of the Memra," instead of "God," is heard (Gen. iii. 8; Deut. iv. 33, 36; v. 21; Isa. vi. 8; et al.).

Memra in the Targums (Targumim)

A concluding briefer on the Targums is in order here. Targums are very old Aramaic translations of the Hebrew bible. They were authoritative, and spoken aloud in the synagogues along with the Hebrew of the Torah and Haftarah readings. Public readings of the Scriptures in ancient synagogues were accompanied by a translation into Aramaic because that was the spoken language of most Jews in Isra'el and Babylonia during the Talmudic era. The normal practice was that after each verse was read from the sacred Torah scroll, an official translator known as the Turgeman, or Meturgeman, would then recite orally an Aramaic rendering.

Targums were utilized in the synagogues before, during, and after the times of Yeshua— being necessary because many of the Jewish people of that day could not understand Hebrew. That's still true today. Because of their assimilation and worldwide dispersion, the vast majority of modern Jews cannot read, nor speak, nor understand the Hebrew language. Today, no doubt the most important, and the most influential translations of the Scriptures are no longer in Aramaic, but in English. The Targum of Onkelos is commonly included along with a traditional Torah scroll in synagogues, but its teachings have pretty much fallen by the wayside and for the most part, ignored.

As useful and necessary as the Targums at one time were for the Jews of Yeshua's day, their teachings today often contradict the religious beliefs of many modern Jews. In point of fact the religious beliefs of modern Judaism, and that of the Judaism of two thousand years ago, contradict each other in a very important area. That area is none other than the identity, and the nature, of God's word—the Memra' of the Aramaic Targums.

God "speaks"

The most common Hebrew expression for "word" is *davar*, which can mean: word, thing, matter, or affair. *Davar* implies content and reality in one's words. Since God is somehow "untouchable" it is necessary to provide a viable link between YHVH and His earthly creation. One of the important links regarded in ancient rabbinical thought was "The Word," called *memra'* in Aramaic (from the Hebrew and Aramaic root, 'mr which means: to say— the root used throughout Genesis 1 when God "said" and the material world came into reality and existence). The *memra'* concept— that of a Divine Mediator between the

unapproachable God and the creature Man— occurs hundreds of times in the Aramaic Targums.

God's word has been of utmost importance ever since the first day of creation week. It is the primary way that God, the untouchable Being, implements His will. It is also how He communicates and interacts with human beings, and how He reveals Himself in a way they can understand. On the one hand, God has done this somewhat through writings. But there is much more to God's word than just ink and letters. Those materials merely constitute an inert, man-made record. On many occasions, when God's words actually came from his heart and from His mouth, it effected much more power and impetus than that of a mere page of historical information.

Why did God even bother to speak during creation? Why didn't The Creator just do His work silently without utterance or sound? To whom, or for whom, was He speaking when He said; "Let there be light." It is clear there is a creative, dynamic force in The Almighty's voice, a power and energy in His words, a tangible release of Divine life. His word is an extension of His nature, a movement of His will— alive, powerful, and effective— not just letters, syllables, and sounds. There is vigor and activity in God's words extending far beyond the applications of thought and communication.

According to the Targums, which were at one time accepted as sacred Jewish beliefs, God's word is an entity; actually God himself. The Memra' is to be worshipped, served, obeyed, spoken to, and prayed to, as God.

Conclusions: Is Yeshua God?

It has come to my attention, as one who answers a lot of email on this subject, that the phrases that are used can lend to the misunderstanding among adherents of this Uni-plural position. The word "trinity" usually only means ONE thing to anti-missionaries: Three Gods! Does it convey that meaning among educated Christians? No. Christians do NOT believe in Three Gods! They believe in a God who expresses himself in a Unity of Three. It is his (the SINGULAR YHVH's) inner nature being described by the word "trinity." Christians need to take care when using the word "trinity" around unsuspecting listeners.

As a Messianic believer, I do NOT espouse to Tritheism, that is, three separate Gods who are independent of each other, existing without cohesion.

Traditional and historic Judaism correctly understands the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) to be instructing its followers to worship and serve ONE God, whose name happens to be YHVH. In all fairness to Christianity, which happens to have sprung from one of the first century Judaisms, non-Jewish believers who know and study their Bible correctly also serve and worship the ONE God, whose

name is YHVH. Anti-missionaries, particular those within Judaic rank today, are fond of accusing Christians of recognizing Three Gods (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit). But is this accusation fair and accurate?

In all actuality, honest Christians do NOT espouse to the heresy that Three separate, non-cohesive Gods exist in the Bible. What Christians are having a hard time expressing in words is the ineffable Truth that the ONE and ONLY True God himself is found to be revealed in a "Unity of Three." Quite simply, this means that there is only ONE God with the Son and the Spirit existing as part of the Inner Nature of God the Father, all in cohesion with each other. However, to complicate the matter in the minds of human beings, all three are also separate Deity. The heresy known by the name "Tritheism" erroneously assumes that there are THREE separate Gods (in contradistinction to ONE God) worthy of worship. From a Christian point of view, this heresy has its origins in the syncretism that the early Church struggled with when they divorced themselves from their Jewish roots. This divorce was finalized in the 3rd and 4th centuries following Yeshua's movement. The term that Christians use "trinity" most likely refers to the inner nature of the God who expresses himself in a Unity of Three. The etymology of the word itself may occasion other meanings. Christians may want to be very careful when using the word "trinity."

Most of ancient theology is lost under the sands of time. However, archaeological expeditions in ancient Mesopotamia have uncovered the fascinating culture of the Sumerians, which flourished over 4,000 years ago. Though Sumeria was overthrown first by Assyria, and then by Babylon, its gods lived on in the cultures of those who conquered. The historian S.H. Hooke tells in detail of the ancient Sumerian trinity: Anu was the primary god of heaven, the 'Father', and the 'King of the Gods'; Enlil, the 'wind-god' was the god of the earth, and a creator god; and Enki was the god of waters and the 'lord of wisdom'. The historian, H. W. F. Saggs, explains that the Babylonian triad consisted of 'three gods of roughly equal rank... whose inter-relationship is of the essence of their natures'.

Is this positive proof that the Christian Trinity descended from the ancient Sumerian, Assyrian, and Babylonian triads? No. However, Hislop furthers the comparison, 'In the unity of that one, Only God of the Babylonians there were three persons, and to symbolize [sic] that doctrine of the Trinity, they employed... the equilateral triangle, just as it is well known the Romish Church does at this day'.

A plethora of public information is available for the honest student in search of more proof that the Church did NOT invent the Three Gods heresy. In the absence of her Judaic foundations, however, the early Church Fathers did in fact embrace many false teachings and doctrines, many to their detriment, to include the heresy known of Tritheism. The Church does stand guilty of syncretism.

What about Yeshua's role in the minds of said Christians? Is Yeshua God? Yes, Yeshua is the Fullness of YHVH existing in bodily form. Are we saying that Yeshua has existed from eternity past just as YHVH has? Not exactly. It is more accurate to say that the Eternal Word, which did exist in eternity past with YHVH became flesh, and by his mother Miryam (Mary) was named Yeshua. The Torah specifically states that a body was prepared for the man named Yeshua. The man Yeshua was born in the first century; the Word, however, existed in eternity past with YHVH and as YHVH.

Yeshua does in fact exist as YHVH revealed in human flesh, while not exhausting the titles and roles that the Father and Son enjoy respective of each other. In other words, Yeshua is echad with YHVH but Yeshua is also distinct from YHVH. This is a fantastic display of what is known as "Hebrew tension," where two seemingly opposite truths co-exist within the same environment (moderns would call this a "paradox"). To be sure, the Torah contains more than a few paradoxes.

The Torah is the final Word on this important subject matter. In my personal opinion as a mere human in scrutiny of God, I must believe and accept what it teaches about God as a composite UNITY from Genesis to Revelation, or I must throw ALL of it out in desperation and conclusion that no such being called God can exist within the scope of human existence, a God who is defined in such Scriptures as a "Unity of Three."

Does our understanding of HaShem and Yeshua as echad have salvific implications for us as believers? I believe that it does. Again let us turn to a few Scriptural examples. Observe the fascinating interaction between HaShem, the Son, and the Name:

YHVH:

Joel 2:32: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the YHVH shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the YHVH hath said, and in the remnant whom the YHVH shall call.

YESHUA:

Act 4:12: There is salvation in none other, for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, by which we must be saved.

Rom 10:9-13: that if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Yeshua, and believe in your heart that GOD raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek; for the

same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich to all who call on Him. For, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

1Co 1:2: to the assembly of GOD which is at Corinth; those who are sanctified in Messiah Yeshua, called to be holy ones, with all who call on the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah in every place, both theirs and ours.

We cannot have it both ways. Either the TaNaKH agrees with the B'rit Chadashah that YHVH is LORD (as is Yeshua) or the B'rit Chadashah is wrong in its portrayal of Yeshua as LORD (a title formerly reserved exclusively in the TaNaKH for YHVH).

I shall close with a "trinity" of quotes: a quote from the book written specifically to the Ivrim (Hebrews), one from Philippians, and finally a significant one from the TaNaKH itself:

Hebrews 1:1-3...In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. (NIV)

Philippians 2:8-11...And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (NIV)

Isaiah 45:21-23: ... 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. (JPS)

The Name that is above every name is the name YHVH. HaShem granted Yeshua of Nazareth the right to use The Name for himself so that he may speak for HaShem, he may speak as HaShem, and he may receive worship as HaShem just as mystics describe the "fictional character" Metatron doing in ancient times. Refusal to worship and serve Yeshua as Almighty God insults the True God, and shows a gross lack of respect for The Name.

The closing blessing is as follows:

***“Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-‘Olam,
asher natan lanu Toraht-emet,
v’chay-yeh o’lam nata-b’tochenu.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn.”***

(Blessed are you O' LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have given us your Torah of truth,
and have planted everlasting life within our midst.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.
Ameyn.)

“Shabbat Shalom!”

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