



Who is Yeshua the Messiah?  
 Part 2: Principles Establishing Unity  
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{Title slide} Shabbat shalom, brothers and sisters. Last week, in my introduction to this new series I'm calling, "Who is Yeshua the Messiah?," I gave you a very broad overview that identified Yeshua as the Son of God who is one in being with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It is Yeshua alone who provides us with an opportunity to come into relationship with God—He is the essence of the Father's love in everything that He said and did for us, calling us to choose Him above all else and come to know Him intimately through His Holy Spirit. While we were still sinners, He died for us, and then rose, conquering both sin and death—the powers of darkness that can keep us away from the Holy One of Israel, who is "dwelling in unapproachable light." We are freed from our bondage in the name of Yeshua so that we can now draw near to God and enter His throne room! We don't deserve God's love, but He gave it of Himself so that we might come into relationship with Him despite the separation that we actually deserve. He desires for us to know Him.

{New slide} Our Torah Portion this week, which is called "shoftim" meaning "judges," is based on the root-word "shafat (שָׁפַט)," meaning "to judge." I'm putting the devotional slide from earlier back up on the screen {look to the right} to remind you of God's righteous judgment, which is absolute, meaning that God alone defines what is righteous and good, and this is the standard by which He judges us and by which we ought to discern the words and actions of one another. If we don't meet that standard, it is impossible for us to get

Judges: Shoftim (שֹׁפְטִים) | Pronounced: Shof'teem

Definition Shafat (שָׁפַט): to judge, pronounce sentence (for or against), to vindicate or punish, to govern, to litigate. Topical Lexicon: The Hebrew verb threads through redemptive history, testifying that God who judges is the same God who saves, and His people are called to reflect His righteous rule until the day He "will judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed." Key concepts: God alone defines and administers righteous judgment. Human authority derives legitimacy only by aligning with divine standards. Judgment in Scripture is both punitive and redemptive, aiming to restore covenant order. The Messianic hope centers on a perfect Judge who embodies mercy and truth. Eschatological judgment secures final justice, motivating holy living and Gospel witness today.

Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9 || Isaiah 51:12-52:12 || John 14:9-20

near to God, but He has made a way in Messiah Yeshua so that we can draw near. It is by God's well-communicated divine standards that He seeks to both redirect and redeem His children, and these standards and how we interact with them are how we ought to understand the meaning of His love for us as well as how we might show our love for Him. In light of this, our hope is in Messiah Yeshua, for He is God's agency in judgment. In this way, He is the essence and the embodiment of God's Truth and God's Mercy coming together as one so that God can redeem us as a people set apart for Himself. And it is through the Spirit of Yeshua alone that we can be moved to holy living as witnesses to His Word, for He alone restores us into right relationship with God by coming to dwell within us when we surrender to His will. It is because of all that He has done for us and what He still promises to do that we ought to seek to know our God for who He has revealed Himself to be. Yeshua has made it abundantly clear by His Word that confessing His identity as One in being with the Father is essential for our right relationship with God—nothing else matters if we don't get this right, because it is only through His redemptive acts that we can receive God's grace. And so, the purpose of this series is to explore this complex unity that Yeshua the Son of God has with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, so that we can better understand the One we have been invited to live with for all eternity. Today, we're going to continue from last week's overview of Yeshua's identity as LORD by exploring some concepts we need to grasp before we can dive into the nature of God in His greatest majesty, according to Scripture. We will also have to identify some fundamental truths regarding the Scriptures themselves, for what we know about God's complex unity is described there.

{New slide} The first principle we have to grasp in coming to understand God's complex unity is how impossible it is for us to completely understand the LORD's essence in a metaphysical sense. Without getting into this point too deeply, I want you to understand that metaphysics is more of a Greco-Roman idea, not really communicated through the Holy Scriptures, which was written from a Hebraic perspective. From that latter perspective, we come to know who someone or something is by what He says and does, and it is in this sense that God describes Himself. I want to show you a few examples of the Father explaining Himself in this way in the Book of Exodus. The first example comes from the time when God appeared in the burning bush to Moses, exclaiming, as we read in Exodus 3:6: "I am the God [Elohe—(אֱלֹהִי)] of your fathers—the God [Elohe—(אֱלֹהִי)] of Abraham, the God [Elohe—(אֱלֹהִי)] of Isaac, and the God [Elohe—(אֱלֹהִי)] of Jacob." God's identity is tied to the relationship He had with the men who served Him before Moses's time, and this relationship Abraham, Isaac and Jacob built with God is recorded for us in the Book of

Genesis for us to learn from. Despite some human shortcomings, these fathers of the faith were models for us to follow, especially when it came to their earnest desire to seek the LORD and His Way for their lives. All three men are prominently featured in the "hall of faith" later found in Hebrews 11, which we'll briefly address later. Moving on, during the same interchange when God identified Himself as someone who desires to know His people, the LORD came closest to explaining His essence to Moses that we'll find in Scripture, but even in this description the LORD did not go that route. He was still explaining who He is by what He does. In Exodus 3:14, we read: "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM' [(אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה)—eh'yeh asher eh'yeh]." In other words, 'I exist. I am the Creator who came before and the One who will live forever.' God is, and His very being is an eternal action that aims to make everything good rather than a metaphysical state. Next, when God explained to Moses, "This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM [(אֶהְיֶה)—eh'yeh] has sent me to you,'" He was again communicating His identity by what He does; He was explaining how He exists forever in an eternal state of perfection in the present, and He was at that time sending His servant Moses to communicate His will to His chosen people. On account of this introduction through Moses, the Hebrews would later refer to the LORD by His relational name—yod-hey-vav-hey (יְהוָה), which we pronounce "Yahweh."

Grammatically speaking, according to Hebrew scholar Michael Heiser, God's name "Yahweh" is simply a description of what He does, but from our perspective instead of His. The Name "Yahweh (יְהוָה)" literally means, "He who is." This is simply our way of referring to the "Great I AM" from our perspective. He's the one who has always existed and always will exist, the Creator God, the Most High, the One who is over all! Because our culture has more of its intellectual roots in the Greco-Roman tradition, you might be struggling to see the distinction between "I am" being an action word rather than a state of being, and so I want to share with you an even clearer description of the Most High, and it's right on point concerning the Hebraic understanding of identity. In Exodus 34, verses 5-7, the LORD passed before Moses and spoke, explaining Himself in this way: "The LORD [Yahweh—(יְהוָה)] , the LORD [Yahweh—(יְהוָה)] God [El—(אֵל)], merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." This indeed is the LORD's identity, described by His actions and His intentions, and it is in this very image that our LORD and Savior Yeshua came to dwell among us.

{New slide} "Yahweh" explained through the prophet Isaiah that this would happen ahead of time. In Isaiah 56, verse 1, we read: "Thus says the LORD [Yahweh—(יְהוָה)]:

‘Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation [Yeshua’ti—יְשׁוּעָתִי] is about to come, and My righteousness [vi’tzed’qa’ti—(וְיִצְדַּקְתִּי)] to be revealed....’ This salvation and righteousness was not something apart from God; rather, the salvation and righteousness would come from the very heart of God for the benefit of His people. This action that would come forth from Yahweh would be embodied in Yeshua the Messiah. Yahweh explained that it was “My righteousness” and “My salvation” in the same way that the things you say and do belong to you and do not exist apart from you. God would send His Yeshua, who would embody His righteousness, so that He could save His people who trust in Him and judge those who would not accept His perfect sacrifice, and this was the purpose for which He came. The LORD desired to separate a people for Himself, and this is just what He would do. As we covered last week in Matthew 1:21, an angel explained to First Century Joseph that His wife Miriam had conceived a child from the Holy Spirit, and when He was born, Joseph was to “call His name 'Yeshua,' for He [would] save His people from their sins.” Again, His name describes action rather than essence. And when our Messiah launched His public ministry, according to Luke 4, Yeshua explained His purpose in coming, citing Isaiah 61:1-2, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” This passage has multiple layers of meaning, but both involve action. The plain meaning is worth contemplating on its own, and the Apostolic Writings certainly bear witness that Yeshua accomplished these things, but there is also a deeper spiritual meaning tied to these actions, and these align with the purpose for which God said He would send His Messiah. When we understand the poor as the humble, whom God said He would look upon, the brokenhearted as those spiritually broken from sin and ready to repent, whom God said He would accept, the captives as those held by the evil one in their bondage to sin and death, who would be released to the freedom of relationship with God through Yeshua's actions, then we can understand that the promised Jubilee of God had come. Yeshua had come to proclaim the good news, as testified throughout the Apostolic Writings with such phrases as: “the meek shall inherit the earth,” “repent and hear the good news,” “trust in Me,” and “follow Me.” In other words, Yeshua had come to be “merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,” and as we can also see Him in the other half of the earlier description—He would “by no means [clear] the guilty.” As we covered last week, in John 8:24, Yeshua also said, “if you do not believe that I AM He, you will die in your sins.” “I AM” who? Well, the eternally existent one who spoke to Moses in Exodus, which we just covered. I’ll get into this more in a future

message, but for the time being, the words “I AM” here are identical in form to the “I AM” verse in Exodus. This aligns with other statements Yeshua made, such as “I and the Father are one,” and He exemplified this by doing the very works of the Father, the actions that identified Him as God. In defending His own identity as the Son of God, Yeshua explained in John 10:37-38, “If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.” He said other similar things, which we’ll explore in more detail later, such as “Before Abraham was, I AM,” (John 8:58), equating Himself to the Great “eh’yeh (אֶהְיֶה)” we spoke about earlier. The Jewish leaders knew what Yeshua had been doing and they also knew what He was doing, because—not believing in Him—they picked up stones to throw at Him. Through Yeshua’s words and actions, there are only two possible conclusions we could make from all of this: Yeshua was either blaspheming by calling Himself God or He was indeed the very embodiment of God in the flesh, just like He said.

{New slide} In line with what I've been describing, a brother of mine said recently that his faith isn't intellectual—that he shies away from the philosophical and religious, so to speak. He's not grasping onto some conceptual object of the mind's devising to build a relationship with God. He's right to object to an intellectual faith. This isn't how we come to relate with God. Rather, we relate to God through an active faith that seeks a true relationship with Yeshua, because He is real, He is powerful, He is loving, and He interacts with us to make us into better men and women. This brother communicated that He KNOWS who Yeshua is and that's why he desires to follow Him. He knows Yeshua is God. And so, in explaining that we know God through what He does and also how we interact with Him, I also want to confirm my brother's observation by repeating that it is impossible for us to completely understand God's essence in a metaphysical sense, but it is entirely possible for us to know Him relationally. Yeshua spoke through the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 55, verses 8-9, saying, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’” This is not to say that we cannot know the LORD, only that we cannot understand His metaphysical essence. Indeed, the whole purpose of our lives is for us to try and learn who God is by examining both His Word and His deeds through our life experiences held up against the Truth communicated in the Holy Scriptures. If this were not so, Solomon would not have written in Proverbs 3:6, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” We may not understand the way the LORD thinks, nor the reason He does certain things, but if we trust that He

knows what is best because He is good and because He is faithful, then He will lead us on the right path and we will be blessed by our trust in Him. We're not meant to know everything God knows—not now—not ever—we're meant to know Him intimately through a relationship with Messiah Yeshua. Isaiah wrote this in Isaiah 40:28, where we read: "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable." He is the Great I AM. He exists. He neither faints nor is weary. He came in the flesh. He died, but death could not hold Him. He rose and sits interceding for us on His throne in Heaven. He is the Father and the Son and the Spirit, and He is One. He exists in the Highest Heaven and in the flesh and even in the Spirit at the same time, but also separately. Can we understand how this is possible? No we can't. At least not in this age. He is our Creator. How could we who have been created by Him understand He who created us? His understanding is unsearchable. He is eternal and He exists outside of time and space. And yet, none of us who live in this age, where time and space exist, can leave here in the corruptible body that we were created with. We rely fully on building a relationship with our God, for He has said that we will have eternal life with Him if we simply trust Him and follow Him in all His ways. He said, according to Jeremiah 29:13, "you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." Does that mean we will understand Him intellectually? Metaphysically? No it doesn't. It means we will come to know Him relationally and the good path that He has for us when we surrender to His will. This is also what He meant when He said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." The fruit He asks us to bring forth is the same fruit that He bore when He walked the earth. He came to demonstrate God's will for us—God's righteousness—so that we might follow Him and "walk the way that He walked" (1 John 2:6)—so that we ourselves can be with God.

{New slide} And so, as we seek an ever deeper relationship with God through Yeshua the Messiah, we ought to understand the reason God's nature is both impossible to grasp but also explainable and understandable, if we come to know Him. Increasingly grasping and then implementing God's nature in our lives is all part of the interaction God desires with us. In Proverbs 25:2, Solomon explained: "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter." Why would God conceal anything from us? First of all, as we learned a moment ago, it's because His ways are unsearchable. He's eternal. There is more to God than we will ever know. And yet, He wants us to seek Him, He wants us to relate to Him, and He wants us to increasingly know Him. Solomon may have been referring literally to his father David and himself as the kings who were searching out the matters of God in this Proverb,

but we can also learn from the court of the kings and follow their example as men and women who have agency to do the will of Yeshua in our own lives under the authority of the King of kings—our LORD and our God. In our Torah Portion reading for this week, specifically toward the end of Deuteronomy 17(:14-20), the LORD explained that kings ought to write a copy of the Torah for themselves and read it all the days of their lives to learn to fear the LORD God and be careful to observe all the words of His law, to remain humble, so that they could prolong their days. This is a good idea for all of us, and we don't have to write out copies for ourselves any longer. We can pick up a copy of God's Holy Word from the back table of the church or download the Bible for free on our phones. Do you read the Scripture daily? How could you not! It's more available to you now than it has been for any generation of people ever born before us. There is no excuse. In Proverbs 4:20-21, Solomon also wrote: "My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh." These may be the words of a king of Israel, but they are inspired words that may just the same come from the Mouth of God, and they are now part of our Holy Bible. These words have meaning for you and me! Solomon's father David, who wrote Psalm 1, similarly wrote that any man would be blessed if He meditated on the law of God day and night, and we know that God's law is found within the Holy Scriptures that we hold in the palm of our hands. It is the very basis by which we can come to know God and His Son, Messiah Yeshua.

{New slide} The Word of God is Truth and the Holy Scriptures are indeed God's inspired Word by which we can know the difference between what is God's will and what we might erroneously think is God's will. If you think about the LORD as our betrothed, a metaphor He Himself uses throughout Scripture, and we are due to be married to Him when He returns for us, then you can think of His Holy Scriptures as His love letter to us explaining all of the good plans He has for us and also what He is going to do to those who try and build a wedge in our relationship with Him. He is both our beloved and our protector in this way, and we learn more about Him and anticipate ever deepening aspects of our relationship by constantly studying His Word. How many times did you read a love letter from your sweetheart back in High School? Isn't it better for you to give more attention to God? As Yeshua was praying for the Father's will to be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven, teaching us by example what to do in this life, He said in John 17:17: "Sanctify them by Your Truth. Your Word is Truth." It is 100 percent true that Yeshua Himself was the Word made flesh to dwell among us. We will get into this more in another message. For now, I want you to understand that we come to know about the life of Yeshua and what He said because of the Apostolic

Writings that are part of the Holy Scriptures, and it is by that Word recorded for us in the Scriptures that we are sanctified; meaning, it is by doing what Yeshua instructed us to do in His Word that we can develop a closer relationship with Him. Amazingly, the Apostolic Writings are not the extent of God's Truth for our benefit, and Yeshua even said this Himself, according to John 5:46-47, where we read: "if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" Now, I ask you this: If building an intimate relationship with Yeshua is what it takes for eternal life in the Kingdom of God, wouldn't we want to know everything ever written about Him? Yeshua Himself wondered how we would come to believe His words if we don't believe the words Moses recorded in the Torah. Shouldn't we study the words of Moses then to learn more about our beloved? It sure sounds like the Torah is also part of God's love letter to His people, and if we love Him, we ought to not just read it, but also do it. Indeed, even after His resurrection, Yeshua pointed us back to the "Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms," saying that we ought to comprehend these Scriptures so that we might come to know Him better. Specifically, we read in Luke 24:44-45: "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." So it's not just the Apostolic Writings, and it's not just the Torah, but also the Prophets and the Psalms that help us to understand the loving path that God has set aside for His beloved people. If the risen Yeshua taught the Scriptures to His followers back in the First Century, shouldn't we want to learn from them as well? Importantly, though, in 2nd Corinthians, chapter 3, the Apostle Paul wrote that we can only understand how to apply the Scriptures properly when we come to understand the identity of Yeshua as the Son of God who was sent into the world. In verses 15-17, we read: "But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart"—that is, the heart of those who do not know Yeshua's identity. He continues: "Nevertheless when one turns to the LORD, the veil is taken away. Now the LORD is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the LORD is, there is liberty." Amazingly, the Truth of the matter is this: To know the LORD, we have to confess our sins to Him and repent, for this is how we "turn to the LORD." Our sins are indeed forgiven when we accept that Yeshua is the righteous LORD who has come to save us from sin and death. From this point, to make a long story short, we enter a covenantal bond with Him that becomes increasingly beneficial the more we seek Him, and we seek Him by reading His Word and learning from the Scriptures how to pray to Him—this is conversing with our beloved—and how to worship Him—this is spending quality time with our beloved. These are the things that Yeshua has said He desires from our side in the relationship. There is liberty in this



effort, for He, being God, has designed us for this very thing. Peace and joy are the result of doing what we were designed to do. How do we know this? We read His Word, which explains this, and then trust in His Word so that we actually do and teach what it instructs, following the example He gave us. The Apostle Paul, who in 1st Corinthians 11:1, said, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Messiah,” said in Acts 20:27, “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.” We too ought to read, internalize, and declare the whole of God’s Word to one another, while also doing what it instructs, so that we might come to know Yeshua and experience liberty in the life He is calling us to live with God.

{New slide} Continuing with this theme, consider what the Apostle Paul wrote in 2nd Timothy 3, verses 10-17, where we read: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” We begin our relationship with God through faith in Yeshua, that He is LORD and that God has raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9), and this is the very moment when Scripture comes to life for us and begins to teach us how we ought to live. This is the moment when we “turn to the LORD” and the veil comes away from our understanding in reading the Scriptures. We begin to walk in liberty when we accept God’s Holy Word as profitable for our instruction, to help us live righteously, to help us turn away from evil, and to correct our behavior so that it aligns with what God desires, and through this process we become more like God. If we endure on this path, we will be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work—this is the goal of our faith as we come to know our LORD and Savior. I want to connect some dots before we continue with some other basic principles that we’re going to need to better understand God’s identity. Earlier, I explained that we turn to the LORD Yeshua through confession of our sins and repentance to receive the salvation that He promised to us. But the only reason you and I might justify turning to Yeshua is if we truly believe He is God. There is no man who can save us from our sins. Only God can forgive sins for salvation—even the Pharisees knew this when they incorrectly rebuked Yeshua for forgiving sins. The prophet Joel explained this principle in Joel 2:32, where we read: “And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.” In this verse, the word LORD is derived from the Hebrew “yod-hey-vav-hey (י-ו-ה-ה),” which I pronounce “Yahweh.” Indeed, we who have been called out from the darkness of sin into the light of the LORD’s righteousness must call upon the name Yahweh to be delivered from our sins. But what about Yeshua? If we believe that Yeshua is Yahweh, and Yahweh is Yeshua, that

the Father and the Son are one, just like Yeshua Himself said, everything falls into place. According to what we've studied here today, the Torah, the Prophets and the Psalms teach us that this is true, and so do the Apostolic Writings. The whole of Scripture is consistent, in fact. Before we address this latter idea, consider what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 10:9-13, where we read: "...if you confess with your mouth the LORD Yeshua and believe in your heart that God has 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 on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same LORD over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'" The first thing to point out here is the link with our passage from Isaiah 56:1 from earlier. If you recall, in that passage Yahweh was about to send His salvation and His righteousness upon His chosen people, who seek to follow the Way of the LORD. Here, Paul explained that confessing Yeshua as LORD brings salvation and believing that God has raised Him from the dead brings righteousness, fulfilling that prophesy. But what does it mean to confess Yeshua is LORD? In the original Greek manuscripts, the words used for LORD in each case of Paul's passage is some form of the word "kurios (κύριος)." While this word can refer to a human "master" or "lord" that has charge over a certain possession, I believe very strongly that the word implies something far more significant. If we look at the Greek Septuagint translation of Joel 2:32, where we read "whoever calls upon the Name of the LORD shall be saved," it's important to note that a Greek form of the word "Kurios (κύριος)" is also used for LORD in that verse. Paul quoted this verse directly in the passage about our salvation, and it is apparent that he was linking Yeshua to Yahweh by doing so. He leads off the section with "If you confess with your mouth the LORD Yeshua" and ends the section with the citation "Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." It's not ambiguous. Paul is equating Yeshua with Yahweh here. It is through a more intense study of Scripture, which we'll get to in the coming weeks, where we can see this principle applied consistently when referring to Yeshua as LORD. He is Kyrios. He is Adonai. He is Yahweh. When we call upon the name of Yeshua, we will be saved, but we also must believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead. There is an apparent distinction here between the Father and the Son, but a deeper study of Scripture shows that the distinction is both intentional and meaningful. As we covered last week, Yeshua said in John 10:18, "No one takes [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father." Yeshua and the Father are one. It's important for us to recognize that this is one of those areas that are beyond our understanding, for the Father was certainly on His throne in Heaven while

the Son was hanging on the cross, but at the same time, both the Father and the Son are God, and our God is One. God raised Yeshua from the dead AND Yeshua had the power from the Father to take up His life again. Both statements are true. We can't parse this from the particular passage we're looking at directly, and we can't understand it intellectually, but we can understand it through our relationship with Yeshua and by looking at the whole counsel of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

{New slide} And this is where I want to bring another principle to the table, which we're going to need as we move forward in this series, and that principle is this: everything is established by a testimony of two or three witnesses. When I say everything, I mean everything. As it pertains to the study of Yeshua's complex unity with God, we ought to apply this principle to "the whole counsel of God," meaning that no passage or verse should be taken out of context to prove or disprove any theological idea. We're going to need two or three witnesses for each principle before we can establish it as something to put our faith in. The concept itself is derived from Torah, where the LORD explained in Deuteronomy 19:15, "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established." Yeshua verified this principle in Matthew 18, verses 15-16, where we read: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'" In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13, verse 1, the Apostle warned the men of Corinth using this very same principle. We read: "This will be the third time I am coming to you. 'By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.'" Even the verse itself has two or three witnesses, which is why we ought to give it great weight. Now, in each of these cases, the LORD is referring to two or three witnesses used to convict a person of sin, but the principle is also used to testify to the Truth. In Deuteronomy 31, after Moses had completed writing the words of the Torah in a book, he instructed the Levites to save the book as a witness to God's Word. In verse 26, we read: "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you;" The Scriptures themselves must agree with one another—they cannot contradict—in order to establish what is right. We can see another testimony of this truth in Hebrews 11-12, which I don't have up on the screen. It's a famous passage known affectionately as "the hall of faith," where in Hebrews 11 the writer took some time to explain the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and really, all of the prophets. Then, in Hebrews 12:1, the writer referred to these men and women

as “so great a cloud of witnesses.” How are they witnesses? Their stories come from Scripture, which, as we read earlier, “is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The “witness” of these men and women in Scripture show us how we ought to move beyond simply confessing our trust in God to also show that we trust God by boldly moving according to His Word in our lives. The long and the short of the principle is this: God’s Word is intentional and it is meant to help direct us into deeper relationship with Him so we can prepare ourselves to live with Him in His Kingdom forever. When Scripture repeats a concept more than once, we ought to pay attention to it. When Scripture repeats a concept and tweaks the identity of the person who is the subject of the passage, we also ought to pay attention to this. We saw this earlier in the example from Joel and Paul’s letter to the Romans; that “all who call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.” This is a testimony of two that Yeshua and Yahweh are one!

{New slide} Next, I want to show you how Yeshua used this concept in a really interesting way to explain His identity and purpose in John 5:31-40, where we read: “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.” Now this is what I just finished talking about: All things are established by a testimony of two or three. Yeshua cannot testify about His own witness, can He? Lest we wonder where He’s going with this, He continues: “There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.” We can see in John 1:29-30, which I don’t have on the screen, that John the Baptist testified to Yeshua’s identity when he saw Him approaching the Jordan River for baptism. He said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” We only need to read the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke to understand that John was in fact born before Yeshua, so his meaning here is plain: Yeshua is the Promised Holy One of God, the eternal Son of God Himself, who would come to save sinners through His sacrifice and resurrection. This is the testimony of John, but Yeshua threw a twist into the equation as He continued. We read in John 5:34: “Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.” Why would John’s testimony be insufficient? Because a man alone cannot testify about Yeshua’s identity as God. Only God could testify about His own identity, and this is the very reason why the Father had to testify concerning the Son. Yeshua explained, continuing in verse 36, “But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness

of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. [The Father sent His Son Yeshua, by the way. Continuing:] You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” In this passage, Yeshua Himself, the Works that He did according to the will of the Father, the Father Himself, and the Word of Scripture are four witnesses testifying to Yeshua’s identity as the Son of God.

{New slide} As I prepare to close today, I want to give you a couple things to think about before we come back together next. First: If everything is established by a testimony of two or three witnesses, then we ought to expect God Himself to have a witness of two or three built into His very own nature. It should not surprise us that Paul wrote in Romans 1:20: “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,...” We are without excuse, Paul explained. We ought to see God’s divine nature displayed in His creation, he wrote. God’s “Theiotés (θεότης),” translated “Godhead” in the NKJV, means His divine nature, or His manifested Deity, or the manner in which He has revealed Himself for His created people to know Him. I’m going to lead with this concept next week, so we’re going to get into this in a lot more detail. For now I want to show you the very account of God’s creation and provide you with a quick overview of what we see established right up front before we learn anything else. In Genesis 1, verses 1-3, we read: “In the beginning God [Elohim (אֱלֹהִים)] created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.” We touched on this a little already, but here’s a little bit more for you to consider: The Word for God in this verse is “Elohim (אֱלֹהִים),” and the “im (ים)” on the end of the Word makes it plural. What’s more interesting than this is the word “created” here, or bara “(בָּרָא),” is a singular verb, meaning that the plural Elohim is acting as a single person in His creation of the heavens and the earth. In brief, the Rabbis call this construct “the majestic plural.” ‘There’s nothing to see here, folks,’ they say. ‘This is just a reverent way to express the supremacy of God,’ they say. Now ... let me explain: They’re right. The verse absolutely displays God’s preeminence as a being Who existed before anything else, and it was He who brought everything into being, both in the heavens and the earth—the spiritual realm and the physical realm. He is the primary actor and the only actor who created something from nothing, and He is One. But in the context of the first three verses of Scripture, and the

Scripture as a whole, and the many witnesses I plan to show you in the weeks to come, there's more to the Name "Elohim" in this passage than "the majestic plural." Why not use "Yahweh," the personal name of God in this verse, and show consistency throughout the Scripture? Why not use El (אל), the singular form for "God" used many other times throughout Scripture to refer to the Most High? Some scholars say "Elohim" is a remnant of some polytheism among early Hebrews, but this very idea destroys the testimony that God's Word is Truth, and so we must reject it. Besides, if "Elohim" reflected multiple gods or divine beings acting to create the world, then why is the word "created" written with a singular verb form indicating there was a singular actor? In my opinion, the use of "the majestic plural" can only mean one thing: We worship One God who eternally exists and reveals Himself as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The complex unity of our God, who reigns forever and ever, is found right at the beginning of Scripture. "His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead,..." You see, it was the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who created the Heavens and the Earth, as Paul explained in Colossians 1:16, where we read: "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." We can see the Father in Genesis 1 and 2 as the invisible Elohim, we can see the Holy Spirit in verse 1 as Elohim and verse 2 as the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters, and we can see the Son of God in verse 1 as the visible Elohim and in verse 3 as the Word of God that spoke out, saying "let there be light." When God spoke this Word, I want you to note the power of His Word. He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." There's no ambiguity here. When God's Word moves, God accomplishes exactly what He intends in His mind according to His will. I'm going to leave this here for now. We have One God who eternally exists and reveals Himself as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and that is evident from the beginning.

{New slide} There's one last concept I want to lay down to set up the rest of this series, and it is this: God's Word—His Holy Scripture—is completely consistent. While Scripture may appear to have contradictions on the surface, when fully examined these apparent inconsistencies actually reveal deeper mysteries about the nature of our God and all His ways. This goes for the Tanakh (Old Testament) and the Apostolic Writings (New Testament) altogether; they are one unit with one inspired message planned by God from the beginning to accomplish all of His purposes. In Numbers 23:19, Balaam, acting as a prophet for the Most High, explained: "God is not man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change His mind. He has said, and will He not do it?"

Or has He spoken and He will not fulfill it?" I picked this passage specifically to prove the final point I want to make today. While some people like to take this passage out of context and explain, 'You see, right here God said He's not a man or a son of man. Clearly, Yeshua can't be God.' 'Aha,' they say. But to jump to this conclusion is erroneous and it's not what the verse is referring to. The testimony from the whole counsel of God explains that Yeshua is the Son of God, that He is equal with God, and that He is one in being with the Father, and these truths are communicated all throughout the Torah and the Prophets as well as in the Apostolic Writings. We can't take this one passage out of context. That's isolational analysis, an error of the wicked. So what does this passage mean? It's actually rather straightforward. God is an eternal Spiritual being who is Holy, Just and Good. There isn't even a scintilla of sin or evil within His nature. He does not violate His nature, which is flawless. Evil is derived only from rebellion against God, not anything that God does Himself. Thus, God is not like a mortal created being who lies or changes His mind. He is immortal. When He speaks, His Word bears fruit. When His Word goes forth, He accomplishes everything for which He sent it. The bottom line is this: there is no inconsistency with God. If we're reading inconsistency into His Word, then we are not interpreting it correctly and more study is needed for us to come to understanding. As we move forward in this series, this concept is going to be a staple that we will often employ. It's abundantly clear, as David wrote to God in Psalm 119:160, "The sum of your Word is Truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever." He also wrote in Proverbs 30, verse 5: "Every Word of God proves True; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him." There is nothing to doubt about God's perfect nature. He is good. He is faithful. He is true. He is love, and He very much desires for you and me to love Him back in the way that He's explained so that He can care for us in the very way that He has promised. It's up to us to surrender to His will to make this happen. If we follow our own way, we will not know the LORD. So let us turn to Him with all of our hearts, souls, minds and strength with loving devotion, just like He asked us to do. — — Ok, so this is where we're going to stop for today. We're still just breaking into the basics here for this series. Next week, I hope to continue to show you some very interesting witnesses to our LORD's complex unity and otherwise we'll see where the Holy Spirit leads us next. Shabbat shalom.