



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) Shalom. This is Amir Tsarfati from Behold Israel. We're about to have a wonderful interview with Dr. Seth Postell on the issue of the deity of Christ. This is one of the most amazing and important topics that are overlooked by so many people or misunderstood by most Christians around the world. It is essential to believe in Messiah, in Jesus, as nothing less than God if we want to be saved. And so join me and Dr. Seth Postell in exploring what the Scriptures have to say about the deity of the Jewish Messiah of Yeshua, Jesus.

WHY IS THE DIVINITY OF JESUS SO IMPORTANT?

(AMIR) Shalom, Seth. How are you?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Hi, Amir. Good to be with you.

(Amir) Yeah, Dr. Seth Postell. I've known you for almost my entire life as a believer since 1993.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Yeah! [nods]

(AMIR) And you were just a brand new immigrant to Israel. You didn't even know if you were going to stay here.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Correct.

(AMIR) A New Jersey guy coming to Israel.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Not my fault!

(AMIR) Not your fault. I'm not gonna hold it against you. New Joisey! [New Jersey accent] But we've known each other since the military service. You were, if I'm not mistaken, in the infantry?



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) I was.

(AMIR) Exactly. And uh...and then, of course, you left Israel for... Originally, you wanted to live for three years, and it ended up being nine years. You completed your degree. You're actually M.A. and the doctorate in the U.S.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Correct.

(AMIR) Can you tell us, in a few words, how did you find your faith in the Messiah?



(DR. SETH POSTELL) Yeah, so I mean, I grew up in a Jewish family. Grew up in New Jersey. We lived in an area where pretty much everybody in my neighborhood was Jewish. We had, I think, two Gentiles on our whole street. Everybody else was Jewish.

(AMIR) Wow.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) [A] strong sense of Jewish identity. I had to go to Hebrew school once a week. And I'm gonna give you the Reader's Digest version—sort of a shorter version. But what ended up happening was, at some point, my mother met a Jewish lady who started to talk to her about Jesus. And my mother was very offended and very curious. And what ended up happening was my mother started to do some searching. And at some point she came to the conclusion, this crazy conclusion, that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. My father cried. He was angry. He said, "Why have you betrayed our people?" Long story short, my father started to ask a lot of questions. And again, it's an amazing story! But...you know, growing up, the worst curse word



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

that I could hear of all the curse words in my house was Jesus Christ. My father, after a period of wrestling of a few months, he could not deny that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. He came to faith. And it was soon after that that I started to ask lots of questions. And I fell in love with this man named Jesus. I'd never met a more beautiful person. I also sensed that there was something seriously lacking in my own life. I also had, I guess, a *fear* of God. I understood that there was something wrong in my own life. And as I started to read and study the scriptures, [I] became convinced that Jesus is my Lord, Savior, Messiah. And, so....

(AMIR) Amazing. Amazing. So you're a doctor now and you're a professor at Israel College of the Bible, ICB?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Correct.

(AMIR) And um... not long ago, I attended one of your lectures on the deity of Christ in the eyes of...or as it is being reflected by the writings of the New Testament writers. And that wasn't actually a lecture that was supposed to be a sermon to convince non-Jews to believe in Jesus as much as a very academic exposure of how first-century, Second Temple period Jews already then presented Jesus as God. Which is revolutionary!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So, I guess...you know the idea behind the lecture, as we think about it, was that...you know I often hear also among some people who claim to be believers that Gentile Christians at some point twisted our faith.

(AMIR) Yes.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) That at some point, they turned Jesus into a fully divine being...at some point, Christians distorted our faith and started to believe in the Trinity...but *everybody* knows that there's no way Second Temple Jews could ever believe that Jesus was fully God or the Trinity...it doesn't mention the Trinity in the New Testament, and therefore, it's a distortion of our faith. And so what I wanted to do [was] to show [that] just by looking at the evidence of the New Testament [and] without trying to convince people that Jesus is God, does the New Testament...do the New Testament authors, present Jesus as God? Because if that's the case, then what you have is a faith tied to [the] Second Temple period. In other words, there was no Gentile...later Gentle distortion, but believing that Jesus is God is a very Jewish thing. And so, [that was] what the point of the lecture [was].

(AMIR) So let's go back to the time of the Jewish world of the Second Temple period. We all know that, at that time, there was no New Testament yet. And therefore, when the Bible...when the New Testament says “it is written” or “the Scriptures” it is talking only about the Old Testament, obviously. And we know that most, if not all of the Jewish people at the time, they knew the Old Testament pretty good. And one of the most common, and the most important prayers, or something that Jewish people recite is the Shema, the **“Hear O Israel: the Lord your God, the Lord is one.”** (Deuteronomy 4:6)

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Correct.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) This is their flagship and reason why they cannot accept the deity of Christ and the concept of the Trinity. Because God is one! So **“Hear O Israel: the Lord your God, the Lord is one.”** How do you refer to such a claim?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Yeah, so you know, it's really interesting. I want to refer to a book that was written...that was recently written by a Jewish scholar, not a believer. He's a religious Jewish man from the United States named Benjamin Summer. And he wrote a book called *The Bodies of God. The Bodies of God!* It's a hard book to read. It's not an easy book to understand. But basically what he claims at the end of his book is that if we take the biblical documents seriously, and even if we take early Judaism seriously, there's absolutely no problem. Judaism ought to have no problem with the belief that God is triune. There's no issue whatsoever. Now he goes on to say, “Now of course we reject Jesus as a false messiah.” Right? So what he does is he goes through all the biblical literature. He starts with the Torah, and it's really interesting that when you start to see the way that the Torah itself presents the unity of God, you come to a conclusion that you have a foundation well set in place to believe in a triune God!

(AMIR) Amazing.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Completely...completely resting on what the Torah itself testifies about who God is. So according to the Torah...according to the Torah, God meets Israel at Mount Sinai. Right? He meets Israel at Mount Sinai. And interestingly enough, we see that God is dwelling at the summit of Mount Sinai. Mount Sinai is built. It's got three levels of holiness. If you think of it that way, God is at the top and only Moses could go there, In the middle, you've



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

got a class of priests that could go up with Moses and have like a fellowship dinner. Right? Joshua could go there. And then, only at the bottom of the hill, could the rest of Israel go. Okay? Well, that actually becomes the foundation of what the tabernacle is going to become. You've got the Holy of Holies and the high priest that goes in. Okay. So here's what's really interesting. So according to the Torah... according to the Torah, God dwells on Mount Sinai. He's dwelling [on] Mount Sinai, and then Moses, at the end of Exodus, he finishes the tabernacle. The glory of God settles in the tabernacle. Can I...I would like to read...it's really amazing...

(AMIR) Yes, of course! I love that story from Exodus.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So, if we look at Exodus 40, towards the end of Exodus, something amazing happens. Okay? In Exodus 40, verse 34.

(AMIR) Exodus 40, verse 34.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Exodus 40:34; **“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”** So now God moves house. He used to live on the top of Mount Sinai. Now He moves into the tabernacle. Notice: **“Moses”**—verse 35—**“was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”** Okay. So where's the presence of God now?

(AMIR AND DR. SETH POSTELL) In the tabernacle.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) In the tabernacle. Where's God? He's in the tabernacle. In fact, you go now to Leviticus 1. It's pretty spectacular. And you'll notice this in Hebrew—in English you'll miss this—it says, “The name of the book [Leviticus] is “Vayikra” (Hebrew). “And He Called.”



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(English translation) Right? But notice it says, “And He called to Moses.” Who's He? You actually have to go to the preceding book to get the subject of “and He called,” which is the Lord, right? And then it goes on. It says, “**And the Lord called to Moses and spoke to him...**” “From where? “**...from the tent of meeting.**” (Leviticus 1:1) Where is the Lord?

(AMIR) In the tent of meeting.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) He's in the tent of meeting. Correct? According to the Torah, the one God, “**Hear O Israel: the Lord your God, the Lord is one.**” He dwells in the tent of meeting. Right? Okay. But that's not the whole picture. Go to Deuteronomy 26. Now...Deuteronomy 26, verse 15,. Deuteronomy 26, verse 15. Where does God dwell?

(AMIR) Deuteronomy 26, verse 15.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) You can read it.

(Amir) Yes, he says in verse 15.

(DR SETH POSTELL) Moses is praying.

(AMIR) Yes, Moses is praying and he's saying the following thing. “**Look down from Your Holy habitation from heaven...**”

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Stop! Where does God dwell?

(AMIR) In Heaven.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Okay. So, in fact, the Torah teaches there are two temples.

(AMIR) Up in Heaven and one on Earth.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) There's the real one in Heaven. There is a copy on Earth. Okay.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) So how can He be in both?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Exactly! In other words...what's really amazing, is that the Torah actually teaches that you have the copy and the of the Lord. The glory of the Lord lives in the copy. Really! It's as if the glory of God dresses in tent. He puts on cloth and dwells among His people without ceasing to be God in Heaven.

(AMIR) Yeah. It's interesting!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It sounds like the Gospel of John!

(AMIR) Exactly!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It's just like John 1:14.

(AMIR) Absolutely!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) **“The Word became flesh and tabernacled [dwelt] among us.” (TLV)**

(AMIR) Yeah, and one of the things that hit me when I read Exodus 33—and you probably know that very well also—it's one of my favorite chapters in the entire Old Testament. It says this in verse nine, **“And it came to pass when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses.”** And then he says, **“¹⁰All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshipped, each man *in his on tent* [door].... ¹¹So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend, and he would return to the camp....”**

But...and then of course, a few verses later, you see that Moses cannot see God.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Yeah.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) You know? So!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So the Torah...the Torah presents something really quite spectacular. And that is that God is One. But this One God can dwell simultaneously in a number of places without ceasing to be the One true God. And so...you bring up, for instance, the angel of the Lord. Now, I don't even like the translation "angel of the Lord." Probably, "the messenger of the Lord" would be a better presentation. But you think about, in Exodus [chapters] three and four. It says that...in Exodus three, it's really interesting, and I'll even go there. **"²So the messenger [angel] of the Lord" verse two, "appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed."** (NASB) So then it says in verse four, **"When the Lord saw"—the Lord—"saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush...."** So who's in the bush?

(AMIR) In the midst...

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Who's in the bush? But is it the messenger of the Lord? Or is it God? And so, what you see in the Torah already is you have a very interesting presentation of the unity of God. And so, the fact that the one true God can come down and lived in a bush without ceasing to be the one true God of Heaven does not contradict His oneness. And interestingly enough, another very famous passage [is] I Kings, chapter eight. An amazing passage! In 1 Kings, chapter 8, God then moves... He moves home. He moves from tabernacle to the temple.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

But here's what's interesting. And again, I won't...you know...it's a very long passage. But in 1 Kings, chapter 8, Solomon—after he builds the temple—you have the glory of God that settles into the Holy of Holies—the Devir [Hebrew], the Holy of Holies. So, we know that God now is dwelling inside His Temple. But here's what's remarkable! Now that God's presence is dwelling in the Temple, Solomon's whole prayer...because he prays, “God, and when we face this Temple, may You hear from Your holy habitation in Heaven and forgive us.”

(AMIR) Yes!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So let's say... so does the Torah teach there are two different gods? Is Solomon teaching there are two different gods? No. He's teaching something that is foundational for our faith that God can actually choose to dwell with His people in a very special way. That's God's desire to dwell with us, whether it's in the messenger of the Lord, whether it's in the glory of God in the tabernacle....

(AMIR) Or the “Word” or the “Memra” of the Lord.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Exactly! Whether it's...Whether it's the flesh of Jesus, the tabernacle of God, the glory of God dwells with us completely and fully without ceasing to be God in Heaven.

(AMIR) Yeah.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Well, this is the Torah!

(AMIR) Let's go to Genesis 1:26.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Sure.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) Genesis 1:26. And I'm trying to see if you look at it as some sort of what we call "old school." Uh, Genesis 1:26 is saying the following thing: **"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"** Who do you think Genesis 1:26 is really speaking about? "Let Us."

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Sure. Okay! So here's something that...the way that I operate...and again, because I realized, as a Jewish believer, that I needed to explain my faith from the Hebrew Bible. And so I believe the New Testament; I take the New Testament as the Word of God. But as a rule of thumb, I always allowed the Old Testament to lead me to the New Testament rather than the New Testament kind of...reinterpreting the Old Testament. Why do I do that? Because I believe that we have to speak to our people. I believe that we...and I also, by the way, believe that the New Testament authors understood the Old Testament correctly. So what do I do with this? Well, as you know, Rashi would say that God in His humility is actually saying so. He's speaking with the angels, right? He just wants to show that He's humble, and so He [says], **"Let Us make man in Our image."** He's speaking with the angels. Okay? Now there's no question...

(AMIR) Rashi is one of the most revered rabbis from among the rabbinical establishment that came after Jesus.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) A1,000 years after, 1,100 years.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) So he's trying—1,100 years after Jesus—he's trying now to settle Genesis 1:26 in his own way.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Correct. And obviously, the reason that he's going that direction is not necessarily because he's trying to understand the text but because he's trying to refute the Christian interpretation. And so, the question then becomes, is this speaking about the angels? There's a few problems with this interpretation. One of the biggest of problems is that creation in the Old Testament is an act that exclusively belongs to God.

(AMIR) Exactly.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) And so....

(AMIR) Angels cannot create, and once He says, “Yes, let Us make.”

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So this is...you know there are acts of God that separate God from you know, the Creator from the created. And one of the big, major acts that separates the created from the created is creation.

(AMIR) Exactly.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So that's the first thing. But the second thing, if you look in the context, do you see any angels in chapter one?

(AMIR) Absolutely not!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) There are none! So—and I might surprise you here—but I want you to notice something here. If we're looking for clues in the text, who's speaking? **“Let Us make man in Our image.”** I believe that the best commentary on scripture is always going to be scripture.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

So let's look in the text. Is God alone in this chapter? Is He alone? And here's what's really amazing! Look in Genesis 1, verses one and two.

(AMIR) Yep! Genesis 1, verses one and two. Everybody knows this. It says, **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²And 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 water.”**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Okay, so here's what's truly remarkable. Here's what's really remarkable if I just want to lean on the text, okay? I don't wanna try to...I don't wanna kind of “read” the New Testament back into this passage. Let's just use the text. Here's what's really amazing. In Genesis 1, God is one, but He's not alone.

(AMIR) Yeah.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) God is one, and He's not alone. God is there—verse one—and who is with Him? The Spirit of God. And by virtue of the fact, in verse 26, that God says, **“Let Us make man in Our image,”** and you look for who's speaking. What you have—there is no other choice—we say “exegetically” that to say at the very least—at the very least—you have God and His Spirit. That's already an amazing...when we talk about trying to convince our people and trying to say, “Listen, it's totally biblical to believe that the one God exists in more than one persons.” And so here we have a classic example that God and the Spirit of God are together creating the world. Now what's interesting, Proverbs...the Book of Proverbs! How did God create the universe? Through His wisdom! His wisdom is the Spirit of God. Now of course...of course,



Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell

elsewhere in the scriptures we see, for instance, in Psalm 33, that God not only creates the world through His wisdom, or through His Spirit, but also through the Word. Also through the Word. And so, what I would just simply say here is—that if we're just allowing the text—we already have an amazing foundation for recognizing this unity of God, the one God who creates—but a plurality of persons. So, (1) we have the Spirit of God, (2) we have God, (3) we have the messenger of the Lord, right? (4) We have the glory of God who settles into the temple. (5) We have the face of God. And so all of this gives us an amazing foundation for realizing the doctrine of the Trinity. The word “Trinity” never appears in the New Testament. But it's simply a word that captures what the scriptures teach: the one God!

(AMIR) The triune nature.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) [The triune nature] Exists in a plurality of persons that's completely biblical! And it rests entirely in the Torah.

(AMIR) Do you think there are clear passages in the Old Testament that point at the divine identity of the Messiah?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Yes! So, interestingly enough, even before we talk about the deity of Jesus, okay,—which I believe the New Testament teaches that there's a Jesus [Who] is divine. But let's take the discussion back even a little bit farther. Does the Hebrew Bible present a divine Messiah? And I could take you to many passages, right? We could go to Isaiah. We could go to the Book of Psalms, but one book that's often overlooked that I think is a key book in this



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

discussion is Daniel. Now, if you'll look in Daniel, chapter seven—I want to show you something amazing. Daniel, chapter seven.

(AMIR) Yeah. Daniel, chapter seven.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Now it's in Aramaic!

(AMIR) Obviously, but the English is here.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) There you go. You got the English. You've got the Hebrew translation! But I want you to notice something in the Aramaic. There's something incredibly important in the Aramaic that people overlook. Okay, so let me just kind of paint a picture for you.

(AMIR) Okay.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) I'm gonna paint a picture for you. The Book of Daniel really, interestingly enough, it has three parts. Chapter one until 2:4 is Hebrew. Chapter two, verse four, (the second half) until the end of chapter seven—Aramaic. Chapters eight through twelve—Hebrew. Now the way that this works, it just...there's a beautiful picture. But the first half of Daniel—one through six—is a narrative: stories of Daniel and his friends. Chapter seven...chapter seven through twelve are Daniel's visions. The hinge chapter, which is in Aramaic, is chapter seven. So chapter seven has a double purpose. Number one—the first purpose—is it's part of the Aramaic section of Daniel. So it connects to the Aramaic section. But...so it connects to the first half of the book. But it's a hinge in that...

(AMIR) It's the first one of the vision.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It's the first one in the vision, so it provides a hinge passage. It's clear [that] it's the most important passage for the theology of Daniel. Now what's going on there? Amazing! In the narrative section, Daniel and his friends continue to be tested to worship things that aren't God—bow down to the things that aren't God, to pray to things that aren't God! So, bow down to the things that aren't God, chapter three. To pray to things that aren't God, chapter six. Okay? Well, the key word that shows up again and again is the word "palach" in Aramaic. Palach! You know the word in Hebrew, "Pulhan (וּלְחָן)." What's "Pulhan (וּלְחָן)"?

(Amir) It's ritual.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It's worship. It's ritual that's tied to things you ascribe to divine beings. So here we go. All through the first half of Daniel—the narrative of Daniel—Daniel and his friends are willing to die as to not worship things that aren't God. They refused to give palach to anything but God. Okay, well guess what happens in chapter seven? The key chapter! The whole book hangs together in this one chapter! It ties the chapter together. So notice verses 13 and 14: **“I kept looking in the night visions, and behold the clouds of heaven...With the clouds of heaven. One like a Son of Man.”** So you think, “Okay, he's just a man.” No! Where is He coming from? He's coming from heaven! **“And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. ¹⁴And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him.”** Now what's the word there for serve?

(AMIR) Actually, worship!



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Worship. It's the same word, “palach”! Yiflechun (יפּלחֶנּוּ)! In other words—here's what's amazing—why would the Book of Daniel, in the most important chapter in the whole book, [yet] everywhere else teach that that word is only used for deity, and here [it is] suddenly to consummate the kingdom of God? All the tribes, tongues and nations are now worshipping the Son of Man? The Son of Man has to participate in the divine identity. He has to be God. If not, this chapter contradicts the whole book and everything that Daniel's been teaching. And so when Jesus quotes this passage at His trial, what do the religious leaders say? Blasphemy! He's blasphemed! Why? Because Jesus is identifying Himself with the divine Son of Man.

(AMIR) Exactly.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) This has to be God!

(AMIR) And people don't understand that the blasphemy was never held as He claims to be the Messiah. No! In their mind, Messiah could have been a human being. It's the fact that He claims to have divine nature, that Him and the Father are one. He equals Himself to God. And that's the blasphemy!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Absolutely! You know what's interesting. So there are a lot of people that would read the New Testament and argue that Jesus never claimed to be God. The crazy thing is that the religious people that constantly wanted...

(AMIR) That's what they accused Him for!



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) They kept... So if ever you wonder what Jesus is really claiming, just check with the religious people that wanted to stone Him. Why would we claim to understand Jesus 2,000 years better, 2,000 years later than the religious people that actually were there and heard what He was claiming and wanted to stone Him? Why? Before Abraham was, he didn't say "I was." He doesn't say, "Before Abraham was, I was." Which is good grammar. He says, "Before Abraham was, I am." A claim to deity.

(AMIR) Yes! Absolutely! And it's...it's beautiful because I think that this is exactly the problem of so many people around the world. They lack the understanding of two things: the Old Testament text as well as the Jewish understanding of things 2,000 years ago. Because again, no one accused Him for being the Messiah. The accusation and the blasphemy referred to Him being God. And if He was—let's put it this way—if He was handed to the Romans to be crucified for being God, that means that that's exactly what He claimed to be. And it was exactly what they claimed that He said. And He was willing to take it all the way to the cross because it's true

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Correct. He never refuted that!

(AMIR) Never refuted that.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) In fact, He testified, **"...you will see the Son of Man seated in power, at the right hand of Power..."** (Mark 14: 62 ESV) By virtue of the fact that He quotes Daniel 7 and applies it to Himself, He's actually saying, "I participate in the divine nature."



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) It seems like there's a lot of Christian cults, or sects, that deny the deity of Christ. And one of the things they say [is] that there's not that many verses in the New Testament that actually state explicitly that Yeshua, Jesus, is God. So, how would you respond to this statement?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Yeah, it's something I've thought about for many, many years. And I really do think that, you know, the whole notion of the deity of Jesus has profound impact on everything you understand about salvation. And the smaller Jesus is, the bigger you have to be in salvation, right? There's a correspondence between a low Christology and what we would call salvation by works. So, in Jehovah Witnesses, right? They have to work really hard because Jesus isn't God. He needs help! Right? He needs help for us to be saved. But what I would argue is that, um...as I've thought through the issue of the deity of Jesus, I see it resting on four pillars. And really, to me, these four pillars are crucial in discussing the deity of Jesus. The first pillar would be—before we even get to, “Is Jesus God?”—does the Old Testament teach that the Messiah is God? Right? And I think that there's [a] really good, wonderful passage. We just looked at one in Daniel. So that's the first pillar. The second pillar, “Are those verses in the New Testament that actually...there's a direct statement that Jesus is God.” You'll be surprised to hear that, yes, there's [are] not a lot of verses that say that Jesus is God. There are some, though, that are quite clear. So John 1:1, “**In the beginning was the Word, ...the Word was with God, the Word was God.**” Okay? But there are two other pillars that are completely overlooked, and I think that they're the most important. And I think that they show, overwhelmingly, that Jesus is



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

God. The third pillar, “Are the verses in the New Testament that attribute to Jesus’ actions, statements, and attributes that belong exclusively to God?”

(AMIR) In the Old Testament.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) In the Old Testament. The stilling of the storm!

(AMIR) Absolutely.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) In Mark, chapter 4, it’s an amazing passage that has a lot of parallels to the story of Jonah. So He’s on the ship. He falls asleep. There’s a storm. The sailors, the disciples, wake Him up. “Don’t You care that we’re gonna perish?” The storm is settled. And then it says that the disciples feared a great fear. This is in Mark. Well what’s really interesting is that when you start to look at the parallels between Jonah, chapter one and the story of Jesus now, obviously, Jesus is not like the prophet Jonah who is running away. That’s clear. But what’s clearer is that there are some parallels between the stories, but suddenly you realize, who is it that calms the storm?

(AMIR) Yes. Psalm 89, verses eight and nine.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Exactly! Who calms the storm? It’s Jesus! And all of a sudden you realize, when you look through the whole Old Testament, one of the attributes of God that separates God from all of creation is God’s ability to control weather, to calm storms. That’s exclusively a divine action! So when the disciples say, **“Who then is this, that even the wind and the waves obey Him?”** that brings us back also to chapter two of Mark: **“Who is this that can forgive sins but God alone?”** And so here you have a classic example of an action that



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

Jesus does in the New Testament that exclusively belongs to God. And then there's a fourth pillar—very powerful—the fourth pillar is really remarkable in that the New Testament—we know this—constantly either quotes the Old Testament or alludes to the Old Testament. And you have so many times where the New Testament writers take a passage from the Old Testament and quote it as referring to Jesus. It's Jesus! But then you look back in the Old Testament; and who is it about?

(AMIR) God!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) YHWH (יהוה) The Lord God, Jehovah! And so, either... either they're blaspheming themselves, or it's clear to them that Jesus has to be God. And again, what's remarkable is we're talking about Jews, from the second Temple period, who had a very strong notion. So one example. I'll give you one of the most amazing examples in Philippians. Philippians, chapter two. We know the passage in Philippians, chapter two.

(AMIR) Here it is. Yeah.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So notice in verse six, it says that He existed in the form of God but He didn't regard what? Equality with God a thing to be grasped. Full equality with God. But then we go on; and I want you to notice in verse...verse nine. If you want to read...why don't you read verse[s] nine through eleven?

(AMIR) Okay, so it says like this...um...it says, **“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee**



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So what people don't realize here is that Paul is actually taking a passage—and Bible scholars agree on this, whether they're believers or not—Paul used Israel's scriptures. Paul was Jewish. Paul's Bible was the Hebrew Bible.

(AMIR) Obviously! He didn't know the New Testament. He wrote it!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Exactly!

(AMIR) We're coming now, to one of the most important topics in this whole interview. And that's the one that is really close to my heart because I do believe with all of my heart that it's a matter of life and death. It's a matter of, you know, being lost or being saved. And that's what I'm talking about. Do you think the belief in Yeshua's deity is essential for salvation? I'm saying that it has to be super clear! It has to be super clear. Can someone call himself a Christian, born again, spirit-filled Christian, yet deny the deity of Jesus?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Okay! So you don't even need to ask me. You can ask Paul the Apostle.

(AMIR) Let's ask Paul the Apostle.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Let's look at Romans, chapter 11. Romans 10. I'm sorry!

(AMIR) Let's go to Romans, chapter 10. Romans, the Magna Carta of our faith. Let's go to Romans, chapter 10. And in chapter 10, look what he says.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Okay, so I'm gonna...if you don't mind, I'm gonna read a couple of passages here. I'm gonna start in verse...well, I'll start in verse 8. Will that be okay? **“But what**



Jesus Man or God? Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell

does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’—that is, the word of faith, which we are preaching.” (NASB) What's the word of faith we are preaching? That if you confess with your mouth, Jesus as Lord! The Greek here is "kurios."

(AMIR) Kurios!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Kurios, which can be like in Hebrew, “Adhon.”

(AMIR) Adhon! Yes!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It can mean "sir"

(AMIR) And that's what it says in the Hebrew here.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It can also mean “divine.”

(AMIR) Correct.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Okay, so...**“if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”** Okay, you actually have to confess that Jesus is Lord. Well, does he mean here only "sir"? Well let's keep going. **“¹⁰For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, ‘whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.’ For there is no distinction between**





**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

Jew and Greek; for the same Lord...—Who's “Lord” here? Jesus. We've already said that. You have to confess He is Lord!—“**...is Lord over all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him.**” Look at this! Romans 10, verse 13: “**For whoever will call on the name of the Lord...**”

(AMIR) Yes! And in Hebrew it's Jehovah!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) “**For who will ever call on the *name* of the Lord will be saved.**”

(AMIR) And that is for....

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Paul is quoting. What's he quoting from? He's quoting from Joel, chapter 2, verse 32! Joel, chapter 2, verse 32. In the English it's 2:32. In Hebrew it's 3:1 or 3:5, I believe it is. But here's what's remarkable! Paul quotes a passage...

(AMIR) About salvation!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) About salvation in the Old Testament. Whoever calls on the name of "YHWH" will be saved!

(AMIR) And He is that Lord!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) He is that Lord! So if we do not confess with our mouth that Jesus *is*...



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) Is that Lord...



(DR. SETH POSTELL) *Is* that Lord, we cannot be saved! This is Paul saying this, not Seth.

(AMIR) So powerful!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It is fundamental to our salvation! This is Paul saying this, not Seth.

(AMIR) Absolutely! By saying that He is God, it is no longer essential for you to work for your salvation—but because He has done it all!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) I love it!

(AMIR) We do not preach salvation through works. It's through Him. But we need to make sure you understand who He is. And do you think, by the way, that when Jesus says, “I do not know you,” do you think that those people that said, “Lord! Lord!” Do you think that there's a chance that these people never understood or knew Him *as* God?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Well listen. Again, what the...in that particular context, I would have to look at it more carefully. Okay? What I like to do is, I like to look at the passages that are very clear. And if you look at Romans, chapter 10...



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) Super clear.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) That is so unbelievably clear. Interestingly enough, what's remarkable, Peter's first sermon in Acts, chapter two.

(AMIR) Acts, chapter two!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) In Acts, chapter two, he quotes this passage as well.

(AMIR) Exactly!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) He says, those who...**“All who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”** (Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13) So his first sermon—Peter, in his very first sermon—Peter quotes this passage about Jesus. In other words, right off the bat.

(AMIR) Verse 21.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Exactly. You have to believe that Jesus is Lord.

(AMIR) Yep! We can say with great confidence that *biblically* you cannot be saved unless you believe that Jesus is God.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) You have to confess with your mouth that He is *Lord!*

(AMIR) Lord! And that same Lord that we see in Joel, chapter two, and of course, as Romans, chapter 10, and Acts, chapter two is talking about. That's powerful! It's important! And it's overlooked often by so many.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) You know, it's remarkable again, Amir. So again, people will say that belief in Jesus as God was a very slow development within Gentile Christianity, that it happened over time. But Peter's very first sermon to the Jewish people in Acts, chapter two...he takes the



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

passage in Joel, “**all who call in the name of the Lord will be saved,**” [and] he applies it to Jesus. In other words, from the very first sermon, public sermon, after the Holy Spirit came upon the early believers, they immediately proclaimed that Jesus was God.

(AMIR) We're coming to the conclusion of our interview here, and it's been unbelievable. I mean, I think that what you did, Seth, is you really help people explain what they already believe or finally understand what they couldn't understand before. Uh...but there are a couple scriptures, such as Colossians 1:15, speaking of Jesus, **the firstborn of [all] creation**, and John 14:28 saying, “**the Father is greater than I,**” which seems to be, not completely, putting Jesus completely equal with God. How will you respond to that? And the reason why I am saying that is because we're here to talk straight forward and to tackle those things that people always hang on to as a proof that He is not God. So how would you respond to that?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So, okay, let's start with the firstborn from the dead, all right? The firstborn of all creation. So let me ask you a question. Who was Abraham's firstborn?

(AMIR) Of course, Ishmael, but...

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Was Ishmael Abraham's first born? That's what's really interesting. He wasn't! Why? Because God chose Isaac. In other words, firstborn has nothing to do with when you were born.

(AMIR) I see. It's the status. It's the title.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) The status. The status!

(AMIR) So Abraham's firstborn is not Ishmael.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It is not Ishmael!

(AMIR) Although...although chronologically, he was born first, but he is not the firstborn!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Exactly! And so really in Psalm 89 where it talks about the fact that God will establish the Messiah as firstborn over all creation...what that means—and he explains it later on—that creation was created *through* the Messiah, *by* the Messiah, *for* the Messiah. He is the Inheritor of everything that God has ever made. He's the firstborn. And guess what? When we believe in Jesus, we become coheirs! We become His children. And so the word here, “the firstborn,” to suggest that it means born first, shows me that they're trying to understand this verse without the Old Testament background.

(AMIR) Absolutely!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So there's a classic example. Now what about **“the Father is greater than I”**?

(AMIR) Correct! John 14:28.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Okay. Well, interestingly enough, go to John 14, verse 12.

(AMIR) Okay, so here's John 14. I'm here at John 14, verse 12. So here it is. And it says the following thing: **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father. And whatever you ask in My Name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My Name, I will do it.”**



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Okay. So here Jesus says to His followers, “You’re going to do greater”—same word in Greek— “You’re going to do greater works than I did.”

(AMIR) Correct.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It's the same word.

(AMIR) Correct.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) You're going to do greater works than I did.

(AMIR) Yes.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Okay. So what does that mean? So we're going to die for people?

(AMIR) No.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) We're going to...in other words, you have to qualify the statement.

(AMIR) Correct.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) “Greater” in what sense? In every sense? That would be blasphemy. That would be a denial of our faith that we're going to do greater things than Jesus because there were things that Jesus did that affirmed His divine nature.

(AMIR) So we cannot say we are God.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) I can't do the things that make Jesus God, right? And so you have to qualify. So when Jesus says that **“the Father is greater than I,”** the Greek doesn't mean that He's greater in everything. He's greater in some things. And I do believe, interestingly enough, that the Father and Son are fully equal. Just like a husband and wife are fully equal. As my view, they're fully equal.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) They're different roles.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) But they're [they have] different roles. And so the Son submits to the Father, **“not My will, but Yours be done.”** There is a hierarchy of roles but not a hierarchy in divine status. Because if you make Jesus a lesser deity, then guess what? You've replaced biblical faith with Greek mythology.

(AMIT) That's true.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Because in Greek mythology, there are there are levels of deity. And so anybody that would claim that Jesus is a lesser deity, lesser in divinity, has suddenly abandoned biblical faith, and they've become a Greek pagan.

(AMIR) Amazing. I want to share with you, just to conclude this whole thing, a statistic that is pretty shocking. Believe it or not, but most “so called Christians,” people who claim that they're not Muslims, they're not Jews, they're not Hindus, they're not Sikhs, they are Christians—that is how they categorize themselves—most of them do not fully believe in the deity of Christ *or* do not understand what it means. Because if you elevate someone else, such as Mary, to the same level, then you don't understand the deity. And isn't that shocking, that 2,000 years later, after the writings of the first century, the Jewish writings, and after everything we see in in His words, and His actions, and attributes, and His nature, everything—still most people on planet earth that call themselves Christians, do not understand or agree. By the way, they had a poll done recently. And I'm not sure if it was 40—30 or 40% of evangelicals in America—correct me if I'm wrong—that actually believed Jesus was created! And this is so sad.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So let me just make a clarification here.

(AMIR) Okay.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) I would say 100% of evangelicals believe that Jesus is God. In the moment you say He is not, you're no longer evangelical.

(AMIR) That's true.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) In other words, the bottom line is this, um...the Scriptures are unbelievably clear. And again, as Jewish believers, um...you and I, you know, we value very much the importance of understanding the biblical Jesus in light of the Old Testament.

(AMIR) Yes.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) And as soon as you start to do that, you can come to no other conclusion other than the fact that Jesus participates fully in the deity of God. He is fully God.

(AMIR) Absolutely.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) The bottom line—and we already touched on this, but it is to me...it's so crucial—to the extent that Jesus becomes smaller, you become bigger. And you'll notice, a lot of these movements that emphasize things instead of Jesus, they're very busy. And so I like to joke. And it's...what I'm about to say is gonna sound heretical. So bear with me till the end.

To the extent that Jesus becomes smaller, you become bigger.

(AMIR) It's okay; I'm being accused of being heretical anyway.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) I like to joke that we really are saved by works. Not our own. We are saved by His works, from start to finish. And the moment you understand who Jesus is—you



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

understand His deity and His humanity together—you start to recognize that salvation is completely a gift, from start to finish, and then suddenly good works become a fruit.

(AMIR) Amen. Exactly! It's the fruit and it's not the way to salvation. It's the fruit of your already existing salvation. This is so important! Anyone that suggests that Jesus is not God and that we must add something to it cannot, by definition, be saved. And this is... and we're not here to blame or accuse. We're here to explain and teach so you will understand, and you will come to that conclusion so you will be saved. We...that's what we want! We want people to be saved, but on the grounds of Romans 10. On the grounds of the things that you must be able to say and believe in and to confess and believe in order to be saved.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So think about the doctrine of works-based salvation. You can never rest!

(AMIR) Never.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Okay. Jesus says to me, **“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”** Well, who is the giver of rest according to the Bible?

(AMIR) God.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) God. The only way you can ever experience that verse in its fullness. The only way you'll ever experience rest is...

(AMIR) If you believe that He is God.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) And that He's done it all!



Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell

(AMIR) Seth, let's move to the practical level of things. Why, from a practical point of view, [is it] important that the believer will have an understanding of the divine nature of the Messiah?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) I'll tell you... I'll give you an answer with a story.

(AMIR) Okay.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Years ago, my daughter was not listening to me. She was young. And I told her, "Sweetheart, if you disobey me again, I'm taking you into the room, and you're gonna get a spanking." She disobeyed. We went into the room, and I said, "Why are you here?" She said, "I disobeyed you." "What did Daddy say would happen?" "You said you'd give me a spanking." "Does Daddy love you?" "Yes." And her lips started to come out and quiver. You know! You know! She was... Right? And at that moment, I rolled up my sleeve, and she got very scared. She'd never seen Daddy roll up his sleeve like that. And I looked at her and I said, "Yael, you deserve a spanking because you disobeyed Daddy." "But Daddy loves you very, very, very much!" "And because Daddy loves you, I'm going to take your spanking in your place." And I started to beat my arm...really hard in front of her. And she was crying! And I said, "Yael, what just happened here?" She said, "You took my spanking." "Why did Daddy do it?" "Because you love me." I said, "Did Daddy deserve that spanking?" "No, I did." "Why did Daddy do it?" "Because you love me." I think we've hit the heart of the gospel. And that is that. You know the story of Passover. God didn't send an angel to rescue us. He came Himself! That's the whole story of the Passover. God came Himself. We needed to be rescued. And so, God didn't want to give glory to anybody else, including ourselves. There's nothing we can contribute to our



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

salvation. God gets all the glory, and God demonstrates His love in the cross. That God, at the perfect time, He became a man so that He could die in our place. So that if we ever doubt the love of God, we look at the cross and we say, “God, you paid such an amazing price!” I think that really the bottom line is that God gets all the glory in our salvation [and] that Jesus is fully God. In any other equation, we’ll never understand the love of God. We’ll never understand the love of God! And we’ll always want to add to our salvation.

(AMIR) But there's nothing we can add to this one.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Nothing at all! He loves us perfectly! And He demonstrated His perfect love by putting on flesh and taking our spanking.

(AMIR) What a great time we had together! Dr. Seth Postell. I know that you wrote some books, and you contributed to some others. So, please, if you don't mind, let us know a little bit about them. Okay?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Yeah, with pleasure. So um...so this is a book. As you mentioned, I serve with One For Israel at the Bible College. I am the academic dean of One For Israel.

And we just...we have a passion to share God's Word and to train and to reach Jewish people and train up Arabs and Jews. And so we wrote this book. One of the questions that we constantly get—I don't know which way to...which angle...[passes book to Amir]—
So...*Reading Moses Seeing Jesus* It's a



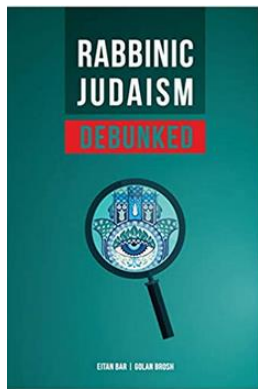


Jesus Man or God? Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell

constant question that we get—it's about the Torah, and the Law—“Should we keep these laws?”

And so we wrote a book that basically deals with how a faithful reading of the Torah brings you

to Jesus. My colleague, Eitan Bar, he wrote a book that basically shows that Jewish oral law...



(AMIR) Yeah, it's the myth.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) It's a myth! That God didn't give an oral law from Heaven.

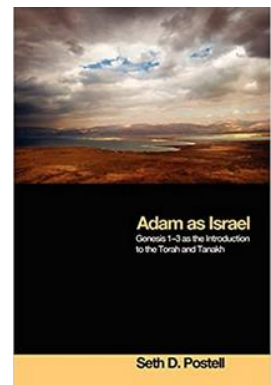
(AMIR) And this is the Hebrew one! And Dr. Golan Brosh, whom we also hosted, is one of the coauthors. And this is being translated, as we speak, to English as well. [*Rabbinic Judaism Debunked: Debunking the Myth of*

Rabbinic Oral Law.]

(DR. SETH POSTELL) So this is a book I wrote. It actually was my dissertation. It's called *Adam as Israel*. And again, the point of this book, the dissertation, was to show how the early chapters of Genesis basically already anticipate the fact that we are going to need a Messiah and the New Covenant. And so that's that [book].

(AMIR) *Adam as Israel*.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) *Adam as Israel*. And then this book...actually, I was a contributor.



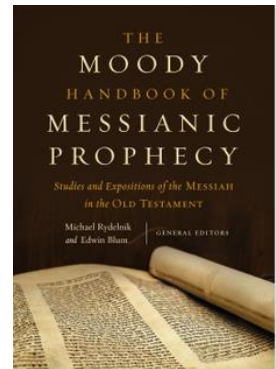
(AMIR) So this is a wonderful book. I've known...um...from Moody Bible Institute.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Correct. So I was... I think I wrote...I think, nine or ten articles...about how the Hebrew Bible is Messianic, and how it points to Jesus and so I recommend this...

(AMIR) *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy*. Michael Rydelnik and Edwin Blum. And uh...and you, of course, contributed about 9-10 of the [articles] there. Why...uh...why is it so important, that people understand this from the Jewish angle, from the local angle?



(DR. SETH POSTELL) Yeah.

(AMIR) Why is it so important?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Sure, I would just simply argue that we want to understand Jesus in His context.

(AMIR) Yes.

(DR. SETH POSTELL) And the moment we try to understand Jesus outside of His context, it's no longer Jesus. So if you try to read the New Testament without the Old Testament, you get a new religion. You try to read Jesus apart from being Jewish, you're going to make a new Jesus.

(AMIR) So He didn't die as a Jew and resurrect as a non-Jew?

(DR. SETH POSTELL) Correct! Correct! He's still the son of David!

(AMIR) Absolutely!

(DR. SETH POSTELL) He still has a Jewish mother! Which means, interestingly enough, if Jesus died a Jew and rose as a non-Jew...that would mean He rose as no longer the Messiah because the Messiah has to be the son of David. Jesus is eternally Jewish.



**Jesus
Man or God?
Amir Tsarfati and Dr. Seth Postell**

(AMIR) He is The Lion of the tribe of Judah. Amen.

(DR.SETH POSTELL) Amen!

(AMIR) Amen.