

Section 4: The Old Testament's testimony to the Deity of Jesus:

Chapter 12: Scriptures that implies the divinity of the Messiah

1- Kiss the Son: Psalm 2

Psalm 2 is a royal psalm and must be interpreted in association with the Hebrew monarchy. More specifically, psalm 2 is a coronation psalm which is clear from the content of the psalm.¹⁷³

The human king is here identified as God's anointed. The royal title was derived from the fact that the king on his coronation is anointed (1 Kings 1:45), an act symbolizing that he was set aside from other people to perform a certain task¹⁷⁴ the identification of the psalm with the coronation of a Davidic king is clarified by the parallels between this psalm and the promise given to David (2 Sam. 7:8-16)¹⁷⁵

Yet the language of the Psalm goes beyond what any earthly king could ever be. Psalm 2 portrayed the Messiah to be a joint-king and a joint Judge alongside God himself and therefore the Psalm implies that the coming Messiah is truly divine:

1- All the nations of the world are in subjection to God and his Messiah: "The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" v2-3. The joint kingship that the Messiah enjoys with God is so obvious from the phrases "Against the LORD and against His Anointed", "their fetters", and "their cords"

2- God will give the Messiah is to be king over all the earth: "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your

¹⁷³ Peter C. Craicie, Word Biblical commentary: Psalms 1-50; (Word Books: Waco; 1983), 63

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 66

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 64

possession” v8. The king over all the earth is a function that is only attributed to God
 “Arise, O God, judge the earth; For You shall inherit all nations” Psalm 82:8.(cf. Psalm
 47:2; 7)

The argument to support the this psalm is talking only about an earthly king is that; the
 Lord was a universal king, therefore the king’s jurisdiction, as his earthly representative, is
 also presented in worldwide terms (v8-9)¹⁷⁶

Against that, however; is that God’s covenant with David and his offspring is that if they
 will abide in his laws, their kingdom over Israel alone will endure (1 Kings 9:4-5; 2
 Sam.7:12; 1 Kings 6:12-13; 2 Chro.7-17-18). The concept of God’s anointed one who
 will, alongside God, rule over all the nations can’t be understood in terms of human kings
 at all and never heard of in any of God’s coeneants with earthly kings.

3- The Coming Messiah will excute judgements over all the nations: “You shall break
 them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.” V9

4- The Son, the Messiah, receives adoration like God:

<p>V11: Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling</p>	<p>V12: Do homage to the Son¹⁷⁷, that He not become angry, and you perish <i>in</i> the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled.</p>
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To do homage to the Son implies the same veneration as to “the Lord”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 68

¹⁷⁷ The phrase “kiss the Son” or “do homage to the Son” is “נִשְׁקָה(ר) בֶּרֶךְ” although the meaning of the MT is clear “kiss the Son” yet there is difficulty with the text because 1- the word “בֶּרֶךְ” for “Son” is Aramic and not Hebrew 2- the majority of the versions with the late rabbinic teaching presuppose a Hebrew text such as “בֵּרֶךְ” for “pure.” But the aramic language could be explained because the psalmist was addressing foreign kings, and a variety of psychological factors might explain its ambiguity in different versions. (for further discussion Craicie, 64)

5- The last phrase of v 12 ascribed to the Son is almost identical to Psalm 34:8 ascribed to the Lord:

Psalm 2:12 “How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” “אֲשֶׁר־יָרִי כָּל־חַוְסֵי בּוֹ”

Ps. 34:8 “How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!”

“אֲשֶׁר־יָרִי הָיָה נִבְרַךְ יַחְסֶה־בּוֹ”

It is clear from the quotation of Psalm 2 in the NT that the Psalm is Messianic and that “his anointed” v2; “My Son” v7; and “the Son” v12 are all terms describing the Lord Jesus Christ.

<p>Psalm 2:2 “The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying”</p>	<p>Acts 4:24-27 “They (the apostles) raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You <i>are</i> God,... who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things?The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ”</p> <p>How did the apostles applied this scripture:</p> <p>V 27 “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and</p>
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¹⁷⁸ J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: God, World, and redemption*, V1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 87 (footnote 13)

	Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together.”
Psalm 2:7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”	<p>Hebrews 5:5 “So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, <i>but it</i> was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”</p> <p>Acts 13:33 "God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”</p>

It is clear then from the language of the Psalm and from the understanding of the early church to it that the Psalm is Messianic and that the divine attributes and actions that only belong to God is also ascribed to the coming Messiah.

2- *His name will be...Mighty God:* Isaiah.9: 6

In Isaiah 9:6 we read a messianic prophecy. Reymond wrote that “the setting of this messianic prophecy is apparent from the context”¹⁷⁹ the land of Israel was covered with spiritual darkness. The people were roaming through the land in distress and gloom. Yet Isaiah prophesied that it won’t be always like this because “The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.” v2. Isaiah prophesied that “this great light” will precisely shine in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali (v1) that is the upper and the lower Galilee, around the sea of

¹⁷⁹ Robert L. Reymond , Jesus divine Messiah, (WS Bookwell, Finland, 2003) 106

Galilee and the Jordan river in which there is a large mixed population of Jews and Gentiles. The effect of the appearance of this great light is that the nation will increase and that they will full of joy v3. Isaiah then gives three reasons in v 4-7 for the joy of the people: first, their deliverance from the bondage v4; second, the destruction of the weapons of war against them v5; third and climatically; the birth of the Davidic king who will rule forever and through whom the previously-mentioned deliverance and destruction were to be accomplished v6.¹⁸⁰

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (NASV)

This is one of the greatest Messianic prophecies in the OT. I want to study this scripture from one point of view, if the coming Messiah is to be called “God”.

Although the classical interpretation of “גִּבּוֹר אֱלֹהִים” is “Mighty God” indicating that the Messiah is God in his nature; yet some recent commentators translated this word as “Divine-hero” or “godlike-hero” indicating the promised Messiah will posses might and power yet he is not divine in his nature. The question is how should we translate “גִּבּוֹר אֱלֹהִים”? is it “Mighty God” or “divine-hero”?

McClellan in his great article on “El Gibbor” expresses the grammatical and exegetical problem as follows:

- In the Traditional exegesis the substantive “God” followed (in the regular Hebrew order of words) by the attributive adjective “mighty”¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Reymond, 106-108

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 279

- The recent exegesis, which is held by some scholars, translates “אלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר” in one of two ways¹⁸²:
 - 1- “mighty hero” or “a prince of a hero” in this interpretation the word “אלֹהֵי” is used in its “subordinate application” as a reference to “men of might and rank”
 - 2- “Divine hero” or “god of a warrior” in this translation the word “divine” or “god” is use in a metaphoric way. The meaning presented is that the victory and power of the promised Messiah will “reflect” the majesty and sovereignty of God.

In either of these cases the second word (taken as substantive) is in the “genitive of genus”, a fairly common feature of the Hebrew Syntax.

Support for the recent exegesis:

- 1- The Parallelism with the other titles support that “god of the warrior” is the right translation. All four titles in Isaiah 9:6 seem to have the same internal construction. Assuredly “פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵזֶן” “wonder of a counselor”, “אֲבִי עַד” “father of all time”, and “שָׁר־שָׁלוֹם” “prince of peace” all involve a noun in construct governing another in the genitive. The conclusion appears to be that “אלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר” must be likewise be constructed as “god of the warrior”¹⁸³

To reply to this argument McClellian quotes Isaiah 1:26 in which God spoke about Jerusalem saying “I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city” The

¹⁸² McClellian’s presentation of Dr. Briggs exegesis of “*el gibbor*”. Ibid, 278

¹⁸³ Ibid, 248

name of the city in Hebrew is “עִיר הַצְּדִיק קַרְיַת נְאֻמָּנָה” it comprises two titles. In Hebrew the first is a noun in the construct followed by a genitive. The second consists of a noun in the absolute followed by an attributive adjective. Parallelism should not be argued too far¹⁸⁴.

- 2- The Comparison with Ezek. 32:21 proves that “אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹרִים” doesn’t mean that the person is divine. In Ezekiel 32:21 we read about the dead heroes who were in Sheol “From within the grave the mighty leaders אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹרִים” will say of Egypt and her allies, ‘They have come down and they lie with the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword’” (NIV) if the term “divine-heroes” was used to describe the “mighty leaders” before the coming of the Messiah, then the term “divine-hero” when applied to the Messiah is just to indicate that he has the ability to rule yet the term doesn’t mean that the Messiah is divine¹⁸⁵.

To reply to this argument McClellian wrote that while it is true that Ezekiel the priest used the same title already conferred by Isaiah on the Messiah himself to refer to the departed heroes. But no one whether it is true or whether we should read instead “the leaders of warriors” as destined to speak from Shoel. This would be more intelligible; but the textual doubts remain unsolved¹⁸⁶.

The word “אֱלֹהִים” is always, even in passages as Gen.31:29, “God.” All the passages which are adduced to prove that it means “princes” or “heros” the forms are to be driven not

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 284

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 284

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 285

from “אל” but from “איל” which probably means “ram” then “prince” On this ground we can set Isaiah 9:6 apart from Ezek. 32:21.¹⁸⁷

Also against the translation “the divine hero”, i.e. the victories of the Messiah will reflect the glory of God, is that “אל” is never used as an adjective; and even so, if it were here only, it should follow, not precede, “גבור”, as has been noticed.¹⁸⁸

And against the translation “mighty hero”, i.e. the Messiah as a human warrior has the might needed to achieve the victory, is that “אל” in Isaiah is always a name of God.¹⁸⁹

- 3- The context requires the translation of “god of the warrior” or “divine-hero”. In Isaiah 9:3-5, Isaiah writes on the joy, deliverance and peace that the Messiah will bring. To describe the coming Messiah as “divine-hero” or “god of a warrior” rather than “Mighty God” will fit more the Messiah’s as a victorious warrior¹⁹⁰.

In his reply to this objection, McClellan argues back that:

- 1- The word “גבור” has the implication of “war” almost always, but not quite so; that there are few passages in which its radical meaning “strong” expresses power in other than warlike spheres of action. For examples; Deut. 10:17, 2 Esd.9:32, Jer.32:18 in all these scriptures the formula “God, the great, the mighty” employs “אל” with “גבור” with no warlike situation indicated by these passages even remotely.

¹⁸⁷ Hengstenberg, 449

¹⁸⁸ William Kelly, *The exposition of the book of Isaiah*, Klock and Klock Christian Publishers, MN, 4th edi. 1979, 133

¹⁸⁹ Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on Isaiah Vol.1*, Funk and Wagnalls, NY, NO Year, 213

¹⁹⁰ McClellan, 286

- 2- In the context of Isaiah 9:2-7 the oppressor's hated load and lash, even the last relic of his devastation, has been destroyed before the child appears. From birth itself he is the most peace bestowing of rulers.¹⁹¹ In v 4 we read about the ending of the oppression "You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian" and then in v5 we read about end of war and the peace that is founded "For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and for fire" in v 6 Isaiah wrote on the reason why this peace was founded, and the reason was the birth of the Messiah child "for unto us a child was born..."
- 3- A careful examination of the names of the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6 suggests the absence of the war motif. The born child is to be called "wonderful consular", "Father forever" and "prince of peace". His title as "Mighty God" rather than "god of the warrior" will fit more his description as a consular, father, and peace giver.

Support to the Traditional exegesis:

- 1- The unmodified "אֱלֹהִים בְּרוּרִים" (with attribution not expressed by the article, as in Deut. 10: 17, 2 Esad. 9:32; Jer.32:18) occurs but once again in the OT. It is therefore natural to return to turn to Isaiah 10:21 for any light that may be shed upon Isaiah 9:6 in its use of the phrase.¹⁹² The whole section Isaiah 10:5-34 points to "that day" as the day of deliverance from Sennacherib, and culminates in the sudden felling of his "Lebanon" before the surviving "stump of Jesse" can be totally destroyed by him. V 20 contrasts the Assyrian "that smote them" with one

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 287

¹⁹² McClellan, 285

upon whom the converted remnant will “lean in truth” when Judah’s devastation through two successive reigns shall have sifted it out. His identity is not left uncertain. He is YHWH, the holy one of Israel, to whom “A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to *the* mighty God (אלֹהֵי גִבּוֹרִים)”

2- The philological support:

- The word “אלֹהֵי”:

This word in the singular occurred about 230 times in the OT, 23 times in Isaiah. The normal significance, present in about 200 cases, is “God” naturally excluded from the rare plural. “A god” may be termed a “less proper” meaning by comparison, but by no mean a mere figure, since what is expressed is still a divine being, alleged if not real.¹⁹³

Brown, Driver, Briggs Gesenius Indicate that “אלֹהֵי” can be applied to “mighty men of might and rank”. “אֵיל גִּבּוֹרִים” translated “mighty one” in Ezek. 31:11. “אֱלֹהִים” translated “the mighty” in Job 41:25 (41:17 in the Hebrew). “אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹרִים” is translated “mighty heroes” in Ezek. 32:21. “אֱלֹהֵי הַגִּבּוֹרִים” translated as “the mighty men of the land” in Ezek. 17:13, 2 kings 24:15. “אֱלֹהֵי” is translated as “chiefs”.¹⁹⁴

McClellan argues that when the meaning “mighty one” or “chief” is ascribed to “אלֹהֵי” by Gesenius, all of them signally fail to support the assertion. Every other scripture cited by him, apart from Isaiah 9:6 and 10:21, is one of an uncertain text. The variant is another substantive “אֵילִים” meaning something like “ram” and sometimes “leader”. This, of

¹⁹³ Ibid, 279, 280

¹⁹⁴ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew Aramaic English Lexicon, Book Publishers’ Press, inc. IN, 1981, page 42

course, reads “אֵיל” in the construct singular , and has the same stem in both states of the plural “אֵיִלִּים” and “אֵלִים”. the idea of “leader” is satisfied by this reading of “אֵיל” but must be verified for “אֵלִים”, at least with one incontestable example.¹⁹⁵

Gesenius argues that the difference between “אֵלִים” and “אֵילִים” in these scriptures because “these reading are uncertain because of an effort to distinguish these forms from the dive name”¹⁹⁶

In his reply, McClellan indicates that if this to be true, it is strange that Ginsburg, in his pertinent passage of his *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, doesn’t even mention the separately written “אֵלִים” (i.e. out of the theophoric names) as an instance of the scribal device even with such conspicuous examples before him.¹⁹⁷

The use of the apparent plural “אֵיִלִּים” requires special treatment (we need

The Theological dictionary of the OT

- The Word “גִּבּוֹר”

The word was mentioned 168 times in the OT. In more that 90% of its occurrence it means either “warlike” or “a warrior”.

Yet the word “גִּבּוֹר” also can mean “strength” or “power” with no warlike

implications. For example; Nimrod was described as “גִּבּוֹר בּוֹרֵר צִיד” “mighty hunter”

¹⁹⁵ McClellan, 281

¹⁹⁶ Gesenius, 42

¹⁹⁷ McClellan, 281-282

Gen.10:9 and Boaz was described as “גִּבּוֹר בּוֹרַיִם חַיִּיל” that is “a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech,” i.e a man of great social influence.

When the word is applied to God as in Deut.10:17; 2 Esdr.9:32; and Jeremiah 32:18 it is free from any warlike implications. More remarkable on another score is the fact that, although not one of these passages is written in poetic metre, the word for God is “אֱלֹהִים” in the common formula; This point to the union of “גִּבּוֹר בּוֹרַיִם” with “אֱלֹהִים” in a conventional phrase which had no warlike implications.¹⁹⁸

McClellan concludes that “mighty God” so long accepted by both Jewish and Christian exegesis, is the only translation in keeping with the idiom of the OT.¹⁹⁹

3- The Ancient translations support:

The Hebrew MT reads the names of the Messiah as:

“פְּלֵא יוֹעֵץ < אֱלֹהִים גִּבּוֹר בּוֹרַיִם אֲבִי עַד שֵׁר-שְׁלוֹם:”

The LXX lacks the titles in the oldest MSS.²⁰⁰ LXX reads “μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄξω εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας εἰρήνην καὶ ὑγίαιαν αὐτῷ” that is the name of the Messiah King is “the Messenger of great counsel: for I will bring peace upon the princes, and health to him”. A Σ Θ follow the Hebrew MT more closely than LXX does. None of these, however, render “אֱלֹהִים” as God but some MSS add to the LXX “a wonderful counselor, a mighty God”. The Tg reads this verse as “wonderful counselor, mighty God who lives forever, the Messiah in whose days peace will be great over us” The Vg reads

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 282-284

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 284

²⁰⁰ John N. Oswalt, The book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39, (Eerdman Publishing company, 1986) 247. footnote 25

“Wonderful, counselor, God, mighty, father of coming ages, prince of peace”²⁰¹ Modern Jewish translators like “The Holy Scripture according to the Masoretic Text” retains the Hebrew of the name in the transcript, translating it marginally, “Wonderful in counsel is God the Mighty, the everlasting Father, the ruler of peace” Although this translation ruins all connection between the sense of the passage and its metrical structure, besides making the attributive name one fourth predicate and three fourth subject. Yet it demonstrates that the authors didn’t understand “אֵל נִבְרָר” any other way except the one that is familiar to us²⁰².

Solomon Freehof, a Jewish commentator, wrote on Isaiah 9:6 that all Jewish commentators follow the example of the Targum who says that these epithets, except the last one, apply to God who is naming the child. There for is to be read “God the Mighty, the eternal Father, calls his name ‘Prince of peace’”²⁰³

4- The comparison to the other names of the Messiah in Isaiah 9:

- The Messiah is a “wonderful counselor” like God himself “This also comes from the LORD of hosts, *Who* is wonderful in counsel *and* excellent in guidance” Is. 28:29 (Cf. Is.25:1)
- The Messiah was described as “Father of all ages” or “everlasting Father” that can be alluded to 1 Chronicles 29:10 “Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever”

²⁰¹ John D.W. Watts, Word Biblical commentary Isaiah 1-33, (Word books, publisher, Waco, TX, 1985) 131

²⁰² William H. McClellian “El Gibbor”, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, V6, No.3, Pages 276-277.

²⁰³ Solomon Bennett Freehof, a commentary on Isaiah, Union of American Hebrew congregations, NY, 1892, 65.

- The Messiah was described as “prince of peace.” In the scriptures the Lord is always the source of peace for his people. His name is “יְהוָה שְׁלוֹמֶךָ” “Jehoveh Shalom” “the Lord is our peace” Judges 6:24.

We see then that the other names of the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6 imply his deity, therefore it is no shock that he is called “Mighty God”

One last argument against the deity of the Messiah is that the title “אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹרִים” was used in a metaphoric way and not in a literal way. The expression proves divine nature as little as when in Ps. 82:1-6 Judges are called “gods” because they are God’s representatives²⁰⁴

This argument is inadmissible. We can’t use Psalm 82 to explain Isaiah 9:6 because in Psalm 82 the term “Elohim” was used in its most vague way but here the name “El” was used which is a personal name. “אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹרִים” of Isaiah 9:6 is used in the fullest meaning of the word and it is to be compared to Isaiah 10:21²⁰⁵

4- “*And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit.*” Isaiah 48:12-16:

In Isaiah 48 the Lord is the speaker through out the whole chapter. In v12-16 He said “Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last.” Surely My hand founded the earth, And My right hand spread out the heavens; When I call to them, they stand together. “Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them has declared these things? The LORD loves him; he will carry out His good pleasure on Babylon, And His arm *will be against* the Chaldeans. “I, even I, have spoken; indeed I have called him, I have brought him, and He will make his ways successful.

²⁰⁴ Hengstenberg, 450

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 450

"Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit."

The first three cola of v 16 are clear enough but the last two constitute a problem in terms of identifying the speaker. Many positions have been taken. 1- the subject of the whole verse in the prophet 2- the subject of the first three cola is God and the Subject of the last two is the prophet 3- the subject of the last two cola is the Messiah²⁰⁶

The speaker in the first three cola can't be any one else but YHWH for many reasons:

1- The first part of v 48:16 "Come near to Me, listen to this" is similar to the saying of the Lord in Isa. 41:1 "'Coastlands, listen to Me in silence, And let the peoples gain new strength; Let them come forward, then let them speak; Let us come together for judgment"

2- "From the first I have not spoken in secret" is similar to the saying of the Lord in Isa.45:19 "'I have not spoken in secret, In some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek Me in a waste place'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, Declaring things that are upright"²⁰⁷

3- "From the time it took place, I was there" "it took place" probably refer to the event of sending Cyrus (v 14-15) so in this phrase God was emphasizing that from the beginning of these events, he was there and he was connected with these events²⁰⁸.

The speaker in the last bicola is the Messiah. In the book of Isaiah it is common in the messianic prophecies to say that the "lord God" send him as in 50:5, 7, 9; 61:1. The speaker here is the servant, the Messiah, who was introduced in 42:1 and the prophet is going to talk about him more fully in chapters 49, 50, 53. Here he is announcing that "the

²⁰⁶ Oswalt, 278

²⁰⁷ Edward J.Young, the book of Isaiah, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 1981); 258

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 258

lord God” has sent him, for he is the true instrument who will bring the true redemption of God. The coming of Cyprus was but a preparation of his coming. Cyprus allowed the Jews to return to their land, but it is the Messiah who will bring the true retribution to the nation²⁰⁹.

Now the question we need to answer is if there is a change of the speaker in the last bicola of v16?

Many commentators say that there is a change in the speaker to avoid the difficulty of the passage, but there is no strong indication from the passage that there is a change of the speaker. I believe that the speaker in v12-16 is the Messiah for these reasons:

- 1- The speaker identified himself in v12 as “I am He, I am the first, I am also the last” which the Messiah freely applied to himself later on Rev.1:17; 2:8; 22:13
- 2- The change from “the lord” to “the lord God” in the last two cola affirms that the Messiah was the speaker through out all v16. we have seen how Jesus wasn’t shy to apply to himself the actions and characters of YHWH, also his disciples applied many scriptures that was spoken by or about YHWH in the OT to Jesus. On the other hand the scriptures seem to reserve the title “the Lord God” to the Father.
- 3- If there is a change of the speaker in the last two cola of v16, that will be the only phrase from Isa.47:5 till the end of chapter 48 that there is another speaker apart from YHWH. The theory of change of the speaker seems to be an easy way to avoid the awkwardness of v16 but not a good exegesis to it.
- 4- Some might argue that the phrase “and now” in “and now the lord God has sent me and his Spirit” indicates the change of the speaker. But this phrase doesn’t necessarily indicate a change of the speaker but rather the change from the immediate time where

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 259

Cyprus is restoring the nation into the time of the Messiah who is the ultimate restorer of Israel.

5-His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS: Jer.23:6

Jeremiah 23 starts with a woe to the Shepards “who destroy and scatter the sheep” v1, then God promised that he will be against these shepards v2, and that he will gather the remnant himself v3, and that he will appoint shepards after his own heart v4 and then he promised “Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this *is* His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (יְהוָה צְדִיקֵנוּ)” v5-6

Several controversial Jewish writers tried to read v26 as “this is the name of him who has called him: our righteous God” making the subject of the last phrase God and not the Messiah. But this reading can be easily rejected because externally it has the smallest authority in its favor and internally because the Messiah is the subject of all prior phrases therefore it would make better sense that the Messiah and not Jehovah is the one who will be called (יְהוָה צְדִיקֵנוּ)²¹⁰

Many commentators take this scripture as a reference to the deity of the Messiah because he is plainly called here “Jehovah Zedikino”; against that however:

1- When the prophet described the Messiah as “the lord our righteousness” he wasn’t talking about him in terms of his nature but in terms of his name. If the words were thus, “and this is Jehovah our righteousness,” we should take Jehovah as the personal

²¹⁰ Hengstenberg, V1, 692-693

designation of the Messiah. But in case of naming brevity is unavoidable. For example in Gen.33:20 Jacob “erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) *God the God of Israel*” that is not to say that the alter is “the God of Israel” but rather that “this alter belongs to the God of Israel.” In Exod.27:15 we read “Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner (יְהוָה נִסִּי) *Jehoveh Nisi*” that is to say “this alter is consecrated to the Lord my Banner.” Thus Jeshoua “Jehoveh is my salvation” is to say “the lord will grant me salvation.” Most perfectly analogous, however, is the named Zedekiah; the righteousness of the Lord, for: under his reign the Lord will grant righteousness to his people. This name, moreover, seemsto refer directly to the prophecy that we are studying here in Jer.23.²¹¹

2- A parallel passage is found in Jer. 33:15-16 “In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this *is the name* by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (יְהוָה צְדִיקֵנוּ) *Jehovah Zidikinu*” Here we see that the name “Jehoveh Zedikinu” is not the name of the Messiah but the name of Jerusalem under the reign of the Messiah. In vain are all the attempts which have been made tosetaside this troublesome argument.²¹²

Sowe cansay that even though Jer. 23:6 implyies the deity of the Messiah because there is no earthly kingwho is righteous yet it might not be a strong proof for his full deity.²¹³

²¹¹ Ibid, 694

²¹² Ibid, 695

²¹³ In the same way we can look at the name “Immanuel” “God is with us.” The fact that Jesus was called Immanuel deosn’t nessesarily imply his full deity.

6- *After Glory He has sent me: Zech.2:8-9*

In chapter 2 of the book of Zechariah we read about Zachariah's third vision. In his vision, Zachariah saw an angel in the form of man having a measuring line to measure the width and the length of Jerusalem. While going out "another angel" met him v3 who brought a message from the Lord. The "another angel" message is "thus says the Lord... "I will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst" v 5
"Flee from the land of the north, for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens" V 6

"Ho, Zion! Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon" v 7

Then starting v 8 we read:

"For thus says the LORD of hosts, "After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye. ⁹ "For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me. ¹⁰ "Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the LORD. ¹¹
"Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you" v 8-11 NASV

Here we have "the Lord of Hosts" saying that he was sent after Glory. That is he was in order to get honor over the heathen by the display first of judgment and then of mercy²¹⁴.

Note how the speaker here is equal to the Lord of Hosts, yet he is distinguished from Him. Here the Lord of Hosts himself saying that he was sent against the nations v 8 and that he will judge them v 9 and that he will dwell in their midst v 10. V 10 clearly

²¹⁴ Charles Wright, *Zechariah and his prophecies*, (Klock and Klock Christian publishers, MN, 1980), 39

indicates that the speaker is “the Lord” YHWH. Yet YHWH said three times that he was sent by the “Lord of Hosts” v 8, 9, 11.

Ralph Smith argues that the “one who was sent” was the prophet himself. He understands v 8 to mean that either God has sent Zachariah to get glory or after glory (that is the vision v1-7) YHWH has sent Zachariah. He continues to argue that twice in this passage the prophet says that the people will know that YHWH has sent him. Once when the enemy nations will be plundered v9 and once when many nations will be converted and God comes to dwell with his people v 11²¹⁵.

The New Revised Translation also indicates that the “one who was sent” was the prophet. It reads v 8-11 as “For thus said the LORD of hosts (after his glory sent me) regarding the nations that plundered you: Truly, one who touches you touches the apple of my eye.⁹ See now, I am going to raise my hand against them, and they shall become plunder for their own slaves. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me.¹⁰ Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the LORD.¹¹ Many nations shall join themselves to the LORD on that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in your midst. And you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you”

This interpretation is hard to accept for these reasons:

1- If Zachariah was the one who was sent in v 8, then v 8 should be read like “for thus says the Lord of Hosts ‘after glory I have sent you...’”

2- Such reading is hard because it breaks v 8-11 into interchanging quotes between the Lord and Zachariah. If Zachariah was the one who was sent, then v 8-11 should be read as something like this:

²¹⁵ Ralph Smith word biblical commentary Micah-Malachi, (Word books publishers, Waco, 1984), 196

For thus said the LORD of hosts, (after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you, for he who touches you touches the apple of his eye *Zachariah's Comment*)

Starting the saying of the Lord: “Behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall become plunder for those who served them. (Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me, *Zachariah's interrupting comment*).

Continuing the saying of the lord: Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of you, says the LORD. And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of you”(and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you, *Zachariah's comment*)

3- In the book of Zachariah; the phrase “thus says the lord of hosts” is ALWAYS followed my direct quote and the words of YHWH never interrupted by any personal comments from the prophet. If this is the case in v 8, then the one who was sent is YHWH and not Zachariah. Even when we study “thus says the Lord” in the OT is always followed by the actual words of YHWH never interrupted by a personal comment from the prophet, as the case in v 8. The prophets sometimes clarified to whom the word was directed as in 2 Kings 19:32 'Therefore thus says the LORD *concerning the king of Assyria*, "He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there;..." if that the case in Zech. 2:8, then v8 should read like this “For thus said the LORD of hosts regarding the nations that plundered you: Truly, one who touches you touches the apple of my eye...” And the phrase “after his glory sent me” should then be omitted.

8- *They will look on Me whom they pierced: Zech.12:1-10*

The speaker in Zechariah 12 is “the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him” v1 Then in v 10 the LORD continues to say “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn”

So we see that the LORD Jehovah is the one who will be pierced upon whom the house of David will look and mourn.

The problem that we have with this scripture is textual. There are two different reading

“They will look upon Me whom they pierced”

וְהָיָה בֵּיתוֹ אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־דָּקְרוּ

Or “They will look upon him whom they pierced” וְהָיָה אֵת אֲשֶׁר־דָּקְרוּ

וְהָיָה בֵּיתוֹ אֵלַי

The first is supported by most of the English translations yet the second is supported by some translations like RSV and NRS and some others.

I want to study both reading from three points of views:

1- The manuscripts support:

The more difficult “אֵלַי” is to be preferred to “אֵלָיו” because the former is found in all the ancient manuscripts, in the best and most numerous of the later ones, the LXX,

Vulgate, Targum, Syriac, Arabic, and the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion.²¹⁶

The New English Bible, apparently following the Theodotion's 2nd Century AD retranslation of the Hebrew Text in which the preposition "ἐπί" is introduced before the pronoun "ἐγώ" has chosen to retain both pronouns with the resultant rather bizarre reading "...they shall look on me, on him whom they have pierced"²¹⁷

In several MSS the reading "לְיָ" "on him" is substituted in place of "לִּי" "me"; but this is evidently an arbitrary correction suggested by the "לְיָ" "to him" in the next clause; the textual reading is that of the majority of the MSS., including the best, and is supported by all the ancient versions.²¹⁸

The idea of a "Pierced YHWH" in this text is hard for the Jews to comprehend that the LXX translated the word "דָּקַרְוּ" "to pierce" into the Greek words "κατωρχήσαντο καὶ κόψονται" "to insult and smite" although in the eleven other mentions of the same word in the OT, it was translated into literal "piercing"²¹⁹. Therefore a reasonable explanation to the difference in the reading of some of the later Hebrew MSS is that the reading "him" which was first a marginal reading as appears from some of the MSS, has been admitted afterward into the text to escape the difficulty.²²⁰

2- The text support:

²¹⁶ Charles L. Feinberg, *God remembers*, (Van Kampen Press, Wheaton, 1950), 230

²¹⁷ Robert L. Reymond, *Jesus divine Messiah*, (WS Bookwell, Finland, 2003) 145

²¹⁸ W. L. Alexander, *Zechariah's visions and warnings*, (London, Ballantyne, Hanson and co. 1885), 260-261

²¹⁹ Feinberg, 230

²²⁰ T.V. Moore, *A commentary on Zachariah*, (London, The Banner of the truth trust, 1958), 200

The reading “they will look upon him” is the easier reading. It will eliminate the difficulty of the idea of a “pierced YHWH”. It will also fit better in v 10 because there will be no change from the 1st person in “they will look upon me” to the 3rd person in “and they will mourn for Him”

Although “they will look upon him” is the easier reading, yet in textual criticism the harder reading is usually accepted by scholars as the more accurate reading. It would be easier to accept that a scribe made a mistake and changed the harder reading “me”

“אֲנִי אֶרְאֶה” with the easier reading “him” “אֲנִי אֶרְאֶה”.

As for the change from the 1st to the 3rd person in the next clause, that can’t be a force to accept the reading “him” because in the poetical and prophetic books a change of one person for another in the same context is not uncommon.²²¹ Moore describes this change as “not unusual with the prophets and which in view of what was to be said in reference to the speaker, was highly appropriate”²²² The shift from the first to the third person may be an instance of either the common grammatical change of verbal number frequently met with the speeches of YHWH for in many instance although YHWH is the speaker, yet he refers to himself in the third person or the differentiation-identity pattern in which the Messiah is identified with God and yet distinguished from him (cf. Zech.2:10-11)²²³

3- The support of John 14:37 and Revelation 1:7

John quoted this scripture twice in his writings first in John 19:37 “and, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced” and in Rev.1:7 “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all

²²¹ Alexander, 261

²²² Moore, 198

²²³ Reymond, 146

the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him” In each of these two quotations John is not quoting Zechariah as “they shall look upon me” but rather “they shall look upon him” yet that can be explained that the evangelist is not there quoting the passage in the words of the prophet, but rather giving the purport of it as from his own point of view.²²⁴

We can safely conclude then that the reading “they shall look upon me” is the more accurate reading.

Yet there a couple of arguments that even though “they shall look unto me” is more accurate, it still doesn’t indicate the divinity of the Messiah:

1- We should understand this scripture in a “figurative” way and not in a “literal” way.

That is to say, as the LXX suggests, that YHWH was “insulted” by their rebellions or sins or that he was “pierced” when his servant (Zachariah, or Zerubbabel...or any godly servant of that time) was “pierced”

Against this exegesis is the fact that in the other ten places where the verb “**יָקַרְוּ**” “to pierce” was mentioned in nowhere used except in a literal acceptance of piercing or stabbing and generally to the effect of slaying (cf. Num25:8; Judges 9:54; 1 Sam. 31:4; 1 Chron. 10: 4; Isa. 13:15; Jer. 37:10, 51:4; Lam.4:9) and also the context requires understand the verb to be understood as piercing in a literal way because the words that were used like “mourn”, “weep bitterly” and “only child” is associated usually with literal death.²²⁵

2- The second escape is re-punctuation of the sentence thus: “and they shall look unto me. (As For) him whom they pierced, they shall mourn for him...”

²²⁴ Alexander, 261

²²⁵ Ibid, 261-262

This interpretation is not supported by the Massoretic punctuation which places the major breaks in the sentence after "...whom they pierced" and having a force equivalent to an English comma coming after "unto me". No English translation recommends this punctuation either and it will not commend itself to a sober scholar²²⁶.

3- a final argument is that is that the future tense of "shall look" and the past tense of "pierced" indicates that the one who was pierced is a nameless victim who already suffered martyrdom.

But against this is that when the Lord will pour out his Spirit of supplication (in the future) the Messiah will have been "pierced" so the whole event of pouring the Spirit and piercing the Messiah is in the future.²²⁷

9- Mal.3:1

"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts"

God promises a forerunner who will prepare his way "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me" "ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξαποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου καὶ ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδὸν πρὸ προσώπου μου" In Mark 1:2 this saying of God is made into a promise to Jesus that he will have a forerunner to prepare his way "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" "ἰδοὺ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου." The change from "my way" Mal.3:1 to "your way" Mark 1:2 indicates that in this whole question of a forerunner the reference

²²⁶ Reymond, 147-148

²²⁷ Ibid, 148

is to Jesus instead of God²²⁸ yet the speaker in Mal.3:1 who will send his messenger before his face is “יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת” “the lord of Hosts”

In Mal. 3:1 we should not confuse “My messenger” 3:1a who will come before the Lord with “the Messenger of the covenant” 3:1c who will come alongside the lord. It is evident from the order in which the different events were narrated here; first God’s messenger comes (cf. Mal.4:5), then God himself with the messenger of the covenant will come to the temple. Also; the phrase “In whom you delight” is parallel to “whom you seek.” They both point back to question “where is the God of justice?” Mal.2:17²²⁹

10- *His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.* Micah 5:2:

Jerusalem was under the siege, and the judge of Israel has been “struck on the cheek”

Mal.5:1, when the prophecy of the victorious ruling Messiah came through Michah.

““But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity”

The phrase “whose goings forth are from long age, from the days of eternity” which indicate the eternal pre-existence of the Messiah has been challenged lately by some scholars.

The coming ruler origins are “from old” “מִן־קִדְמוֹת” and “from ancient days”

“מִן־יְמֵי עוֹלָם”. The “ancient days” could be referring to the origin of the new ruler in terms of the first Adam in the Garden of Eden. Whether or not the idea of primitive man was in Micah’s mind, the idea of a new David certainly was. The days of David are

²²⁸ Gerhard Kittel, *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans publishing company, 1965) v.3, 103

²²⁹ Hengstenburg, 1207

spoken of as “the acient days” “כִּי־מִי עוֹלָם” in Amos 9:11, so much language would not be out of place in Micah.²³⁰ On this construction, a paraphrase of the third line would read “whose roots goes back to the time of David” This interpretation means that the idea of the Messiah king originated and grew out of the failed monarchy in Israel. The more the remant saw the kings of Israel grew weaker, the more their belief in the coming Messiah king grew stronger.²³¹

There are theological and exegetical objections to this interpretation.

Theologically: It is arbitrary, simply on the basis of the refrence to Bethlehem, to insist that Micah’s intention was to trace the origin of the Messiah to the time of David. The idea of kingship in Israel goes back to the time of Ibraham (Gen.17:6) and was anticipated in Gen. 49:10, and in Deut. 17:14-20.²³²

Exegetically: The noun “מִזְצָאֵי־תִיר” translated “his goings forth” is the feminine plural form of “צֵא” which can donate 1- a concrete entity such as an exit (Ez.42:11), an export or import (1 Kings 10:28) or an utterance (Deut. 8:3) or 2- a place of going forth such as a spring of water (2 Kings 2:21) or 3- the act of going forth as in (Hos.6:3)²³³

A concrete entity of any kind doesn’t seem to fit Micah’s context nor does the idea of the place of depature (‘origin’ as in NIV, RSV) especially because of the plurality of the noun which will require the translation “whose places of going forth...” This leaves as the most plausible meaning the act itself of going forth; this meaning also fits the proceeding phrase “From you One will go forth (יִצְאֵי) for Me to be ruler in Israel.” In that sence

²³⁰ Smith, 43-44

²³¹ Reymond, 130

²³² Reymond, 130

²³³ Ibid, 131

the LXX translated the noun “מוצא־תיו” into “ἐξοδοι” the plural of “ἐξοδος” (exodus; going out)²³⁴

The goings forth of the Messiah is “מִן־קִדְמֹן מִיְּמֵי עוֹלָם” “from old from the days of everlasting.” The word “מִן־קִדְמֹן” intends nothing more than “from former times” in isolated instances, but it also indicate eternity as in Deut. 33:27. The phrase “מִיְּמֵי עוֹלָם” can mean nothing more than “the days of old” (as in Micah 7:14 where it refers to the days of Mosaic or patriarchal age) but usually means “everlasting” as in 1 Chro.17:12. The two words “מִן־קִדְמֹן” and “עוֹלָם” were mentioned together also in Pro. 8:22-23 to describe the brining forth of wisdom from everlasting. This is the way the LXX seems to understood the phrases for they read in Greek “ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ἐξ ἡμερῶν αἰῶνος” “from the beginning, *even* from eternity”²³⁵

We can conclude that if we give the plural noun its full force, pointing as it does to prior repeated acts of going forth on the part of the ruler who was to be born in Bethlehem, we have every reason to include within the time frame allowed by the phrases themselves the idea of the going forth of the Messiah from the days of eternity²³⁶

9- *The Man who is my Companion: Zech. 13:7*

“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion,” Says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones”

²³⁴ Ibid, 131-132

²³⁵ Ibid, 132

²³⁶ Ibid, 133

In this verse, the Lord God is inviting the “sword” of his judgment to awake and to strike his shepherd, The Man who is his Companion, so the sheep will be scattered and God will return, that is to bring back, his hand of judgment from the little ones that is the remnant that will believe in him.

His Shepherd of YHWH, who is his fellow, is the Lord Jesus Christ. The one who was smitten on the cross of Calvary and all his disciples were scattered. Jesus applied this scripture to himself. He told his disciples, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered'" Matt.26:31

The Hebrew word “עִמִּי תִי” is translated as “my fellow” KJV, “my Companion”

NKJV, “My Associate” NASV, “the man who is close to me” NIV, “the man who stands next to me” RSV, “πολίτην μου” LXX that is “my citizen”

The Targum renders this word threefold: “his companion, as he is, who is like him”²³⁷ some other versions translated this word as: “a man, my kinsman” Aquila; “a man of my people” Symmachus; “a man my neighbor” Theodotian; “the man, my friend” the Syriac; “a man my connection” the Vulgate; “the man my equal” De Wette; “the man whom I have associated with myself” Arnheim. The last two versions are remarkable as coming the one from a rationalist and the other from a Jew, and express very nearly the exact truth.²³⁸

²³⁷ K. Larkin, *The eschatology of Second Zechariah*, (KOK Pharos Publishing house, Kampen, the Netherlands, 1994) 175

²³⁸ Moore, 213-214

The Hebrew word “עַמִּי־תִי” was mentioned only here in Zechariah and eleven times in the book of Leviticus (5:21 twice; 18:20; 19:11, 15, 17; 24:19; 25:14 twice, 15,17)²³⁹ In every case in the book of Leviticus the word is used as a concrete noun expressive of close personal and friendly connection. In Lev. 25:15 the word is used as equivalent to “brother” or a member of the same family (cf. v10, 15). Intimacy of relation if not equality of condition the word always implies; it could not be used of a mere servile or official relation. When God, then, here calls his shepherd “עַמִּי־תִי” “my fellow”, there is intimated not that he stood to God in the relation of the servant or representative merely, but that that he was in near relation to God personally, in some sense, if not on a par with the Almighty, the nearest to him in nature and position.²⁴⁰

“The man of my companion” doesn’t mean an associate of any kind, or a neighbor. The word “my fellow” was revived by Zechariah from the language of the Pentateuch. It was used eleven times in the Leviticus, and then was discussed. There is no doubt then that the word, being revived from the Leviticus, is to be understood as in Leviticus, but in Leviticus it is used strictly of a fellow man, one who is as himself, Lev. 6:2; 18:20; 19:2, 15, 17; 24:14, 15, 17. The name designates not one join by friendship or covenant, but one united indissolubly by common bonds of nature, which a man may violate but can’t annihilate. When this title is applied to the relation of an individual with God, it is clear that this individual is united with God by the unity of being.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Feinberg, 245

²⁴⁰ Alexander, 289-290

²⁴¹ Liddon, 90-91