

The Nature of Yeshua in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts

Yeshua's answer to have been far more than a simple "yes." In his commentary on Luke, Morris concurs,

"They are asking whether Jesus claims a special relationship to God. His reference to the Son of man and to the place of God's right hand must have seemed to them a claim to a higher place than that which they understood the Messiah to occupy. For them a claim to be Messiah might be a mistake, but it was not blasphemy. But this was something different; it linked Jesus to deity."¹⁹³

Why was Yeshua the Messiah charged with blasphemy, and condemned to death by the Jewish Sanhedrin? When asked by the Sanhedrin whether or not He was the Messiah, of all the Tanach passages or concepts Yeshua could have quoted or invoked, He made mention of Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13, and He spoke forth the affirmative "I am" formula issued by God to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:14. Surely it was within the Sanhedrin's power to rule that Yeshua was mentally disturbed or unstable. Surely the Sanhedrin recognized the place of false witnesses, who were brought in by those who found Yeshua to be a threat to their position of power and influence in the Jewish community, and could have disregarded the case, or at least have fined Yeshua a heavy sum for wasting their time. Surely, there were a few sitting on the Sanhedrin, who might have considered that the Messiah would be a supernatural agent sent from God, and who might say things similar to God without actually being God.

But, a conviction for blasphemy was issued to Yeshua, because the Sanhedrin court recognized that in His statements of self-identity, Yeshua was declaring Himself to be not just supernatural with origins from another dimension, but the "I am," One who sat alongside the Father in Heaven, and who was integrated into the Divine Identity with a power and rule which would extend for eternity. Yeshua's statements of self-identity, in their estimation, required no mere censure or corporal punishment, but capital punishment.

Mark 15:16-20; Matthew 27:27-31; Luke 22:63-65 **"Roman Soldiers Mock Yeshua"**

"The soldiers took Him away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium), and they called together the whole *Roman* cohort. They dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him; and they began to acclaim Him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him. After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him and put His *own* garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him" (Mark 15:16-20).

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Yeshua into the Praetorium and gathered the whole *Roman* cohort around Him. They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They spat on Him, and took the reed and *began* to beat Him on the head. After they had mocked Him, they took the *scarlet* robe off Him and put His *own* garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him" (Matthew 27:27-31).

"Now the men who were holding Yeshua in custody were mocking Him and beating Him, and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, 'Prophesy, who is the one who hit You?' And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming" (Luke 22:63-65).

Prior to His crucifixion, Yeshua is turned over to various Roman soldiers, who in beating Him, also make it a point to mock Him as some kind of king. It should be easy to recognize that

¹⁹³ Morris, *Luke*, 347.

not only is Yeshua as the true King of Kings being mocked by these Romans, but that Yeshua as a Jew is suffering a severe act of anti-Semitism. Yeshua is dressed up as though He were a monarch, but rather than sincere honors and accolades being afforded Him, Yeshua is instead humiliated and brutally tortured.

In the second witness listed above, the record indicates, *kai gonupetēsantes emprosthen autou enepaixan autō* (καὶ γονυπετήσαντες ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ ἐνέπαιξαν αὐτῷ): “And kneeling before him they mocked him (Matthew 27:29 RSV); “and knelt in front of him and mocked him” (NIV). The verb of interest is *gonupeteō* (γονυπετέω), “to fall on the knee, to fall down before one” (LS).¹⁹⁴

The first witness listed above, says something different about the action demonstrated by the Roman soldiers to Yeshua. The source text states, *kai tithentes ta gonata prosekunoun autō* (καὶ τιθέντες τὰ γόνατα προσεκύνουν αὐτῷ), with a selection of mainline versions having, “and kneeling and bowing before Him” (Mark 15:19, NASU); “and they knelt down in homage to him” (RSV); “Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him” (NIV); “Getting down on their knees, they were paying Him homage” (HCSB). *Tithentes ta gonata* is “placing the knees” (LITV), but *prosekunoun autō* includes an obvious usage of *proskuneō* (προσκυνέω), which it is lexically acceptable to translate as “bow down” or “pay homage,” but also can mean “worship.”

Christian versions of Mark 15:19, which translate *proskuneō* with either “bow down” or “pay homage,” will often reflect the decision of a translation team that holds to a high Christology of Yeshua being God. Contextually, the question is raised whether or not the Roman soldiers mocking Yeshua, intended to demonstrate a mock “worship” toward Him in some way, or simply a mocking form of “bowing down” or “homage.” It is to be recognized that there are versions which render *prosekunoun autō* in Mark 15:19 with, “worshipped h/Him” (KJV/NKJV, American Standard Version, Marshall¹⁹⁵); “they worshipped Him” (TLV). The reason for various versions not translating *proskuneō* as “worship” in Mark 15:19, is because the activity demonstrated toward Yeshua by the Roman soldiers is not veneration, but instead humiliation.

It is to be recognized, though, that there are a number of versions which take a slight liberty in rendering *prosekunoun autō* as “mock worship {of him}” (NLT, The Message, CJB/CJSB); “they mockingly worshipped Him” (Apostle’s Bible Complete); “pretended to worship him” (Contemporary English Version). It would seem unlikely that the soldiers were unaware of everything that had taken place and was spoken during Yeshua’s trial before the Sanhedrin. While some of the Roman soldiers were simply bowing down, mocking and humiliating Yeshua as a human monarch, some of the Roman soldiers may have been doing this with more supernatural components of veneration in mind, hence a number may have indeed been worshipping Him in a mocking way. That there will be unredeemed and unsaved people, who have to recognize Yeshua and worship Yeshua at some future time—in spite of being eternally condemned—is something assured to us in the Apostolic Scriptures (Philippians 2:9-10).

Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46

“Yeshua Cries Out at His Death”

“At the ninth hour Yeshua cried out with a loud voice, ‘ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ which is translated, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’ [Psalm 22:1]” (Mark 15:34).

¹⁹⁴ LS, 168.

¹⁹⁵ Marshall, *The Interlinear KJV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*, 157.