

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).<sup>194</sup>

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, Marshall<sup>195</sup>); “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).

<sup>194</sup> LS, 168.

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

## The Nature of Yeshua in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts

“About the ninth hour Yeshua cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’ [Psalm 22:1]” (Matthew 27:46).

As Yeshua was being executed on the tree, He spoke forth the words from Psalm 22:1, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”, witnessed in both Mark 15:34<sup>196</sup> and Matthew 27:46.<sup>197</sup> Psalm 22 is actually attributed to David of his entreating God for His vindication of righteous action (Psalm 22:23-31). The text has some definite parallels with specific actions involving the humiliation and death of Yeshua, including a reference to garments being divided up after lots are cast (Psalm 22:18-19; cf. Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:24). Likewise, the words “let Him [God] deliver him” (Psalm 22:8) were hurled at Yeshua as He was dying on the cross (Matthew 27:39-43).<sup>198</sup>

Within discussions about the Messiahship of Yeshua, a conclusion drawn is that the quotation of Psalm 22:1 should serve as a necessary referent to the contents of all of Psalm 22. In the estimation of Walter C. Kaiser, in his book *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, “In antiquity, there were no chapter numbers, verses, or even titles of books to refer to or quote from; instead, the first line was generally used to refer to the whole poem.”<sup>199</sup> It is not just enough to conclude that from Psalm 22:1 quoted in Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:46, and focusing on the negative condition that has manifest itself as the sin of all humanity has caused some rupture to emerge between the Father and the Son—the Psalm includes a decisive word of God’s Divine intervention at the end: “For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard. From You comes my praise in the great assembly” (Psalm 22:24-25a). This is the kind of accolade that we should expect from a narrative later involving the Messiah’s resurrection from the dead and subsequent declaration of the good news to both the Jewish people and the world at large. As Watts appropriately summarizes in the *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*,

“Jesus’ extreme anguish at being separated from God should not be minimized...But neither does his anguish nullify his confident declarations of subsequent resurrection...His cry is the final and clearest echo of Ps 22...which proceeds from David’s certainty of God’s faithfulness to hear and vindicate his own...Jesus thus sees his death as the Messianic fulfillment of David’s deepest experience of divine abandonment (Ps 22:1-18)—in a way that no human could ever understand—but his death will just as surely result in glorious vindication and subsequent universal worship of God (Ps 22:19-31...)”<sup>200</sup>

That the quotation of Psalm 22:1, while Yeshua is dying on the cross, is a prompt for readers of Mark 15:34 and Matthew 27:46 to go and decompress the material of Psalm 22 for Messianic importance, should be clear enough. That Yeshua the Messiah, in His capacity as the Son of David, is identifying with a Psalm of David, in quoting Psalm 22:1, should also be clear enough. But are there to be any deductions made about Yeshua addressing His Father with,

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<sup>196</sup> Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th Edition* (New York: American Bible Society, 1993), 145; Kurt Aland, et. al., *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1998), 187; Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th Revised Edition* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, 2012), 171.

<sup>197</sup> Nestle and Aland, *GNT*, 84; Aland, *GNT*, 112; Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini, Metzger, *GNT*, 98.

<sup>198</sup> A Summary of Messianic fulfillment of Psalm 22 is available in Walter C. Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), pp 111-118; Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus, Volume 3: Messianic Prophecy Objections* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), pp 122-133.

<sup>199</sup> Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 117.

<sup>200</sup> *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, 2057.

“My God! My God! Why have you deserted me?” (Mark 15:34, CJB/CJSB). Usually, proponents of a high Christology of Yeshua being God, in instances where Yeshua is seen to call His Father, “God,” will conclude that the venue being witnessed is Yeshua operative via His incarnated humanity—which surely did take place at the scene of His execution and subsequent death. Commenting in *The Apologetics Study Bible* on Mark 15:34, Alan Hultberg says,

“The greatest mystery of the gospel is that Jesus was both God and man in one person. Though the Gospels do not tell us, we can deduce from the rest of Scripture that Jesus was forsaken by God due to His bearing the sin of the world on the cross (Is 59:2; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24). The rupture in relationship was between God and Jesus in His humanity.”<sup>201</sup>

## **Mark 15:39; Matthew 27:54; Luke 23:47**

### **“Yeshua Dies”**

“When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”” (Mark 15:39).

“Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Yeshua, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’” (Matthew 27:54).

“Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, ‘Certainly this man was innocent’” (Luke 23:47).

The death of Yeshua triggered some rather significant phenomenon, as the sky had grown dark in the middle of the afternoon (Luke 23:45a). The Lord issued a loud cry with His final breath, “Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT [Psalm 31:5]” (Luke 23:46; cf. Mark 15:37; Matthew 27:50). At this moment, two groups of people have something communicated to them. The veil in the Temple, separating out the Holy of Holies, rips in two (Mark 15:38; Matthew 27:51a; Luke 23:45b), something that any of the Jewish priests present would have noticed, and probably anyone else present. Likewise, the Roman centurion attending to Yeshua’s crucifixion recognizes, at the earthquake which ensues, as he states in Luke 23:47, “Certainly this man was innocent.” Matthew also records a later sign, of how “many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many” (Matthew 27:52-53). While certainly a mystery to be pondered, we can safely speculate that those who were raised to life here were some of the recently deceased.

Significant questions are raised from the exclaim of the Roman centurion who witnessed the death of Yeshua. In Mark 15:39 we see, *alēthōs houtos ho anthrōpos huios Theou ēn* (ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν), “Truly, this Man was Son of God” (LITV), followed in Matthew 27:54 with, *alēthōs Theou huios ēn houtos* (ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος), “Truly this One was Son of God” (LITV).<sup>202</sup>

Much has been debated by the centurion’s conclusion of Mark 15:39 and Matthew 27:54. In both passages, *Theou* or “of g/God” is in the singular. It would be quite impossible to render this with “Truly this was a son of the gods,” with the supernatural activities manifested somehow demonstrating that Yeshua was the offspring of mythological gods and goddesses. The testimony of Luke 23:47, in fact, is that “when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified

<sup>201</sup> Alan Hultberg, “Mark,” in *The Apologetics Study Bible*, 1501.

<sup>202</sup> It is safe to say that the Roman centurion could indeed have spoken this dialogue in Greek, upon witnessing the death of Yeshua.