

Wellum goes further than the Mark and Luke commentators just quoted, as He takes “Holy One of God” coupled with the title “Son of God,” as explicit references to the Divinity of Yeshua, as He is to be strictly identified as God:

“Jesus is portrayed in exalted terms...and his heavenly origin is evident when he is identified as the ‘Holy One of God’ and the ‘Son of God.’ Jesus’ coming in order to destroy the demons is presented as a visit from the heavenly realm, and, as such, it presupposes not only his preexistence but also that he transcends the human realm and is identified with God.”⁴⁵

While Wellum’s commitment to a high Christology is to be appreciated, Yeshua simply being called “the Holy One of God” or even “the Son of God,” by demonic entities, is insufficient to prove His Divinity, without a consideration of further data. Important clues are given by Mark 1:21-28 and Luke 4:31-38 about the nature of Yeshua, beyond those of His supernatural origins from Heaven. A created, supernatural agent of God would probably not be asked, “Have you come to destroy us?”, with some degree of finality associated with the final judgment in view.⁴⁶ More important to consider, is how Mark 1:21-28 and Luke 4:31-38 are not the only passages where Yeshua’s authority and supernatural abilities will be on display, as this is only an early scene of Yeshua being identified by an entity other than God the Father, as supernatural.

In their book *Putting Jesus in His Place*, Bowman and Komoszewski appropriately summarize how Yeshua’s ability, to be immediately obeyed by the demons, needs to be catalogued along with other, with a number of more significant supernatural acts, which will have more of a direct bearing on whether Yeshua the Messiah is indeed God:

“The complete and total command that Christ exhibits over the natural realm in his miracles reveals his deity. On two separate occasions—once before his resurrection and once after it—Jesus tells his disciples precisely where to lower their nets in order to catch a large haul of fish (Luke 5:1-11; John 21:1-11). **Jesus commands unclean spirits, and they immediately obey and come out of their host (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37).** He rebukes a fever and it immediately leaves (Matt. 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39). Even more astonishing, he rebukes the winds and the waters during a dangerous storm on the sea, and they immediately become calm (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25). The Gospels conclude this particular episode with the disciples’ question, ‘Who then is this?’ showing that the miracle points to Jesus’ unique (and, from a human point of view, hidden) identity”⁴⁷ (emphasis mine).

Mark 2:1-12; Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 5:17-26

“Yeshua Forgives Sin”

“When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Yeshua seeing their faith said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ‘Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?’ Immediately Yeshua, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, ‘Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven”; or to say, “Get up, and pick up your

⁴⁵ Wellum, “The Deity of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels,” in *The Deity of Christ*, 86.

⁴⁶ For the record, the author is not a supporter of the theological concept of annihilationism, or the belief that the unrighteous condemned suffer extinction from existence. Consult his publication *Why Hell Must Be Eternal*.

⁴⁷ Bowman and Komoszewski, 201.

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pallet and walk"? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—He said to the paralytic, 'I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.' And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this'" (Mark 2:1-12).

"Getting into a boat, Yeshua crossed over *the sea* and came to His own city. And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Yeshua said to the paralytic, 'Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven.' And some of the scribes said to themselves, 'This *fellow* blasphemes.' And Yeshua knowing their thoughts said, 'Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up, and walk"? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—then He said to the paralytic, 'Get up, pick up your bed and go home.' And he got up and went home. But when the crowds saw *this*, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men" (Matthew 9:1-8).

"One day He was teaching; and there were *some* Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting *there*, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and *from* Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was *present* for Him to perform healing. And *some* men *were* carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. But not finding any *way* to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Yeshua. Seeing their faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven you.' The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, 'Who is this *man* who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?' But Yeshua, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, 'Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, "Your sins have been forgiven you," or to say, "Get up and walk"? But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,'—He said to the paralytic—'I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.' Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. They were all struck with astonishment and *began* glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, 'We have seen remarkable things today'" (Luke 5:17-26).

The Synoptic Gospels all record an important scene of a public healing of a paralytic, when Yeshua comes to Capernaum. That there were huge crowds, demanding to see the Messiah, is specified by Mark 1:45b: "Yeshua could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere." Luke 4:15 also indicates, "But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear *Him* and to be healed of their sicknesses." Here, there was a significant enough number of people, that a paralytic desiring to be healed had his friends remove tiles from the roof of the house, and he was lowered down on a pallet, so he could be seen by Yeshua (Mark 2:3-4; Matthew 9:2a; Luke 5:18-19).

The first statement of Yeshua, when witnessing the paralytic lowered down to Him on a stretcher, is to see that the sins of this person are forgiven: "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5); "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven (Matthew 9:2, RSV); "Man, your sins are forgiven you" (Luke 5:20, RSV). There is no indication in the surrounding narrative that this paralytic man had ever encountered Yeshua before, committing some kind of previous transgressions against Him. *Yeshua issued a widescale release to this man for all the sins he committed in his lifetime.* The Jewish religious leaders present, identified as various scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 9:11; Luke 5:21), immediately accuse Yeshua of committing blasphemy against the God of Israel, as by issuing a widescale release for the paralytic's sin, Yeshua was

demonstrating a prerogative reserved only for the LORD or YHWH. As Isaiah 43:25 asserts, “I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins” (Isaiah 43:25).

The witnesses of Mark and Luke, both record how a direct claim of blasphemy was issued by the Jewish religious leaders present, to Yeshua:

- *ti houtos houtōs lalei? blasphemēi. tis dunatai aphienai hamartias ei mē eis ho Theos* (τί οὗτος οὕτως λαλεῖ; βλασφημεῖ· τίς δύναται ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἰς ὁ θεός); “why [is] this one speaking-thus? he blasphemes. who is able to forgive sins except [the] one, - God?” (Mark 2:7, Brown and Comfort).⁴⁸
- *tis estin houtos hos lalei blasphemias? tis dunatai hamartias apheinai ei mē monos ho Theos* (τίς ἐστίν οὗτος ὃς λαλεῖ βλασφημίας; τίς δύναται ἁμαρτίας ἀφεῖναι εἰ μὴ μόνος ὁ θεός); “who is this who is speaking blasphemies? who is able to forgive-sins except alone – God?” (Luke 5:21, Brown and Comfort).⁴⁹

The witness of Matthew, indicates that Yeshua had some kind of unique abilities or powers, as it states, “And knowing their thoughts, Yeshua said...⁵⁰” (Matthew 9:4a, TLV), as Yeshua had the ability to know what they were thinking in their minds, hearing their thoughts. Each of the Synoptics records how Yeshua asked those accusing Him of blasphemy, as to whether it was easier for someone to declare another person’s sins forgiven, or whether to pronounce a statement of healing on a man beset with a paralysis:

- “Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier to say to the paralyzed man? “Your sins are forgiven”? or “Get up, pick up your stretcher and walk”? But look! I will prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ He then said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you: get up, pick up your stretcher and go home!’” (Mark 2:8b-11, CJB/CJSB).
- “Yeshua, knowing what they were thinking, said, ‘Why are you entertaining evil thoughts in your hearts? Tell me, which is easier to say—“Your sins are forgiven” or “Get up and walk”? But look! I will prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ He then said to the paralyzed man, ‘Get up, pick up your mattress, and go home!’” (Matthew 9:4b-6, CJB/CJSB).
- “But Yeshua, knowing what they were thinking, answered, ‘Why are you turning over such thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier to say? “Your sins are forgiven you”? or “Get up and walk”? But look! I will prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ He then said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you: get up, pick up your mattress and go home!’” (Luke 5:22b-24, CJB/CJSB).

The logic of Yeshua, to those who accused Him of committing blasphemy by forgiving the paralytic’s sin, is sound. *Any crazed person could declare another person forgiven of his or her sin.* But, not just any person could heal a paralytic, who would then be able to pick up his stretcher or pallet, and go home. Yeshua asks the Jewish religious leaders to observe this, which was to serve as a validation of the authority He has been granted to forgive sins. And, Yeshua’s authority to forgive sins explicitly stated to be predicated on His identity of being the Son of Man—which in light of its Tanach background of Daniel 7:9-14 (previously discussed), involves One being brought before the Ancient of Days, who “was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an

⁴⁸ Brown and Comfort, 124.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 218.

⁵⁰ Grk. *kai idōn ho Iēsous tas enthumēseis autōn eipen* (καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν); “And seeing their thoughts, Jesus said” (LITV).

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everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" (Daniel 7:14, NIV).

The witnesses of Mark and Luke, both record how the crowds assembled, who witnessed the healing, were amazed and gave glory to God:

- "In front of everyone the man got up, picked up his stretcher at once and left. They were all utterly amazed and praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'" (Mark 2:12, CJB/CJSB).
- "Immediately, in front of everyone, he stood up, picked up what he had been lying on, and went home praising God. Amazement seized them all, and they made a *b'rakkah* to God; they were awestruck, saying, 'We have seen extraordinary things today'" (Luke 5:25, CJB/CJSB).

The witness of Matthew 9:7-8 does beg some questions about the nature of the Messiah, as the NRSV renders it as, "And he stood up and went to his home. When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings." The statements of interest from the Greek source text of Matthew 9:8 read as *kai edoxasan ton Theon ton donta exousian toiautēn tois anthrōpois* (καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν τὸν δόντα ἐξουσίαν τοιαύτην τοῖς ἀνθρώποις); "and glorified – God, the one having given such~authority to men" (Brown and Comfort).⁵¹

When seeing a statement about God "giving such authority to people" (Matthew 9:8, Good News Bible), proponents of a low Christology assume that the people, witnessing Yeshua being accused of blasphemy and healing the paralytic, identify Him as a special supernatural agent sent from God. Hence, it may be concluded that a supernatural agent sent from God, a created being, might be authorized by God to forgive sins on God's behalf. Yet, all three Synoptic witnesses for the healing of the paralytic denote how Yeshua the Messiah was accused of **blasphemy** by the Jewish religious leaders, for His forgiving the man of his sins. They could have just as easily said, "You are in error" or "You are misguided" or "You are mad," for Yeshua thinking that He could forgive the sins of the man. And, Yeshua's response was to identify Himself being far more than just some supernatural figure or messenger/angel come down to them from Heaven; Yeshua identifies as the Daniel 7:9-14 figure of the Son of Man, who sits right alongside of God proper and is to be venerated by all Creation.

Proponents, of a high Christology of Yeshua being God, have often completely avoided the statement of Matthew 9:8: "But when the multitudes saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men" (KJV). But, when some older theological resources are consulted, it tends to be asserted that at this point in Yeshua's ministry, those who encountered the Messiah were not fully aware of His Divine nature, and only recognized Him as a human being specially empowered by God. This is the view presented by John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible:

"which had given such power unto men; of working miracles, healing diseases, and delivering miserable mortals from such maladies, as were otherwise incurable; still looking upon Christ as a mere man, by whom God did these things; not knowing yet the mystery of the incarnation, God manifest in the flesh."⁵²

It does need to be fairly recognized that the scene of the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12; Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 5:17-26) is hardly the only data to be weighed regarding the nature of

⁵¹ Brown and Comfort, 29.

⁵² E-Sword 10.1.1: John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. MS Windows 7/8/et. al. Franklin, TN: Equipping Ministries Foundation, 2010-2012.

Yeshua. The venue of this scene also needs to be recognized: an overcrowded house, so packed with people that the paralytic man had to be lowered down through the roof on his stretcher or pallet. Did everyone present hear the accusation of blasphemy issued by the scribes and Pharisees, to the Messiah? What if there were only five or six scribes and Pharisees surrounded by several hundred people? The stress of Matthew 9:8 is *idontes de hoi ochloi ephobēthēsan* (ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐφοβήθησαν), “and~having seen [this], the crowds were afraid” (Brown and Comfort).⁵³ While it would be inappropriate to conclude that this *ochlos* (ὄχλος) was an unruly mob, it cannot go unnoticed that it was probably “*a moving crowd, a throng, mob*” and “*generally, a mass, multitude*” (LS).⁵⁴ It is quite probable that the mass crowd, on the whole, was only able to witness the invalid being lowered down from the roof, healed of his ailment, and then they made a path for him walking out. They could very well have been unable to hear the dialogue between Yeshua and the Jewish religious leaders. As one resource, *The Pulpit Commentary*, concludes,

“there is here no mention of forgiving sins: the multitudes appear to have thought only of authority to perform the miracle; further, that although the multitudes seem to have heard Christ’s words, they did not understand his expression to refer to Messiah.”⁵⁵

With an immense crowd pressing in on Yeshua, the considerable majority could have been widely oblivious to the claims of blasphemy issued against Him by the scribes and Pharisees, and His appeal to being the Daniel 9:7-14 Son of Man. What the immense crowd would not have been oblivious to, was a paralytic lowered down through the ceiling, and then healed. Their reaction, as noted by Matthew 9:8, “they were afraid and praised God, who had given such authority to human beings” (Common English Bible), is consistent with how figures in the history of Ancient Israel, namely various Prophets, could have been granted the ability by God to heal people. As The Voice slightly paraphrases Matthew 9:8, “When the crowd saw this, they were amazed, *even a little scared*, and they praised God who had given humans the authority to *do such miraculous things*.”

It is notable that this is not the only time when Yeshua will be accused of blasphemy, and further consideration of, at least future indictments (Mark 14:53-65; Matthew 25:57-68; Luke 22:63-71), is warranted in evaluating the nature of the Messiah.

Mark 3:7-12

“Demons Confess Yeshua to be the Son of God”

“Yeshua withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and *also* from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him. And He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crowd Him; for He had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him. Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, ‘You are the Son of God!’ And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was.”

Yeshua the Messiah widely attracted crowds of people, who hearing of various miracles and mighty deeds performed by Him, wanted to see Him, seeking answers and resolutions to their life questions and physical maladies. In the record of Mark 3:7-12, because of the massive

⁵³ Brown and Comfort, 29.

⁵⁴ LS, 581.

⁵⁵ [E-Sword 10.1.1: The Pulpit Commentary](#).