

- “And those in the boat came and did bow to Him” (ISR Scriptures-2009).
- “Those who were in the boat came and bowed down before him” (The Messianic Writings).

While it is lexically acceptable to render *proskuneō* in Matthew 14:33 as “bow down,” is it theologically acceptable? The honor displayed by the Disciples to Yeshua—in spite of them not fully processing all of the events—is **religious veneration**. Nolland broadly states, “There are those who discover, in their experience of being rescued by Jesus, that in Jesus they encounter God, worship God, and Jesus as the Son of God.”<sup>123</sup> Morris is more assertive, concluding, “The experiences of seeing Jesus walk on the water and then of seeing him call Peter to walk there and of delivering that disciple when his faith failed made a profound impression; as a result they *worshipped Jesus*...It betokens the worship that should be offered to deity and thus shows us the effect the incident had had on those who saw it all.”<sup>124</sup>

As obvious as it might be, upon Yeshua getting into the boat and the waves being calmed, the Disciples could have all simply quieted themselves and wondered. Or they could have actually been said to have remembered their Israelite ancestors crossing the Red Sea. *Instead, they worshipped Yeshua*. And how serious is this? If Yeshua is not God, the One who identifies Himself as the “I am,” then to worship Yeshua would be to commit idolatry against the God of Israel. Wellum properly notes how “when Jesus was on earth, he received the praise and worship given to him without ever rebuking the persons who acted in this way (Matt. 14:33; 21:15-16; 28:9, 17; John 20:28; cf. 5:22-23).”<sup>125</sup> *Yeshua did not refuse the Disciples’ worship of Him*. In his book *Jesus and the God of Israel*, Richard Bauckham concurs,

“Matthew’s consistent use of the word *proskunein*, and his emphasis on the point, show that he intends a kind of reverence which, paid to any other human being, he would have regarded as idolatrous. This is reinforced by the fact that his unparalleled uses tend to be in epiphanic contexts (Matt. 2:2, 8, 11; 14:33; 28:9, 17). Combined with his emphasis on the presence of the exalted Christ among his people (18:20; 28:20), Matthew’s use must reflect the practice of the worship of Jesus in the [First Century] church.”<sup>126</sup>

The scene of Yeshua walking on the water, Yeshua declaring Himself to be “I am,” and Yeshua subsequently being worshipped by His Disciples—are together all strong signs of His Divinity. Many people throughout religious history, who have concluded that Yeshua the Messiah is God, integrated into the Divine Identity, have not just made this conclusion on the basis of blind religious dogma. If Yeshua were just a created supernatural agent, we would not expect Him to just say “I am” as God at the burning bush, or permit Himself to be worshipped.

## Matthew 15:29-31

### “God is Glorified by Yeshua’s Miracles”

“Departing from there, Yeshua went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there. And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them *those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.*”

Various proponents of a low Christology, witnessing how Yeshua was healing various people with significant needs—“great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the

<sup>123</sup> Nolland, *Matthew*, 603.

<sup>124</sup> Morris, *Matthew*, 384.

<sup>125</sup> Wellum, “The Deity of Christ in the Apostolic Witness,” in *The Deity of Christ*, 142.

<sup>126</sup> Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 131.

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

maimed, the blind, the dumb, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them” (Matthew 15:30, RSV)—may claim that Yeshua was only acting like a Prophet from Ancient Israel, via such miracles, and/or just a supernatural but ultimately created agent sent from God. The response from the audience, to all that was taking place, as narrated in Matthew 15:31, was *kai edoxasan ton Theon Israēl* (καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν Ἰσραήλ), “And they praised the God of Israel” (TLV).<sup>127</sup>

Immediately prior to Matthew recording how Yeshua was healing people along the Sea of Galilee, His encounter with The Syrophenician or Canaanite woman (also Mark 7:24-30) is detailed:

“Yeshua went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and *began* to cry out, saying, ‘Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.’ But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, ‘Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.’ But He answered and said, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ But she came and *began* to bow down before Him<sup>128</sup>, saying, ‘Lord, help me!’ And He answered and said, ‘It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.’ But she said, ‘Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.’ Then Yeshua said to her, ‘O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish’ And her daughter was healed at once” (Matthew 15:21-28).

According to Mark 7:24, “Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by birth” (RSV). Recognizing how the region of the Galilee was not entirely Jewish, is important for readers to consider, especially as it concerns the point of Matthew 15:31: “and they glorified the God of Yisra’el” (HNV). Aaron M. Gale specifies in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, “Here the phrase might indicate a Gentile crowd.”<sup>129</sup> If indeed, the majority of the audience which was being healed were pagans, then a recognition of the power of the One True God of Israel would be necessary *first*, before any conclusions could be made or discerned about the nature of the Messiah present.

Polytheistic pagans, when seeing the God of Israel move, must first acknowledge Him and His exclusivity *before* they can deduce anything about the origins of the Messiah. In Yeshua’s prayer of John 17:3, the Messiah would later state, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Yeshua the Messiah whom You have sent.” If anyone is to have eternal life in the Messiah Yeshua, they must first recognize the Lord God or YHWH as the exclusive Deity, dismissing all other potential gods or goddesses (discussed further). Once this is accomplished, then it can be recognized—as those who advocate a high Christology would affirm—that Yeshua is integrated into the Divine Identity.

### **Mark 8:27-30; Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-20** **“Yeshua’s Disciples Confess Him to be the Messiah”**

“Yeshua went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, ‘Who do people say that I am?’ They told Him, saying, ‘John the Baptist; and others *say* Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.’ And He *continued* by questioning them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered and said to Him, ‘You are the Messiah.’ And He warned them to tell no one about Him” (Mark 8:27-30).

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<sup>127</sup> The CJB actually has, “and they said a *b’rakhah* [blessing] to the God of Isra’el.”

<sup>128</sup> Grk. *hē de elousa prosekune autō* (ἡ δὲ ἐλθοῦσα προσεκύνει αὐτῷ); or, “But she came and worshipped him” (American Standard Version).

<sup>129</sup> Aaron M. Gale, “The Gospel According to Matthew,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 29.