

“WAGGING THEIR HEADS”

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In the account of the crucifixion of Jesus, we read that some who passed by “blasphemed Him, wagging their heads” (Matthew 27:39 NKJV). When I was young, I had some trouble understanding this. I knew about dogs “wagging” their tails, but what did it mean that these people were “wagging their heads?”

The word in the Greek language is *kineo* and it means “to move, set in motion” (*Arndt and Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon*). In Matthew 27:39 it means to “shake the head as a sign of scorn and derision” (*ibid.*). It is used “of those who mocked the Lord at His crucifixion, nodding their heads in the direction of the cross as if sneering at this supposed ending of His career” (*Vine’s Dictionary*). Kenneth Chumbley writes that this shaking of the head was “either laterally in a gesture of negation (‘you’re not the King of the Jews’) or vertically in a gesture of assent (‘you’re getting what you deserve’)” (*The Gospel of Matthew, 502*). Whatever the case, the bodily gesture of shaking their heads matched their mocking, blasphemous words, and fulfilled the prophecy of David: “All those who see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head” (Psalm 22:7).

Such reactions to Jesus and the truth have not changed. Many unbelievers today shake their heads in mocking bewilderment at how any thinking person could believe the Bible. This they do as they sneer, laugh, and blaspheme all that is good and decent. Standing on the truth of creation, divine inspiration, Jesus as God, baptism for remission of sins, morality, and the final resurrection will cause many to roll their eyes and snicker. Don’t be intimidated by such actions. Jesus and His church will stand vindicated in the end.