

**Death of a King**  
**Matthew 27:45-53**  
**Notes**

By the time of Jesus, the Romans had crucified some 30,000 men in Palestine alone, and none of them are mentioned in the pages of history. So, the question comes to us: What makes this man so special that we remember his name?

Why is Jesus the one who has been so scrutinized, examined, argued over, and believed in? After only 3 short years of ministry, this man literally changed history forever. He was able to do this because he was who he said he was.

Jesus is the very Son of God. He is the King of kings. He is the Lord of lords. He is the Savior of all those who would believe in him.

Jesus is remembered, taught, and believed in because he did what he said he would do—died on the cross for the sins of the world, and because he does what he said he will do—redeem and save anyone who would believe on him, we know he is Lord.

**THE PUNISHMENT OF THE FATHER (MT. 27:45-46)**

*<sup>45</sup>Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. <sup>46</sup>About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANIE?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"*

Jesus was not crucified as a criminal, nor was he being punished for anything he had done. Unbeknown to the Jewish leaders and the Roman government, Jesus was placed upon that cross as the supreme, once and for all sacrifice for all of humanity.

Jesus was about to endure the most horrific punishment any person would ever experience in all of human history.

We read in verse 45, that darkness covered the land *from the sixth to the ninth hour*. He was already on the cross 3 hours for a total of 6 hours, a short time in comparison to others.

Darkness covered the earth from 12-3pm.

The cross was a place of immense divine judgment, where the sins of the world were poured out on the sinless, perfect Son. It was therefore appropriate that great supernatural darkness express God's reaction to sin in that act of judgment.

The darkness represented God's judgment for the sin of all mankind, past, present, and future.

During those 3 tense hours of deep darkness, God was punishing Jesus for all sins.

He was punishing Jesus for all of the murders, all the rapes, all the robberies, all of the break-ins.

He was punishing Jesus for all of your sins too; all of mine. He was punishing Jesus for all of our lies, our unfaithfulness, our greed, our envy, our anger, our pride, all of our bad attitudes, all of our behavior, all grievances to his Word.

Jesus was undergoing the most devastating punishment the world has ever known.

Can you imagine such a thing?

As Jesus is experiencing such torment from bearing the weight of the world's sin he cries out, "'ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANIE?'" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

This question has puzzled scholars, preachers, teachers, and theologians for centuries. Many choose to not even deal with it.

"Why" is the most difficult question to answer. I believe that even in the why, it shows us that even the wisest of men do not have all the answers to God's questions and decisions.

But we must encounter these last words of our Savior.

In this unique and strange miracle, Jesus was crying out in anguish because of the separation He now experienced from His heavenly Father for the first and only time in all of eternity.

It is the only time in which Jesus did not address God as Father.

Jesus died as the substitute sacrifice for the sins of the world & the righteous heavenly Father had to judge Him fully according to that sin.

Jesus did not cry out during this time due to the nails in his hands and feet, nor from the flesh peeling off of his back. He cried out because of the painful loss of fellowship with the Father because of the punishment that he underwent.

The passion narrative began with a prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, now it comes to a close with Jesus' prayer as he experiences drinking the cup he had earlier prayed would pass.

Jesus clearly feels abandoned.

The Father forsook the Son because the Son took upon Himself our transgressions and our iniquities.

Jesus did not only bore man's sin, but actually became sin on man's behalf, in order that those who believe in Him might be saved from the penalty of their sins (2 Cor. 5:21).

When Christ was forsaken by the Father, their separation was not one of nature, essence, or substance. Christ did not in any sense or degree cease to exist as God or as member of the Trinity. He did not cease to be the Son. But he did for a while, during those dark hours cease to know the intimacy of fellowship with His heavenly Father.

Jesus' cry to the Father is a quote from Psalm 22:1. This Psalm describes the suffering Servant. This Psalm describes in prophetic detail what Jesus would undergo on the cross.

In quoting Psalm 22:1 Jesus is identifying himself with the suffering servant.

It would be superficial for us to say that Jesus was only identifying himself with that prophecy. I think that would be making the death, the crucifixion, the pain cheap.

Jesus as the sin-bearing sacrifice must endure a temporary abandonment by his Father.

In that moment when the weight of the world's sin fell upon the heart and the person of Jesus, at that moment was the moment that "him who knew no sin became sin for us." And the penalty which He bore was the separation from the Father.

That's what makes hell so painful. It is not the physical torment, which is horrible, but it is the eternal separation from the Father's presence, with no recourse to restore fellowship.

Jesus' last words before his death teach us the gospel with the Gospel. They tell us that Jesus took on our abandonment, our questions, our feelings of God's betrayal, our most agonizing experiences, and still believed in the God he could not feel.

There are two very important facts from this point.

1. That sin causes a separation from God. God cannot look upon sin or treat it kindly, even when it is in his own Son. Sin must be dealt with and punishment must be given. (EXPAND)
2. Jesus underwent your punishment. He took the punishment for your sin, my sin, the sin of the very world that hates him and he bore the very wrath of his Father. Your payment has been made. Your gift has been given. Will you now go through life without accepting the gift that Jesus has given you? Will you allow his punishment to be in vain?

### **THE PEOPLE IN CONFUSION (MT. 27:47-49)**

*<sup>47</sup>And some of those who were standing there, when they heard it, began saying, "This man is calling for Elijah." <sup>48</sup>Immediately one of them ran, and taking a sponge, he filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink. <sup>49</sup>But the rest of them said, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him."*

As the Father was punishing his Son for the sins of the world, nobody was taking serious notice. They simply were not paying attention to Jesus, even misunderstanding his cry of abandonment for a cry of a dead prophet.

Even now, in darkness, the world does not take notice of what God was doing to his Son, what his Son was going through, for their sake.

The Son of God has been sacrificed so that we might have eternal life.

A single person noticing Jesus' agony offered him something for his thirst, the rest of those in attendance simply ignored the sacrifice made.

They continued on with their lives, with their mockery, with their blasphemies of God's own Son.

Will we do the same? Will we participate in ignorance? Will we keep on drinking our coffee, reading the news, going to games, working, enjoying hobbies without any thought to the sacrifice that both the Father and the Son made on our behalf.

I want you to know, I want you to understand, and I want you to have a constant remembrance of what Jesus did for you, what he did for all of us.

Let us not be part of the world that does not pay attention but let us instead have a conscious concern for what Jesus did.

He took my place, your place, our place on that cross. That cross should have had you and me on it. We should have paid the penalty for our own sin.

But God loved us so much that he sent his very own Son to earth so that he may be the perfect sacrifice for our sin, so that our sin may be forever forgiven.

Let us, by our commitment to live gospel-centered, gospel sharing lives bring clarity to a world wrapped in confusion.

#### **THE PAYMENT IS MADE (MT. 27:50)**

*<sup>50</sup>And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.*

The Gospel writers John and Luke both record Jesus' last words for us; "*It is finished,*" and "*Father, into your hands I commit My spirit.*"

Jesus did it! He finished his task. He left the comforts of heaven, he took on a mortal body, he lived a sinless life, he willingly endured the horrors of the cross, he underwent the Father's punishment and now he willingly gives up his life.

This is a cry of a man who has completed his task; it is the cry of a man who has won through the struggle; it is the cry of a man who has come out of the dark into the glory of the light.

This fact is encouraging to not only the believer but the unbeliever for the meaning of the death, but also for how Christ's death gives us an example.

Jesus passed through the uttermost abyss, and then the light broke. If we too cling to God even when there seems to be no God, desperately and invincibly clutching the remnants of our faith, then quite certainly the dawn will break, and we will win through.

The victor is the person who refuses to believe that God has forgotten him, even when every fiber of his being feels that way.

I know that life is hard and many times you will feel like giving in. You may feel like you cannot take another step. You may feel like you will never get anywhere.

You may feel like you will never beat a particular habit. You may feel that the world is against you. You may even feel like your heavenly Father has abandoned you.

But hold on. Jesus gives us the example that there is light on the other side. Jesus fought through and completed the task that the Father set for him.

God gave Jesus the task of the cross and he completed it. He did not want to undergo its torment, he did not want to experience the separation from His Father, but he kept the faith, he stayed with the fight, he never gave up until the price was paid, until his task was complete.

You may wonder what your task is in life. A good parent, a loving spouse, a kind child, a gentle person, a servant, a businessman, a faithful employee; all of those are admirable traits, but they are not your task.

Our task is to glorify God with all of our life, down to the very last breath. It is, in whatever capacity we serve or live in, to honor God with all of our thoughts, words, and deeds. It is to shamelessly tell others about what Christ did for them.

And God has empowered all those who have called upon his name with the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide us along.

Our task is to live in the fullness of God's mercy.

As Jesus paid the price, as he made it through the darkness into the light, as he lived out his mission, he gives us a question to ask.

When Jesus yielded up his spirit, he put God's mercy on full display.

Have you been wrapped in God's mercy? Are you living in God's mercy?

### **THE PROOF IS GIVEN (MT. 27:51-54)**

*<sup>51</sup>And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup>The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup>and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. <sup>54</sup>Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly, this was the Son of God!"*

Three things happened when Jesus died, three proofs were given.

1. The veil was torn. This is most significant. The veil was in the temple and it separated the holy of holies from the outer court. The veil was 30 foot high by 30 foot wide. The holy of holies was only entered once a year by the high priest on Passover to offer the sacrifice for the people.
  - a. When Jesus died the veil split down the middle from top to bottom because it was no longer needed. The high priest was no longer needed. Anyone could now and can now have full access to God without the need for a mediator.
  - b. All people have personal access to God, in Christ, for forgiveness of sins and for personal fellowship.
2. The earth shook. There was an earthquake that split the rocks open. Many of these rocks were covering the tombs in the mountain.

3. God chose to raise many of his faithful saints. More than likely they were not in their earthly physical bodies, but their glorified bodies. God was giving us a taste of what was to come for all believers.
  - a. Just to be sure, Jesus was the first fruit of the resurrection. Notice the text says that these resurrections did not happen until after Jesus'.

With all of these evidences a pagan Roman guard declared, *"Truly, this was the Son of God!"*

He got it! He put all the pieces together. He saw that Jesus was innocent. He knew what he went through. He saw the darkness. He felt the earthquake, he heard of the veil tearing and of the dead being raised. He took all of the evidence and declared the truth. That Jesus is the Son of God!

Jesus gave salvation to that Roman soldier who believed, he even gave salvation to the thief next to him on the cross, he has given salvation to all who have believed in him, even me.

What is your heart declaring? To you? To the world?

The Roman soldier announced Jesus' divinity to the world, for all to hear.

From his heart he declared the gospel truth.

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My prayer for you today is that you would always remember the sacrifice that Jesus gave for you.

1. That you would understand that God punished him for your sins.
2. That you would not be ignorant of the sacrifice made but live your life so as to honor that sacrifice.
3. That you would take Christ's example to live your life as the mission God has for you, giving your whole life in service and honor to him.
4. That if you are here and do not have a personal relationship with Jesus, that you heed the evidence given and give Jesus your heart today.