

Mark 15:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Analysis

When the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour—From noon (hōra hektē, ὥρα ἕκτη, sixth hour) until 3 PM (hōra enatē, ὥρα ἐνάτη, ninth hour), supernatural darkness (skotos, σκότος) covered holēn tēn gēn (ὅλην τὴν γῆν)—debated whether 'whole land' (Judea) or 'whole earth' (cosmic). The preposition epi (ἐπὶ, 'over/upon') suggests comprehensive covering.

This wasn't a natural eclipse—impossible during Passover's full moon. The darkness was theophanic judgment, recalling the ninth plague (Exodus 10:21-23). As Jesus bore humanity's sin, the Father judicially 'made Him to be sin' (2 Corinthians 5:21), and darkness symbolized divine judgment falling on the sin-bearer. The Light of the World (John 8:12) was shrouded in darkness, bearing the outer darkness humanity deserved. Amos 8:9 prophesied: 'I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.' The darkness proclaimed cosmic significance: creation's King was dying.

Historical Context

Multiple ancient historians noted unusual darkness at this time, though accounts vary. The historian Thallus (52 AD) mentioned darkness during Passover in Jesus' era, which Julius Africanus (221 AD) cited. The darkness occurred during peak daylight hours when activity in Jerusalem would be maximal—Passover preparation was underway. The supernatural darkness would have terrified a population

familiar with darkness as divine judgment. This was the hour when Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple for the evening meal.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the darkness at Christ's crucifixion illuminate the gravity of God's wrath against sin?
2. What does creation's response (darkness) to Jesus' death reveal about His cosmic significance as Creator?
3. In what ways should understanding Christ bore 'outer darkness' for you affect your worship and gratitude?

Interlinear Text

ἐγένετο	δὲ	ώρας	ἑκτης	σκότος	ἐγένετο	ἐφ'	ὅλην
there was	And	hour	the sixth	darkness	there was	over	the whole
G1096	G1161	G5610	G1623	G4655	G1096	G1909	G3650
τὴν	γῆν	ἕως	ώρας	ἐννιάτης			
G3588	land	until	hour	the ninth			
G1093	G2193	G5610	G1766				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:45 (Darkness): Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

Mark 15:25 (Parallel theme): And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

Psalms 105:28 (Darkness): He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.

