

Mark 15:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying,
Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My
God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Analysis

This verse records Jesus' cry of dereliction from the cross, quoting Psalm 22:1. The Aramaic "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani" (Ἐλωΐ Ἐλωΐ λεμὰ σαβαχθάνι) means "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This represents the climax of Christ's suffering—not merely physical agony but spiritual abandonment as He bears the full weight of God's wrath against sin. The repetition "My God, My God" expresses anguish and emphasizes the personal relationship now ruptured by sin-bearing. The question "why?" reveals the mystery of atonement—the sinless Son experiencing what sinners deserve: separation from God. Second Corinthians 5:21 explains: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." At this moment, Jesus experiences the hell believers will never know—absolute God-forsakenness. Reformed theology emphasizes that this cry demonstrates penal substitutionary atonement: Christ didn't merely die as a martyr but bore God's judicial wrath in sinners' place. The Father forsook the Son so He would never forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). This cry also demonstrates Jesus' humanity—He genuinely suffered, truly experienced abandonment, fully tasted death's horror. Yet even in dereliction, He cries "My God"—maintaining faith in the midst of forsakenness.

Historical Context

This cry occurred at the ninth hour (3 PM), after Jesus had hung on the cross for six hours. Crucifixion was Rome's cruelest execution method, designed to maximize suffering and shame. The phrase "at the ninth hour" is significant—this

was the time of the evening sacrifice in the Temple, when the Passover lamb was slain. Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, dies as the substitute sacrifice. The quotation from Psalm 22:1 identifies Jesus as the suffering righteous one prophesied in that Messianic psalm, which also predicted other crucifixion details (hands and feet pierced, garments divided, mockers wagging heads). Jesus' use of Aramaic rather than Hebrew reflects the common language of first-century Palestine. The darkness that had covered the land from noon to 3 PM (Mark 15:33) symbolizes divine judgment—God's wrath being poured out on His Son. Early church fathers (Athanasius, Augustine) recognized this as the pivotal moment of atonement, when Christ bore sin's penalty. The cry reveals both Jesus' full identification with humanity in suffering and the costliness of redemption—salvation required the Son's experience of hell so believers could experience heaven.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's experience of God-forsakenness reveal the severity of sin and the price required for atonement?
2. What does Jesus' cry teach us about the reality of His suffering and the genuineness of His humanity?
3. How should understanding that Christ experienced abandonment so believers never will shape our response to feelings of spiritual distance from God?
4. Why is it significant that Jesus quotes Psalm 22, and what does this reveal about His self-understanding as the suffering Messiah?
5. How does this moment of Christ bearing God's wrath demonstrate both divine justice (sin must be punished) and divine love (God provides the substitute)?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	τῇ	ὥρᾳ	τῇ	ἐννάτῃ	ἐβόησεν	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς	φωνῇ
And	G3588	hour	G3588	at the ninth	cried	G3588	Jesus	voice
G2532		G5610		G1766	G994		G2424	G5456
μεγάλῃ	λέγων,	ελωι	ελωι	λαμμᾶ	σαβαχθανι	ὃ	ἐστιν	
with a loud	saying	Eloi	Eloi	lama	sabachthani	which	is	
G3173	G3004	G1682	G1682	G2982	G4518	G3739	G2076	
μεθερμηνευόμενον	Ὁ	θεός	μου	ὁ	θεός	μου	εἰς	τί
being interpreted	G3588	God	My	G3588	God	My	hast	why
G3177		G2316	G3450		G2316	G3450	G1519	G5101
με	ἐγκατέλιπές							
me	thou forsaken							
G3165	G1459							

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 22:1 (References God): My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

Matthew 27:46 (References Jesus): And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Hebrews 5:7 (Parallel theme): Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Psalms 27:9 (References God): Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Psalms 71:11 (References God): Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.

Isaiah 41:17 (References God): When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

Psalms 42:9 (References God): I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

Daniel 9:21 (Parallel theme): Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

Acts 10:3 (References God): He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

Luke 23:46 (References Jesus): And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.