

# Mark 15:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

## Analysis

**One ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink**—The Greek oxos (οξος, sour wine/vinegar) was cheap wine-vinegar, standard Roman soldier rations. The spoggos (σπόγγος, sponge) on a kalamos (κάλαμος, reed-staff) allowed reaching Jesus' mouth on the elevated cross. This fulfills Psalm 69:21: 'In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.'

**Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down**—After Jesus cried 'Eloi, Eloi' (Mark 15:34), some misunderstood, thinking He called Elijah. Jewish tradition expected Elijah as Messiah's forerunner (Malachi 4:5). The speaker's 'let's wait and see' combines cruel curiosity with callous delay of any relief. They wanted spectacle, not compassion. Ironically, no rescuing Elijah came—because Jesus WAS the Rescuer, accomplishing redemption that moment. God didn't deliver His Son FROM death but THROUGH death to resurrection victory.

## Historical Context

Roman soldiers typically offered drugged wine to crucifixion victims to dull pain (Mark 15:23), which Jesus refused. This later offer of vinegar may have been mock-compassion or genuine refreshment to prolong suffering. The cheap wine was readily available—soldiers' standard rations. Elijah traditions were strong in first-century Judaism; many expected his miraculous return before Messiah's kingdom. The crowd's speculation about Elijah reflects genuine confusion about Jesus'

identity mixed with morbid curiosity about whether divine intervention would vindicate His claims.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Jesus receiving vinegar (not honor) at His death challenge worldly expectations of how God treats His servants?
2. What does God's refusal to send rescuing Elijah reveal about the necessity of Christ's completed sacrifice for your salvation?
3. In what circumstances do you expect God to 'rescue' you FROM difficulty rather than sustain you THROUGH it for greater purposes?

## Interlinear Text

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δραμὼν δέ εἰς καὶ γεμίσας σπόγγον ὅξους περιθεὶς  
ran And one and filled a sponge of vinegar put it on  
G5143 G1161 G1520 G2532 G1072 G4699 G3690 G4060

τε καλάμῳ ἐπότιζεν αὐτόν λέγων, Ἀφετε ἵδωμεν  
and a reed and gave him saying Let alone let us see  
G5037 G2563 G4222 G846 G3004 G863 G1492

εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλίας καθελεῖν αὐτόν  
whether will come Elias down him  
G1487 G2064 G2243 G2507 G846

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 69:21** (Parallel theme): They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

**Mark 15:23** (Parallel theme): And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

**Luke 23:36** (Parallel theme): And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

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