

Matthew 27:50

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Analysis

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Jesus's death is described with unique language. After His cry (likely 'It is finished,' John 19:30, and 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,' Luke 23:46), He 'yielded up the ghost' (ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα/aphēken to pneuma)—literally 'dismissed' or 'sent away' His spirit. This word choice indicates Jesus died voluntarily, maintaining control even in death.

He 'cried again with a loud voice' (φωνήσας πάλιν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ/phōnēsas palin phōnē megalē)—crucifixion victims typically died quietly through asphyxiation, unable to breathe let alone shout. Jesus's loud cry demonstrates supernatural strength and conscious control. He was not overcome by death; He chose to lay down His life (John 10:18). No one took His life from Him; He gave it freely.

The phrase 'yielded up' (ἀφῆκεν/aphēken) can mean to release, dismiss, send forth. Jesus actively released His spirit rather than passively expiring. This voluntary death is crucial theologically: Christ's death was a willing sacrifice, not a tragic martyrdom. He came to give His life as 'a ransom for many' (Matthew 20:28), and here He accomplishes that purpose.

This moment accomplished redemption. The sinless Son of God, having borne our sins and God's wrath, completed the atoning sacrifice. His death satisfied divine justice, propitiated God's wrath, and purchased eternal redemption (Hebrews

9:12). What looked like defeat was actually victory; what appeared as weakness manifested God's power to save.

Historical Context

Roman crucifixion was designed for maximum suffering and shame. Victims hung naked, exposed to elements, mockery, and slow asphyxiation. Death usually took 24-48 hours. Jesus's six-hour death was unusually quick, prompting Pilate's surprise (Mark 15:44).

The centurion supervising the execution witnessed Jesus's manner of death and declared, 'Truly this was the Son of God' (Matthew 27:54). Even a pagan soldier recognized something supernatural occurring. Jesus's conscious, controlled death distinguished Him from other crucifixion victims.

Jewish law required bodies be removed before Sabbath (which began at sunset, Deuteronomy 21:23). Jesus died about 3 PM, allowing time for burial before sundown. God's sovereign timing ensured all details aligned with prophecy and necessity.

The early church proclaimed Christ's death as central to the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3). Unlike mystery religions where gods' deaths were mythical symbols, Christians proclaimed a historical death occurring at a specific time and place, witnessed by named individuals, with predictable physical consequences (blood and water flowing from His pierced side, John 19:34).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's voluntary, controlled death (yielding up His spirit rather than having it taken) demonstrate His active role in accomplishing our salvation?
2. What does Jesus's loud cry at death (when crucifixion victims typically died quietly) reveal about the supernatural nature of His atoning work?
3. How should the historical reality of Christ's death—at a specific hour, in a specific manner, witnessed by named individuals—strengthen our confidence in the gospel's truth?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	Ἰησοῦς	πάλιν	κράξας	φωνῇ	μεγάλῃ
G3588	G1161	Jesus	again	when he had cried	voice	with a loud
		G2424	G3825	G2896	G5456	G3173
 ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα						
yielded up	G3588	the ghost				
	G863		G4151			

Additional Cross-References

John 19:30 (Spirit): When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Luke 23:46 (Spirit): 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.

Hebrews 9:14 (Spirit): How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Mark 15:37 (Spirit): And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

Matthew 20:28 (Parallel theme): Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

John 10:15 (Parallel theme): As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

John 10:11 (Parallel theme): I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Daniel 9:26 (Parallel theme): And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

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