

Crucified! Jesus had been unjustly condemned, first by the Jews, then by the Roman governor, then sentenced to death by crucifixion. Mark's account describes what happened and who was there without comment except to cite one prophetic scripture, "He was numbered with the transgressors," Isaiah 53:12. Mark's reporting is a fitting description of a crucifixion of a lowly, unknown, peasant. Yet what a startling cry from this Servant — Servant of the Most High God. He had come, in obedience to God, to provide the blood of the perfect sacrifice necessary to propitiate the Almighty, opening the way for the proclamation of the gospel to lost sinners.

ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI!

That mighty cry demonstrated to all that the Man on that cross was perfect, sinless, and the perfectly obedient and faithful Servant of His Master, God Almighty. No other man in the universe or in Hell could rightly utter such a question to God. Only a perfectly sinless and obedient Man could honestly question God's judgement. All others deserved to be forsaken by God. He didn't. But He was. And all will rightly be forsaken by God if they die in their sins. But Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient to redeem us all. Those who refuse to accept Christ's death on the cross for their sins will indeed be forsaken by God for all Eternity. Lost but not unloved. And not unsought.

("Eloí," the Aramaic form of the Hebrew "Eli," especially accents His call upon God Almighty, not simply the God of Israel. This Aramaic form is found only in Ezra and Daniel, both faithful men of the Captivity among the Gentiles.)

Jesus when He cried out was truly abandoned, truly alone! More alone than ever any man on earth. For God cannot look upon sin,

Habakkuk 1:13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity....

Under the Law of Moses the sinner symbolically placed his hand upon the head of the lamb he brought for a sin offering. He then killed the lamb, the Levites dressed it and the priests offered it on the brazen altar. Symbolically he put his sins on the lamb and by killing it he confessed his own sinful nature that had produced the sinful act that he had committed. God laid upon Jesus the iniquity of us all, Isaiah 53:6. Really! Not just symbolically! "God who knew them laid them on Him" (LF 103, v3.) So God, Who cannot look upon sin, turned His back upon the Sin Bearer on the cross. Mystery unfathomable by our finite human minds! Mystery which engages our born again human hearts with awe and sympathy and gratitude. A horror of a great darkness engulfed Abraham when God confirmed His covenant with him, passing between the separated pieces of a sacrifice, Genesis 15:12. That rite looked forward to the Cross.

We have many questions. This forsaking is beyond our human experience and will remain outside of our human experience forever, if we have trusted in the Sacrifice. The abandonment Jesus suffered that three hours was beyond our comprehension. He who had always been the delight of God from eternity, Who enjoyed constant uninterrupted and untainted communion with God was cut off. Alone! Alone with our sins. Bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, 1Peter 2:24. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2Corinthians 5:21.

"Sins" borne! Our sinful acts! God's wrath upon them. And the sinless made "sin?" Like our sinful nature? Could something God calls "sin" enter Him in some way so it is said "He is was made to be sin?" Not made to (forced to) commit sin, but to be characterized before God as Sin, as having a sinful nature. And consequently to be forsaken for three whole hours!. Forsaken, not only because He bore our sinful acts in His own body while on the cross. But forsaken for having **been made** sin, a sin nature, which only death could destroy. The three hours of darkness was infinite Death. Separation from God. Human death pictures that. When a human dies his soul and spirit are separated from his body. Likewise on the cross those three hours of darkness Jesus was separated from His God. When He uttered that mighty "IT IS FINISHED" something was truly finished. The necessary separation from God was over, communion was restored. And our sins were borne and paid for. He addressed God as His Father before and after the three hours, but could only address Him as "My God" when forsaken while bearing sins. And note that though of necessity forsaken by His God He did not forsake His God. He called out, "My God."

If the work on the cross was finished why then did He have to die? Hadn't His three hours been enough DEATH? Was there more needed to cleanse us from our sins and make us presentable to God? Was there more needed to grant the believer power over his sin nature? Was there more needed to satisfy God's holiness? No! But the penalty of sin is Death. It was to be conquered through the death and resurrection of a sinless man. Jesus was sinless when tried and unjustly condemned. He was sinless after the three hours of God's wrathful judgement He bore for our sins. He was sinless when He died and was buried. So He did something no other man has been given authority to do. Bowing His head He delivered up His spirit to the Father and died. He expired. Let out His breath. Not from exhaustion or loss of blood, as the soldier's spear revealed, but voluntarily gave up His human spirit. He was really dead, as the soldier's spear

demonstrated. His body was lovingly wrapped and entombed in a sepulture hewn from bedrock which was sealed and guarded by the Roman government. He was in Paradise, Luke 23:43. The third day He took His life to His body again and rose from the dead. Death was conquered. It had no power to retain a sinless man. He is risen, and we are told we have died with Christ, so to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, Romans 6:8-11. He presented His blood to God as a great High Priest, holy and undefiled, Hebrews 9:12-14. His resurrection is God's witness He accepted the Sin Bearer and the sin-bearing He completed on the cross. It IS finished! O Death 1Corinthians 15:54-56.

Religious men call the crucifixion the "Passion of Christ." Recently a well known producer created a box office movie with that title. Christians flocked to it. Was it accurate? Was it edifying? Did it glorify God? Many said it was too graphic, too violent. It was! I didn't have to go to it to know it was unfit for most to watch because the real thing two thousand years ago was unfit for most to watch. One commented to me that if God had wanted everyone to see it He would have provided us a video. Did God want everyone to sit and watch the spectacle of His beloved Son unjustly condemned, abused, ridiculed, tortured and suffering an agonizing, slow death? How is that any different from those who Matthew saw "sitting down they watched Him there," (Matthew 27:36)? The disciples had fled, except for John, and apparently were in hiding for fear of the Jews. The women stood afar off. No one, except for perhaps John, saw the whole thing up close, start to finish, and even he was ushered off charged with the care of Jesus' mother, Mary. Are we to crucify Him over and over again? How could this be right? Respectful? God gave us all the graphic description He

felt we needed. He spared us much. **And** He gave us the innermost thoughts and feeling of His beloved Son in the Psalms, particularly Psalms 22 and 69. So He in His infinite wisdom and grace provided His own a means of regularly remembering Him in His death. How many of the thousands that watched the movie do what He requested of them?

Thoughts: We can be thankful through God's mercy "cruel and unusual punishment" is unconstitutional in this country. The public is very sensitive to injustice and inhumane treatment of suspects and prisoners. But neither Jesus or His disciples or Apostles protested the death penalty in principle, but they did cite the unjust condemnation. There were no protest groups then as there are today protecting the rights of the accused and condemned. The appallingly callous cruelty and injustice of the accusation, trial and condemnation and execution of Jesus expose the sinful human nature for what it is.

We wouldn't let this happen today. Or would we? Aren't believers suffering, as their Savior did at the hands of hateful men, many places in this world today? If we today are so conscious of injustice and cruelty where is the repentance of the descendants of the Romans? Or of the Jews? That is the least we could do today, repent and believe. We can't go back and undo what we did. But we can honor the One who gave His Son by accepting the provision He made to make salvation available to all. What Love! What a Perfect act of submissive obedience by God's Perfect Servant. What an example for us to follow. What a motive for worship.

By Ron Canner, May 16, 2007