



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V23 N30

July 25, 2021

KING JESUS

“What Took You So Long?”

Mark 15:33-41

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners, and rose from the dead.

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”

Hebrews 1:3



What does
how Jesus
died say about
him?

The seven last sayings of Jesus include the following: 1) “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk 23:34); 2) “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Lk 23:43); 3) “Woman, here is your son . . . Here is your mother” (Jn 19:26, 27); 4) “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani? . . . My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mk 15:34); 5) “I am thirsty” (Jn 19:28); 6) “It is finished” (Jn 19:30); and 7) “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Lk 23:46). Of these sayings, the fourth is particularly profound and intensely inscrutable.

This saying is most difficult to interpret because it raises a thorny question related to the incarnation. In what sense did God forsake Jesus, his incarnate Son? The *incarnation* is defined as that act of the Second Person of the Godhead, whom John calls “the Word” (Jn 1:1-3, 14), whereby he took to himself human nature. The divine nature of the Second Person of the Trinity was not *temporarily* united to the human nature of Jesus but was *permanently* united to it, making Jesus both fully divine and fully human. One theologian writes: “It will be helpful to keep in mind here that the heavenly Second Person of the Trinity antedated the earthly Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, there was no such being as the earthly Jesus of Nazareth prior to the moment of conception in the womb of the virgin Mary . . . The Word, the Second person of the Trinity, always has been. At a finite point in time he assumed humanity, however, and was born as the man Jesus of Nazareth” (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2: 738, 753). In the incarnation, the Second Person, the *Logos*, retained all of the essential attributes of God, but gave up the independent exercise of these attributes. Another theologian explains: “In other words, although he retained all the attributes, powers, or prerogatives of God, the earthly Jesus refused to draw on his divine abilities merely at his own whim. Rather, he willingly submitted his prerogative to use his divine capabilities to his Father’s will as directed by the Spirit” (Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 307). And as a human being Jesus possessed a human body having all five senses and a human soul having traits displaying human

intellect, emotions, and will. Two New Testament passages balance the *kenosis* or “emptying” of Jesus with the *pleroma* or “fullness” of Jesus. In Philippians 2:6-7, Paul writes regarding Jesus: “Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but *emptied himself*, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (ESV). And in Colossians 2:9, he writes: “For in him the whole *fullness of deity* dwells bodily” (ESV). In a nutshell, Jesus is *fully God* and *fully man*.

This brings us back to the question: In what sense did Jesus experience separation from God? On the one hand, the penalty for sin is separation from God, but on the other, the persons of the Trinity can never be separated. Theologians face the daunting task of unpacking the meaning Jesus’ enigmatic cry of dereliction by neither diminishing the reality of Jesus’ abandonment by the Father nor by imposing a rift in the Godhead. While no answer is fully adequate, perhaps the following one is one of the least inadequate: “Jesus was quoting Psalm 22:1: ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ That is why He expressed His agony of separation as a question. Jesus was not asking God for an answer; the question was rhetorical. As Jesus used this verse, it expressed an affirmation of His relationship to God as His Father and a *feeling* that the Father had ‘abandoned’ Him. Jesus expressed this feeling in David’s words. God ‘abandoned’ Jesus in the judicial [not relational] sense that He focused His wrath on the Son (cf. Mk 14:36). Since Jesus was God, the Father did not literally abandon the Son. The members of the Trinity are forever united . . . Jesus experienced the ‘separation’ from God when He took the place of sinners (Mk 10:45; Rom. 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). That this ‘separation’ was not literal or permanent—and yet was a real event experienced in time and history—is supported also by the fact that Jesus proceeded to address the Father in prayer: ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit’ (v. 37; cf. Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Mark,” 2021 ed., 323, planbiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf).

1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

33 At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34 And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

35 When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

36 Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

37 With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

40 Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. 41 In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box "at noon" and "until three" indicating *time* in v. 33.
- Circle "darkness" in v. 33.
- Highlight Jesus' cry in v. 34b.
- Circle "Elijah" in vv. 35, 36.
- Circle "wine vinegar" in v. 36.
- Underline v. 37.
- Circle "curtain" in v. 38.
- Highlight the centurion's cry in v. 38.
- Circle "women" in vv. 40, 41.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. How long does Jesus hang on the cross before he takes his last breath?
 2. Darkness descends on “the whole land” of Judea at high noon (v. 33). Explain what the darkness signifies.
 3. From the cross, Jesus quotes the opening verse of Psalm 22. Put the point of his *rhetorical* question (v. 34) in your own words.
 4. How would you explain *why* Jesus is forsaken by God?
 5. Someone gives Jesus “a sponge with wine vinegar” (v. 35). Is this an act of *compassion* or *mockery*? Explain.
 6. The “loud cry” that accompanies Jesus last breath is *unexpected* (cf., Jn 19:30). How so?
 7. At the moment Jesus dies, the curtain of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom (v. 38). What do you make of that?
 8. Seeing how Jesus dies, a Roman centurion declares Jesus “is the Son of God!” (v. 39). Do those words mark his Christian conversion? Explain.
 9. *Why* would Mark mention by name “some women” (v. 40), who are watching from a distance?
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about how the women who came to Jerusalem from Galilee with Jesus must feel as they watch Jesus die.
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Commentary On The Text

Mark 15:33-41 describes the circumstances surrounding Jesus' death after hanging on the cross for six hours. According to verse 25, "It was nine in the morning when they crucified him" (lit., "the third hour"). From nine until noon, Jesus hangs in daylight. From noon until three, he hangs in darkness (cf., "And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour," ESV). By way of summary, one commentator writes: "Mark's account of Jesus' death included five climactic events: the darkness, two of Jesus' cries, the tearing of the temple veil, and the Roman centurion's confession. All of these events happened during the last three of the six hours of Jesus' sufferings on the cross" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Mark," 2021 ed., 321, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf).

At noon darkness falls "over the whole land" of Judea (v. 33). This preternatural event goes unexplained by Matthew and Mark (cf., Mt 27:45; Mk 15:33). Luke simply records that "the sun stopped shining" (23:45). As far as the significance of the darkness is concerned, one commentator explains: "They all evidently viewed it as a sign of God's judgment on Jesus (cf. Isa. 5:25-30; 59:9-10; Joel 2:31; 3:14-15; Amos 8:9-10; Mic. 3:5-7; Zeph. 1:14-15). Perhaps darkness covered 'the whole land' of Israel because it also symbolized God's judgment on Israel—for rejecting His Son" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Mark," 2021 ed., 321, 322, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf).

From noon to three, Jesus hangs on the cross in silence. But at three, shortly before he breathes his last breath, he utters a cry of dereliction that pierces the eerie darkness: "*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*" "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" With the imputation of humanity's sin and the experience of God's wrath that accompanies it, his unclouded communion with the Father is temporarily broken. Put differently, while the union of deity and humanity in him effected by the incarnation remains intact, the person of Jesus experiences *judicial* separation from the Father as he drinks the "cup" of God's judgment (see Mk 14:36; 2Co 5:21; Gal 3:13).

Some of those standing by the cross either mistakenly or mockingly say, "Listen, he's calling Elijah" (v. 35), and they want to see if the prophet will come in answer to Jesus' anguished cry (v. 36). One commentator explains: "The Aramaic word *Eloi* ('my God'; Matt. 27:46 has the Hebrew word *Eli*) sounds similar to the Hebrew *'Eliya* ('Elijah') so that onlookers think that Jesus is calling out to the prophet Elijah to rescue him. The people who understood Aramaic would have included the soldiers who belonged to Pilate's auxiliary troops recruited in the region. The mistake—unless it was a malicious mockery—alludes to the expectation that Elijah would precede the Messiah (cf. 6:15; 8:28; 9:11-13; cf. 2 Kgs. 2:11; Mal. 3:1; 4:5), which prompted the hope that Elijah might appear from heaven

to help in times of need" (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 421).

Moments later, Jesus utters a "loud cry" and with it breathes his last (v. 37). John records that he cries, "It is finished" (19:30), and Luke records that he cries, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (23:46). It seems likely that the first reported by John is followed immediately by the second reported by Luke. The strength of the cry is significant. "Jesus' strong 'loud cry' indicates that this was not simply the last gasp of an exhausted, demoralized, or defeated man. Jesus' 'cry' was a shout of victory. He triumphantly announced: 'It is finished!' (John 19:30). Then He dismissed His spirit (Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46; John 19:30)—'and breathed His last.' It is possible that Jesus' last shout and the dismissal of His spirit took place simultaneously; He dismissed His spirit with a triumphal shout" (Constable, 325).

The tearing of the curtain of the temple from top to bottom (v. 38) and the testimony of the centurion (v. 39) follow. There were two curtains, an outer one that hung between the sanctuary and the forecourt and inner one that hung between the holy place and the most holy place. Both curtains were very long—the outer one nearly 90 feet and the inner one nearly 98 feet—which means a tear from top to bottom could not have been made by human hands. Either could have been torn. But according to one commentator: "If it was the outer curtain, then the tear was a public sign confirming Jesus' words of judgment on the temple, later fulfilled in A.D. 70 (cf. Mark 13:2). Probably the inner curtain was torn, for it was a sign that Jesus' death ended the need for repeated sacrifices for sins, and opened a new and living way of free and direct access to God (Heb. 6:19-20; 9:6-14; 10:19-22)" (Grassmick, 190). The centurion's testimony based on his observation regarding *how* Jesus died suits Mark's purpose. His Gospel opens with the claim that Jesus is "the Son of God" and closes with the centurion's testimony to that effect—even if he didn't intend it in its fullest Christian sense.

Mark closes his account of the death of Jesus by naming three women who witness it from a distance. More than passing remarks, his identification of them by name serves an important purpose. As more than one commentator note: "These three women, especially the two Marys, have a crucial role as eyewitnesses: they saw Jesus die (v. 40), they saw Jesus' body laid in the tomb (v. 47, the two Marys) and they found the tomb empty (16:1). The fact that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jacob/James and Joseph were present at all three events 'means that they can testify that Jesus was dead when laid in the tomb and that it was the tomb in which he was buried that they subsequently found empty'" (Schnabel, 426; cf., Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 48-51). Mark's mention of them would also provide encouragement to female disciples in Rome.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 33 **at noon** Cf., “And when the sixth hour had come” (ESV). “Jesus hanged on the cross for three hours in the daylight (9 A.M. till noon) and then **at the sixth hour** (noon) total **darkness** engulfed **the whole land** (Palestine and environs) **until the ninth hour** (3 P.M.; cf. comments on v. 25)” (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 189).

v. 33 **darkness** “All three synoptic evangelists recorded the supernatural ‘darkness’ that covered all of Judah from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. None of them explained it” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Mark,” 2021 ed., 321, 322, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf). “Strange events and omens were thought often to attend the death of great figures. The darkness may also allude ominously to such biblical stories as Exod 10:22, implying that divine judgment is being visited upon the earth” (Craig A. Evans, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34B, Mark 8:27-16:20, 506).

v. 34 **forsaken me** “This was more than the cry of a righteous Sufferer affirming His faith that God would cause Him to triumph (contrast Ps. 22:1 with Ps. 22:28). Nor did Jesus merely feel abandoned. Instead, Jesus’ cry combined (a) abandonment by God the Father in a *judicial* not *relational* sense, and (b) a genuine affirmation of Jesus’ relationship to God. Bearing the curse of sin and God’s judgment on sin (cf. Deut. 21:22-23; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13) He experienced the unfathomable horror of separation from God, who cannot look on sin (cf. Hab. 1:13). This answers Jesus’ question, ‘Why?’ Dying for sinners (Mark 10:45; Rom. 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18) He experienced separation from God” (Grassmick, 189, italics added).

vv. 35, 36 **Elijah** “The plea ‘Eli, Eli’ was misconstrued, or willfully misinterpreted, as a cry for help to Elijah by those standing around the cross. Presumably they were Jews or Palestinian recruits who were familiar with various stands of folk piety. Later Jewish sources illumine the popular belief that Elijah will come in times of critical need to protect the innocent and rescue the righteous” (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT, 573).

v. 36 **wine vinegar** I.e., “cheap vinegary wine that the soldiers drank” (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 716). “Sour wine refers to cheap wine that was called in Latin *posca*, a cheap vinegar wine diluted heavily with water. It was the drink of slaves and soldiers, and was probably there for the soldiers who had performed the crucifixion” (*The NET Bible*, 58sn, note on Mk 15:36).

v. 37 **loud cry** Cf., Lk 23:46; Jn 19:30. “Jesus’ loud cry (Luke 23:46) before He breathed His last indicated that He did not die the ordinary death of one who was crucified (cf. Mark 15:39). Normally such a person suffered extreme exhaustion for a long period (often two or three days) and then lapsed into a coma before dying. But Jesus was fully conscious to the end; His death came voluntarily and suddenly. This accounts for Pilate’s surprise (cf. v. 44)” (Grassmick, 190). “The declaration of the centurion who ‘sees’ how Jesus died (v. 39) suggests that Jesus’ last words indeed expressed confidence in God and the triumph of having accomplished his mission” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 422).

v. 38 **curtain** “The tearing of the outer curtain would be a more public event. The tearing of the inner curtain, tearing open the Holy of Holies, would be theologically more telling; this is the understanding of the writer of Hebrews who speaks of the ‘second curtain’ (Heb. 9:3; cf. 6:19; 10:19-20)” (Schnabel, 423).

v. 39 **the Son of God** “Impressed by the manner of Jesus’ death and the signs that attend it, the Roman centurion confesses of Jesus what he should only confess of the Roman emperor. Caesar is not the ‘son of God’; Jesus, the crucified Messiah, is. The mockery is now over. In calling Jesus the ‘son of God,’ the centurion has switched his allegiance from Caesar, the official ‘son of God,’ to Jesus, the real Son of God . . . However it is probably to read too much into the centurion’s declaration to understand it as an ‘orthodox’ Christian confession” (Evans, 519). “However, Mark regarded the declaration in its distinctive Christian sense; the centurion unwittingly said more than he knew” (Grassmick, 190).

vv. 40-41 **women** “Mark mentioned the women as eyewitnesses of the Crucifixion in anticipation of their eyewitness role at Jesus’ burial (15:47) and His resurrection (16:1-8). Their devotion surpassed that of the 11 disciples who had deserted Him (14:50). Mark may have intended these words as an encouragement to faithful discipleship among women in the church at Rome” (Grassmick, 191).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Suffering his wrath on the cross, Jesus was forsaken by God so that sinful people for whom he died might be forgiven and redeemed by God as his own.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Imagine your sweet, precious child is 15 and it's time for them to learn to drive. Would you give their friends the car keys and say, "Go for it! Teach them how to drive"? Absolutely not! As parents we should be the one to lay as much foundational groundwork as possible. We want to be their teachers in all circumstances, from driving to difficult conversations. We should constantly seek opportunities for open dialogue with our kids so that when they do have hard questions, they know they can come to us for truth. Do you have a tendency to shield and protect your kids from Jesus' death, gloss over it and rush straight into His resurrection? This might be because talking about Jesus' death can be overwhelming and intimidating. I mean, His atoning death on the cross is fundamental to our Christian faith. We don't want to mess this up! But take heart, you are the parent God picked for your child and He has gifted you with His Word and Holy Spirit. It may sound weird, but I find the circumstances surrounding Jesus' death absolutely fascinating. Mark's succinct account leaves no room for wasted words. Each detail is filled with symbolism that, when read as the ancient text was originally intended, opens our eyes to the miracle of our salvation. Carefully read through the text with your kids this week. Help them understand Jesus' death. Marvel with them at the unbelievable price He paid for each of us. Adore Him in praise and prayer with your kids. Show them what a difference His death has made in your life. Blessings!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Mark 15:33-41.

1. What did Jesus cry out and what do you think He meant?
2. What is important about the curtain being torn at the time of His death?
3. Who were the women with Jesus and why were they there?

What Do You Think?

What do you think was worse for Jesus: the physical pain of death or knowing He was without the presence of His Father?

What Do You Do?

Step outside at noon. Imagine the earth becoming dark for the next three hours (and more). Draw a picture of this scene.

CORE COMPETENCY: Jesus Christ

I believe that Jesus Christ is fully God/perfectly man and died for my sins.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Peter 2:24

"He Himself bore our sins' in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness, 'by His wounds you have been healed.'"

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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