



## Mark 15:33–34

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?’)

### Reflection

It’s been three hours. The man who’d

healed tens of thousands, who taught about love, who'd never spoken a false word, who was overjoyed when the children came to him, and who'd come on a mission from God to reconcile his lost children to him is being slowly tortured to death in the most wicked form of capital punishment ever devised by humankind. And over the past three hours, the past 1200 excruciating breaths or so, Jesus has been incessantly mocked and insulted from all sides. The rebels crucified with him are pouring their dying vitriol on him. The chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law are scorning him, asking him where his Father is in this moment, taunting him about coming down from the cross, reminding him of the Old Testament curse of dying on a tree. And the relentless tide of passers-by, representative of

all humanity, mock him; men, women and children hurling insults at him as they go about their daily business heading into Jerusalem for this reason or that.

But when the clock ticks over to twelve all the mockery stops dead in its tracks. Jaws drop, mouths open wordlessly, the superstitious amongst them reach into their pockets to grab hold of lucky charms. Universally, a deep sense of foreboding fills every heart – as would happen in any land, and in any time and place in history, when the blazing midday sun ceases to shine, and darkness covers the whole land. The Jewish religious leaders have lost their swagger, some of them even look deeply disturbed. They can't leave, they have to see him dead, but what to make of this darkness? The Romans guarding

Jesus are tense, there's sweat on their brows, expert executioners, they'd killed many but none of them had died like this man. Setting these uneasy feelings aside they scan the darkness, as professional soldiers they sense the risk of ambush; after all, men had been known to live when taken down from the cross and if this man lived it was Roman policy that their lives would be forfeit.

Some have claimed that this event, the 3 hours of midday darkness that came across the land, was a great wind storm, or the solar eclipse of AD 33, but if it was, neither of these could account for the complete darkness. No. This was a supernatural event. They're killing the son of God. The light of the world is about to be extinguished. What better way to mark

his passing than all of wicked humanity plunged into the dread of darkness?

Darkness and silence covers the land, except for hushed whispers and people hurrying for the safety of the walls of Jerusalem and their homes. Silence until Jesus, some three hours later, cries out in a loud, anguished voice that makes everyone jump despite themselves,

‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’)

‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ cries the ransom, the substitution, the Passover lamb slain for the sins of the world, as God himself enters into his own

wrath so that we might be spared. This is the moment of judgment, the moment when the son of God bears the wrath of God as the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’

... comes the chilling cry. But Jesus isn't forsaken. As he breaks the silence with this anguished cry, every Jew, despite themselves would have recognised these words. Their's was an oral culture. Most of them couldn't read and so, since they were little children they'd memorised the Scriptures. The Jewish religious leaders especially, would have recognised Ps 22:1. And in the darkness, voicelessly in their minds, the words of David's psalm would

have continued,

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me,

so far from my cries of anguish?

2 My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,

by night, but I find no rest.

3 Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;

you are the one Israel praises.

4 In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them.

5 To you they cried out and were saved;

in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

6 But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by everyone, despised  
by the people.

7 All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their  
heads.

8 “He trusts in the Lord,” they say,  
“let the Lord rescue him.

Let him deliver him,  
since he delights in him.”

9 Yet you brought me out of the  
womb;

you made me trust in you, even at  
my mother’s breast.

10 From birth I was cast on you;  
from my mother’s womb you have  
been my God.

11 Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.



12 Many bulls surround me;  
strong bulls of Bashan encircle  
me.

13 Roaring lions that tear their prey  
open their mouths wide against  
me.

14 I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.  
My heart has turned to wax;  
it has melted within me.

15 My mouth is dried up like a pot-  
sherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof  
of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

16 Dogs surround me,  
a pack of villains encircles me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet.

17 All my bones are on display;  
people stare and gloat over me.

18 They divide my clothes among them

and cast lots for my garment.

19 But you, Lord, do not be far from me.

You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

20 Deliver me from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dogs.

21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;

save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

22 I will declare your name to my people;

in the assembly I will praise you.

23 You who fear the Lord, praise him!

All you descendants of Jacob,

honor him!

Revere him, all you descendants  
of Israel!

24 For he has not despised or  
scorned

the suffering of the afflicted one;  
he has not hidden his face from him

but has listened to his cry for help.

25 From you comes the theme of  
my praise in the great assembly;

before those who fear you I will  
fulfill my vows.

26 The poor will eat and be satis-  
fied;

those who seek the Lord will praise  
him—

may your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth

will remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations

will bow down before him,  
28 for dominion belongs to the Lord  
and he rules over the nations.

29 All the rich of the earth will feast  
and worship;

all who go down to the dust will  
kneel before him—

those who cannot keep them-  
selves alive.

30 Posterity will serve him;

future generations will be told  
about the Lord.

31 They will proclaim his righteous-  
ness,

declaring to a people yet un-  
born:

He has done it!

Prophecy fulfilled. Words written 1000  
years beforehand explaining this day. The

Messiah, the son of David, explaining in the prophetic words of David, with his dying breath, the momentous nature of what is happening in this moment, explaining his triumph,

future generations will be told about the Lord.

31 They will proclaim his righteousness,

declaring to a people yet unborn:

He has done it!

## **Think & Pray**

If you have a Bible with you why not meditate over the words of Psalm 22 again now? Or you could rewind the app and listen to them again. They're the words Jesus

would have us view this moment through. Then close our time together today in prayer. Once you've thought deeply over Psalm 22, why not pray over it verse by verse? Bring it before our Lord as a prayer of thanksgiving and of praise for what his Son did for us on that cross.