

JESUS CRIED

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Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. (Matthew 27:45-50)

The words of Jesus on the cross, “My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me,” which words He took from the twenty-second Psalm, are as deeply mysterious as the Trinity, and many have pondered their significance. The doctrine of the Trinity states that there is only one God, and that this one God exists in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although the Father and the Son are distinct in their Persons, they are indivisible in their essence. Moreover, the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father. (John 3:35; John 5:20; John 14:31) The Son proved His love for His Father by perfectly obeying Him. He told His disciples, “But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.” Because the Son is faithful, the Father is pleased with Him. When Jesus was baptized, the Father spoke from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17) He said the same at Jesus’s transfiguration. (Matthew 17:5) Nothing can change the unity of the substance of the Trinity, and nothing can change the love that the Father and the Son have for each other.

Yet, as Jesus suffered on the cross, He did cry out, “My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?” Why? Because God let Him die. Jesus had to die. He had to die because the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23) He had to die, not for His own sins, for He had none. He had to die for the sins of His people. “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” (1 Peter 3:18) God “hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21) “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written (Galatians 3:13) He “his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.” (1 Peter 2:24)

Yet, as Jesus suffered on the cross, He cried with a loud voice, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” His friends had deserted Him. (Matthew 26:56) His enemies mocked Him, saying that He could not save Himself, and saying that God would not save Him. The treachery and insults were difficult for Jesus to bear. More difficult for Him to bear was His Father’s not delivering from death, but rather allowing Him to die. In those moments, those painful moments of silence, Jesus may have felt abandoned, but He knew He was not. He always “committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously,” (1 Peter 2:23)

That God let Jesus die was no injustice to Jesus. The Father and the Son had in eternity past agreed to the scheme. God loved the world by giving His Son as a sacrifice, and the Son loved His friends by laying down His life for them. (John 3:16; John 15:13) The Father certainly had the power to keep Jesus from death. When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, and Saint Peter struck off the ear of a servant of the high priest, Jesus said to Saint Peter, “Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Matthew 26:52-54) Jesus did not die under duress. He died in the place of His people, and He was glad to do so. He, “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.” (Hebrews 12:2)

The words Jesus spoke from the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,” are from the Twenty-second Psalm. In that same Psalm, the writer also says with respect to God, “For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.” (Psalm 22:24) God never did forsake Jesus. He did allow Him to die, as the two agreed that He should. Yet, God would not allow His beloved Son to remain in the grave. He would deliver Him from death. The Sixteenth Psalm says, “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” (Psalm 16:10)

And now to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three Persons and one God, be ascribed by us, and by the whole Church, as is most due, the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*