

# Jesus on the Cross

by Chuck Smith

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*Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was a demonstration of His ability to save others by giving Himself as a sacrifice, despite being forsaken by God due to the sins of the world.*

**Scripture:** Mark 15:26

**Topics:** "Crucifixion", "Salvation"

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## Description

Chuck Smith preaches on the significance of Jesus' crucifixion, emphasizing the irony in the statement made by the chief priests: 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save.' While they acknowledged Jesus' ability to save others, they failed to understand that His refusal to save Himself was essential for the salvation of humanity. Smith explains that Jesus' suffering and ultimate forsakenness by God were necessary for the atonement of sin, allowing believers to never experience separation from God. The darkness that enveloped the land during His crucifixion symbolizes the gravity of this moment, as Jesus bore the weight of the world's sins. Ultimately, Smith urges listeners to recognize the profound implications of Jesus' sacrifice and the eternal consequences of rejecting Him.

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## Transcript

26 And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. 28 So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors." 29 And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 save Yourself, and come down from the cross!" 31 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save."

Mark 15:26-31

Today's Reading:

Deuteronomy 32-34; Mark 15:26-47

Today's Devotion by Pastor Chuck Smith:

Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save (Mar 15:31).

Two statements: one of them was true; one of them was false. It is true He saved others, and they recognized that. It was an admission that they had to make. People all around them had been saved by Jesus. There were blind people who could see, there were lame people who were walking, there was Lazarus who was raised from the dead. He saved others, that they had to admit. They could not deny the evidence. "He saved others," an interesting confession of His enemies. The false statement was, "Himself He cannot save." That is wrong; He could have saved Himself. Actually, He could have appealed to Pilate. Pilate was doing his best to free Jesus. As you get into John's gospel, he points out even more clearly how anxious Pilate was to set Him free. But Jesus was not cooperative with Pilate at all. Jesus wouldn't answer him. He could have just said the right thing to Pilate and Pilate would have just said, "Well, you know, you Jews go your way." I think that Jesus probably could have appealed to the crowd. Emotions were high, but He could have just appealed to the crowd and saved Himself. Or, as He had said to Peter earlier, "Hey, Peter, put away your sword. Don't you realize that at this moment, I could call for ten legions of angels to deliver me from their hands? The cup that the Father has given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?" He could have saved Himself by calling on the angels to come and deliver Him out of the hands of these wicked men. He could have saved Himself, but He didn't save Himself.

Now, there's a bit of irony here. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." The whole statement taken as a whole is true as a whole statement. Though a part of it is false, as a whole statement it is true. If He is to save others, He cannot save Himself. You see, if He saves Himself, then He can't save others. The only way He can save others is by not saving Himself. So, the statement as the whole is true. "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." You can't do both. You can't save yourself and others. You can only save others. He can only save others by giving Himself as a sacrifice.

They said,

Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him (Mar 15:32).

Now Luke's gospel tells us that later on one of them had a change of heart, and we will get to that when we get to Luke's gospel.

And when the sixth hour was come (Mar 15:33),

Six hours on the cross...remember it was nine o'clock, the third hour when they put Him on the cross? The sixth hour would be high noon.

there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour [three o'clock in the afternoon] (Mar 15:33).

It became midnight at noon, darkness over the whole land. There is no particular phenomena that you can blame for the darkness. It could not have been an eclipse of the sun, for this was Passover and it was full moon. And the sun and the moon were opposite of each other during the Passover or during full moon, so it's impossible that it could have been an eclipse. It was as though heaven was veiling itself from this horrible crime that man was committing. This dark shroud covered the earth from the sixth hour, or from twelve o'clock noon until three o'clock in the afternoon.

And at the ninth hour [three o'clock in afternoon] Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Mar 15:34)

Mark gives the words of Jesus in the language that Jesus spoke them, and very rarely do we have the actual words of Jesus. We have the translation of the words of Jesus, and usually he translates it into Greek and then from Greek to English. But here he gives us the actual words in order that we might understand why some of those who were standing by thought that He was crying for Elijah. "Eloi, Eloi." They thought He was crying, "Elijah, Elijah." But in reality He was crying, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The answer to it is found in Psalm 22, which begins, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from the cry of my roaring? I cry unto thee in the daytime and thou hearest not; and in the night season and I am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of thy people." It was because of the holiness of God that Jesus was forsaken of God. For sin always separates a man from God, and when the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus, that fellowship that He had experienced, that coexistence, that oneness with the Father was broken. He who had existed with God from the beginning, He who shared the glory of God before the world ever existed was forsaken of God when God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. He tasted of death for every man. He tasted of death for you. He experienced the consequence of sin, spiritual death, separation from God. And thus, the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was forsaken of God in order that you would never have to be forsaken of God.

God help you, that you never echo that prayer of Jesus. Those who live in sin, those who refuse Jesus as their Savior experience separation from God, spiritual death. And the Bible says, "They are dead while they yet live." But it will eventuate in eternal death, the second death, as Jesus said, "And I will say to those on my left hand, 'Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity. Depart from Me.'" Separation from God. I Thessalonians 1:9 speaks again of that eternal separation from God.

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