

# Christ Crucified

by C.I. Scofield

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*The sermon explores the significance of Jesus' cry from the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' and the necessary understanding of God's moral government.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 22:1, Mark 15:22, John 14:6, Hebrews 9:1, Hebrews 10:19

**Topics:** "Atonement Theology", "The Cross"

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## Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the profound events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the fulfillment of prophecy, the inescapable alternative faced by Christ, His voluntary death, the significance of the rent veil, and the mystery of why God forsook His Son on the cross, exploring the implications of this forsakenness in the context of atonement and divine justice.

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## Transcript

(Mark xv:22-29.)

### I. The Analysis.

1. The Sure Word of Prophecy Fulfilled (verses 22-29). --The twenty-second Psalm is a picture of the crucifixion painted with photographic minuteness of detail by the Spirit of God more than 1,000 years before the cross was set up.
2. The inescapable Alternative (verses 26-32).--"Let Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross." "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Most true! that was the actual alternative. He had descended from the cross; if He had permitted His own rescue by the twelve legions of angels, not a human soul would have seen the face of God in peace.
3. The forsaken Son (verses 33-36).--See below.
4. The Voluntary Death of Jesus (verse 37).--Make no mistake here. Jesus, even in the agonies of the cross, did not die of necessity. He "gave up" His spirit.
5. The Rent Veil (verse 38).--Only one instructed in the tabernacle types can appreciate what that meant. Briefly, so long as the veil between the holy place and the holy of holies remained, the way into God's presence was impossible for all humanity save only one man, the high priest, and he could enter but once each year. The rent veil made "a new and living way" into God's presence for all men who would come by

that way (John xiv:6; Heb. ix:1-12; x:19-22).

6. A Convinced Spectator (verse 39).

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

The heart of this lesson must be found in an adequate answer to Jesus' desolate cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The emphasis must be put on the personal pronoun "thou" and "me." "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The cry was appropriated by our Lord from the twenty-second Psalm, the Psalm of crucifixion (see verses 14-18), and in that Psalm the argument implied in the words of Jesus is more drawn out. "Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them; they cried unto thee and were delivered." Why were the fathers, though faulty and sinful men, delivered when they cried unto Jehovah, when the sinless One, whose delight had ever been the father's will, was forsaken of Jehovah in the extremity to which perfect obedience had brought Him? The difficulty is a real one, and any adequate theodicy must meet it. God is the moral Governor of the universe, and in all the ages of His rule over men He had but One sinless and perfectly holy subject--His own incarnate Son, Jesus Christ. Why should the only human being who ever deserved the entire approval of God be abandoned to the whim of a despot, the insensate rage of a mob, the cold hatred of bigots, and, so abandoned, be forsaken of God in the extremity of a cruel death?

Let it be repeated--the difficulty is a real one. For, if mobs and despots and bigots are supreme in authority over perfect goodness, then God has resigned, or is a myth. There is no Supreme Ruler.

For all other suffering save the suffering of Jesus Christ many reasons may be found in perfect harmony with both the goodness and justice of God. It is eternally right that God, in Plato's phrase, should "rivet together" sin and suffering; and furthermore, suffering is often, in the moral government of God, both purifying and remedial. Suffering is the crucible in which dross is burnt out, that the gold of God may be pure.

" 'Tis suffering sublimes the soul

So perfect peace may come at last,

And I shall know God's kind intent

When these sharp pains are past."

But in Jesus Christ was no dross of Adamic nature, no sin to which suffering might justly be "rivetted." And not only so, but even those who deserved to suffer were delivered if they cried to Jehovah. Amongst all [he suffering sons of men Jesus only was forsaken." Why?

Men have thought the doom of the wicked heathen to reflect upon the moral government of God, but here, forsaken of God is no filthy heathen sinner, but the holy Son of God. Let this be accounted for.

And just here is the necessary test of any theory of the atonement--does it account for a holy Son forsaken in a cruel death? If Jesus dies only to afford such a spectacle of moral grandeur as must forever enchain the hearts of men, and so transform human character, then the forsaking of him by God meant that God disowned the act, dissociated Himself from it. If the cross meant only a supreme manifestation of divine love, then the Father could not have been absent. But if Christ were indeed the sacrifice for the guilt of the

world; if, in infinite compassion toward man, and honor toward God, He was in one supreme act of suffering doing right by the moral order of the universe, and putting everlasting shame and ignominy upon sin, then indeed we may understand that God could not associate Himself with human guilt, and that the forsaken One suffered the forsaking that we might never be forsaken.

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