

The crucifixion

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[0 : 00] Why is it dark? Why this sudden darkness at noon at this time? Is God looking at the event and saying,!

Light is linked to salvation. And here at the cross, Jesus experiences darkness instead of salvation. This man, Jesus, is not getting salvation. He's not getting light, is he? He's getting darkness. The Lord is not acquitting him of the crimes from the Roman court that came on him.

But the darkness here means something else as well. It means judgment. The darkness means judgment. It shows God's holy hatred for sin.

Because Mark is really alluding to a time way back that you can read about in Exodus 10, where darkness covers the whole land. Listen to these words from Exodus 10, verse 22.

[1 : 23] Moses stretched out his hand towards the sky and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days.

Covers the cross for three hours. Covers Egypt for three days. The darkness in the Exodus is because Pharaoh stubbornly refuses to obey God and let God's beloved people go.

God's own son, Israel, refuses to let Israel go. And so darkness comes as judgment. And even in other places in the Old Testament, such as Amos, the prophet Amos, when he speaks about judgment, he says, this is Amos 8, verse 7, The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob, I will never forget all their deeds.

So God says, I'm not going to forget their deeds. And in verse 9 of Amos 8, In that day declares the sovereign Lord, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight.

So you read Amos and you think judgment is coming on God's people when the sun goes down at noon. And then more than that, as if that wasn't clear enough, Amos 8, verse 10 says, I will make that time like morning for an only sun.

[3 : 02] And the end of it like a bitter day. So judgment comes for God's people. And it gets intensely poured out, not in three days, but in three hours onto Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

The Son of God, who hangs on the cross, is the King of God's people. And this King, this King is taking the judgment, the punishment, the pain that we as God's people deserve.

And when Pharaoh resists the Lord, the land's covered in darkness. And do you know what the next plague is? After the darkness, the next plague is the death of the firstborn son.

Here the land goes dark, and the only begotten Son of God is butchered on a Roman implement of savage torture. Because he's receiving the judgment for our sin.

God is not stepping away. God is not stepping away from the cross. God is there, actively at the cross, punishing his beloved son. That's what he's doing.

[4 : 15] And I don't want to give the wrong impression. Jesus has not been coerced towards this. Okay? You know, it's not like God is some school bully who corners victims.

Jesus makes it so clear. He says, The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

He gives his life up. He willingly gives himself up to the darkness of judgment for his people. And the Lord responds by placing sin on him.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to our own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Judgment for sin. For our sin. The holy, righteous anger of God. Consumed by the righteous Son of God.

[5 : 23] That's the cross. Our gossip. Our lies. Our covetousness. Our lack of faith. Our pride. Our lust. Our self-righteousness.

Dealt with. Sorted. Judged. At the cross. He receives hell. At the cross. How is hell described? How does Jesus describe hell?

As outer darkness. Don't think that's just away from God. God is there in judgment. And Jesus enters into this outer darkness of judgment.

Where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth. And that's what he takes on the cross. And the good news is, if we recognize that our sin is bad enough to warrant the death of not just a good man, but a perfect man.

The Son of God. We do not need to enter judgment. Because Jesus has taken judgment for us. And anyone who wants to join in on that offer.

[6 : 27] But if you think, if you think, I've made some mistakes. And if you think, I know if I just try to do a bit better. I've made some mistakes.

I'll call them sin. But I'll just try and do a bit better. God will probably be pleased with me. Then you are rejecting this Savior. With as much Christian language as you might want to give it, you're rejecting this Savior.

You are keeping him at arm's length. And how does Jesus respond to this judgment? Well, he responds in verse 34. At three in the afternoon, after three hours of darkness, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani.

Which means, translated from Aramaic, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

He cries out with scripture. With the words of the Spirit. From Psalm 22, 1. David's prayer. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[7 : 36] Why are you so far from saving me? So far from my cries of anguish? And this prayer is at a point in David's life where he suffered without doing anything wrong immediately.

You know, he's persecuted and being mocked and not being defended. And David feels, in Psalm 22, he says, dogs surround me. A pack of villains encircles me.

They pierce my hands and feet. He says, all my bones are on display. People stare and gloat over me. And Jesus repeats this psalm as a prayer. It's a prayer for salvation.

It's a prayer for light. And he's asking the Lord why he has been forsaken to death on a cross. And you might think, well, Jesus is God.

And he is. He knows why. Well, Jesus is both human and he's divine, isn't he? He's human and he's divine.

[8 : 39] He's one person with two natures. A divine nature and a human nature. One Jesus. One Son of God. And there are times in Jesus' ministry when he acted according to his divine nature.

When he walks on water, which is a divine thing to do according to the Old Testament. But there are times when he acts according to the human nature. When he gets hungry and tired. And there are times when he speaks according to his divine nature as well.

When he tells the woman at the well how many husbands she's had. And there are times when he speaks according to his human nature. When he says, I don't know the day of the hour or the hour when the Son of Man will return.

And here at the cross, he speaks as the perfect human who has been forsaken by God to a judgment that he does not deserve.

And he says, why? Which is a natural human reaction, isn't it? I don't deserve this. Why am I getting it? Why am I receiving it?

[9 : 46] You might have felt this cry. Suffering in your own life. Because of injustice. And you say, God, why didn't you save me from that? Why didn't you deliver me from that?

Why? That was not fair. That was not right. That was not just. And Jesus knows that cry. He feels what you feel and he empathizes with us.

But he also prays that prayer in a way that none of us ever will. Because he took on the greatest injustice.

Paying for our sin. Christ suffered once for sins. The righteous for the unrighteous. To bring you to God. This is the only time when he doesn't directly address God as Father in prayer.

Instead, he relates to him as a human. Calling him God. I'm not saying there are two people here. There's one Jesus. One son.

[10 : 48] One son of God. But sometimes he relates to the Father as the eternal son. And other times as our mediator. Although he's one person.

Why do I say this? Because Jesus was not forsaken in every sense at the cross. He was forsaken to death.

He was forsaken to judgment. And he remained the beloved son of his Father. Hard to understand. He was not disowned from the Trinity. He did not lose his sonship. He was abandoned to death on a cross. But he was not rejected by his Father full stop.

Instead, he was forsaken to punishment and death. To the active judgment of God. The only way he was able to die was because he took on a human nature.

[11 : 45] Which is capable of death. And the only way he was able to be forsaken to death on a cross. Is because he had a human nature. That Jesus has an indestructible, unbreakable relationship with his Father.

Is able to give us so much joy and comfort. Because if you're a Christian, you've been adopted as a child of God. So we can enjoy the security of knowing the Father and the Son are in this secure relationship.

Because we've come into that as well. We gain that security. Secondly, the king receives mockery rather than honor. Mockery rather than honor.

Have a look at verse 35. When some of those standing near heard this, they said, Listen, he's calling Elijah. Someone ran. Filled a sponge with wine vinegar.

Put it on a staff. Offered it to Jesus to drink. Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes. Let's take him down. He said. Likely when Jesus said, Eloi, Eloi.

[12 : 53] It was a reference. They thought. They heard it as a reference to Elijah. They go, Oh, you're calling for Elijah. And they think Elijah's going to come and help Jesus in that situation.

Jesus needs some assistance. Elijah, according to kind of Jewish tradition, was someone who could help righteous sufferers. That's the way they're seeing it. Oh, Jesus, he needs help.

He's calling out. But this king should not be mocked by the assumption that he needs help.

Throughout his suffering, especially in his trial, Jesus could have helped himself.

He has an opportunity to make a difference, a defense, sorry. But he doesn't open his mouth. He goes to the cross with a purpose. He desires to be there, to hang, strung up for his people.

Those around the cross not only mock with their mouths, leaving dishonor in the ears of Jesus, but they mock with their actions, leaving a bitter taste in Jesus' mouth.

[13 : 57] Because verse 36 says, Now we know from John's account of the crucifixion that Jesus said, I am thirsty.

But they respond by giving Jesus this wine vinegar. It's cheap, cheap wine. Very different to the wine that Jesus would have made in his first miracle.

And a difference to the wine that he was offered in Mark 15, 23. They actually offer him, Mark 15, 23, they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, which is actually there to act as an anesthetic, to take away the pain.

He refuses that wine, which would have dulled the pain, and takes the bitter wine. Why? Well, Mark wants us to see that Jesus fulfills the sufferings of David in Psalm 69, who was also given vinegar for his thirst.

Why is that important? Mark wants us to know Jesus has fully entered not only into judgment for us, but into our sufferings as well.

[15 : 06] He knows what it's like to be mistreated as he's mocked. And his final act of suffering is to go ahead of us into death.

With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. That's what the king receives. Judgment, mockery.

Let's look at what the king accomplishes. Verse 38, straight after Jesus dies, something happens.

And it's as a result of the miraculous death, it's as a miracle as a result of his death.

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. Who rips the curtain? Well, God does it supernaturally. It's ripped from the skies downwards.

Not a human action. Not from the bottom up. But what does it show? It shows our access. It shows our access to God. This curtain divided the holy place in the temple from the most holy place.

[16 : 16] And the most holy place was the place of God's presence on earth. It was the place where the high priest, as you probably know, goes once a year to offer a sacrifice on behalf of the people on the Day of Atonement.

But now, that barrier is removed. What does it mean? It means this king is not only a king, he is a priest.

who opens up our way to God. He makes God accessible to us. But he's not only a priest. He is also our full and final sacrifice.

So these priests would do this every year. Go back into the Holy of Holies, repeating the same offering again and again and again and again and again. But now, the Savior's blood is enough. The sacrifice is done. And the writers of the Hebrews says that Christ's death is really his body being torn in two, which is why the curtain gets opened.

[17:20] Listen to what Hebrews 10 says. Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, opened up for us through the curtain, that is his body.

There's a link between his body and the curtain. the body gets ripped at the cross. The curtain gets torn open.

Calvary is a place of sacrifice. And because it's a place of sacrifice, it's a place of access. You know, this verb in the original language that Mark uses for torn is only actually used twice in Mark's whole gospel.

It's only used twice there. It's used here in verse 38. The curtain of the temple was torn in two. And it's used as a verb, only one other place, which is Mark 1 verse 10, which is Jesus' baptism.

Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being split open or being torn open and the spirit descending on him like a dove.

[18:42] So in Mark 1 10, the skies are ripped open and the spirit comes down and descends on Christ to show the pleasure of God on Christ.

But now here, the curtain is torn open because Jesus has been broken and sacrificed. What does it mean for us? It means the Mark is alluding to the fact the spirit will come and descend on us.

And if you're a Christian, you have the spirit of God directly because of Jesus' sacrifice right here in Mark 15. Jesus gives us his spirit and this means we have confidence.

It means we are assured of our access to him. Sometimes Christians, me included, can be a bit like those standing around the cross.

As we saw earlier, those who mock Jesus who thought he needed a bit of extra help from Elijah.

We can assume Jesus needs a bit of extra help from us to achieve what he has achieved.

[19:58] We think, I know Jesus was judged in my place. I know I have his spirit but I can't really approach God now. I don't feel ready to approach God now.

I've sinned. I'm aware of my sin. I feel ashamed. I feel awful. I feel just distance is better until I can show God that I'm more committed.

I don't know if I should pray. I don't know if he'll accept my prayer. I don't know if I can be forgiven again. I've sinned too many times.

Does Jesus need help to give us access if we come by him repenting of our sin? Or has he been judged?

Has he taken our judgment? Has he already given us the spirit through whom he enjoyed the pleasure of his father? That's what he's done isn't it? The sacrifice has happened.

[20:57] The spirit has been given. Thirdly, let's look at how the king rules. We've looked at what the king receives, judgment, mockery.

We've looked at what the king accomplishes, access, the spirit to us, his spirit I should say. Thirdly, we look at how the king rules. I think you see this in verses 39 and 40.

There's a lot of talk at the moment about politically how active we should be as Christians. Aren't we a Christian nation? Shouldn't we take back this nation? For Christ. Lots of talk.

In verse 39 we get a demonstration of how Christ topples empires. How Christ topples empires. We see a Roman centurion, soldier, high ranking, in charge of a hundred other soldiers.

He was the lead man in the execution squad that killed Christ. Hardened man. seen brutal things. What does he do in verse 39?

[22:08] When the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus saw how he died, he said, surely, surely this man was the son of God.

Surely this man was the son of God. He's broken. He's broken. broken. This man is the son of God. We've nailed him to a tree.

Tiberius Caesar, who was the Roman emperor at the time, he had coins made. And on the coins, put his name, put son of God.

Son of God. And this Roman centurion looks at a crucified man and says, surely this man was the son of God.

This is the divine king. This is the one. Forget Caesar. Forget Augustus. This is the one. And it's no coincidence, it's no coincidence that Mark records a non-Jewish Roman confession confessing that Jesus is the son of God.

[23 : 19] It's no coincidence. Because there's this tension throughout Mark's gospel, which is easy to miss. There's this tension throughout Mark's gospel about confessing Jesus as the son of God.

Mark starts the gospel saying, the beginning of the good news or the gospel about Jesus, the Messiah or the anointed king, the son of God. He says, the gospel is about Jesus who's the son of God.

And so we think, we read Mark's gospel, great, people who come to Jesus are going to be calling him the son of God. And you read through, and there's not many times Jesus gets called the son of God.

And when he does get called the son of God, he's called the son of God by his father in Mark 1.11. He's called the son of God by demons in Mark 3.11.

They call him the son of God. God, he's asked by the high priest if you're the son of the blessed one. But no one is calling Jesus on earth the son of God.

[24 : 25] Only those above the earth and below the earth, no one on earth is calling Jesus the son of God. Until this Roman centurion, the one who's in charge of putting him on the tree, says, surely this man was the son of God.

And Mark is saying, look, this gospel is going out to the world. This temple curtain has been torn. The way God was manifesting his presence in one place in Israel is now available to the world, even in the hearts of Roman centurions.

The spirit comes to live even with him. All through the confession, he's the divine king. Jesus Christ is the king who conquered the Romans.

He's the king who has conquered people from all types of kingdoms and nations, and he does it through sacrifice, and he does it through love. I want to ask, has he conquered your heart, or are you stronger than this Roman centurion?

Are you refusing to treat him as a divine king, or are you opening yourself up, broken at the cross saying, this is the son of God? Finally, we shouldn't think that Jesus is only after the powerful, the elite, those with positions.

[25 : 55] He wants the ordinary people as well. A wonderful portrayal of devotion in verses 40 and 41. Some women were watching from a distance among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger, and of Joseph and Solomay.

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. Here are these ordinary women, not high-ranking soldiers, but devoted followers of Jesus.

And that's what he wants, doesn't it? That's what Jesus wants. Devotion day in and day out. This was the hardest day of their life, life, and they stay devoted. Where are the apostles?

These women stay devoted, stay following Christ through thick and thin. That's what Jesus wants, isn't it?

They might struggle to understand what was happening, the confusion, the doubts, but Mark says, now they're here, they stayed with him. How does Jesus the king rule?

[27 : 03] Through confessing him as the son of God, the only one who died for our rebellion. And then we need to live lives devoted to him through all circumstances.

May the Lord help us as we live for Jesus. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we want to thank you this morning for the judgment, the sin that was taken on that tree by you in your body, pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities.

it was the Lord's will to bruise you. We should have been bruised. We deserve the outer darkness. We deserve the gnashing of teeth.

And you take it for us. And so we thank you, Lord. And we praise you that that work is finished and accomplished and we can now approach your father as our father and speak to you father and say thank you that we can approach you as adopted children.

May we never add to the work of Christ. But I pray help us to be devoted to Jesus Christ your son throughout our lives like these women were.

[28 : 34] We confess him as the son of God in Jesus name. Amen. Let's sing together. Man of sorrows, what a name for the son of God who came.
ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah. What a Savior. here.