

Jesus' Second Three Hours on the Cross: The Wrath of God

Matthew 27:45-50; Mark 15:33-37;

Luke 23:44-45a and 46; John 19:28-30

From Noon to 3 pm on Friday, the fifteenth of Nisan

DIG: What character traits did Messiah exhibit during the six hours before His death? Why did Jesus submit to God's plan of salvation for the world?

REFLECT: How do you feel when you think about the pain and agony Jesus endured for you? Who is the one person you can tell about Christ's work on the cross?

He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of His dear Son. It is through His Son that we have redemption - that is, our sins have been forgiven (Colossians 1:13-14 CJB).

A woman told her husband that it was becoming difficult to see. He looked into the sky, and others looked up as well. There were no clouds. But the heavens had deepened from a pale blue to a deeper blue. The sky continued to darken. It was not a sudden thing, but it was definitely getting darker.

The people forgot for a moment the three men on crosses, and many in the gathering pointed to the sky. Some said that a storm was coming. The crowd began to break up, and many hurried toward the gates, the women flinging shawls over their heads and running with their children to get to shelter before the storm broke.

But there was no sound of thunder. There were no lightening flashes. There were no clouds. The sky darkened until the sun could be stared at with the human eye. The blue deepened until the darkness of dusk descended over all.

The people were afraid, and many asked what this was. And some, calmer than others, said that it must be gigantic dust storm that had flung millions of sand particles between the land and the sun. But others said that even the oldest living Jew had not seen a sandstorm of more than minor proportions over Jerusalem. Some said it must be an eclipse of the sun, although the more learned knew that this could not be true because the sun was now in the western side of the sky and the moon would rise in the east after sundown.¹⁶¹¹

Stage 18 - Darkness That Covers the Entire World: From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land, for the sun stopped shining (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44-45a). The Greek word for **came over all the land**, means *the whole inhabited world*. We have several secular sources that speak of the same darkness. Dionysius of Egypt wrote that he experienced the same thing. Another writer, Diogenes, wrote something very interesting. As a scientist in Egypt, wrote that he saw "a solar **darkness** of such likeness that either the deity himself suffered at that moment or he sympathized with one who did." There was some insight there. Also Phlegon of Tralles, a freedman of the Emperor Hadrian in the fourth year of the 202 Olympiad, which was 30 AD said, "There was a great and remarkable eclipse of the sun above any that had happened before it. The day turned into dark night, so that the stars were seen in the sky, and an earthquake in Bithynia toppled many buildings of the city of Nicaea." He called this an eclipse, but it could not be an eclipse because stars do not come out in an eclipse. This unique darkness was recorded in various parts of the Greek world.

ADONAI was using **the darkness** to make a spiritual statement. And it wasn't the first time **He** had done so, as one only needs to remember the ten plagues of Egypt (see my commentary on **Exodus Bs - Total Darkness Covered All Egypt For Three Days**). From that point on, the Bible often pictures **darkness** as being associated with the judgment of **the LORD** at the Second Coming (**Amos 8:9; Joel 3:14-15**).

Those **three hours** of **darkness** mark **three hours** of spiritual death. This was **the cup** that **Yeshua** did not want to drink, but would drink it if it was **the Father's** will (see **La - Jesus Prays for All Believers**). For three hours, for the first time in all eternity, **Jesus Christ** is spiritually dead and suffers the wrath of **God**. During that time **God the Father** turned **His** back on **God the Son** as the **Messiah** became sin on our behalf (see my commentary on **Isaiah Jb - Yet We Considered Him Punished, Stricken and Afflicted by God**). **YHWH** made **Him** who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in **Him**, we might become the righteousness of **God** (**Second Corinthians 5:21**). **Peter** said it this way: **He Himself** bore our sins in **His** body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by **His** wounds you have been healed (**First Peter 2:24**).

Messiah's sacrifice satisfied every requirement of a righteous **God**. **His** anger for our sin has already been paid. **ADONAI** **Himself** provides the means by which **He** can remove **God's** own wrath from us. Propitiation is the averting of **God's** wrath by means of the vicarious (substitutionary, performed by others) and efficacious (producing the desired effect) sacrifice (death) of **Jesus Christ** (the atonement). Propitiation is the work of **Christ** that satisfies every claim of **God's** holiness and justice so that **God** is free to act on the behalf of believers (**Isaiah 53:4-11; Second Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Romans 3:23-26; First Peter 2:24**). This concept is not found in any other religion.

Even though **Mary** was at **His** feet watching **Him** die, **her** personal suffering did not represent any kind of participation in **His** atoning work. **Her** grief saved no one. It was **Messiah** who was bearing the sins of the world in **His** body. **She** could not help with that. Nor did **He** need her to, **for there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus (First Timothy 2:5)**. **Mary** herself never claimed to be, or pretend to be, anything more than a humble believer in **God**. **She** was special because **God** used **her** in a special way. However, **she** clearly thought of **herself** as ordinary and never encouraged *anyone* to believe that **she** could be a **mediator** like the Catholic Church teaches today. It is regrettable that religious superstition has, in effect, turned **Miryam** into an idol. No doubt **she** would be appalled to think that anyone would pray to **her**. **Jesus Christ** was the one **she** recognized as **Lord** and worshiped. We should do the same.¹⁶¹²

Stage 19 - Christ's Fourth Words from the Cross: **Yeshua** quotes the first part of **Psalm 22:1** and cries out for help as **David** once did. **And at three in the afternoon Jesus** painfully pushed **Himself** up. Because **His** legs were rotated laterally, the weight of **His** body came down with full force on the single nail driven through both heels. For a moment **His** head hid the sign that told of **His** crime. When **His** shoulders were level with **His** wrists, breathing was rapid and easier. **He** fought the pain in **His** heels in order to breathe, and **cried out in a loud voice: Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani? which means My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34)?** The call to **God** was in Hebrew, while the second part of the cry to **ADONAI** was in Aramaic, the common language of the day.

It is important to note here how **Jesus** addresses **God the Father**. **He** says: **My God, My God**. This is the only time in **the life of Christ** that **God the Son** addresses **God the Father** in this manner. In all four Gospels **Christ** says, **Father**, 170 times and **My Father**, 21 times, but never **God**. This is unique. In the TaNaKh the term, **Father** (in relationship to **God**) is only used 14 times. It is never used in relationship to a person, but always to Isra'el. The concept of Fatherhood as it relates to individuals is unique to the New Covenant. There is no prayer in the TaNaKh that addresses **God** as **Father**, or Jewish prayer in Judaism today that addresses **Him** as such.¹⁶¹³ At this point, **Yeshua** uses, **My God, My God**, because **He** is no longer in a parental relationship with **the Deity**, but a judicial relationship because **Jesus** had **become sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24)**, and was suffering the wrath of **God**.

In addition, it is obvious that **Christ** quoted directly from **Psalm 22** because of its messianic overtones. **The rabbis have different interpretations of this Psalm, but one of them is that King David was agonizing over the suffering of the future Son of David (see Mv - The Jewish Concept of Two Messiah's) King Messiah. It was because of the ordeal of the Son of David that David wept, saying, "My strength is dried up**

like a [piece of broken pottery]" (Psalm 22:16 as quoted in Pesikta Rabbati 36:2). Therefore, it was no accident; more accurately, **Yeshua** intentionally connected **His** death with the prophetic suffering of **the Meshiach**.¹⁶¹⁴ But **Jesus** had not called **the prophet**. He had called **His Father**.

Then, unable to bear the pain in **His** heels, which cramped **His** legs and thighs, **the Suffering Servant** let **His** torso sag lower and lower. **Christ's** knees, being rotated laterally, sagged, a little at a time until, with a deep sigh, **He** felt **Himself** once again painfully hanging on **His** wrists. This process was repeated again and again.

Stage 20 - The Reaction of Those Standing By: When some of those standing there heard "**Eloi, Eloi,**" they said, "He's calling **Elijah**" (Matthew 27:47; Mark 15:35). The Hebrew phrase could easily have been misunderstood because either form of the name of **God** - **Eli** or **Eloi**, could sound something like **Elijah** if not heard clearly enough. **The rest** said: **Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take Him down and save Him** (Matthew 27:49; Mark 15:36b). Because **he** never experienced death, **Elijah** it has long been a Jewish tradition that **he** might appear to help those in need. Even today, Jews and Gentiles attending the Passover Seder set a place with a special cup with the expectation that **Elijah** might appear and announce the arrival of **King Messiah**.

The whole purpose of **crucifixion** was progressive weakness under increasing pain. But the weakness of **the two criminals** with **Him** did not keep up with **Christ's** because **He** had been severely flogged and had no food or water since about eleven the night before at the end of the Seder. The mouths and throats of all condemned men cried out for water and, as the victim went deeper into shock, **He** lost more fluids and **His** skin became increasingly moist to the touch. **Yeshua** was closer to death than were **the zealots** on either side of **Him**.

Stage 21 - Christ's Fifth Words from the Cross: Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, **Jesus** said: **I AM thirsty** (John 19:28). Literally in the Greek: **I thirst**. There is significance in this word because the rich man in **Luke 16:24** says basically the same thing after suffering the torments of hell. Thus, for three hours, **Christ** had suffered the wrath of **God**, which is the torments of hell and **He** said: **I AM thirsty**. Although **Yeshua** had not tasted the last cup of the Seder on the previous night, it is clear here that **He** willingly tasted the terrible death on the cross for **the Father's** divine purpose.¹⁶¹⁵

Stage 22 - Vinegar to the Lips of Jesus: Behind the Lord, a soldier immediately ran and got a sponge. He picked up a stalk of the hyssop plant and stabbed it into the sponge, then dipped it into a jar of posca. This was a common drink for laborers and Roman soldiers made of vinegar and wine diluted with water.¹⁶¹⁶ Then dripping sponge was lifted up

to the lips of the Messiah (Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:36a; John 19:29). This moistened Christ's lips so that what He says next will be distinctly and clearly heard.

The Messiah - who was dying as a man and with the physical limitations of a man - found himself in a multiplicity of pain. Slowly, steadily, he was being asphyxiated as surely as if he had two hands around his throat. The loss of blood had not been fatal. No arteries in the wrists or feet had been severed, though there was considerable loss from the thorns on his head and from the flogging on his back. The cause of death, in Roman crucifixions, was never loss of blood. It was almost always asphyxiation.¹⁶¹⁷

Stage 23 - Christ's Sixth Words from the Cross: When He had received the drink, Jesus said in Aramaic: **It is finished** (John 19:30a). He said **"It" is finished**, not **"I" AM finished**. The Lord will speak these same words again at the end of the Great Tribulation when He will say: **It is done** (see my commentary on **Revelation Eh - The Seventh Bowl: A Tremendous Earthquake**)! Jesus spoke in Aramaic, but the Bible is written in Greek and this is one word in Greek, *tetelestai*, and it is in the perfect tense, indicating a past, completed action, with continuing, and in this case, permanent results. *Tetelestai* was a Greek word used in accounting. Archeologists found an enormous amount of invoices at a dig in Egypt. Many Jews had fled Jerusalem before the Roman destruction and settled in Alexandria. There they translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, the international language of the day. In Alexandria, Egypt, archeologists found a large quantity of invoices with *tetelestai*, written on clay tablets. In accounting terms, it means **paid in full**. In other words, what Messiah was saying, was that the price for sin (see propitiation above) had been **paid in full**.

Stage 24 - Christ's Seventh Words from the Cross: Then Jesus cried out with a loud voice: **Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit** (John 19:30b), just about same time when the evening sacrifice was being offered. The Lord did not die the ordinary death of a man who was crucified. Normally, a person would suffer extreme exhaustion and in most cases, lose consciousness. But Yeshua was fully conscious to the end. This was a voluntary death. Proving what He had said earlier: **No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord** (John 10:18a). Jesus was in control the entire time, and He personally dismisses His soul from His body. From His perspective, His death was not a surprising tragedy but a divine completion of **the Father's** will.

As the hours' past, Caiaphas became worried. The water clocks were nearing three o'clock and these executions needed to end soon. The priests did not want to appear callous about the matter of time, but, in a little more than a couple of hours Shabbat would be upon all of them. So after some discussion, they sent a messenger hurrying back into Yerushalayim to ask the Pontius Pilate to order the centurion to put an end to these three criminals, so that they might be buried before sundown.

Stage 25 - Physical Death: When Yeshua had said this, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit (Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30c). The words **gave up** are translated from the Greek word *ekpneo*, meaning *to breath out one's life, to breathe one's last or to expire*. He most certainly died on the afternoon of the first day of the Passover, **the fifteenth of Nisan**. The Talmud, Jewish commentaries on the TaNaKh, indicates that Jesus died on Friday afternoon at 3 pm. This was the common time for the afternoon Temple sacrifice, or *minchah prayers*, offered by the Levites. How much more so on that holy day of Passover as the *levi'im* were preparing the annual sacrifice of the national Passover lamb. Like the *Chagigah* offering at the morning Temple sacrifice, it was an important and well-established tradition to offer one single sacrificial lamb on behalf of the whole nation of Isra'el. It is no coincidence that the Gospel writers mention that it was **at three in the afternoon** when Yeshua died, the very time of the lamb offering in the Temple. Less than a mile to the east, a finely clothed priest leads a lamb to the slaughter, unaware that his work is futile . . . and that the darkness that had engulfed them from noon until **three in the afternoon** had subsided and it became light again. Heaven was not looking at the lamb of man but at **the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world** (Yochanan 1:29).

There were probably several causes for the physical death of **Messiah**: dehydration, irregular heartbeat, and congestive heart failure. But the two most important were probably shock due to blood loss and exhaustion asphyxia, or the lack of oxygen (or an excess of carbon dioxide), due to the inability to exhale. Death by **crucifixion** was, in every sense of the word, excruciating.

Many times it is inaccurately portrayed that "the Jews" rejected **Jesus**, as if not one Jew followed **Him** in the first century. If that were true, we would like to know how we even got the New Covenant? Who were the apostles and the tens of thousands who called on **His** name in **Acts 21:20**? Quite frankly, these were not "Christians" converting to a new religion, but they were all Jews who followed **Yeshua** as **King Messiah**.¹⁶¹⁸

There are eleven important results from the death of **the Messiah**. First, it was a **ransom** and paid the price for the penalty of sin (**Matthew 20:28; First Timothy 3:6**); secondly, it was a **redemption** (**Galatians 3:13** and **First Peter 2:24**); thirdly, it was a **reconciliation** (**Second Corinthians 5:18-19**); fourthly, it was a **propitiation** (**First John 2:2**); fifthly, it was a **substitution** (**Second Corinthians 5:21** and **First Peter 3:18**); sixthly, it was **proof of the love of God** (**Romans 5:8**); seventhly, it was **judgment of the sin nature** (**Romans 6:1-10**); eighthly, it **marked the end of the Torah as a means of salvation** (**Romans 10:4; Colossians 2:14** and **Second Corinthians 3:7-11**); ninthly, it is **the basis for the cleansing of believers passive and active sin** (**First John 1:3-9**); tenthly, it was **the basis for the**

removal of sin before the cross (Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:15); and lastly, it is the basis for the judgment of Satan and his demons (John 12:31 and Colossians 2:15).¹⁶¹⁹

To the casual observer the six hours are mundane . . .

God is on a **cross**. **The Creator** of the universe is being executed.

Spit and blood are caked to **His** cheeks, and **His** lips are cracked and swollen. Thorns rip **His** scalp. **His** lungs scream with pain. **His** legs knot with cramps. Taut nerves threaten to snap as pain twangs her morbid melody. Yet, death is not ready. And there is no one to save **Him**, for **He** is sacrificing **Himself**.

This is no normal six hours . . . it is not normal **Friday**.

Let me ask you a question: What do you do with that day in history? What do you do with its claims? If it really happened . . . if **God** did orchestrate for **His** own **crucifixion** . . . if **He** did turn **His** back on **His** own **Son** . . . those six hours were no normal six hours. They were the most critical hours in history.¹⁶²⁰

Dear **Heavenly Father**, thank **You** for rescuing me from the domain of darkness. Because of **Your** grace, I announce that I am no longer a child of darkness but a child of light, and I choose to walk in the light and ask that **You** would enable me to do so by the power of **the Holy Spirit**. I renounce the lie that I am merely of product of my past, and I announce the truth that I am a product of **Christ's** sacrifice on **the cross**. Please forgive me of my **sin**. I invite **You** to take control of my life and to reveal to me anything that would keep me in bondage to my past or to the lies of Satan. I ask for the grace to renounce all former activities of darkness and the lies of the evil one. I now commit myself to **You** for all eternity. In the precious name of **Jesus** and through **His** shed blood I pray. Amen.¹⁶²¹