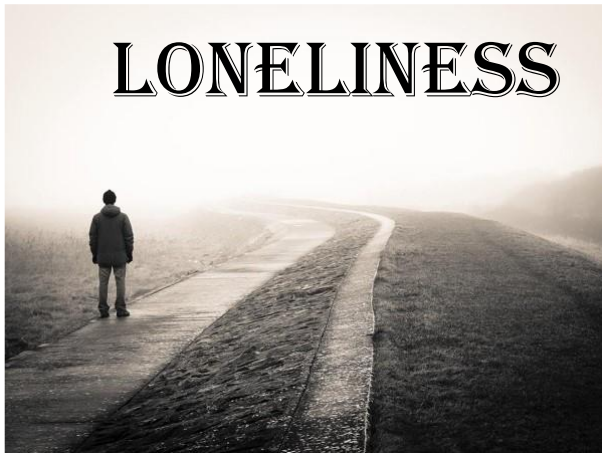


A Lesson on Loneliness
(Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34)



Apollo 15 astronaut Al Worden knew what it felt like to be on the far side of the moon. For three days back in 1971, he flew alone in his command module, Endeavor, while two crewmates worked thousands of miles below on the surface of the moon. His only companions were the stars overhead that he remembers as being so thick they seemed to wrap him in a sheet of light. During this time in

space, he felt all alone. Many of us have experienced loneliness at certain times in our lives.

Head coach Pepper Rodgers came under intense criticism and pressure from alumni and fans as his UCLA football team suffered through a poor season in the early 1970s. Things got so bad, he remembers with a smile, that friends became hard to find and I became lonely. “My dog was my only true friend” Rodgers said. During this particular season and year Rodgers also stated: “I told my wife that every man needs at least two good friends, so she bought me another dog!”

Well, this man felt forsaken, loneliness, and despair. Have you ever experienced loneliness? Have you ever felt that you were all alone, and that God had forgotten you? Have you felt the pain and emotion of being left alone not knowing if anyone cared? Perhaps you were passing through a time of illness and suffering when you suddenly felt all alone. Maybe you lost a loved one that was very dear to your heart. Loneliness can strike at the core of our hearts.

In this study we are going to discover that Jesus Christ experienced extreme loneliness when He hung on the cross, during the three hours of darkness, the time when He was separated from the Father. There has never been a lonelier person than Jesus when the Father forsook Him. This occurred during the time when His beloved Son bore the full weight of our sins upon the cross.

Loneliness is just one of many lessons we learn when we listen to the words of Jesus from the cross.

A.J. Gossip once said:

“Get the people in the sight of Calvary. Pause there... hushed and reverent; enable them to look, to see it, make it real to them, not just an old tale that has lost its wonder and its stab, but a tremendous awful fact.”

Yes, the whole ordeal was awful! It was horrible! It was a horror! It was a terrible thing! But it was needful for our redemption. When looking at Matthew 27:45-47 we discover that the cross of Calvary is a tremendous, awful fact! It is an awful fact in relation to how Christ bore the penalty for our sins while at the same time it is a tremendous fact of amazing grace!

When Jesus took our sin upon Himself and become our curse and died in our place bearing the dreadful sin debt of mankind. It was during this time when the Father had to forsake His Son. Think of how broken the Son was, as well as the Father’s heart, when He had to leave His Son behind! He had to let Him go, break His fellowship with Him, and separate from Him.

Somewhere I read the story of a father whose son was killed in a tragic accident. In grief and enormous anger, he visited his pastor and poured out his heart. ‘Where was God when my son died?’ The pastor paused for a moment and with great wisdom replied, “The same place God was when His own Son died.” In other words, God the Father was in Heaven, with a broken heart, allowing His own providential plan and purpose come to pass on earth with His own beloved Son, even as God allowed His purpose to come to pass with this earthly father’s son who had died.

Matthew 27:46 declares:

“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?”

Matthew 27:46

“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?”

Mark 15:34 similarly records with a few changes in wording: “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Mark 15:34

“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eloi, Eloi**, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Matthew, like Mark, has preserved the words of the orphan cry of Jesus in both the Hebrew and Aramaic languages. In Matthew's gospel "Eli, Eli (ay-lee) is in the Hebrew language and lama sabachthani?" comes from the Aramaic. In Mark's gospel he has "Eloi" (el-o-ee) which is Aramaic instead of the Hebrew and preserves the entire saying in the Aramaic language. Some suggest Mark did this because of a Roman audience. In any event, these variations mean the same thing.

Eli or Eloi means "my God" and "lama" means "why" and "sabachthani" means "thou hast left me" (it refers to a cry of distress).

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." It's not an easy task to explain this statement that Jesus made on the cross. I cannot plummet the depths of this saying! No person can. In fact, no individual can ever fully understand what Jesus passed through when He was forsaken by the Father.

For many hours Martin Luther sat and stared at this text. He said nothing, he wrote nothing, but silently he pondered these words of Jesus on the cross. Suddenly he stood up and exclaimed, "God forsaken by God. How can it be?"

This is perhaps the hardest of all the sayings on the cross. No statement is perhaps more mysterious than this one. The problem is not with the words of Hebrew and Aramaic origin but what they mean? Indeed, how can it be? God forsaken by God? God the Father forsaking God the Son? We will try and unearth this in our study as we reflect on the time of loneliness that Jesus experienced while hanging on the cross.

Jesus became lonely when separated from the Father to free us from eternal separation and loneliness in Hell.

This scene of loneliness is unfolded in four ways.

1. It is enshrouded in darkness

I want to comment on verse 45 for this sets the entire stage for what Jesus said in verse 46. We must attempt to understand and grasp what took place in those three hours of darkness before we can understand what Jesus meant when He cried out

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.” What was happening in the time of blackness or darkness?

Matthew 27:45 states:

“Now from the sixth hour (12:00 p.m.) there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour” (3:00 p.m.).

Mark made no reference to the time when the saving transaction of the crucifixion began. But Matthew indicates the exact time in which Jesus bore our sins in judgment and was separated from the Father.

During this specific time there was darkness not only over the land of Palestine but also in the holy soul of Jesus as well. It was during this time that He bore the indescribable curse of our sins and was separated from the Father.

In these three hours Jesus bore the Hell that we deserved, the wrath of God against all our transgressions. We simply cannot know what it fully meant for Him to satisfy all God’s righteous demands against sin. We only know that in those three hours He paid the price, settled the debt, and finished the work necessary for man’s redemption.

Once again, verse 45 says, “there was darkness over all the land.” While Jesus was hanging on the cross between the hours of 12:00 and 3:00 (Roman time) there was a time of eerie blackness over the land of Israel. The land became enveloped with darkness much like Egypt’s – it was a darkness that could be felt.

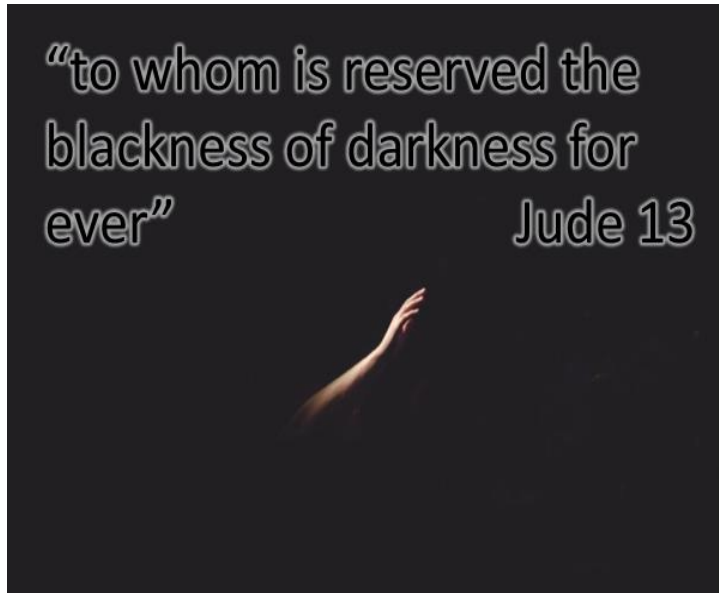
Exodus 10:21 records:

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness *which* may be felt.”

We learn that when God brings judgment He sometimes brings darkness along with that judgment. This is what occurred on the cross. The darkness was a sign of God’s judgment passing over His beloved Son.

The good news is that Jesus bore the judgment for our sins in the darkness so we might never experience the darkness of Hell. Jesus taught in Matthew 22:13: “Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness” and in

Matthew 25:30 He also states, “cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.”



Jude 1:13 explains the judgment upon false teachers like this: “to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” 2 Peter 2:17 also reveals this about the unsaved: “to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.” Thank God that Jesus passed through the darkness of God’s judgment on our behalf so we must never face the eternal darkness of Hell with all its terrible judgments and eternal sufferings.

I was trying to imagine what it might be like to live in eternal darkness forever. In Centralia Pennsylvania you can take a tour down an old shaft mine to see how they used to dig for coal. When we took that tour, at one point, they turned out all the lights. Let me tell you, I was never in darkness such as that! And your eyes did not adjust. This is the way it will be in Hell for those who spend eternity there. There will be eternal darkness. Darkness in the Bible is one expression of God’s judgment and wrath.

We see this on the cross. During those three hours upon the cross, Jesus was taking our Hell and judgment. Once again, Jesus experienced darkness so that we might never experience the eternal darkness of Hell. He passed through the darkness so that we might escape it forever. The physical darkness that God the Father sent during noontime was a demonstration and picture of the spiritual darkness of sin and judgment that was placed upon Jesus Christ while He hung on the cross. It was also a symbol that the Father could not look upon sin with His favor and acceptance.

With the darkness covering the land God the Father presented a gigantic object lesson to the world regarding the necessary judgment for sin. The cross was a place of divine judgment, where the sins of the world were poured out vicariously on the

sinless, perfect, Son of God. It was therefore appropriate that a great supernatural darkness express God's reaction to sin in that act of judgment.

We know that darkness in the Bible is also a metaphor for sin. Ephesians 5:11 talks about "the unfruitful works of darkness" and 1 John 1:5 declares that "in him is no darkness at all."

It's very significant that when Jesus was bearing the sins of the entire world, and the judgment for these sins, that there was darkness in the land of Israel. For three hours the Lord Jesus Christ took the totality of our sins upon Himself and was punished for them in our place. In these three hours there was blackness over the land because sin is typified as darkness or blackness. Jesus took the darkness of sin upon Himself and faced the penalty for our sin (judgment and separation from God) so we could go free!

It's interesting that in the plan of creation He brought forth light. However, in the plan of redemption He brought forth darkness! There had to be darkness that came upon the land for God cannot look at sin. But there was also a darkness which came upon the soul of Jesus for the Son had to be separated from the Father. Imagine the loneliness and despair that Jesus experienced while hanging on the cross when He was abandoned by the Father.

"Alone, alone, He bore it all alone;
He gave Himself to save His own,
He suffered, bled and died alone, alone."

When the horrible moment of separation from His Son approached, God put out the sun! Once again, this darkness symbolized God's separation from His Son and that He could not look upon His Beloved Son, who became the Sin-bearer of the world during this time.

It's also interesting that Jesus, who was the light of the world (John 8:12) is now enshrouded in darkness. But the light of Christ, who He was and what He came to do, was not being snuffed out. This is because on the cross Jesus was fulfilling all the previous Old Testament pictures and Passover animal sacrifices. It was time to ponder - "Behold, the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). A provisional sacrifice was made to remove the sins of mankind.

Someone remarked:

“Calvary is not only a place of atonement; it is also a place of amazement. Are we so familiar with the cross that we no longer pause to wonder and to worship?”

These hours of darkness would be the time when everything would fall on Jesus, all the sins of all the centuries, since the beginning of time to the end of time, were placed upon Him. Your sins and mine were placed on Him so He could provide the way of forgiveness and acceptance for you and me in Heaven.

So, Jesus was crucified at 9 o'clock in the morning; and from 9 until 12 noon, He hung in the light. But at noon, a miraculous or supernatural darkness covered the land. This was not a sandstorm or an eclipse, as some liberal writers have suggested. It was a heaven-sent darkness that lasted for three hours. Again, it was during this time when Jesus became the sin offering for the entire world. In this time of darkness Jesus became the substitutionary sacrifice for the entire world of mankind.

Isaiah 53:10 prophesied of this long ago:

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”

Isaiah 53:6

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

“All my iniquities on him were laid.
He nailed them all to the tree.
Jesus the debt of my sin fully paid.
He paid the ransom for me.”

Think of it. Jesus made a complete identification with all sinners of all time on the cross. He took all our sins upon Himself (the judgment, penalty and Hell we deserved). All the iniquity of all time, all the evil of all time, all the crime and hatred of this world of all time. It was all laid on Him!

Imagine that somewhere in the universe there is a cesspool containing all of the sins that have ever been committed. The cesspool is deep, dark, and incredibly foul. All of the evil deeds that men and women have ever done are floating around. Imagine a river of filth constantly flowing into this cesspool, replenishing the vile mixture with all the evil done every day. Now imagine that while Jesus is on the cross, that cesspool is emptied onto Him. See the flow of filth as it settled upon Him. The flow never seems to stop. It is so vile, toxic, deadly, filled with disease, pain and suffering.

When God looked down upon His Son He saw the cesspool emptied upon Him. No wonder He turned away from the sight. Who could bear to watch it? All the lust in the world was there. All the murder, lies, hatred, theft adulteries, pornography, drunkenness, bitterness, greed, drug abuse, crime, cursing. Every vile deed, every wicked thought, every single sin, all of it was laid upon Jesus when He hung on the cross.

“I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood;
He fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.

Oh, can it be, upon a tree
The Saviour died for me?
My soul is thrilled,
My heart is filled,
To think He died for me!”

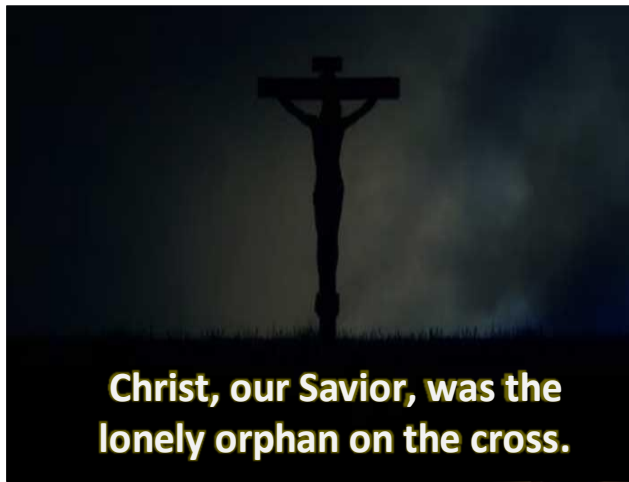
We must remember to never minimize the horror of human sin and the price Jesus paid for our sins when suffering on the cross and being separated from the Father. Sometimes we might laugh at sin, maybe even laugh at a dirty joke, as if sin was something to joke about. We might think lightly about not telling the full truth or not being fully honest about something. We might give in to something we know is wrong for the sake of not making waves. But we must remember that our sins, every sin, is a terrible stench, an ungodly and ugly thing. Sin is a horror for it nailed Jesus to a cross and caused the eternal Father to forsake the eternal Son.

1 Peter 2:24 declares:

“Who his own self bare (“to carry or bear up, to place on oneself as a load”) our sins (the penal judgment for our sins) in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

As Jesus hung there in those hours of darkness and blackness the wrath of God was being poured out upon Him. This is because all of humanity had sinned in Adam (Rom. 5:14) and would commit an incalculable number of sins that would have to be paid for by judgment. So, in a judicial way Jesus bore the judgment for all those sins while He was hanging on the cross, during the time of darkness.

“Was it for crimes that I have done,
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! Grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!”



Dr. Leonard Cammer, a psychiatrist who has specialized for thirty years in treating depressed persons, said, "The human being is the only species that can't survive alone. The human being needs another human being—otherwise he's dead! A telephone call to a depressed person can save a life. An occasional word, a ten-minute visit, can be more effective than twenty-four hours of nursing care. You can buy nursing care. You can't buy love."

People are lonely today. They really are lonely, and Jesus was lonely when He hung on the cross. His loneliness stemmed from being deserted by the Father and because He was taking the entire sins of the world upon Himself.

Someone said:

“The biggest disease today is not heart disease or cancer. It's the feeling of being uncared for, unwanted—of being deserted and alone.”

Now think of this. There in the darkness, as a perfect sin offering, as a “Lamb without spot or blemish” (1 Pet. 1:19), Jesus was all alone. Christ, our Savior, was the lonely orphan on the cross. When He took the penalty of our own sin upon Himself He bore it all alone.

Remember that sin deserves wages, which can be viewed as a penalty of judgment (“the wages of sin is death” - Romans 6:23). Jesus paid the wages for your sin! When Jesus was hanging on the cross during those hours of darkness He was taking the wages of our sins (the penalty for our sins) upon Himself. During this time of blackness or darkness Jesus was taking the punishment for my sin upon Himself. He was dying for me, as me, in my place, on my behalf.

2 Corinthians 5:21 teaches the important doctrine of substitution:

“For he (*the Father*) hath made him (*the Son*) *to be* sin for us (a sin offering bearing the load of judgment for our sins), who knew no sin (a sinless substitute); that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (a supplied righteousness).

This is what happened in those three hours of darkness! Jesus paid the necessary fine that God required for sin and sinners. He suffered and died to supply us with a righteous position of acceptance before the Father. This has been called “the great exchange.” The Bible teaches that sin was imputed to Christ and righteousness is imputed to the believing sinner.

1 Peter 3:18 also teaches substitution for sinners:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins (*retribution of the Father - God’s wrath falling upon His Son as He bore the judgment for our own sin*), the just for the unjust (*replacement of the sinner who should have been judged*), that he might bring us to God (*reconciliation with God*), being put to death in the flesh (*receiving the sentence of death*), but quickened by the Spirit” (*the resurrection*).

In those dreadful hours of darkness upon the cross Jesus became the sin-bearer of all mankind paying the price that God demanded for sin – the price was judgment, punishment, God’s wrath, separation from the Father, and death. The judgment that we deserved for our sins was placed upon Christ in those hours of darkness.

Galatians 3:13 also explains the dreadful scene:

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law (*release from God’s judgment - exagorazo – to purchase, buy out, or ransom us*), being made a curse for us (*replacement for the sinner*): for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree.”

The law taught that when condemned criminals were hanged on a tree, it was a sign of their being under the curse of God (Deut. 21:23). But Jesus bore the curse or judgment associated with the Law that we had broken and paid the necessary fine that God required to release from sin’s judgment and slavery. The word “redeemed” was used in the ancient world to describe the payment of a ransom. A ransom implied that a price was paid in order to secure someone’s release.

Jesus bore the curse of judgment that the law inflicted upon us for breaking it. It was the holy expression of God’s wrath and judgment being poured out upon sin (Rom. 2:5). He was cursed in our behalf and took the judgment for our sin upon Himself.

This is once again a strong declaration of Christ’s substitutionary death on behalf of sinners. Christ took the penalty of all guilty lawbreakers on Himself. Thus the “curse of the Law” was transferred from sinners to Christ, the sinless One, and Jesus delivered people from it by providing the redeeming sacrifice.

There was no greater love!

“There is no greater love
Than that of Christ above
That made Him stoop to earth
Become a man and by His death
Provide redemption's plan.
There is no greater love
That's why I'm singing of
God's Love so rich and free
Revealed at Calvary.”

Matthew 27:46 once again declares:

“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 suggest that this was physical pain that Jesus endured, other suggest it was a cry of faith as it related to God’s plan or purpose, and still others will tell you that Jesus was disillusioned at this point. All these assessments are wrong. What Jesus was experiencing at this point was emotional anguish beyond degree. He was for the very first time separated from the presence of the Father whom He had enjoyed an unbroken relationship with throughout eternity.

In these bleak and black hours on the cross, God the Father turned His back on God the Son. For the very first time there was a sense of broken fellowship between the two members of the Godhead. And Jesus felt it. But so did the Father!

The word forsaken is a very strong word. It means to abandon, to desert, to turn away from, to utterly forsake. Again, there are three different words that bring this out: Eli (aylee) (Hebrew origin) means “my God” and “lama” (Hebrew origin) means “why” and “sabachthani” (Aramaic) means “thou hast left me” (it refers to a cry of distress). Jesus felt lonely and forsaken because He actually was forsaken by the Father. This is the only time Jesus addressed God as “My God.” Everywhere else He called Him “Father.” But here he said, “My God,” because the Father-Son relationship was broken at that moment. He had sensed that His Father had indeed forsaken Him and now He addresses Him as only God. We will say more about this later.

On the cross Jesus also experienced a personal separation from the Father of His love! Jesus, for three hours, ceased to know the intimacy of fellowship with His heavenly Father, just as a child can cease for a time to have intimate, normal, loving fellowship with his human father. In this unique time, Jesus was crying out in anguish because of the separation He had experienced from His Father for the first and only time in all of eternity!

Because the Son had taken sin upon Himself in a judicial and penal way, the Father turned His back and Jesus felt a very real separation from the Father’s fellowship. This is the real cup that Jesus asked to be removed from him while He was in the garden.

Luke 22:41-42 reminds of the scene of Gethsemane:

“And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

It was not Christ's physical suffering that loomed over His soul but His mental and emotional anguish that He would encounter when being separated from the Father's fellowship. Christ's greatest agony was not physical; it was rather the agony of His soul as He contemplated taking the horror of sin upon Himself and being separated from His Father. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus contemplated the hours of darkness when He would be judged for the sins of the world and be separated from the Father.

Luke 22:44 goes on to record the agony Jesus was passing through while looking ahead to this time of separation from the Father: “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

The hymn writer picked up on the Savior's suffering in Gethsemane.

“King of my life, I crown Thee now,
Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.

Lest I forget Gethsemane;
Lest I forget Thine agony;
Lest I forget Thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary.”

It was during the time of blackness that Jesus bore the utter darkness and indescribable curse for our sins. In those three hours Jesus took our Hell upon Himself – the very Hell that we deserved. The wrath of God was being poured out on Him because of our own transgressions.

Someone wrote:

“We see it only dimly; we simply cannot know what it meant for Him to satisfy all God's righteous claims against sin. We only know that in those three hours He paid

the price, settled the debt of sin and judgment we had before God, and finished the work necessary for man's redemption."

This is why we sing today as believers:

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

We were the wrecks of time and Jesus became the Savior during this time of darkness, for all those who were wrecked by sin! But Jesus became an orphan for us on the cross, abandoned by the Father, bearing the full weight of judgment for our sins. He became lonely and estranged from the Father for you and me.

Missionary Dan Crawford of Africa, in his journal, tells how a wave of homesickness and loneliness swept over him as he became swallowed up in the jungle. Then it grew fearfully dark. What a long time would have to pass before he would see again the dear shores of the homeland! He thought of the obstacles ahead. Perhaps his adventure was unwise. Then he lost his song.

The days passed which were days of increasing gloom. He couldn't sing. And then one morning, he read the 108th psalm, verses 1 and 2. "O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp: I *myself* will awake early." And sing he did, until the jungle was transformed into a heavenly place, and the darkness and loneliness sped away. In a similar way, Jesus was the lonely orphan on the cross, but after His time of separation of the Father, there was great reunion and rejoicing. The separation did not last. The Godhead was reunited in fellowship once again.

Luke 23:46

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

You will notice that after the terrible ordeal of Christ bearing the judgment for sinners, He was once again restored to fellowship with the Father. His loneliness left him for He was once again in close fellowship with the Father. Jesus could pray

to the Father recognizing that the Father had accepted His sacrifice and could once again possess close communion with the Father. The Trinity (Godhead) was once again reunited in fellowship.

Hebrews 12:2 declares:

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Christ’s time of loneliness was turned into a time of reunion and blessing with the Father for today He is sitting at the right hand of God the Father, highly exalted and victorious, confirming that sin’s penalty has been paid in full on the cross. His time of loneliness was short-lived, and it ended.

Maybe you have been experiencing loneliness in your life for one reason or another. There is a natural feeling of grief and loneliness that accompanies the loss of a loved one or when other unforeseen circumstances come to pass in our lives that may be a springboard for loneliness. But as a Christian, I encourage you today to remain close to the Lord, remain in fellowship with Him, experience His presence, and worship God daily. He can turn your loneliness into joy and replace your loneliness with great satisfaction and spiritually fulfillment. Our companionship with the Lord can remove and replace the loneliness in our hearts and lives.

James 4:8 declares, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word our loneliness does not have to overcome our Christian lives. We can conclude with the song writer:

“On life’s pathway I am never lonely,
My Lord is with me, my Lord divine;
Ever present Guide, I trust Him only,
No longer lonely, for He is mine.

No longer lonely, no longer lonely,
For Jesus is the Friend of friends to me;
No longer lonely, no longer lonely,
For Jesus is the Friend of friends to me.”



About halfway through a PBS program on the Library of Congress, Dr. Daniel Boorstin, the Librarian of Congress, brought out a little blue box from a small closet that once held the library's rare items. The label on the box read: CONTENTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S POCKETS ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 14, 1865. Since that was the fateful night Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, every viewer's attention was seized. Boorstin then

proceeded to remove the items in the small container and display them on camera. There were five things in the box:

A handkerchief, embroidered "A. Lincoln"

A country boy's pen knife

A spectacles case repaired with string

A purse containing a \$5 bill—Confederate money(!)

Some old and worn newspaper clippings

"The clippings," said Boorstin, "were concerned with the great deeds of Abraham Lincoln. And one of them actually reports a speech by John Bright which says that Abraham Lincoln is "one of the greatest men of all times."

Today this is common knowledge. The world now knows that British statesman John Bright was right in his assessment of Lincoln. He was a great man, but in 1865 millions of people shared a contrary opinion of him. The President's critics were fierce and many. During this time, Lincoln possessed a lonely agony that reflected the suffering and turmoil of his country ripped to shreds by hatred and a cruel, costly war.

There is something touching about this when we realize that this great leader was seeking solace and self-assurance from a few old newspaper clippings as he reads them under the flickering flame of a candle all alone in the Oval Office. Yes, anyone can experience loneliness. Jesus did when He was separated from the Father on the cross.

Jesus became lonely when separated from the Father to free us from eternal separation and loneliness in Hell. We have studied how this scene of loneliness is

unfolded to us in the Biblical narrative. It is enshrouded in darkness. But we must go on in our study.

2. It portrays God's justice – "My God, My God"

As previously pointed out the term "Eli" means "my God." The Jehovah Witnesses, the Mormons, and the cults in general think they can disprove that Jesus was not God from a statement like this. They reason, "If Christ was God, then why did He call the Father His God. Only someone lesser than God would call the Father God." Little do the J'W's realize that the Father also called Jesus God.

Hebrews 1:8

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

There are no loopholes to be found in the Bible regarding the deity of Jesus Christ. If you want to go to Hell, then reject Christ's deity. It's as simple as this! If you want to go to Heaven, then believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:31).

When Jesus said, "My God" He was not denying His deity within the Godhead. Any Bible student knows that Christ sometimes speaks from His divine side (John 10:30) and at other times from His humanity side. Once you understand the Biblical teaching of the Godhead you will understand that Jesus was 100 percent God and also 100 percent man (hypostatic union of Jesus Christ). We best get back to theology if we want to maintain orthodoxy. Many of the millennial churches of today are weak on theology and that is why there are so many weak Christians.

What does "My God, my God" really mean? This is a term that deals with the justice of God. God's wrath had to be satisfied. If the concept of God's wrath is taken away from the suffering and death of Christ, then the Lord Jesus Christ was not propitiating God's wrath upon the cross. As a result, no person could be saved from God's wrath. The justice and wrath of God had to be placed on Christ or we would have no redemption.

1 John 2:2

“And he is the propitiation (*satisfying sacrifice*) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.”

The word “propitiation” (*hilasmos*) speaks of the means of appeasement through forgiveness or expiation. From the perspective of Jesus on the cross, He was dealing with God and His justice and wrath that needed to be carried out against sin. Therefore, He used the words “my God” instead of “my Father.” As God, the Father was carrying out the necessary sentence upon His Son who was taking the sinner’s place. Jesus knew this and therefore appeals to the righteous justice of God.

Yes, it’s true that Jesus shed His blood for us. But it is even more true to say that He shed His blood for the Father! As God, the Father demanded that justice be served! He demanded the price to be paid for sin or else every sinner must pay the judgment for his own sins in Hell forever. The justice of God demands that the wages for our sin is death (Rom. 6:23) and it also demands that blood be shed to provide forgiveness for our sins.

Let me reiterate this. The blood was shed for us, but it was also shed for God the Father! The blood that was shed on the cross had to be presented to God as the satisfying sacrifice to provide propitiation for our sins.

Hebrews 9:14

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God (*to the Father, satisfying His justice and wrath*), purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Christ’s blood sacrifice was offered to God to satisfy His wrath and justice, and for this reason Jesus cried out, “My God, my God.” He was appealing to the righteous justice and demands of a holy God. If Jesus’ death is not enough for you, there isn’t a Plan B. If you refuse to come to Christ then the door of Heaven will remain shut to you. There is one plan, one way, one man, one God, and one sacrifice! You come to God by the way of the cross or you don’t come at all.

There is a story told of a man who was brought before a judge for speeding. The fine was assessed at a hundred dollars, but the man had no money to pay. In sheer sympathy the judge did what he did not have to do. He left the bench, laid aside his

robe, stood by the defendant, took out a hundred-dollar bill and laid it on the table. Then he returned to put on his robe, walked back up the stairs to his desk, leaned over, took the one hundred-dollar bill he had laid down, and said to the defendant: “You may go free.”

This is what Jesus did for us when He was separated from the Father. God the Son made a payment for sin to God the Father that covered the sins of the entire world and those who accept the payment that Jesus made on their behalf, by believing on Jesus Christ and His saving work, are given the free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23). In other words, they escape judgment and go free!

3. It leads to a heart-wrenching question – “Why has thou forsaken me?”

Why? Why did you do this as my God? Of course, Jesus did not speak these words to question the Father’s perfect plan and purpose for redemption. Nor does Jesus ask this question in order to get an answer from God. He asks this personal question to express His broken or crushed heart over what was taking place at that very moment. God the Father had forsaken His Son.

The words of Christ are understood in this sense: “Oh God, My God, my heart is broken over Your departure! It breaks my heart to think that You have turned away from Me. It breaks my heart to contemplate that We will not enjoy fellowship together. I’m your Son. I’m you beloved Son. And You have turned your face away from Me!” This is the orphan’s cry. It was what passed through the heart of the Son of God as He hung on the cross and was separated from the Father!

Why hast thou forsaken me? Jesus knew there was a relational fellowship broken between Himself and the Father. The emotional pain was very real. Imagine the Father’s heart as he heard the orphan cry of His Son? It must have broken the Father’s heart even as a Father would hear the cry of His own son but could not help him. Can you imagine your son falling off his bicycle and crying out in pain and agony. He would cry, “Daddy, daddy, come help me.” Then think of not being able to help him as a father. You would turn your back on His crying and hurt and forsake him. This was not only heart wrenching for the Son but also for the Father!

In the words of a little a child, it would go like this: “Daddy, please don’t leave me. Daddy, I need you.” There is no Father who would ever think of forsaking his own

son if he really loved his son! Then why would God the Father do this to His only Son? Why would He abandon Him and forsake Him? Is it not the chief duty of a parent to take care of their child? Is it not our job to ensure that our children do not suffer needlessly? Will not we do anything in our power to spare them pain? What was the purpose for the Father forsaking the Son? What caused the Father to abandon His son? It was your sin and mine that caused Him to forsake His Son.

To state is succinctly, it was our sins and the sins of all humanity that were judicially and legally imputed to Christ's account when He hung on the cross. As a result, the Father could not look at that sin and His Son, while His Son became the sin-bearer for the world, the exact time when He bore the judgment for our sins. This is why the Father looked away, disowned, abandoned His Son. Sin was placed upon Him, laid upon Him transferred to Him, imputed to Him – not literally but judicially.

The prophet Habakkuk 1:13 observed long ago:

“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.”

God's holiness demands that He look away from sin. God will have no part of it. The implication is that God cannot look upon sin “with favor” or with His approval. God is omniscient. He knows there is sin in the world and visibly sees us as sinners, but He cannot look upon any sin with His approval or acceptance. Holiness recoils from sin and wickedness.

For this reason, Dr. Herbert Lockyer said:

“The face of the Father then has turned not so much away from Christ as from what He was bearing, namely, the load of the world's sin, which load ultimately broke His loving, compassionate heart. He was there on the plane of sinners with mountains upon mountains of guilt encircling Him, thus the Father hid His face from such a horrible load, seeing that He was of purer eyes than to behold evil.”

In those dreadful hours of darkness, the Father looked away from His Son because of the awful wickedness and sin that His Son was bearing. The Father did not turn away in anger, nor did He lose His love for His Son, but He turned away from the sin of the world that sent His Son to the cross. He turned away from your sin and my sin. He turned away in sorrow, in deep pain, when He saw what sin had done to His Son. He turned away in complete disgust at the ugliness of sin.

When He did this, Jesus was completely forsaken. Godforsaken. Abandoned. Deserted. Disowned. And lonely!

“He could have called ten thousand angels
To destroy the world and set him free
He could have called ten thousand angels
But he died alone, for you and me.”

When Jesus bore the sins of the world, He bore them all alone. He did it because of the plan and love of God for all humanity.

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son (*as a sacrifice and substitute for all sinners of all time*), that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

God abandoned His Son while He bore the sins of the world during those three hours because He also loved the souls of all mankind and wanted to rescue them from Hell! God so loved the world! That’s you and me. That’s everyone! There is no hyper Calvinism in the crucifixion story! The term “world” means everyone that was born in the past and future. God loved the world of mankind to such an extent that He was willing to turn His eyes away from His only beloved Son!

In his book *Competent to Counsel*, Jay Adams matter-of-factly declares, "As a reformed Christian, the writer believes that counselors must not tell any unsaved counselee that Christ died for him, for they cannot say that." This is heretical. Some of these hyper Calvinists conclude: 1. God hates you; 2. He has a terrible plan for your life; and 3. there is nothing you can do about it. I don’t know about you, but I’d rather believe Jesus Christ over Jay Adams! The Bible repeatedly teaches that Christ died for the whole world of mankind. He paid a price for everyone. Of course, not until we embrace Christ by faith can we say that Christ’s death saves us.

“Upon a life I did not live,
Upon a death I did not die,
Another’s life, Another’s death,
I stake my whole eternity.”

There was a song I had to sing with a voice instructor back in the early 80's. I thought to myself, "I can't sing very well, and I surely can't sing this song!" It's too high and difficult. The song was, "God So Loved the World."

Let us never forget that Jesus Christ was forsaken by God because we deserved to be forsaken by God! In fact, Jesus was forsaken by God so we would never be forsaken by Him! Thankfully God does not forsake His own children, since He forsook His Son, who had paid sin's penalty in full.

By way of application, we must remember that God still loves us, as He loved His own Son, despite what He must sometimes allow to come into our lives to accomplish His sovereign purpose (Rom. 8:28). We can be reassured today that God always does what is right. We must rest in His sovereign plan and purpose for our lives. This is what Christ did! Even though it was difficult, He submitted to the Father's plan, even when it meant separation from the Father.

Mark 14:36 is another gospel account of what Jesus said in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." He wanted the cup of suffering and separation from the Father to be taken away from Him, but He surrendered to the Father's will and purpose for His life. How about you? Are you ready to submit to God's will for your life? Are you ready to say, Nevertheless! It may hurt a little. It may be tough for a time. It was for Christ! But in the end it will yield great dividends and blessings!

Doing what is right, following the truth, doing God's will for your life, continuing in the things that you have learned, which you know are the right way to go, will result in great blessings. In anguish you might ask: "My God, My God, Why?" but in the end you must say, "Nevertheless, not my will!"

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,
Over mountain, or plain, or sea;
I'll say what you want me to say, dear Lord,
I'll be what you want me to be."

This is the experience of Christ upon the cross and it must be ours as well today! Don't sell your life short! Live for God, follow His will, do what is right. Turn your questions into obedience!

“It may not be on the mountain's height,
Or over the stormy sea;
It may not be at the battle's front
My Lord will have need of me;
But if, by a still small voice, He calls
To paths that I do not know,
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine,
I'll go where you want me to go.”

4. It results in a separation from the Father.

Matthew 27:46 once again reads:

“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?”

We have dealt with this already, but it is worth dwelling upon one more time. Jesus said that you have “forsaken me?” This is the main point of our study. Forsaken! This has stumped theologians for years. How could God forsake God! God the Father forsook God the Son.

Psalm 22:1-2 prophetically anticipates Messiah's words on the cross:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*”

This is one of the Messianic Psalms. It's clear that it not only recorded actual events in the life of David but also predicted events in the life of David's greatest Son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. David probably described many of his own sufferings figuratively, but his descriptions happened literally in the sufferings, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As David's sin caused the fellowship between himself and God to be broken, so in a prophetic sense, the sin laid on Christ caused the Father to break His fellowship with the Son. God is holy and had to turn away His eyes from His beloved Son. The Messiah (Jesus Christ) knew this by sharing that the Father was "far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring." The Hebrew word for "roaring" speaks of moaning and making a mighty or loud cry. Jesus cried out on the cross when contemplating and experiencing the load or weight for sin placed upon Him and the separation from the Father's presence. Jesus became the orphan on the cross ("but thou hearest not").

Psalm 22:2 suggests a period of light and darkness ("night season") which would include the time when the Son of God was abandoned by the Father.

Psalm 22:3 also emphasizes the holiness of God ("But thou *art* holy"). How could a holy God look with favor on His Son who was bearing the sins of the world? The answer is that He cannot! And when our sins were placed upon the cross the Father had to turn His face from His Son.

"The scourge, the thorns, the deep disgrace,
These Thou couldst bear nor once repine;
But when Jehovah veiled His face,
Unutterable pangs were Thine."

So God the Father could not look upon God the Son in those hours of darkness – "in the night season." It is a mystery how God the Father could forsake God the Son when they are both one in essence and being. This is the mystery to the Godhead.

William Pettingill used to say:

"One in three and three in one, and the one in the middle died for me."

At the close of the dreadful hour of darkness Jesus said something that tells us what took place and what He experienced in the hours of darkness. During the darkness Jesus experienced a separation from the Father. He was forsaken by God the Father while experiencing the wrath of God's righteous judgment for sin.

The word "sabachthani" means "thou hast left me" and refers to a great cry of distress. The word "forsaken" has the idea of being deserted by someone during a set of circumstances that are against him. The word means "to let one down, to

desert, abandon, to leave one helpless.” This indeed was the orphan’s cry from the cross. “My God, My God why has thou forsaken me”

Dr. Lockyer writes:

"Here it is 'God,' for He appeals to divine righteousness. Somewhere in the darkness He feels pushed out of the Father's heart in a desolate forest."

This brings us back to our main point. Jesus was forsaken by God the Father on the cross and experienced real loneliness so we might never be forsaken in Hell and experience eternal loneliness and separation from God.

Some people think that Hell is just “heaven with the lights turned out.” They think that in Hell they will enjoy friendships and fellowship. They say, “We don’t care if we go to Hell, after all, we’ll have plenty of company there! This is not true! Hell is a place of suffering, separation, and severe loneliness; the very things that Jesus experienced on the cross. Hell is not a place of friendship and fun.

What is the worst thing about Hell? It’s not the fire, although it’s real. It’s not the loss of memory and darkness, although these things will be real. The worst thing about Hell is that it’s the only place in the universe where people are utterly and forever forsaken and abandoned by God. Hell is truly a Godforsaken place.

Warren Wiersbe stated:

“If hell is not serious, then why did Jesus die? If hell isn’t real and terrible, then the cross of Christ is a mockery and His death a scandalous waste.”

Thank the Lord that the Father was willing to forsake His only Son that we might not be Godforsaken in Hell for all eternity.

Some of those standing near the cross misunderstood Jesus' words. They heard "Eli" but thought Jesus was trying to call for Elijah. Matthew 27:47 reveals: “Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.” But this is not what Jesus was saying. He was not talking to Elijah but to the God of Elijah! In those final moments of blackness Jesus could no longer bear something. It was the separation from His Father. Throughout these hours of darkness or blackness the Father could not look upon His Son. Once again, the darkness not only typified the sins and our judgment that were being placed upon the Son but also signified that the Father could not look upon sin as it was credited to His Son.

Through all of it, the Father had to look away from His Son, and His Son felt an utter loneliness and abandonment that no person could ever experience as He did in those dark hours.

“Yea, once Immanuel’s orphaned cry,
His universe hath shaken,
It went up single,
My God, I am forsaken.
It went up from the holy lips,
Amid His lost creation;
That of the lost, no son should use,
These words of desolation.”

I must ask again. Have you ever felt forsaken and experienced loneliness? Jesus felt utter abandonment when the Father forsook Him while hanging on the cross. The cry from the cross is for all the lonely people of the world. It is for the abandoned child, the widow, the divorced wife who is struggling to make ends meet, the mother standing over her suffering daughter, the father out of work, the parent left alone, the prisoner in the cell, the aged person who is in a single room, wives abandoned by their husband, a single people who celebrate their birthday alone. These are the words of the cross for you. Forsaken! Lonely! Abandoned! Hurt! No one has ever been so alone as Jesus was during those three hours. For this reason, Jesus understands your loneliness and heartbreak and will come to aid you and meet your deepest longings and needs.

Hebrews 4:15 declares to Christians:

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.”

“No one understands like Jesus;
He's a Friend beyond com-pare.
Meet Him at the throne of mercy;
He is waiting for You there.
No one under-stands like Jesus
When the days are dark and grim.
No one is so near, so dear as Jesus;
Cast Your every care on Him.”

Since Jesus knows what loneliness is like, He can be our sympathetic High Priest today which is “touched with the feelings of our infirmities.” Jesus knows what it’s like when we feel lonely and forsaken. The point is this, Jesus as your High Priest will come to your aid in our times of loneliness and bring healing to your heart.

Loneliness is a growing problem in our society. A study by the American Council of Life Insurance reported that the loneliest group in America are college students. That’s surprising! Next on the list are divorced people, welfare recipients, single mothers, rural students, housewives, and the elderly.

To point out how lonely people can be, one preacher mentioned an ad in a Kansas newspaper. It read, “I will listen to you talk for 30 minutes without comment for \$5.” The preacher said, “Sounds like a hoax, doesn’t it? But the person was serious. Did anybody call? You bet. It wasn’t long before this individual was receiving 10 to 20 calls a day. The pain of loneliness was so sharp that some were willing to try anything for a half hour of companionship”

Jesus knows and understands what loneliness is and He can come to rescue us and help us through these difficult times of despair and loneliness.

Christ’s separation from the Father can be described in two ways.

- a. It can be described as a judicial separation.

The covering of darkness signified that the Father was forsaking the very Son of His love because He could not look upon the sin that was legally and judicially transferred to the Lord Jesus.

As we have already confirmed, the Father forsook the Son because the Son took upon Himself “our transgressions and our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus “was delivered for our offences” (Rom. 4:25) and “died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3) and became “a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13). He forsook the Son because He could not look upon sin with favor.

2 Corinthians 5:21 again declares, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” This expression “made to be sin” means that Jesus became our sacrifice for sin in a judicial way –

not in a literal way. Christ was the target of God's punishment for sinners while at the same time God makes us targets of His imputed righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9).

There is something very important that I must stress at this point. When the Father forsook the Son, it was a judicial or legal separation related to Christ being judged for our sin. When Christ was forsaken by the Father on the cross this separation was not one of nature, essence, or substance. Christ did not in any sense or degree cease to exist as God or as a member of the Trinity. He did not cease to be the Son of God, God incarnate, any more than a child who is separated from his human father ceases to be his son. Furthermore, in no way did Jesus Himself, in His inner spirit become defiled by sin when He hung on the cross. In other words, Jesus did not become a sinful sacrifice on the cross. Our sins were laid on Him but not in Him.

William MacDonald correctly concludes:

"We must beware of any idea that on the cross of Calvary the Lord Jesus Christ actually became sinful in Himself. Such an idea is false. Our sins were placed *on* Him, but they were not *in* Him. What happened is that God made Him to be a sin-offering on our behalf. Trusting in Him, we are reckoned righteous by God. The claims of the law have been fully satisfied by our Substitute."

Jesus did not, nor could He ever be, sinful in His being or nature for He is God. When Jesus hung on the cross, taking our sins and punishment upon Himself, He was "the Lamb that was without spot, and blemish" from start to finish (1 Pet. 1:19). "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" – Not filthy or sinful is the Lamb that was slain. Perish the thought!

"Guilty vile and helpless we,
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
Full atonement! Can it be?
Hallelujah, what a Savior!"

On the cross the Father was pleased with His Son (Matt. 3:17), but He was not pleased with the sin that was legally transferred to His Son! The Bible teaches that Jesus was "a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling saviour" (Eph. 5:2). Hebrews 9:14 says "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." Jesus suffered "as the "righteous servant" (Isa. 53:10-11). We must remember that sin was not imputed to Christ's spirit

(spiritual nature) but to Christ's account in a legal or judicial sense. Jesus was the sinner's sacrifice, but He was not a sinful sacrifice. To be specific, Jesus suffered Hell in our place while hanging on the cross, experiencing the effects of spiritual death, without losing His impeccability or pristine holiness as God. Christ did pass through the realm of spiritual death in His experience but not in relation to His inner essence of being or eternal nature and moral likeness to God.

Malachi 3:6 says, "For I *am* the LORD, I change not."

"Yesterday, today, forever, Jesus is the same.
All may change, but Jesus never! Glory to His Name!
Glory to His Name! Glory to His Name!
All may change, but Jesus never! Glory to His Name!"

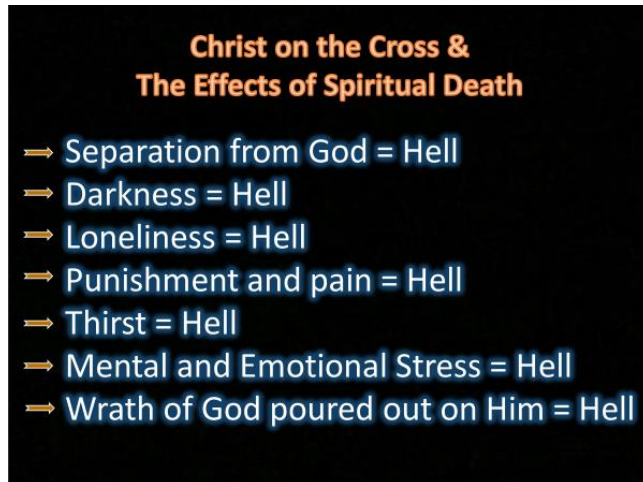
There is no indication by these statements that Christ Himself became polluted spiritually with sin. Jesus remained holy in His inner being and essence and this is why the Father could accept His Son's sacrifice as sufficient payment for our sins. On the cross Jesus became a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins bearing the judicial punishment for our sins. To conclude that Jesus actually became sinful in His being and that He died spiritually while hanging on the cross divides the Godhead and has serious repercussions for our salvation.

First, if Jesus died in the realm of His own spirit, it would mean that sin was transferred to the realm of His spirit and that Jesus became as a normal sinner in the human race. It would mean that man would be trying to save man instead of God saving man!

Second, it would also mean that God could never be satisfied with His Son's sacrifice because it became spiritually defiled or unholy and blemished. It would mean that God could not accept that sacrifice of His Son as sufficient payment for our sins. God could only accept a perfect sacrifice - not a spiritually defiled sacrifice.

Third, if Jesus died spiritually, it would indicate that He needed to be born again or saved by His own sacrifice. It would actually mean that Jesus would become a lost sinner instead of a holy Savior!

Some of the Charismatics actually teach this! They make the errant claim that Jesus became lost, died, and went to Hell on our behalf. They claim He had to do this in order to rescue us. No! A thousand times no!



Christ did NOT bare our Hell in the place we identify as Hell; He bore our Hell on the cross. Jesus did not die in the realm of His human spirit, but He did experience the EFFECTS of spiritual death while on the cross. The chart demonstrates how Christ passed through hell while hanging on the cross.

In those three dreadful hours Christ experienced and tasted what every Christ-rejecting soul must taste, the ultimate horror of being abandoned by God! Christ experienced all these things for us on the cross. But we must once again remind ourselves that Christ did not become a sinful sacrifice but a sin offering for us while hanging on the cross!

The false teachers say something different about Christ's death. They claim Christ died spiritually and became unsaved like us and then was resaved (born again) in order to bring us to God.

Kenneth Hagin said:

"He (Jesus) tasted spiritual death for every man. And His spirit and inner man went to hell in my place. Can't you see that? Physical death wouldn't remove your sins. He tasted death for every man. He's talking about tasting spiritual death."

This is a lie!

Kenneth Copeland made this outlandish claim:

"Since Jesus was made to be sin, He had to pay the penalty for sin. He had to die spiritually, which took him into the regions of the damned, before He could redeem us."

This too is another lie!

Paul Billheimer adds:

“It was not sufficient for Christ to offer up only His physical life on the cross. His pure spirit had to ‘descend’ into hell...The Father turned Him over, not only to the agony and death of Calvary, but to the satanic torturers of His pure spirit as part of the just dessert of the sin of all the race.”

He goes on to say:

“As long as Christ was the ‘essence of sin’ he was at Satan’s mercy in that place of torment. While Christ identified with sin, Satan and the hosts of hell ruled over Him as over any lost sinner. During the seemingly endless age in the nether abyss of death, Satan did with Him as he would, and all hell was in carnival.”

Lies, Lies, and more lies! All I can say is this: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain! Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!”

Jesus NEVER died spiritually in His inner spirit, becoming stained with sin, when hanging on the cross. To do so would mean He became like you and me and that He Himself would need a Savior. Sin was imputed to Him from a judicial standpoint, but it did not change His inner being of purity. Jesus remained holy in His inner being and nature while on the cross and therefore the Father could accept His Son’s sacrifice as sufficient payment for our sins (“the propitiation for our sins” - 1 John 2:2). God was satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ because He was without sin and et bore the penalty of sinners.

Benny Hinn supposedly received some revelation on the rebirth of Jesus while in Hell: “My, you know, whoosh! The Holy Ghost is just showing me some stuff. I’m getting dizzy! I’m telling you the truth-it’s just heavy on me now...Do you know what the word begotten means: It means to be reborn. Do you want another shocker? Have you been begotten? So was He (Christ). You say, “What are you talking about?” ... He was reborn. He had to be reborn. If He was not reborn I could not be reborn. Jesus was born again.”

These are lies and blasphemous statements that undermine both the person and work of Jesus Christ. They scandalize the cross instead of causing us to glory in the

cross. No, the essence of Christ's being could not change and did not change when Jesus was forsaken by the Father.

Jesus died physically upon the cross, but He did not die spiritually within the realm of His human spirit. Our dreadful sins were transferred upon a sinless Christ so that we, the lost sinners, could be saved spiritually. We are the sinners – not Christ.

1 Peter 3:18 reminds us of this truth: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh (not in the realm of His human spirit), but quickened by the Spirit.”

Hebrews 10:10

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (not the defiled spirit of Jesus Christ) once for all.”

In other words, the Bible emphasizes that Christ died physically on the cross, but He never died spiritually. Although Christ suffered the spiritual effects of sin and its dreadful judgment, He did not cease being God while hanging on the cross by losing His inner perfection and purity. Our sins were legally or judicially transferred upon Christ without polluting His eternal and unblemished spirit. Therefore, our sins were credited to Christ through His suffering upon the cross but not His spiritual death. The payment for sin was not based upon Christ sharing in man's actual sinfulness and depravity within His inner being.

1 Corinthians 15:3 states that “Christ died for our sins” in a physical way – not a spiritual sense. Christ's physical death proves that He had endured the full weight and measure of the Father's wrath upon Himself. All the physical and spiritual suffering and anguish ended with Christ's death which finished the necessary payment for sin (John 19:30). My point is this. Jesus was not separated from the Father because He became sinful in His being or because of His alleged spiritual death. Ontologically (relating to His physical being or existence) Jesus died upon the cross, but He did not die spiritually in the sense that His inner being was defiled and corrupted with sin. The Father had to separate Himself from the Son because the sins of the entire world were laid upon Him in a legal or judicial sense. During these three hours of darkness, Jesus completed an eternal transaction that was planned in eternity past and finished the work that He came to do (John 17:4).

And while on the cross, Jesus continued to be coequal in respect to the triune nature of God (1 John 5:7) sharing God's unchanging nature of impeccable purity and holiness with the Father (Isaiah 6:1-5).

“Holy, Holy, Holy! Tho the darkness hide Thee,
Tho the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee.
Perfect in power, in love and purity!”

- a. It can be described as a broken fellowship.



It's no wonder that Jesus was lonely! There on the cross Jesus experienced a broken fellowship from His loving Father! This was also a filial or personal separation that was sensed in the area of communion and fellowship. Jesus for three hours ceased to know the intimacy of fellowship with His Heavenly Father, just as a child can cease for a time to have intimate, normal, loving fellowship with his human father.

Jesus paid the sinner's fine in total as He experienced physical pain and suffering and spiritual suffering (mental, emotional agony, loneliness) when contemplating the dread and fear of being separated from God the Father while He was hanging on the cross. In this unique time Jesus was crying out in anguish because of the separation He had experienced from His Heavenly Father for the first time in all eternity past. There was now a great gulf between the Son and Father.

Once again, this is the only time of which we have record that Jesus did not address God as Father. A fellowship that had been perfect for countless eternities was not broken. And in utter incredible loneliness Jesus cried, "My God, You have forsaken me. I'm lonely, I'm all alone." Because the Son had taken sin upon Himself the Father turned His back and Jesus felt a separation from the Father's fellowship that He has never experienced before nor will ever experience again. As previously

mentioned, this is the real cup that Jesus asked to be removed from Him while He was in the garden (Luke 22:42).

Erwin Lutzer said:

The hiding of His Father's face was the most bitter cup of sorrow He chose to drink."

It was not Christ's physical suffering that loomed over His soul as much as His mental anguish, emotion, and suffering of heart that He would encounter when being separated from the Father's fellowship. Christ's greatest agony was not merely physical; it was rather the agony of His soul as He contemplated separation from His Father when bearing the sins of the world.

This mystery of the Father's separation from the Son is so great and impossible to fully comprehend that it is not surprising that Martin Luther is said to have gone into seclusion for a long time trying to understand it, and came away as confused, as when he began. In some way, and by some means, in the secrets of divine sovereignty and omniscience, the God-Man (Jesus Christ) was separated from God the Father for a brief time at Calvary, as the furious wrath of the Father was poured out on the sinless Son who in matchless grace became sin for those who believe in Him.

Ray Prichard commented on the broken fellowship of the Trinity:

"Christ was abandoned, the Trinity disjointed, and the Godhead broken."

In those hours of darkness Jesus sensed a separation from the Father which he had never known before nor would ever know again throughout eternity. The Father judicially turned from the Son while the Son was being judged for our sins. And a separation between the members of the Godhead occurred in those three hours. And during this time Jesus was all alone!

"Alone, alone,
He bore it all alone;
He gave Himself to save His own,
He suffered, bled and died alone, alone."

The darkness over the land told the story how God the Father could not look upon the Son in those hours when He bore the weight of our sin. It tells the story how

Jesus sensed a separation from the Father He had never known before. Christ in those hours of darkness was experiencing abandonment and despair from the Father which resulted from the outpouring of divine wrath on Him as sin-bearer. And when God, as Judge, looked down and saw our sins upon the sinless Substitute, He withdrew from the Son of His love.

It was this separation of fellowship that wrung from the heart of Jesus that Mrs. Browning so beautifully called “Immanuel’s orphaned cry.” “Deserted! God could separate from His own essence – no - rather; And Adam’s sins have swept between the righteous Son and Father: Yea, once, Immanuel’s orphaned cry His universe hath shaken — It went up single, echoless, “My God, I am forsaken!” For the first time, since eternity past, the fellowship and communion was broken between the Godhead. The mystery of that separation is far too deep even for the most mature believer to fathom. But God has revealed the basic truth of it for us to accept and to understand to the best of our ability under the illumination of His Spirit.

Nowhere in Scripture can we behold the reality of Jesus’ sacrificial death and the anguish of His separation from His Father more clearly and penetratingly than in these words – “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.” Christ suffered with great anguish, not merely from the lacerations on His back, or the thorns that still pierced His head, or the nails that held Him to the cross, but from the painful loss of fellowship with His Heavenly Father, which resulted from His separation from the Father and Christ becoming sin for us.

Today we can look back to the cross and realize the great agonies that Christ went through for each one of us. It was not only painful agony but emotional agony. It was utter abandonment and loneliness that He faced when bearing away the sins of the world. Jesus became lonely and separated from the Father to free us from the separation and loneliness in Hell.

Dr. Lehman Strauss has wisely observed:

“God will never forsake you if you trust His Son whom He forsook for you.”

Have you recently looked upon the old, old, story of what Christ has done for you? Have you tried to reflect upon the passion, the orphan cry, and death of our Lord?

“Tell me the story slowly,
That I may take it in -
That wonderful redemption,
God's remedy for sin.
Tell me the story often,
For I forget so soon;
The early dew of morning
Has passed away at noon.”

Here is the Good News!

- Jesus was forsaken that you might never be forsaken by God.
- Jesus was abandoned that you might never be abandoned by God.
- Jesus was deserted that you might never be deserted by God.
- Jesus was forgotten that you might never be forgotten by God.

I can go to Heaven on that!

Someone remarked that liberalism teaches that “a God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministration of a Christ without a cross.” Thank God we know different! We know that we are saved today because Jesus Christ died on the cross and gave Himself for us totally and completely. He became an orphan for you and me. He became lonely for you and me so we might never be eternally separated from God. What a profound mystery! The loneliness of Christ on the cross!

When speaking of Christ's orphan cry on the cross, someone said:

“This is the holy of holies to the reverent reader of the passion of Christ's work on the cross.”

“O help me understand, Lord!
Help me to take it in,
What it meant for Thee
Thou Holy One, to bear away my sin.”