

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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SUFFERING THE JUDGMENT
OF GOD FOR SINNERS
TO ACCOMPLISH
THE VICARIOUS DEATH
FOR THEM

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Anaheim, CA • www.lsm.org

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In Luke 23:26-49 we see two aspects of the Lord's death: the aspect of man's persecution and the aspect of God's judgment. First the Lord Jesus suffered man's persecution, and He suffered this as a martyr, not as the Redeemer. Then, as the Redeemer, no longer as a martyr suffering persecution, He suffered God's judgment for us, the sinners.

SUFFERING THE PERSECUTION OF MEN

In Luke 23:26-43 we see that on the cross the Man-Savior suffered the persecution of men. He was mocked and ridiculed by both the Jewish leaders and the Roman soldiers. “And the people stood by, looking on. And the rulers were even sneering and saying, He saved others, let him save himself if this is the Christ of God, the Chosen One! And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him and offering Him vinegar” (vv. 35-36).

The Lord Jesus was put on the cross at nine o'clock in the morning and remained there until three o'clock in the afternoon. This means that He was on the cross for six hours. These six hours may be divided into two groups of three hours each: the first from nine o'clock until noon, and the second from noon until three o'clock in the afternoon. During the first three hours, the Man-Savior suffered the persecution of men. The religious people ridiculed Him, and the Roman soldiers mocked Him. Even “one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” ([v. 39](#)). Therefore, during the first three hours on the cross, the Lord was a victim of human persecution, and He suffered this persecution as a martyr.

SUFFERING THE JUDGMENT OF GOD FOR SINNERS TO ACCOMPLISH THE VICARIOUS DEATH FOR THEM

In [Luke 23:44-49](#) we see that during the second period of the six hours on the cross, the Man-Savior suffered the judgment of God for sinners to accomplish the vicarious death for them.

[Luke 23:44 and 45a](#) say, “And it was already about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun’s

light failing.” Instead of “The sun’s light failing,” some manuscripts read, “And the sun was darkened.” The sixth hour mentioned in [verse 44](#) was, according to our way of reckoning time, twelve o’clock noon.

According to [Matthew 27:45](#), darkness was over all the land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, that is, from twelve o’clock noon until three o’clock in the afternoon. Who caused darkness to come over the land? Of course, the high priest, Pilate, and the Roman soldiers were not able to do this. The only One who could cause darkness to come at noon was God.

This darkness was an indication that the righteous God had come in to judge the Lord Jesus as our Substitute and Redeemer. He was the unique, universal Substitute for mankind. From nine o’clock until noon, He was persecuted by the Jews and Romans as a martyr. But from noon until three o’clock He was dying not as a martyr, but as the Substitute for sinners. Because God recognized Him as our Redeemer, God came in to judge Him. This means that during the last three hours the Lord was on the cross, He was judged by God for the accomplishment of our redemption. It was during this time that God counted Him as our suffering Substitute for sin

(Isa. 53:10). Darkness came over all the land because our sin and sins and all negative things were being dealt with. God even forsook Him (Matt. 27:46) because of our sin.

Actually the Lord's persecutors did not kill Him. While He was under their persecution, He was still alive. After the Lord suffered this persecution for three hours, God came in to put Him to death. The darkness that came over the land was a sign of God's coming in. Luke tells us that the darkness came over the whole land, not merely over Jerusalem or Mount Zion. God caused the sun's light to fail.

THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE TORN DOWN THE MIDDLE

Furthermore, Luke 23:45 says, “The veil of the temple was torn down the middle.” Matthew 27:51 tells us that the veil of the temple was torn in two “from the top to the bottom.” This tearing of the veil signifies that the separation between God and man was abolished, because the flesh (signified by the veil) of sin, of which Christ had taken on the likeness (Rom. 8:3), had been crucified (Heb. 10:20). “From the top to the bottom” indicates that the rending of the veil was God's doing from above.

In Luke 23:44 and 45 we see two matters accomplished by God: darkness coming over the whole land and the veil of the temple being torn. These are signs proving that from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, that is, from noon until three o'clock in the afternoon, God came in to judge the Redeemer, who was dying as our Substitute. His death was not for Himself; it was for us. Therefore, we may call His death a vicarious death. This death was accomplished by Him for us on the cross and under God's judgment.

THE MAN-SAVIOR FORSAKEN BY GOD

During the hours from noon until three o'clock, God put all our sins upon the Lord Jesus. In the words of [Isaiah 53:6](#), "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The darkness signifies that God had put our sins upon Him. Furthermore, [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) says that God made Him to be sin for us. Hence, God not only put our sins upon Him; He even made Him to be sin on our behalf. This took place during the second period of three hours.

It was also during these hours that God forsook the Man-Savior ([Mark 15:34](#)). Because the Lord is God's beloved Son, God always delighted in Him. But because God regarded Him as our

Substitute, as the One who bore our sins and was made sin for us in God's sight, God forsook Him. In the sight of God during those hours the Lord was a totality of sin.

This understanding of the Lord's death is not guesswork. On the contrary, this understanding is according to the study of the accurate record in the Bible.

All our sins were put on the Man-Savior. The root of our sins is the sin that came into mankind from Satan. This sin indwells us. When our sins were put on the Lord Jesus, He was made the very sin that indwells us. Therefore, both the root—indwelling sin—and the fruit—our sins—were put upon Him. As such a One, He was judged by God according to His righteousness.

[First Corinthians 15:3](#) says, “Christ died for our sins.” [First Peter 2:24](#) tells us that He Himself “carried up our sins in His body onto the tree.” These verses indicate that Christ bore our sins and died for them. [Hebrews 9:28](#) says that Christ was “once offered to bear the sins of many,” and [verse 26](#) in the same chapter says, “He has been manifested for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice.” Both sin and sins were dealt with by His death once for all. Therefore, we may call His death an eternal death, a once for all death.

When the Lord Jesus was bearing our sins and was made sin on the cross, He was considered by God to be the Lamb of God. “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” ([John 1:29](#)). In this verse the “world” refers to mankind, to the human race. The Lamb of God took away the sin of mankind. The problem of sin has been solved by His vicarious death for us.

ONE WITH GOD ESSENTIALLY, BUT FORSAKEN BY GOD ECONOMICALLY

When the Lord Jesus, the God-man, died on the cross under God’s judgment, He had God within Him essentially as His divine being. Nevertheless, He was forsaken by the righteous and judging God economically. Christ was conceived and born of the Holy Spirit essentially. The Holy Spirit was one of the essences of His being. As the Lord Jesus grew up and lived on earth, He had the Holy Spirit within Him essentially. Later, when He was baptized, He had the Holy Spirit as an essential part of His being. However, when He was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him economically. This means that the Lord Jesus had the Holy Spirit as one of the essences of His being essentially, and also that the Holy

Spirit descended upon Him economically. This does not mean, of course, that there are two Holy Spirits. It means that the one Holy Spirit has two aspects—the essential and the economical. The essential aspect was for the being, the existence, of the Lord Jesus, and the economical aspect was for His work, His ministry.

Now we need to see that when the Lord Jesus was on the cross dying for our sins, God was in Him essentially. Therefore, the One who died for our sin was the God-man. But at a certain point the righteous God, while judging this God-man, left Him economically. God's forsaking of Christ was an economical matter related to the carrying out of God's judgment.

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Life-study of Luke
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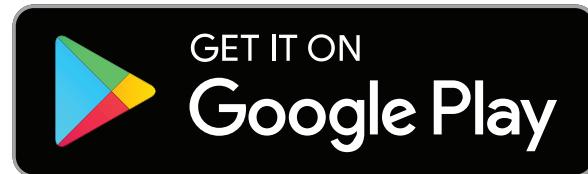
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