

Study of Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani

Matthew 27:46:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying [now there are some peculiar words here], Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

There it is. There's a verse of scripture that should have arrested our attention from the beginning. Because there are some peculiar looking words in it. Now if you say they are Greek words, well why did they leave those Greek words in that verse? If we are going to speak English let's speak English. If we are going to speak Greek let's speak Greek. Why are those words like "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani" why are they left in here? This should have arrested our attention and should have caused us to make an inquiry into why it is there. You see this verse of scripture interprets itself right in the verse where it is written.

Word by word I understand with the exception of those four foreign words that are in there. But somehow or other it contradicts oodles of other verses in the Word of God. It just cuts to pieces the whole Word. So this one sits here like a sore thumb. But every Easter time, come Easter time we got to preach on it. We've got to teach our people that God forsook Jesus because Jesus became sin. God couldn't stand sin so He left him to hang on the cross to die by himself.

Well let's go to the Word and see exactly how this Word fits and what it really says. Look at the gospel of John. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. John 16 I want to turn to first of all, chapter 16 and in verse 32:

John 16:32:

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered [he's talking to his apostles], every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

Talking about the time of his crucifixion and of his death, the coming time he says "the Father is with me." Yet in Matthew 27:46 it said "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" Look at John 10 and verse 30:

John 10:30:

I and my Father are one.

How are you going to separate one? "I and my Father are one" John 10:30. Look at Colossians. Acts, Romans, Corinthians. Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians chapter two. Listen to this, verse 9:

Colossians 2:9:

For in him [in Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

How are you going to separate this? How are you going to be able to say "My God why hast thou forsaken me?" 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Listen to this record. There are many in the Word. I am just picking out some of them for you to show you how one verse of scripture sits like a sore thumb and it contradicts everything else in the Word of God. Can't do this. For if it's the Word of God it will all have to fit like a hand in a glove.

2 Corinthians 5:19:

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,....

God was in Christ. How are you going to separate? Now go back to Matthew 26, the chapter we were working in. Matthew 26, right before the chapter, and verse 53. Listen to this. Just before he was taken captive or at the time he was taken captive look what Jesus said:

Matthew 26:53:

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

You've got to be on talking terms with God to get that kind of results. That's 72,000 and here were just a little handful of men. Jesus could have walked right out if he'd have wanted to. Why? Because I and the Father are one. The Father is with me. I always do the Father's Will. When he was dying upon the cross whose will was he doing? If he's always doing the Father's Will he must have been doing His Will when he was dying upon the cross. And he said I could call to my Heavenly Father, I could pray to Him and presently, right now, He'd give me twelve legions, 72,000 angels. I want to tell you you've got to be on talking terms with God to get those results. Right?

Well, and yet in Matthew 27 in verse 46 in the King James it says:

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?

You see that verse just contradicts all the rest of them. What is the problem? Well first of all; those words that are in that forty-sixth verse are not Greek words. They are Aramaic words. Jesus spoke Aramaic. Aramaic was the language, the lingua franca¹, of the entire East in those

¹ A *lingua franca* /lɪŋgwə_ˈfræŋkə/ also known as a **bridge language**, **common language**, **trade language** or **vehicular language**, is a language or dialect systematically (as opposed to occasionally, or casually)

days. Greek was introduced much later. Jesus Christ did not speak Greek. He spoke Aramaic. And these words are left in this particular scripture because when the translators got to them in those early days they really did not know what to do with them. So they let the verse set and added the English. We have a few others like *Talitha cumi* and a few others in the New Testament to this day where they have allowed the Aramaic words to continue. You see Aramaic is called Hebrew in the King James version, in the translation of it.

Now, this word *Eli* means "My God." The word *lama*, there is no word like the word *lama*. There is a word *lmna* and this is what that word is. This is never a question. It is always a cry of victory, a declaration of "for this purpose" or "for this reason." This is the meaning of this word *lmna*; "for this purpose."

Now this word *sabachthani* in the King James. You see, all words in languages are made of roots. They call them roots or stems and then you change them by prefixes or suffixes. You add to them either in front of the word, in front of the stem, or behind it. The root of *sabachthani* is the word *shbk*. This is the root word, *shbk*.

Now this word *shbk* is used at other places in the Word of God. And it is there that I want to take you to show you other places where this word *shbk*, the root of *sabachthani* is used. And you can see for yourself that even in the King James there is an answer to this tremendous difficulty in this very difficult verse.

You know nobody in the world would handle this difficult verse unless he knew exactly what to do with it. Because nobody touches any of these difficult things. They touch the easy things but in these classes on Power For Abundant Living if you have the right keys to the interpretation of the Word of God every verse will fit and all you need to do is work it. That's why we handle in this class some of the most difficult verses of scripture because anybody can handle the simple ones and easy ones.

Look at the Old Testament. 1 Kings, 1 Kings chapter 19, here we have in 1 Kings 19 this word *shbk*. Now listen to it in verse 18. Everybody looking at the Word, 1 Kings 19:18:

1 Kings 19:18:

Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

"I have left me," the words "left me" are the word *shbk*. *Shbk* is the

used to make communication possible between people who do not share a native language or dialect, particularly when it is a third language that is distinct from both native languages. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lingua_franca)

Aramaic word from which they translated "left me, I have left me." Now when you say to someone "I have left me" what do you mean? The immediate thing is "I have left me," "I have forsaken." But that's not it, that's not it. Suppose you have ten dollars left in your pocket; it hasn't left you yet, you still have it remaining. You still have it. It is still yours. "I have left me seven thousand who haven't bowed the knees to Baal" does not mean that they forsook. It means that "He has these remaining, they are left yet." That's its meaning. That's the word *shbk* in 1 Kings.

Look at the book of Romans. Here again in the New Testament this same word *shbk* in the Aramaic is used. In Romans chapter 11, Romans 11 verse 4:

Romans 11:4:

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

"I have reserved to myself seven thousand who haven't bowed the knee." It's the same reference as the one in Kings. In Kings they translated the word *shbk* "I have left me seven thousand." While over here in Romans they translated "I have reserved." Same word. This is why the root word *shbk*, the root word *shbk* means "to spare or to keep." "I have spared seven thousand." I have kept back seven thousand." "I have reserved seven thousand." That's what it means. That is its root meaning.

Now, when you go back to Matthew 27 and in verse 46. Go back again.

Matthew 27:46:

And about the ninth hour...

Which is 3:00 in the afternoon our time. They crucified him at the third hour which is 9:00 our time in the morning. And from the sixth hour which would be 12:00 noon till about 3:00 in the afternoon there was darkness upon the face of the earth that day. And then about the ninth hour Jesus spoke some words from the cross and one of those words are these words that we are dealing with. "*Eli, Eli, shbk.*" "My God, My God, *lmna* for this purpose." It's a cry.

He was hanging on the cross that day for your sin and mine. Jesus Christ was not hanging upon the cross because of his sin. He was hanging upon that cross for you and for me. And so while he was hanging on that cross whose will was he doing? Why he was doing the Father's Will. Because the Word says "I always do my Father's Will"; " I and my Father are one." And dying upon that cross that day whose will was he doing?

The Father's. And he was dying upon that cross that day for you and for me. So that you and I could be redeemed, could be saved from sin. And the Word of God says he had no sin. Jesus Christ had no sin. But he took sin upon him. He became sin so that you and I could become the righteousness of God in him.

So when he was hanging upon that cross that day he was hanging there for you and he was hanging there for me. And he spoke these words from the cross and he cried, "Eli, Eli, my God, my God, *lmna*, for this purpose, *shbk* was I spared."

Hanging on that cross at that crucial hour he gave forth with that great and tremendous utterance from the depth of his soul. "My God, My God, this is our hour. This is for what I was spared, this is what I was spared for. This is what I was kept for, this is why I came in the world. My God, My God, for this purpose was I spared, for this purpose was I kept." And the next words that he uttered from the cross were the words "It is finished." What was finished? Your redemption and mine. That's what was finished. For God had so loved in Christ Jesus that Christ Jesus had given his own life. He had laid it down. He who knew no sin had become sin so that you and I might become the righteousness of God in him. And so he cried "It is finished!" What is finished? Your redemption and mine and the next verse of scripture says "And he gave up the ghost." Which simply means he laid down his life.

They didn't take his life. Not the nails that were driven through his hands that held him to the cross. Not the rope tied around his midriff or the nails driven through his feet. You know why he kept hanging on that cross? Because he loved. Jesus Christ loved us! He could have walked off of that cross! He could have had twelve legions of angels at his command. But you know why he kept hanging on the cross? Not because of the nails driven through his hands but because he so loved us that he gave his own life for us!

So when he was dying upon the cross he cried those tremendous words! Not "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But "My God, My God, for this purpose was I spared, for this purpose was I kept!"

Let me ask you a question. Suppose you had a son and right now, this is your only son, and right now your son is dying. Would you be sitting in this class listening to me teach the accuracy of God's Word or would you be with your son? Well I know where you'd be and where you ought to be--with your son. And yet your son has reacted negatively to your instructions at times. He has not always done the Father's Will. Your son has sinned. He has done things contrary to what you'd like for him to do. And yet you'd want to be with him. But God Almighty is not as good as you are. Boy isn't that devilish, that's real devilish.

Jesus Christ was God's only begotten Son. Jesus always did the Father's Will. When he was dying upon the cross he was doing the Father's Will! Where do you think the Father was? With him. I and my Father are one. I am never alone. The fulness of the Godhead bodily. When he was dying upon that cross God was there with him! And yet he cried "My God, My God this is the purpose that I came for! For this purpose was I spared, for this purpose was I kept! This is our great hour of triumph!" Then he said "It is finished." He laid down his life for you and for me.

That's the accurate translation of Matthew 27:46. One of the most difficult verses if scripture in the King James and in the whole world. But this is a remarkable truth. Listen, my good friend Dr. George M. Lamsa whom we consider to be the most outstanding Aramaic scholar in the world today. Dr. George M. Lamsa by the way finished the proofreading of this The Lamsa Bible in our home a number of years ago. And this is his translation from the Aramaic into English. Listen to this:

Matthew 27:46 [The Lamsa Bible]:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said Eli, Eli, lmna shabachthani, My God, My God, for this I was spared.

Another remarkable truth that I think you ought to know as students; you know all the Eastern translations all the Eastern versions that go into the Far East, all of those translations read of Matthew 27:46 "My God, My God, for this purpose was I spared." All those that come into the Occident or the Western World all of these versions or translations read "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?"

And these translations and versions come out of the same Bible houses. Why then do they send them out to the East reading "My God, My God, for this purpose was I spared." And send them out to the West "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

I said this to a number of scholars some time ago. And you know what they said to me, "we know that you're right in what you teach. We know that Dr. Lamsa is right in the translation of that Aramaic. We know all of that." But he said, "if we translated it 'My God, My God, for this I was spared' or 'for this I was kept, this is what you permitted me to do, this was my destiny.' Then we could not sell any Bibles in the Western world." And I said, "my God!" "Man, when you going to get some courage?" But you know this is why we translate it this way. Because we've got to sell Bibles. Nobody concerned about the integrity and accuracy of God's Word, whether the Word fits! Only concerned about whether we can sell a few more translations, a few more Bibles. Ladies and gentlemen that's devilish as far as I'm concerned. And they know, everybody, basically

every scholar in America, Europe and every other place knows that these words "*Eli, Eli, lmna sabachthani*" mean and say "My God, My God, for this purpose was I spared, for this purpose was I kept." And yet every translation coming into the Western world has to be translated "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me."

I suppose we'd have to give up all of our old sermons and couldn't dig down in the barrel on Good Friday to preach on it anymore. You know why we've taught that God forsook him? Because God couldn't stand sin. And therefore Jesus was sin and God can't stand sin. So that when Jesus was hanging on the cross there dying God just took a walk. He walked off and left him hang back there. Didn't give a hoot about him. Boy that's real devilish.

God did love Jesus, His only begotten Son. And so when he died upon that cross it wasn't sin that turned Him away. You ought to be thankful it wasn't sin because you've got a few of them, I have a few of them. And if sin kept God away from us you and I would never get saved. It isn't sin that keeps a man from going to heaven. It's the rejection of the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ that keeps a man from going.

But this is why Matthew 27:46 is one of these great verses of scripture. And you see taking this verse of scripture: "My God, My God, for this purpose was I spared or for this purpose was I kept." It takes that one verse and gets all the other verses dealing with the identical situation and time element regarding the death of Christ and they fit like a hand in a glove.

You leave it set like it is in the King James or in these other Western translations and you'll find out that it doesn't fit. Now there are good words in the Word that are translated "to forsake" or "to get rid of." One is the word *tatani* the other is the word *nashatani* and this means to forsake. These are used for instance in Psalm 22:1 and in other sections of the Word of God. So it fits like a hand in a glove.