**God Forsook Jesus On The Cross**

There is controversy among Christians about whether God actually forsook Jesus on the cross. What do the scriptures teach on this question?

**My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?**

I suggest Matthew 27:46 (“… Jesus cried … My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”) means the obvious, that Jesus was forsaken. How could one deny the Father forsook Jesus when Jesus is plainly asking the Father why he did just that? When Jesus asks the Father “Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?,” that is equivalent to asserting “You have forsaken me. Why?” Was Jesus’ assertion wrong? If yes, what else was Jesus wrong about? If Jack asks John “why did you forsake me?,” doesn’t that mean one of three things?: either (1) Jack is lying, (2) Jack is mistaken, or (3) Jack was forsaken. Which was it for Jesus?

If we can read “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” and somehow conclude Jesus was not really forsaken, then I suggest something has gone completely haywire with our method of Bible “interpretation.” We certainly can no longer claim the common man can understand the Bible as written (Ephesians 3:3-4). Me thinks a Christian couldn’t reach the conclusion Jesus was not really forsaken without help from someone else; it would never occur to them from the text itself.

**Thirty-One Examples Of Jesus Asking "Why" Somebody Did Something**

To nail down what the plain meaning of Matthew 27:46 is, consider all 31 examples in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John of Jesus asking why somebody did something. In each and every case, Jesus’ question implies the person or persons had done exactly what Jesus is asking about. For example when Jesus asked his disciples in Matthew 8:26 “Why are ye fearful?,” doesn’t that mean the disciples were fearful about the winds and sea? When Jesus asked the rich, young, ruler in Matthew 19:17 “Why callest thou me good?,” doesn’t that mean the rich young ruler had called Jesus good? In Matthew 26:10 “Jesus … said … Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.” Did they trouble her or not? In Luke 6:46 Jesus asked “why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” Doesn’t Jesus’ query imply they were calling Jesus Lord? In Luke 22:46 Jesus asked “Why sleep ye?” And verse 45 says “he found them sleeping.” John 7:19 has Jesus asking “Why go ye about to kill me?” Weren’t they conniving about His death? Matthew 12:14 and 26:4 say the Pharisees were doing just that. Jesus asks in John 18:23 “why smitest thou me?” because they had struck him (verse 22). In John 20:15 “Jesus saith … Woman, why weepest thou?” because she was weeping in verse 11.

Everybody agrees “what Jesus is asking why about” actually happened in all of the other 30 cases. Why should it be any different in Matthew 27:46? All these cases serve to confirm for us what we already know inherently - if Jesus asks somebody why they did something, they must have done that something.

**David Only Appeared To Be Forsaken In Psalms 22:1; Likewise Jesus?**

But some reason since Jesus here is applying Psalms 22:1 to himself, and David (assumed) wasn’t really forsaken in Psalms 22:1, then neither is Jesus here. For example my friend Doy Moyer said in his article “Was Jesus Literally Forsaken” in The Auburn Beacon (2010) “In the psalm, the … phrase does not intend to express the idea that God has … actually forsaken anyone. The forsaking is in **appearance**, not in reality.” But why would anybody conclude David was not forsaken in Psalms 22:1-2? Wasn’t the writer inspired of God when he wrote “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 day time, but thou hearest not ….” Many say David just felt like he was forsaken in Psalms 22:1, but he really wasn’t. You mean David was inspired but wrong in Psalms 22:1-2? Have we forgotten the Holy Spirit is the real author of Psalms 22:1-2? If the Holy Spirit was mistaken when he wrote the inspired text “O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest”? (ESV), then how can we trust anything in the Bible? For example, how do we know Paul's prohibition against “women preachers” in I Timothy 2:11-12 is divine truth, and not just how Paul "felt" at the time? And suppose for the sake of argument David was wrong. Was Jesus also wrong when he applied these words to himself on the cross? There would be no end to questioning everything the Bible affirms as true.

**Forsaken Then Expected Deliverance**

It seems Doy’s main reason for his contention David was not really forsaken in Psalms 22:1-2 is because verses 22-31 discuss his deliverance. But expected deliverance doesn’t necessarily imply never forsaken. As a matter of fact, the frequent pattern we see in God’s word is just the opposite. Observe just how many times Old Testament passages fit the Psalms 22 pattern of what I call “forsaken then expected deliverance.”

Judges 6:13c-14 “now the Lord hath **forsaken** us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the Lord … said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt **save** Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?”

Isaiah 54:7-8 “For a small moment have I **forsaken** thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee … but with everlasting kindness will I have **mercy** on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.”

Psalms 60:1,9-10,5,12 “O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again. … Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?  Wilt not thou, O God, which **hadst cast us off**? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies? … That thy beloved may be **delivered** … Through God we shall do valiantly:  for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.”

Psalms 79:5,8,9-10 “How long, Lord? wilt thou be **angry for ever**? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? … O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low. … Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name:  and **deliver** us, and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake.  Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.”

Psalms 13:1-6 “How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?  How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall **mine enemy be exalted over me**?  Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.  But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy **salvation**.  I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.”

Psalms 44:22-26 “Yea, for thy sake are we **killed all the day long**; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.  Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever.  Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?  For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.  Arise for our help, and **redeem** us for thy mercies' sake.”

And we have many other instances of David and/or the Israelites being forsaken including Psalms 89:38-46, 80:4-6, 43:1-2, 35:1,17, 88:1-2,14,6-7, 108:11-13, Jeremiah 7:29-30, etc. In view of all these other Old Testament illustrations of “forsaken then expected deliverance” (that everybody agrees with), I think it is safe to say the only reason some claim in this one case that the writer of Psalms 22:1 was not forsaken is because Jesus applied the passage to himself. And for some reason that revealed truth scares them.

Reading further down the chapter confirms this obvious meaning of Psalms 22:1-2. No less than three times in verses 19-21 David (using the second person to refer to himself) asks God to deliver him – so he hadn’t been delivered yet. Then in verse 24 he switches to the third person to assert it is God’s general practice to hear the afflicted, and so David expects the same out of God in his case. So as of the writing - David is in the position of the one afflicted asking God for deliverance, and anticipating deliverance based upon what he says in verse 24 has been God’s usual practice in such cases. And when that deliverance comes, David will praise God for it (verse 25). This is parallel to Christ: forsaken on the cross but expecting deliverance through his resurrection.

**Conclusion**

So as we’ve demonstrated, the writer of Psalms 22:1 was forsaken, and since Jesus applied that to himself in Matthew 27:46, the inescapable conclusion is Jesus was also forsaken. In short we should accept that Jesus was forsaken by the Father on the cross because Matthew 27:46 says He was. What do we have to gain by struggling so hard to work against that plainly revealed fact?