

## Why is “Eli, Eli, Lama, Sabachthani” recorded in Hebrew?

**Question:** When Jesus was dying on the cross, He cried out, "Eli, Eli, Lama, Sabachthani" which translated means, "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46) Why did His Father forsake Him and why are the Hebrew words recorded in Scripture? Why didn't Matthew just record the translation of those words?

**Answer:** Jesus quoted from Psalm 22:1. Many Bible scholars believe that when Jesus cried out these words, He bore the sins of the world in His body and that His Father turned His face away during that time. Others think that His Father didn't turn His face away but placed the sins of the world on Jesus at that time.

But why include the Hebrew words Eli instead of leaving it in Greek? If he left out the original words “Eli, Eli,” people would read the verse and wonder why the people watching Jesus die thought He was calling for Elijah. By keeping the words “Eli, Eli” in Hebrew (Lama Sabachthani is Aramaic), we can read it and understand why they came to that conclusion.

The Jews believed that Elijah would announce the Messiah and stand with Him. The bystanders in verse 35 were mocking Him and made a joke about His words. Their mockery amounted to saying, “Now that this man’s life is about to end, He is frantically calling for Elijah to rescue Him and confirm Him as the Messiah!”