

**THE SEVEN
SAYINGS
OF JESUS**

From The Cross

BIBLE
BAPTIST CHURCH

OF P I S A

INDEX

Introduction.....	1
Chapter one: “Father, forgive them”	9
Chapter two: “Today, you shall be with me”	17
Chapter three: “Behold your mother!”	31
Chapter four: “My God, My God,”	43
Chapter five: “I thirst.”	56
Chapter six: “It is finished:”	66
Chapter seven: “Father, into thy hands”	74
Conclusion:	86
A Personal Appeal	87

Presentation:

The subject of this book, the last words spoken by the Lord Jesus while He was on the cross, which were (and still are) the expression of His heart, is one of the most sacred and serious subjects that anyone can speak or write about.

These are my thoughts and observations of what I believe the Scriptures reveal about who Jesus Christ is and what He did through His life, death, and resurrection.

My hope is that this book will cause you to search the scriptures with a sincere desire to better understand God's heart towards you, as revealed in the scriptures and demonstrated on the cross of Calvary.

My desire is for this book to make you reflect on His work of salvation in a deeper way.

My prayer is that its pages will exalt Jesus Christ in your heart.

This book is mainly composed of notes taken from a series of sermons preached over a period of two months at the Bible Baptist Church of Pisa (Italy) during the summer of 2022.

The Lord used that study in my life and in the life of the church in a powerful way. I trust He will use it in your life as well.

I praise the Lord for the privilege of sharing it with you in this book.

In the love of Christ,
Pastor Joseph Tacon

Introduction

I learned very early in the ministry to never take what people know for granted.

When I started teaching Sunday School, I was surprised that there seemed to be many things that I assumed were common knowledge, but were not really well known and understood. At that point, I decided to treat each study as if it were the first time anyone had ever heard it. I am sure there will be some things that you have already heard and known, but I will approach this study with the same idea that all of this is new to you as I have also tried to approach it this way.

Having said that, since the Gospels are our starting point for this study, I want to focus on some points of an introductory nature.

The Content of the Gospels

There are four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and each Gospel contains some details that the others do not contain. In fact, they were written purposely to underline certain details that were significant for a particular reader. In other words, what was/is significant to a Jewish reader would not have been meaningful to a Gentile reader; therefore, certain details do not appear in certain Gospels.

Understanding this helps us understand why every detail is not mentioned in every Gospel.

The Gospel of Matthew was written primarily for Jewish readers, and that is why it alone has for its introduction: "*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham*" (*Matthew 1: 1*). These words would not make much difference to a Gentile reader, but it is absolutely essential to present Him as the Messiah to the Jews.

The Gospel of John was written to introduce Jesus to the whole world and, therefore, has a very different introduction than the Gospel of Matthew: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made*" (*John 1: 1-3*). This introduction is important because it introduces to the world its Creator and later in the chapter, its Savior: "*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (*John 1:29*). Therefore, the Gospel of John has many details that are not found in the other three Gospels.

How to Study the Gospels

Matthew, Mark and Luke have been called "the Synoptic Gospels." The term *synoptic* is composed of two Greek words *syn*, which means "together," and *optic*, which means "seen" and therefore means "seen together." In short, when these three

presentations of Jesus Christ (these three Gospels) are seen together (synoptically), they give us a complete picture of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. These three Gospels record many of the same situations, encounters, and teachings but with added details.

In the synoptic Gospels, we see the genealogy, birth, and adolescence of Jesus, as well as His words and works, His second coming, and His subsequent earthly kingdom.

The content of John's Gospel, on the other hand, is slightly different from the other three Gospels and, in a sense, stands alone in its presentation of Jesus.

It is important to understand this because there is what is called the "harmony of the Gospels" which is necessary when doing any kind of study on one of the four Gospels.

We have to harmonize, or bring together, all those added details in order to understand a particular event well in our mind.

The seven cries of Jesus from the cross is an example of this.

If you only read Matthew, Mark, and Luke, you will be confused by the fact that I said there are seven cries from the cross because they only record six of them. In fact, only the Gospel of John reports the words "*it is finished*" while Luke is the only Gospel that records the words "*Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.*" Therefore, a harmony of the Gospels is essential for this study.

I want to say something about the adding of information in different Gospels: *Adding a detail does not mean creating a contradiction*. It could mean that, but it doesn't have to mean that. *What do I mean?*

Suppose you asked Brother Ray who was at the Bible study last Tuesday and he said "Joseph, Mark, Christine, and Ermanno" and you also asked me who was there and I said, "Ray, Christine, Marco and Ermanno." Now, Ray didn't think to include himself, and I didn't think to include myself, but we were both there. This is not a contradiction. They are two different accounts, from two different points of view, of the same night and together they give the whole story. This is what we find in the Gospels. If I tell who was at the Bible study last Tuesday and say "There was only Ray, Christine and Mark," this would be a contradiction.

So, I want to say this emphatically: there are no contradictions or errors in the Gospels. What is found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is an exact, perfect account of what God wanted to be inspired regarding the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of John tells us this clearly: "*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name*" (John 20:30-31).

The Holy Spirit did not inspire the writers to record all that Jesus did on this earth, but He did inspire them to remember, understand, and record all we need to know about His Person and work to believe and be saved. Jesus Himself said this about the content of the New Testament: *“These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you (the disciples). But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”* (John 14:25-26). Then: *“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you”* (John 16:12-14).

So, Jesus told those disciples who had personally heard His words that the Holy Spirit of God, who would come to dwell in them, would cause them to remember and understand what He had said, and that the Holy Spirit would even reveal to them more truth.

Since we know that Jesus would not have lied or could not have been wrong about such claims, we have full confidence in the reliability of the New Testament. In fact, we know that the entire Bible is the infallible Word of God: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction*

in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16), and again, we read: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

As far as this study goes, that means that in contemplating these seven saying of Jesus from the cross, we can know with full certainty that we are reading the very words of our Lord in His last hours on earth.

Someone's last words can tell us a lot about what was important to them. Leonardo Da Vinci said, *“I have offended God and mankind. My work did not reach the quality it should have.”* Bob Marley said, *“Money can't buy life.”* Mozart said, *“The taste of death is on my lips ... I feel something, which is not of this world.”* Edgar Allan Poe said, *“Lord, help my poor soul.”* Buddha said, *“Behold, O monks, this is my last advice to you. All component things in the world are changeable. They are not lasting. Work hard to gain your own salvation.”*

Last year, we lost (another) family member. His name was uncle John. Uncle John was a generous and loving man. He was a deacon in the church and had a true servant's heart. Uncle John was a godly man. I would like to share with you a part of the last words that uncle John left for our family: *“Jesus promised He would come back, so don't waste your time reading and crying about me. Revelation 3:20 says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock’.... Have you opened the door? Will you*

open the door?" These words show us what was important to him. These words help us see and understand a little of his heart. Considering Jesus' last words on the cross also shows us what was important to Him. They show us His heart.

If you are not familiar with the fact that Jesus spoke seven times from the cross, then this study will be very helpful to you. If you are familiar with these seven cries, this study will help you rekindle your love for Jesus by contemplating His love for you. I believe this is true because these seven cries sum up His saving work on behalf of humanity. To make it personal, I believe these seven cries sum up His saving work for you and for me. To make it more personal, I believe these seven cries sum up His saving work on your behalf and on my behalf.

This book is full of questions that need to be answered in your heart for two reasons:

1. Meditating and reflecting on the truth of God's love for us will bring up some questions that need to be answered.
2. Since the content of this book is derived primarily from sermon notes, it is designed to cause the reader to confront his heart, just like when this was preached.

I trust that when these questions come, you will try to answer them with an honest and open heart before the Lord. I trust that by looking at the Gospels, the answers to some of the questions you may have will become clear. I believe that the heart

of our God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is clearly manifested and expressed through these words from the cross.

Chapter 1: Luke 23:34
“Then said Jesus, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.’”

The last words of Jesus Christ were a series of seven cries while He was on the cross facing an imminent death. They show us what was important to Him. They show us what was in His heart and mind as He was about to leave this earthly life. This first cry from the cross is the reason that there are missionaries today. These words are the motivation of every believer to share the gospel around the world. With these first words, we want to reflect on a request from the Lord and His reason for it, which are clear expressions of His heart and His desire for you and me.

Jesus’ Request

The request is clear: “*Father, forgive them;*” but, we need to ask the question: *Who is He referring to? Who is the “them” of this request?*

We talk a lot about “*them.*” We say things like “*They* are not going to bring me down...”; “*They* are the problem”; “Who do *they* think *they* are?”; “It’s us against *them.*” When we talk like this, we are usually referring to people who we think are against us, or about people who have in fact made themselves our enemies.

In these first words from the cross, our Lord makes a request for “*them.*” He asks for the

forgiveness of those who were against Him, of those who had made themselves His enemies.

To understand this, we simply need to read the verses surrounding this request. Note the preceding verse: *“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left”* (Luke 23:33). Then, we note the rest of v.34: *“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots”* (Luke 23:34). We do not need to guess at who those were who took Jesus to Calvary and divided His garments: *“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers”*(Matthew 27:27). Hence, *“they”* refers to those soldiers who had just crucified Him. But it doesn't stop there. The following verse in Luke 23 says: *“And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God”* (Luke 23:35). This tells us that what Jesus said about *“them”* was about the people and the rulers who mocked Him. However, we read again: *“And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself”* (Luke 23: 36-37). This tells us that this was also said about the soldiers who were mocking Him. The *“they”* for whom Jesus is making this request goes beyond even the soldiers, the people of Jerusalem, and the rulers. The Bible goes a step further and

tells us those who were involved in Jesus' crucifixion: *“The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4: 26-28).*

Thus, *“they”* refers to Herod, the people of Israel, the Gentiles, Pontius Pilate, the Roman leaders and soldiers. This actually means that when Jesus said, “Father, forgive them,” that He was referring to all the people who had desired and conspired to kill Him. *“They”* for whom Jesus asked forgiveness were the ones who had made themselves His enemies.

In other words, Jesus' desire is for every person, whether criminal, religious leader, or king to receive the Father's forgiveness. Or to put it even more simply: Jesus' first cry from the cross shows that He desires all men to be saved - even His enemies.

I need stop here and say: This means that Jesus wants you to receive the forgiveness of your sins through faith in His perfect sacrifice on your behalf. Your nationality or social position does not matter. Jesus will save you if you come to Him with faith and repentance. His death on that cross shows that there is no other way to pay your sin debt and that you must believe in Him only for salvation.

A good question is this: *Why should Jesus request the forgiveness of those who desired and conspired for His death?*

Jesus' Reason

Notice what the Lord Jesus says about these people: *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34).

Jesus was concerned about the forgiveness of these people, of the nations, of His persecutors, of those who hated Him, because they did not understand what they were doing.

Because of a sin corrupted nature, we (like these people) are darkened and become blind to our true spiritual condition and to the Person of Jesus Christ. The Bible is clear that we are darkened and ignorant concerning our sinful nature: *"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"* (Ephesians 4:17-18). Then, we become blinded by the devil: *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,"* (2 Corinthians 4:3-4a).

Praise the Lord that the blindness that comes from the devil can be healed: *"lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not*

ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:4b-6).

The Gospel of Christ has the power to shine the light and destroy the devil's blinding power, but the Bible says that there is an incurable blindness that can come from God Himself: *"He (God) hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" (John 12:40).* This has happened to the nation of Israel as we know it today. And, it has (and is still happening today) to the Gentile world that continually rejects the truth of Christ and His Word: *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an*

image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:” (Romans 1:18-26).

In short: a nation or a person can reject God's knowledge and goodness until He allows that darkness to overwhelm them and make them totally blind. This is one of the saddest comments in all the Bible and that is why God Himself is long-suffering and merciful to us. *“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;” (Romans 2:4-5).*

The result of our darkened condition is that we live in ignorance and unbelief serving ourselves and the devil, all the while thinking that we are okay. We have no understanding of our true spiritual need and of the consequences of our rejection of Jesus: *“Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Corinthians 2:8).* And again: *“Who was before a blasphemer, and a*

persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Timothy 1:13). This is why Jesus wanted His persecutors to receive forgiveness: because He understood their condition just as He does ours.

If you are without Christ, then this is your condition and you need the forgiveness of sins before it is too late for you. You may hate me for saying this, but I love your soul and I want you to know Jesus Christ and have the life, light, and love of God in your life. This is what the Gospel does. It breaks through the darkness, enlightens the heart, and lets the light of Christ shine in our minds. Listen to it again: *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).*

I would like to conclude by asking two questions:

For those who have not yet received the forgiveness of sins: *Is the Spirit of God revealing Christ to you?
Will you respond to the gospel work in your heart?*

The request and the reason is clear from the cross and the heart of the Lord Jesus. *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”*

For those of us who are believers:

What is our attitude towards “them”?

Are we concerned about the souls of those who have made themselves our enemies?

Do we want them to receive the forgiveness of their sins?

May the Holy Spirit help us to have the heart of the Lord Jesus.

May this first cry from the cross be the reason for which we share the Gospel with the whole world.

Chapter 2: Luke 23:43

“And Jesus said unto him, ‘Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.’”

We are contemplating the seven sayings of Jesus from the cross. These seven cries show us the heart of the Lord. They show us who and what was important to Him in His last hours. These cries demonstrate His saving work in favor of all humanity.

We have already talked about the need to look at all four of the Gospels together (the word synoptic) in order to get the full picture of Jesus' words and works. If you read just one gospel, you will be confused when I say that there are seven cries from the cross because that particular gospel will have recorded only a few of them (Luke 23 and John 19 record for us only three, while Matthew 27 and Mark 15 record only one). Therefore, a harmony of the Gospels is essential for this study.

Last time, we contemplated Jesus' first cry from the cross: *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34)*. In this cry there is a request from Jesus Himself: “Father, forgive them”.... We have seen that “they” referred to Herod, the people of Israel, the Gentiles, Pontius Pilate, the leaders and soldiers who desired and conspired for Jesus' humiliation and public death. In short, Jesus made a request for forgiveness for those who slapped Him, spit on Him, put Him on

the cross, humiliated Him, mocked Him, scorned Him and rejected Him.

In reality, this request for forgiveness describes and includes you and me. *“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled”* (Colossians 1:21). The Bible goes on to say, *“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”* (Ephesians 2:3) In short, the Bible teaches that every person who has ever lived has made himself the enemy of God and falls under the category of “them” for whom Christ prayed for forgiveness. Or, to put it even more simply: Jesus’ first cry from the cross shows that He desires all men to be saved..

Then, we saw the reason for this request: *“And Jesus said: ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’”* (Luke 23:34). Hence, the Bible is very clear that Jesus was concerned about the forgiveness of the people, the nations, those who hated and mocked Him because He understood that in their lost condition that they had no understanding of what they were doing.

To the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel Jesus said: *“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes”* (Luke 19:41-42). Paul said:

“What I did before as an unbeliever, I did ignorantly in my unbelief.”

We can say with full certainty that Jesus Christ knows our human condition and He wants us to receive forgiveness as just He desired that for “them” two thousand years ago.

How do I know that? *“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8)*. This means that the attributes, attitude, and actions of Jesus Christ are immutable and eternal. This means that He desires the same forgiveness to be received by those people whose actions, attitudes, and intentions are the same as they were two thousand years ago. How does God's Word describe God's attitude toward sinful people? *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8)*. *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15)*.

So, according to the Scriptures: Who is a sinner? *“What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;” (Romans 3:9)*. And the Bible goes on to say: *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” (Romans 3:23)*. Hence, every person on the face of the earth is a sinner whom God loves and for whom Christ died.

We must also consider: *“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, but quickened by the Spirit:”* (1 Peter 3:18).

So, according to the Scriptures, Who are the unjust, or the unrighteous? *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* (Isaiah 64:6). The New Testament takes this Old Testament reality and applies to you and me today: *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God”* (Romans 3:10-19).

I am sure that no one who takes the Bible seriously would deny that all of mankind is described as sinful and unrighteous in the eyes of God. Therefore, the Bible is clear that God placed on the sinless One (Jesus) all of our sins. The Just

One (Jesus) died for the unjust. Isn't it wonderful? Listen again to the words of Jesus Christ from the cross: *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34). Friend, you and I are part of "them" for whom Jesus desires and asked for forgiveness.

This prayer or request from Jesus was the fulfillment of a prophecy: *"For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer"* (Psalm 109:4). How beautiful it is to understand God's attitude toward us sinners! This makes us truly understand the heart of the Lord Jesus. Now, we must consider His second cry from the cross.

***"Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"* (Luke 23:43).**

Consider this: Jesus made a request for forgiveness to His persecutors, then His next words confirm the veracity of that request.

Jesus' first words were a request for forgiveness for those who were guilty of putting Him on the cross, while His subsequent words were told to a guilty person who was himself next to Jesus on the cross. *"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left"* (Luke 23:33).

The Gospel of Matthew adds a very important detail about this thief to whom Jesus does in fact extend forgiveness: *"The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth"*

(*Matthew 27:44*). This man was one who had made himself the Lord's enemy. He was mocking and scorning Him just as the others were. Yet Jesus now promises the reality of the Father's forgiveness to this guilty sinner.

This is a beautiful confirmation for all guilty sinners! These are the words of true hope. This promise is the anchor of our souls. The Bible says: "*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;*" (*1 Timothy 1:15*). These words of Jesus: "*Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*" confirm the greatest promise and the truest hope a person can ever know.

Note carefully what the Lord said: "*Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*" Jesus did not say "*it's possible that,*" or "*you might,*" but He said, "*Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.*"

Have you ever been asked, "What happens when a person dies?" The answer is this: *It depends on whether or not that person has received the forgiveness of sin.* When a person who has been justified through faith in Jesus dies, his spirit goes immediately to be with Him in paradise. "*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*" (*2 Corinthians 5:8*). Again, we read: "*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:*" (*Philippians 1:21-23*). Luke

23:43 says it this way: *“Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”*

Regarding those who die in their sin without having received Christ and His forgiveness, the Bible says: They *“shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,”* (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Jesus put it this way: *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28).

In short, when a person dies in sin, their spirit goes directly and immediately to a place called hell and will be eternally separated from the Lord. There are only these two places: Heaven or hell. There is no second chance. *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”* (Hebrews 9:27).

There is something very interesting in this verse. The word “judgment” is: κρίσις (krisis) that we know today as the word “crisis.” The Biblical reality is this: when a lost person stands before God in judgment, that will be a time of crisis. It will be a situation that will end in disaster and ruin that cannot be undone. It will be an eternal crisis.

Now, let’s apply this to our text: *“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left”* (Luke 23:33). This means that one of these men was about

to enter an eternal crisis and the other was about to enter into eternal security.

Here's a good question: Why would one of these criminals be in heaven after his imminent death and the other not? What made the difference between the forgiveness and eternal fate of these two thieves?

The answer is clearly and easily found in the whole story: *“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:39-43).*

As far as I know, the Bible does not tell us which man was on the left or on the right, but I will refer to them as “the lost man on the left” and “the righteous man on the right.”

There are several points we need to note regarding these two men and their attitudes towards the Lord and their own situation that made all the difference.

First, let's consider “the lost man on the left.”

*“And one of the malefactors which were hanged
railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save
thyself and us” (Luke 23:39).*

There are a couple of things in this verse to consider. First, we must note

1. His attitude towards Jesus

We need to underline two primary points.

A. *“one of the malefactors..... railed on him,”*

This man had no respect, no honor, and no love for Jesus and what He was doing upon that cross.

Then, notice carefully the words:

B. *“If thou be Christ,”*

This man did not have any faith or conviction whatsoever that Jesus was the Savior.

Thus, the attitude of the lost man on the left towards Jesus Christ was, in every sense, hostile and wrong.

Then, there is:

2. His attitude towards his own condition

“save thyself and us” (v.39)

Since we know the tone of voice in which he spoke, (he railed on Jesus) and because we see his unbelief in Jesus as Savior (*if you are the Christ*), we know that this statement was not one of love and true need in the Lord.

This man did not have any true sense of need for Jesus and what He was doing on that cross, but just wanted to be saved from his present situation for his own selfish reasons and personal gain. To put it simply, the man on the left only wanted Jesus to save him from dying on that cross, but did not think or care at all about why Jesus was dying on His cross. (*We will see in a few minutes that biblical salvation is about our attitude towards our spiritual condition and what Jesus did on the cross.*)

On the contrary, we note several things about “the righteous man on the right.” First, we note:

1. His attitude towards Jesus

“But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:40-42).

Again, we want to underline two primary points.

A. *“but this man hath done nothing amiss.”*

We pointed out earlier, that in the beginning both of these men railed on Jesus with everyone else that morning (*Matthew 27:44*). Evidently, something had changed in this man’s mind and heart as he heard the Lord’s words and observed His response upon the cross, for now he is demonstrating honor, love, and respect toward Jesus by defending His innocence and character.

B. *“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”*

This man was fully convinced that Jesus was the Lord and Savior.

Now, I am going to speculate a little here. We know for a fact that Roman law prohibited the crucifixion of Roman citizens. So, that means that these two thieves could not have been Romans. This means that there is a strong possibility that they could have been Jewish men. Certainly they could have been Gentiles who were not Roman citizens, but, if they were Jewish men, that would mean that they most likely would have had some knowledge of the Messiah and His coming kingdom. This would explain why this man on the right would have acknowledged Jesus as Savior and His coming kingdom. It seems very odd to me that a Gentile would have had any knowledge of that concept to make a confession like the one of this man.

Therefore, I believe that this was a Jewish man who realized and then believed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

In any case, there was no doubt from this man on the right about the nature and identity of Jesus as Savior. Thus, it is very clear that the attitude of the righteous man regarding Jesus is very different from the attitude of the lost man regarding Him.

Again, we must also note:

2. His attitude towards his own condition

“Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?.... for we receive the due reward of our deeds:”

This man recognized his standing before God and the fact that his actions had justly earned him death. The Bible clearly says: *“For the wages of sin is death;” (Romans 6:23).*

This man did not speak out of doubt and personal gain, but made a humble confession of guilt and an earnest appeal to the Lord and Savior for salvation. This is the difference between the lost man on the left and the righteous man on the right.

True saving faith is the acknowledgment of sin, guilt, and our inability to save ourselves. It is total dependence on Jesus Christ alone to save us. True salvation is not a selfish action solely to improve our current situation.

The righteous man understands and recognizes his standing before God and his consequent need

for forgiveness by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the only way of true salvation. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9)*. Again, *“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;” (Titus 3.4-6)*.

Earlier, I said that Jesus’ first words were a request for forgiveness for those who were guilty of putting Him on the cross while His next words were said to a guilty one who was himself on a cross.

Now, I want to say that every person reading this is either the lost man on the left or the righteous man on the right and that depends on your attitude towards Jesus Christ and your condition before God.

The question is: Which one are you?

Thank God that many of us are “the righteous man on the right” because we recognized our need for Christ and called on His name for salvation. We have already heard him say: “Today you will be with me in paradise.”

For the others: If you recognize that you are a guilty sinner and that Jesus was on that cross to pay for your sin, and that you have no hope of salvation apart from Him, then do what the thief on the right did: ask Jesus to save you.

Then you will listen to that beautiful promise of the cross: "today you will be with me in paradise."

Chapter 3: John 19:26-27

“When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, ‘Woman, behold thy son!’ Then saith he to the disciple, ‘Behold thy mother!’”

In Jesus’ first cry from the cross, we see words of forgiveness to those who put Him upon that cross. *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”* In His second cry, we see the hope of that forgiveness (salvation) extended to a guilty one who was himself facing death upon the cross. *“Truly I say unto you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”* In this, His third cry from the cross, we see words of comfort. These words are only recorded for us in the Gospel of John, chapter 19.

The people that He is speaking to in this moment were about to lose the Person they had loved and that loved them the most: a friend, *“the disciple.. whom he loved,”* and a son, *“there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother,”* and in His suffering, the Lord Jesus speaks words of comfort to them.

In considering these words of Jesus, we must remember that this was a day, that is, the day of His death on the cross, that He knew was coming. Earlier in the gospel of John, Jesus said: *“Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast: for my time is not yet full come” (John 7:8).* Then, we read again in the same chapter, *“Then they sought*

to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come” (John 7:30).

At this point in His ministry, the Jewish leaders were trying to kill Jesus, *“because the Jews sought to kill him” (John 7:1)*, but it was not yet His time to die and Jesus understood this.

The disciples should have understood that day was coming because Jesus had clearly told them: *“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matthew 16:21)*. Mary did know that this incredible painful day would arrive because of a prophecy that was given when the family was at the Temple in Jerusalem when Jesus was a boy. *“And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the*

custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:22-35).

We need to note something important in this encounter: “*And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,)” (Luke 2:34-35).* Both Joseph and Mary were present at this particular moment: “*they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord” (Luke 2:22), “and when the parents brought in the child Jesus,” (Luke 2:27),* yet this phrase “*Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,*” was said directly and only to Mary and was given regarding the reality of Jesus’ saving work as the Messiah. This prophecy did not concern Joseph and he was not present at the crucifixion: why?

We are not exactly sure what happened to Joseph because the Bible does not say, but the common thought is that he died sometime between the time when Jesus was thirteen and thirty years old. I want to give seven reasons why we believe this was the case:

1. There is nothing written in the New Testament mentioning Joseph after Jesus was 12 years old.
2. At the wedding in Cana, the Bible speaks only of the presence of His mother, Mary. (*John 2:1,12*)
3. At the beginning of the Gospels, Jesus is called “the Son of Joseph” (*Luke 3:23*) but later, He is known as “the son of Mary.” (*Mark 6:3*)
4. The Gospels record events in which the family of Jesus is present, but does not name Joseph. (*Matthew 12:46-47; Mark 3:31-32; Luke 8:19-20*)
5. Before His death on the cross, Jesus commits the care of His mother to John. If Joseph were still living, Jesus would have no need to do that because Joseph would have been responsible for her. (*John 19:25-27*)
6. After the death of Jesus, Joseph would have been responsible for his son’s body and

burial, but instead, that responsibility fell on someone else. (*Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-53*)

7. As we have mentioned, it is notable that in spite of the fact that Joseph and Mary were together at the time, when Simeon prophesied about the crucifixion and death of Jesus, he spoke only to Mary when he said: “*Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,*” (*Luke 2:35*).

Why would Simeon have not said this also to Joseph? Surely, if Joseph were living, he would have grieved to see his Son crucified and die?

Therefore, for these seven reasons we believe that Joseph died sometime after Jesus was 13 years old and before He began His public ministry. In any case, both Jesus and Mary knew this day was coming. Jesus was going to suffer, but Mary was also going to have an experience of deep grief in her soul with respect to Jesus’ saving work. In John chapter 19 that hour had arrived. “*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother,*” (*John 19:25*); “*and the disciple standing by, whom he loved,*” (*John 19:26*).

I was next to the bed of my grandmother when she took her last breath, but it was a peaceful passing. Even though it was peaceful, it was still emotionally difficult. I still think about it 15 years later. I can only imagine how painful this would have been for Mary to watch the horrible treatment

and then the six hours of suffering and eventual death of her Son.

Let's read Jesus' third cry from the cross again: *"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home"* (John 19:26-27).

I want to notice three observations from these words: *"Woman, behold thy son!"* and, *"Behold thy mother!"*

1. I think it is amazing that as we study the life, and in this case, the death of Jesus, we find that He never commanded anything that He Himself did not do.

In these words spoken from the cross, we see several New Testament commands that would be given to us as believers today being exemplified by the Lord Himself. For example: *"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:12-13). As Jesus was speaking from the cross, certainly He was doing what He had commanded His disciples just a few days earlier. He was laying down His life as the greatest display of love possible.

The Apostle John applies this command and example of Jesus to us as believers today: *"And this*

is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1 John 3:23). This refers back to verses 16 through 18 which speak of loving in sacrificial ways and in giving ourselves for each other in service.

Let’s consider another passage in this regard: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”

(Philippians 2:4-5). I would say that never have truer words been written that describe the mindset of Jesus Christ, even in His last hours on this earth.

In spite of His own suffering and imminent death, Jesus was not thinking of Himself, but of the care of others. Jesus was concerned for His family and His disciples. In His third cry from the cross, we see that the Lord will never command us to do what He has not already done Himself, that is, to think of others before self.

2. In these words, we also find that Jesus never contradicted any commands of the Word of God.

In this moment, even in His sufferings, Jesus was making sure that His widowed mother would be taken care of. Why do I point that out? *“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Timothy 5:8).*

It is clear from context that this is a command concerning the responsibility of the care of widows: (v.3, 4, 5, 9, 11). In reality, Jesus was making sure that He was fulfilling the command of the Scriptures regarding His mother.

That perfect obedience to the Word of God enables Him to show the ultimate care for you and me, that is, to give His life as the perfect sacrifice for our sin. Only Jesus can save us because only He lived a sinless life.

The Apostle Peter also writes about this: *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare 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. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls”* (1 Peter 2:21-25). How beautiful it is to see that even on the cross, in His greatest time of suffering, Jesus did not sin.

Lastly, we see:

3. We will not face anything that Jesus has not experienced and that He cannot understand.

In these words, *“Woman, behold thy son!”* and *“Behold thy mother!”* we see that Jesus experienced

and understands what it means to be separated from His loved ones and to love the Lord God and follow His will even when it means a voluntary separation. Jesus Christ left His heavenly Father, His earthly mother, and His disciples for the love of God and the sake of the Gospel.

As His disciples, Jesus calls us to love God more than our own family, even if that might mean a voluntary, temporal separation from them. Jesus spoke of this reality often. *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37)*. And again: *“Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:28-30)*.

Jesus' third cry from the cross shows us that He never contradicted any commands of Scripture nor ever commanded anything that He Himself would not do and experienced, and therefore He can help us in our time of need. In short, this third cry from the cross shows us the compassion of the Lord.

I would like to conclude with two applications. First, I want to say that Jesus not only suffered for us, but He suffered with us.

The word *compassion* means “to suffer with.” This is what the Bible means when it speaks of Jesus as our “Great High Priest.” *“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:17-18). “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. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15). “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;” (Hebrews 8:1).*

When we have a need in our lives and take it to the Lord, we can do so knowing that He understands and cares about us. The cross demonstrates that to us in every sense. He experienced hunger, thirst, mockery, and rejection with us and for us on the cross. On the cross, Jesus experienced separation from His Father, mother, and friends. Jesus did not only suffer for us, but he suffered with us.

The second application I would like to point out is that knowing Christ as Savior should cause us to have compassion on each other.

We should experience each others' joy, sorrow, and needs together as a church. *“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Romans 12:15). “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:” (1 Peter 3:8).* The word *compassion* in that verse is *συμπαθής (sympathês)* which means: “suffering or feeling the like with another, sympathetic.”

All of us have experienced certain hurts or disappointments in our lives, but none of us have experienced all of them. The beautiful thing about a church (a group of people in different stages of life from different backgrounds committed to each other) is that we are likely to have someone among us who has already experienced whatever problem we may be facing and can therefore understand and help us. *“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).*

This is one of the ways in which we need to use the trials that we have gone through as part of this church, that is, as a way to help each other find comfort in the trial. This is part of how the local church is designed to work. This is the heart of the

Lord Jesus and His third cry from the cross demonstrates that to us in every sense.

No one ever loved us more than Jesus. He experienced hunger, thirst, mockery, and rejection with us and for us on the cross.

No one can save you except Jesus. He is the only Person ever to keep the commands of Scripture perfectly and therefore could give His life as the perfect sacrifice upon the cross.

No one understands us more than Jesus. On the cross, Jesus experienced separation from His Father, His mother, and His friends.

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”

Chapter 4: Matthew 27:45-46

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 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?”

I would say that these words constitute one of the holiest moments in all of human history. It is this cry of the Lord Jesus on the cross that shows us the depth of what He did to make possible that forgiveness, hope, and comfort that He had already spoken of to His persecutors, to the thief, to his friends and mother, and to you and me.

From the beginning, I think it is important to emphasize that in the Old Testament it was prophesied that our Lord would say these very words from the cross. *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1).*

There are three important details regarding the interpretation of this cry as a prophecy concerning the words of Jesus on the cross through David in Psalm 22. The first important point is a general observation about **the Biblical Testimony of the Prophetic Reality of the Psalms.**

We need to consider several passages of Scripture that give us a clear testimony of the prophetic reality of the Psalms concerning our Lord.

First of all, let us note The Testimony of Jesus Himself. *“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:”* (Luke 24:44-46).

So, according to Jesus Himself, there are things written in the Psalms regarding His death, burial and resurrection that He had fulfilled. In fact, Psalm 22 contains at least five prophecies about his death. *(We will talk more about this in the next chapter.)*

Then, we must consider The Testimony of David himself. *“Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue”* (2 Samuel 23:1-2).

We have talked about the importance of someone's last words in the first message of this series, and now we see that as part of his last words, David says that the Holy Spirit had spoken through him during his life. The testimony of the New Testament confirms this fact: *“For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies*

thy footstool” (Mark 12:36). Then, we read: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:29-31). And again: “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?” (Acts 4:24-25). This is a clear statement that David was in fact the author of Psalm 2 which refers to the crucifixion of Jesus.

We know that the whole Bible, both the Old and the New Testament, tells us that the Psalms speak prophetically of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. But what about Psalm 22 in particular? Do we have any evidence that it speaks of Jesus and not David? The answer to that is an unequivocal “Yes!” We find those answers in **The Testimony of the Gospels.**

The Gospels clearly tell us that parts of Psalm 22 were prophecies of Jesus' crucifixion. I just want to highlight one for now: *“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture”*

(Psalm 22:18). The New Testament then says: “And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, ‘They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots’” (Matthew 27:35). Again, we read: “They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did” (John 19:24).

Hence, we know as a New Testament fact that Psalm 22:18 was a prophecy about the crucifixion of Jesus. *(As I mentioned, we will note other verses from this Psalm in the next chapter which are also clearly identified in the New Testament as prophecy about the crucifixion.)* This leaves us with no doubt that Psalm 22:1 was a prophecy of Jesus' own words on the cross.

But, we must also consider **The Historical Testimony of Crucifixion.**

Consider these words: *“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22:16).* These words from Psalm 22 were not only written a thousand years before the crucifixion of Jesus, but also before crucifixion itself as a form of capital punishment had been invented, or at least recorded as being used. *“Crucifixion was invented and used by other people groups, but it was ‘perfected’ by the Romans as the ultimate*

execution by torture. The earliest historical record of crucifixion dates to c. 519 BC, when King Darius I of Persia crucified 3,000 of his political enemies in Babylon. Before the Persians, the Assyrians were known to impale people. The Greeks and Carthaginians later used crucifixion, as well” (gotquestions.org).

So, hundreds of years before crucifixion was invented and used, David describes it in Psalm 22.

In fact, because Psalm 22 is so precise, for years skeptics said that it was actually written in the first century after the crucifixion of Jesus, but with the appearance of having been written before the crucifixion itself. We know this is not possible because this Psalm is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls which were written during the period from about 200 BC. to around A.D. 68. Thus, Psalm 22 is a Messianic Psalm that gives us the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ on the day He would be crucified. *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1).*

Let's read our main passage together again: *“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 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 27:45-46).*

The first three cries from the Lord speak of forgiveness, hope, and comfort, but this one speaks of darkness and abandonment. It should be noted that all the Synoptic Gospels record this darkness in

connection with these words. Not all Gospels record all seven cries from the cross, but all mention this darkness as being directly related to this particular cry of the cross. I want to consider two aspects of this darkness.

First, we will consider the darkness that hid the face of the Son of God. Then we will consider the darkness that hid the Father's face from the Son.

The darkness that hid the face of the Son of God

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,”
(*Matthew 27:45-46a*).

We need to understand that according to the Jewish reckoning of time the sixth hour was noon and the ninth hour was three o'clock in the afternoon. So, we are talking about a period of darkness that lasted three hours during what would normally be the brightest part of the day.

As we begin to contemplate this darkness that hid the face of the Lord, we must remember that it is in the context of, and I believe it is the crux of, these last sayings of Jesus from the cross that incapsulate His saving work.

The extent of the darkness:

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour” (*Matthew 27:45*).

Some people teach that this was not a darkness over the entire earth, but just over all the land of Israel. I don't agree with that, and as we will see, I think it is significant in its meaning that it was not a localized, but a universal darkness.

We must notice that the text does not say that it was a darkness that covered only the land of Israel. It says that it covered all the land. If the verse said "From the sixth hour to the ninth hour there was darkness only over the whole land of Israel" then there would be no doubt about the extent of darkness. But, I believe, the Bible is clear that it went much farther than just that land.

To understand the full extent of this darkness we need to go to the Gospel of Luke: *"And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst"* (Luke 23:44-45). This makes it clear that it was not a localized darkness. It was not an eclipse over a certain area. Rather God obscured the sun; that is, the source of light for the whole earth was cut off and what fell on Jesus at His crucifixion was a darkness that covered the whole world. Why is this important? Because this darkness represented the moment when God the Father was placing all the sin of the world on Jesus Christ.

The Significance of Darkness:

I believe that this was a worldwide darkness because **all of humanity is described as**

walking in darkness. The day that Paul came to know Jesus as Savior, the Lord said these words: *“Delivering thee from the people (Jews), and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, (Jews and Gentiles) and to turn them (Jews and Gentiles) from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me”* (Acts 26:17-18). Later, Paul himself wrote: *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:”* (Ephesians 5:8). And, again: *“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”* (Colossians 1:13). The Bible plainly declares that all men, in all places, are in darkness.

Read it again: *“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour”* (Matthew 27:45). What a picture of the extent of the saving work of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

Jesus took all the darkness, all the sin of all men upon Himself in order that He might make the light of life available to all men. *“I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house”* (Isaiah 42:6-7). *“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever*

*believeth on me should not abide in darkness”
(John 12:46).*

I must ask: Are you still in the darkness? If so, come to Jesus Christ for the light of life.

As believers, just as the Apostle Paul, we have the mission of bringing light so that people can be changed from darkness to light. *“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” (2 Corinthians 4:1-7).*

What a joy and a blessing it is that God gives to us the privilege of being a part of His work of transforming people from darkness to light through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The extent of our mission is the same as the extent of the darkness: *“And he said unto them, Go ye into*

all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Just as that darkness was over all the earth, we must take the light of the Gospel to all the earth.

Now, we must consider the second aspect of darkness connected to this cry of the Lord from the cross, that is, there was not only a darkness over all the earth, but there was also a darkness over the Lord Jesus Himself. It was the darkness of abandonment by the Father.

The Darkness of God the Father Hiding His Face from the Son

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 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 27:45-46).

Consider this: Jesus had never before, nor has He ever again, been abandoned by His Father. There was never a time when the Father did not hear Jesus. *“Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 11:41-42).* There was never a time when the Father and Son were not in a perfect relationship, even from eternity past. *“And now, O*

Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:23-24).

But, in this moment Jesus was left alone. He was abandoned. He cried out and heard no response from His Father. Why? It was at this very moment that Jesus was taking the sin of the world upon Himself. This is the crux of the saving work of Jesus Christ. It was the darkness of the abandonment of the Father.

I would like to read four verses of Scripture that make this clear. I will say that although it is clear, we still can never fully understand the depth of this truth. Consider these words from the Old Testament: *“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” (Isaiah 53:6).* And then, from the New Testament, we read: *“For he (God) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).*

Here, we must note that it was God the Father who laid the iniquity of all of us on Jesus, so that we

could have His righteousness imputed to us through the work of Jesus Christ.

We read again from the New Testament: *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:”* (Galatians 3:13). And still: *“Who his own self bare 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”* (1 Peter 2:24).

Again, please note that Jesus Himself was not under the curse of the law, but God the Father put our curse and the sin associated with it onto Jesus Christ when He was upon the cross.

Think about this: we can never be abandoned by God as His adopted children, but the abandonment of His Only Begotten Son was necessary for that to be possible.

“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 27:45-46). It was at this moment, for the first time in all eternity, that the Father had to turn His face away from His Son. It was the first time that their relationship was hindered. It was the first, and only time, that God would not hear the voice of His Son.

Friends, the Son of God was forsaken by the Father, so that we would never be.

Consider these words from David: *“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up”* (Psalm 27:10). Consider this

testimony from the Apostle Paul: “*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen*” (2 Timothy 4:16-18).

As His children, we can rest assured that we have never been, nor will we ever be, abandoned by the Lord. He has given us the promise of His Word and the guarantee of His presence in us that He will bring us home to Himself. That is only possible because the Son of God was forsaken by the Father, so that we who trust Him could never be.

Chapter 5: John 19:28

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.”

Beloved, the benefits we receive through salvation in Jesus Christ are infinite, but the cost of that salvation was infinite to Him. We saw this contrast clearly in our study in the fact that His fourth cry was spoken in the dark: *“It was about the sixth hour, and it became dark over all the land until the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out,”* and then it tells us about sin and the separation that it causes from the Father in the next words, *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”*

The Bible is crystal clear: Sin brings separation from God and to be in darkness (in sin) is to be separated from the light (from God).

The Bible says that by birth and by nature, every person walks in darkness and therefore needs Jesus Christ and His salvation to dispel that darkness and shine the light of life into his heart, mind, soul and spirit. Jesus Himself said: *“I am come as light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”*

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak” (John 12:46-50).

When Jesus uttered his fourth cry from the cross, sin had separated the Son of Man from the Father. *“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. 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 27:45-46).* The world became dark when the Father placed all the sin of the world (described in the Bible as darkness) onto His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. This is the crux of Jesus Christ's saving work on the cross. This the moment when *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.”* This is what Isaiah wrote about, *“But he (Jesus) was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD (God the Father) hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:5-6).* This is the heart of Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross for our sins. This is the moment when He gave everything so that we could gain everything. *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that,*

though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Beloved, Jesus was forsaken by the Father so that we would never be. He suffered the wrath of God so that we would not have to.

There is a Biblical word that is most important and indispensable in this regard, namely, the word *propitiation*. What does this word mean? The best explanation of this word comes from a beloved passage in the Old Testament: *“Yet it pleased the Lord (God the Father) to bruise him (Jesus); he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul (Jesus) 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. He (God the Father) shall see of the travail of his (Jesus) soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he (Jesus) shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53:10-11).*

The “Propitiation of Jesus” means that it is His sacrifice, and His only, that satisfies God's demand for justice and judgment against sin. There is no other method to be saved from God's holiness, and consequently His demand for justice, except by faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection in our place. *“Whom God (the Father) hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,” (Romans 3:25).* For whom was Jesus abandoned to provide that eternal comfort? For whom did He offer His life and

suffer so that they might be delivered from punishment? *“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). “For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe” (1 Timothy 4:10).*

Here is the question for you:

Will you bear your sin, or will you apply the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to your life?

He will save you if you repent and believe on Him.

How can Jesus be the sacrifice for all men? *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:9-10).* Then, the Bible says: *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:14-15).*

This atoning work is possible because Jesus took upon Himself the same flesh and blood that belong to all men.

We must understand that there are not different races with different kinds of flesh and blood. There is only one flesh and blood, and only one race. On this point the Bible is clear: *“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;”* (Acts 17:24-26).

In short, Jesus participated in the same flesh and blood that belong to the one human race and therefore represents the entire human race. That is why the New Testament calls Him “the last Adam.”

Let us note what the New Testament says about Jesus, “the last Adam.”

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45).

“The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven”
(1 Corinthians 15:47).

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord”
(Romans 5:12-21).

In short, the New Testament says that just as any member of the human race whose ultimate representative is Adam will be condemned, any member of the human race whose ultimate representative is Jesus will be justified. He is “the last Adam.” He was (and is) very God, but He was (and is) also very man. He was (and is) fully divine and fully human. His fifth cry from the cross tells us about His humanity. *“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, ‘I thirst’”* (John 19:28).

We have talked a little about the prophetic reality of the psalms and in particular, Psalm 22. We have already seen that the fourth cry, *“My God, O my God, why hast thou forsaken me”* consists of words revealed through David about a thousand years before Jesus said them. But Psalm 22 goes beyond this and also reveals to us the words and actions of those around Jesus at His crucifixion. *“But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,”* (Psalm 22:6-7).

The fulfillment of this is clear: *“And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, ... Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,”* (Matthew 27:39, 41). We read again: *“He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him”* (Psalm 22:8). The fulfillment is seen clearly, *“He trusted in God; let him deliver him*

now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God” (Matthew 27:43). Here, we are talking about the wonder of God's Word!

The Bible says again, “*They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture*” (Psalm 22:18). We clearly see the fulfillment of this in our text today: “*Now the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts of them, one part for each soldier, and the tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven of one piece from top to bottom. They said therefore among themselves, ‘Let us not rend it, but cast lots to decide whose it shall be’; and this so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which says, ‘They divided my garments among them, and cast lots for my tunic.’ The soldiers therefore did these things*” (John 19:23-24). The Word of God is truly amazing! This fifth cry from the cross shows us more of the wonder and perfection of the man Christ Jesus.

We read again, “*After this, knowing Jesus that all things were now fulfilled, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said, ‘I thirst’*” (John 19:28). We need not ask whether this was the fulfillment of something that had been prophesied about the Lord's crucifixion, because the verse tells us so. Interestingly, this also refers to a prophecy originally given through David: “*They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*” (Psalm 69:21). After Jesus had said, “I thirst,” we read, “*Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with*

vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth” (John 19:29).

I think it is very significant that these words of Jesus from the cross were spoken previously in the most human way possible, that is, through David at a time of his own intense human suffering. When Jesus cried out, “I thirst,” He was speaking humanly in the same way as David.

We must remember the circumstances under which the Lord said this: Jesus was placed on the cross at the third hour: “*It was the third hour when they were crucified*” (Mark 15:25). The third hour was nine o'clock. Darkness fell at the sixth hour. “*From the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land*” (Matthew 27:45). The sixth hour was noon. Jesus uttered his fourth cry at the ninth hour. “*About the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a great voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lammà sabactani?’ That is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’*” (Matthew 27:46). The ninth hour was three o'clock. From nine to three o'clock is a six-hour period. It means that at this point, Jesus had suffered on the cross for six hours. This was after He had been struck down and forced to carry His own cross through the city and up to Golgotha. “*After this, knowing Jesus that all things were now fulfilled, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He said, ‘I thirst.’*”

Jesus was thirsty just as you and I would be thirsty. He was hungry. Jesus was forsaken. Jesus was tired. He experienced pain.

We said that Jesus suffered not only for us, but also with us. This is true because of His divinity and His humanity.

In His divinity, Jesus could live a perfect life and give the perfect sacrifice. In His humanity, Jesus could suffer for us and with us.

The cross shows us God's identification with man through Jesus Christ. *“They also crucified with Him two thieves, one on His right and the other on His left. Thus was fulfilled the Scripture that says, ‘He was numbered among the transgressors’” (Mark 15:27-28).* Jesus is truly identified with us in His incarnation and death.

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst” (John 19:28).

Chapter 6: John 19:30
**“When Jesus therefore had received the
vinegar, he said, It is finished:”**

We have now come to Jesus' sixth cry from the cross and like the last chapter, it will overlap and build upon the previous one.

These three words are the culmination of what we have studied up to this point. These three words are the foundation on which our forgiveness, hope, and comfort rest. These three words give us the assurance of an ineffable future.

In contemplating this sixth cry, we must remember that His fifth cry, "*I thirst*," speaks deeply of His humanity.

We said that the atoning work of Jesus Christ is possible because He took upon Himself the same flesh and blood that belongs to all men, and therefore, He can be the true representative of all humanity.

The one who is our representative by birth is Adam. Because of his sin as the representative of our whole race (the human race), we are all under and subject to the consequences of his disobedience. "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*" (Romans 5:12). "*For the judgment was by one (Adam's transgression) to condemnation,*" (Romans 5:16). "*For if by one man's offence (Adam) death reigned by one;*" (Romans 5:17).

“Therefore as by the offence of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation;” (Romans 5:18). The main consequences of Adam's transgression are death and condemnation.

The Bible sums this up in calling it “the curse.” *“And there (the new earth) shall be no more curse;” (Revelation 22:3).*

God made clear to the first Adam the reality of this curse and its effects, *“Then he said to Adam, ‘Because you heeded the voice of your wife and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘Do not eat of it,’ the ground shall be cursed because of you; you shall eat its fruit with toil all the days of your life. It shall bring forth thorns and tribulation unto thee, and thou shalt eat the grass of the field; thou shalt eat bread by the sweat of thy face, until thou return unto the ground, because from it thou wast taken; for thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return.’” (Genesis 2:17-19).*

Everything God created—the earth, the trees, the animals and the whole human race—are under this curse and its effects. *“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, ‘Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field;” (Genesis 3:14).* *“And unto Adam he said, ‘Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, ‘Thou shalt not eat of it:’” cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;” (Genesis 3:17).* *“And he called his name Noah, saying, ‘This same shall comfort us concerning our work and*

toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed” (Genesis 5:29). “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:21-22). This curse is the reason why all things in this world decay and eventually die.

Glory to God that He also promised that there would be One, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would come and end the curse and defeat the enemies of mankind. *“Now the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen” (Romans 16:20). And again, “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:26).*

We talked a little bit about the fact that Jesus was called “the last Adam” and the effects of His life are clearly contrasted with those of the first Adam. What came from the first Adam is condemnation and death, whereas what came from Jesus, “the last Adam,” is grace, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life.

Listen to what the Bible says, *“And the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many” (Romans 5:15). “But the free gift is of many offences unto justification” (Romans 5:16). “Much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17). “Even so by the righteousness of one (Jesus) the free gift*

came upon all men unto justification of life”
 (Romans 5:18). “*So again by the obedience of one*
(Jesus) the many will be made righteous” (Romans
 5:19). “*So also let grace reign for righteousness to*
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”
 (Romans 5:21).

This gift of God’s righteousness, or “the gift of eternal life”—“*The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23)—is possible because of these three words spoken from the cross, “*It is finished”* (John 19:30).

This phrase “*it is finished”* is a single word in the Greek language (*Tetelestai*) which means, “a thing fully paid, a debt paid, a work completed to the end.”

“In ancient times, when a promissory note was paid, the one who held it wrote ‘TETELESTAI’ on it. A deed was not in effect until it was dated and signed, and when that was obtained, the clerk wrote ‘TETELESTAI’ on the deed. When someone had a debt and it was discharged, the creditor wrote ‘TETELESTAI’ on the debt certificate to signify that it was ‘PAID IN FULL.’”

This word would have been well understood by ancient readers. This word meant that the debt had been paid in full. It meant that there was no longer any concern about whether or not that person could pay the debt. It meant that the person was freed from all consequences related to that debt. This word *Tetelestai* is found only 2 times in the New Testament—John 19:28, 30—and both instances it is in the perfect tense which “describes an action

that is considered done in the past, once for all, and does not need to be repeated.”

When we owe someone, or an institution, we live with the knowledge that that person, or that institution, has some power and authority over us. We recognize that there will be consequences if we fail to pay that debt. We have to live with that burden on us until we repay it. However, when the debt is paid, then there is a sense of relief and freedom.

Here is the Biblical reality: Every person on the face of the earth has a debt of sin that they can never erase or repay. In fact, the longer we live, the greater that debt becomes and thus the burden of its consequences becomes greater. We know that we cannot meet the needs of the One to whom we are indebted and to whom we are accountable. That is why we are all afraid of death because we know that it is the consequence of something we are unable to make right. Now listen to the word spoken from the lips of Jesus Christ from the cross, “*It is finished:*” (John 19:30).

This sixth cry from the cross was Jesus’ declaration that He had fulfilled all the necessary requirements to cancel the curse, pay the debt, and bring us back to God.

What was required so that the man Jesus Christ could cancel the curse, pay the debt of sin, and lead us back to God? He had to live a perfectly righteous life; that is, it required His perfect obedience to God’s Law at all times, in every way, for His entire life.

Think of this: Even though He suffered under the curse of sin on the cross, Jesus still persisted in righteousness and responded in perfect obedience. *“For to this you have been called, for Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you may follow in His footsteps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. Outraged, he did not respond with outrages; suffering, he did not threaten, but remitted himself into the hands of him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the wood of the cross, that we, dead to sin, might live for righteousness; and by his bruises you were healed. For you were like wandering sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and keeper of your souls”* (1 Peter 2:21-25). We have already read in Romans chapter 5 that it was through the obedience of this one man that the gift of justification and eternal life was extended to all mankind.

Jesus Christ did what we can never do; that is, He fulfilled God's Law. There is a wonderful prophecy in the Old Testament about the fact that the perfect life of Jesus Christ would be pleasing to God and fulfill the demands of His law: *“The LORD is pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify His law and make it glorious”* (Isaiah 42:21).

That is exactly what Jesus said He came to do: *“Think not that I came to abolish the law or the prophets; I came not to abolish, but to bring to fulfillment”* (Matthew 5:17).

That is exactly what Jesus did: *“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”* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This is what Peter wrote in summary of His life: *“Who did no sin,”* (1 Peter 2:22).

This is what John wrote concerning His life: *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin”* (1 John 3:4-5).

Due to the fact that Jesus fulfilled the law by His perfect obedience and so pleased the Father, and since I am now in Him and He is in me, the Father has declared that my debt has been paid and that I have been accepted by Him. *“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,”* (Ephesians 1:5-7).

In Christ, the greatest consequences of my sin debt are gone: now I belong to God and death and the devil have been defeated. Glory to God! TETELESTAI! This is one of the greatest words ever spoken to men.

Jesus Christ is "the last Adam" who did what we can never do: *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a*

tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” (Galatians 3:13-14).

Friend, do you feel under the weight of your sin debt? Come to Jesus in faith for forgiveness and justification.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we have been entrusted with the most beautiful and most important message in all the world — the message that can set captives free and change their lives! We must spread it.

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, said, It is finished:” (John 19:30).

Chapter 7: Luke 23:46

“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:”

With this chapter, we bring our study of Jesus’ seven sayings from the cross to a close. We have heard words of forgiveness, hope, comfort, abandonment, pain, and victory. In the last chapter, we contemplated the sixth cry from the cross: *“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:30).*

When Jesus spoke these words, He was referring to the fact that everything that was required to make that forgiveness, hope, comfort, and victory possible for all men was completed. The price that was necessary to pay the sin debt of every man was paid in full. Jesus’ life of perfect obedience and consequential fulfillment of the Law of God as our representative was complete.

The spiritual sacrifices made by Jesus Christ were over, but there was one last sacrifice to make; it was the giving of His life. Jesus had already given His blood, body, and His soul as an offering for sin, and now He was going to give his life.

The salvation that Jesus Christ brings required the giving of His entire being: body, soul, and Spirit; and therefore, it changes our entire being. It gives a new heart, a new mind, and a new Spirit. Paul summed it up like this: *“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have*

entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Corinthians 2:9-12).

When we come in total dependence (faith) in Christ for salvation, He sends His own Spirit to dwell in us which gives us that new heart, mind, and nature. This is the saving and transforming work of Jesus Christ. After His saving work was finished, after all that was necessary to provide for our salvation was paid for, Jesus uttered His last words from the cross: *“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” (Luke 23:46).*

I would like to consider 3 important points from this last cry from the cross.

First of all, we must consider: **The Reality of Jesus’ Death.**

I am sure that we all know this, but it’s worth highlighting that the emphasis in this verse is concerning the fact that the moment that the Lord Jesus died was under His own power and control.

I would like to read this again with an added emphasis: *“Into thy hands I commend my Spirit”... “he gave up the ghost” (emphasis mine).*

With these words underlined and emphasized, we see that the soldiers did not kill Jesus Christ. It was He Himself that gave up His life. No one took it from Him, He offered it up under His own power and on His own terms.

Jesus had already spoken about this reality earlier in the Gospel of John: *“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:17-18).*

Remember, we need to look at all four Gospels in order to get the complete picture of the Lord’s life and death because each one contains certain details that the others do not. In this case, the Gospel of John records several important details that Luke does not concerning the death of Jesus and the events immediately following it. We read, *“Then came the soldiers, (after He let out this last cry) and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already,” (John 19:32-33).* Therefore, John leaves us with no doubt that Jesus was already dead.

I think it is important to understand that the biblical definition of death is the moment when the

spirit leaves the body: *“For as the body without the spirit is dead,” (James 2:26).*

I want to say emphatically that it was not the soldiers, or the religious leaders who took Jesus’ life. He was the One that decided the moment in which His Spirit would leave His body.

*“Jesus..... yielded up the ghost”
(Matthew 27:50).*

*“And Jesus..... gave up the ghost
(Mark 15:37).*

*“and having said thus, he gave up the ghost”
(Luke 23:46).*

*“and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost”
(John 19:30).*

Now, I would like to consider a few verses:

*“The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up”
(1 Samuel 2:6).*

“There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death:” (Ecclesiastes 8:8).

“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption” (Psalm 49:6-9).

The Bible tells us that none of us have the power to decide when we die. If we did, surely none of us

would ever die. The Bible tells us that none of us can redeem the soul of another. If we could, surely we would save our loved ones from whatever eternal consequences we feared for them.

How is it possible then, that Jesus had the power over the moment of His own death and could redeem our souls? The reality of Jesus' sacrificial death is an amazing display of the power and dominion of our God and Savior. He truly has all authority, even over death.

Secondly, I would like to consider : **The Record of His Death.**

We have already seen the need to look at all four Gospels in order to get the complete picture of the Lord's life and death, and in this case, the Gospel of Luke is the only one to record this cry of Jesus from the cross, but it does not record two other extremely important details concerning the actual death of Jesus. For this, we need to look back at the Gospel of John, chapter nineteen.

We read: *“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare*

record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe” (John 19:31-34).

In this passage, we find two records regarding the death of Jesus. The first of these is **Personal Testimony**.

In the New Testament, the death of Jesus is testified to by John, the writer of this Gospel. “*And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true,*” (John 19:35). This refers to the Apostle John and his testimony concerning the death of Jesus: “*This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true*” (John 21:24). The question is: Do you believe John’s testimony?

If that's not enough, there is also the testimony of **The unbelievers of Jesus’ day**.

To see this, let’s read a very telling passage of Scripture from the Gospel of John. “*The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away*” (John 19:31). These particular Jews are clearly distinguished as unbelievers shortly after this: “*And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus*” (John 19:38). Because of

their hatred and rejection of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathaea was afraid of these people and came by night. So, these unbelieving Jews clearly testified to the fact of their belief that Jesus was dead.

Then, after Jesus was buried, there is clear testimony from His greatest enemies about His death: *“Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first”* (Matthew 27:62-64). These chief priests and Pharisees give clear testimony to us of their belief that Jesus was dead. The question is: Do you believe the testimony of Jesus’ greatest enemies concerning His death?

If these do not convince you, there is one last personal testimony to consider, that is: **The personal testimony of Jesus concerning His death.**

After His resurrection, we read: *“Then opened he (Jesus) their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said (Jesus) unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day”* (Luke 24:45-46). And, again we read: *“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore,”* (Revelation 1:18). The question is:

Do you believe the testimony of Jesus concerning His death?

There is not just personal testimony concerning Jesus' death, there is also **Prophetic testimony concerning His death.**

In our study, we have already seen many prophecies fulfilled concerning the crucifixion of Jesus, such as the very words He would say from the cross as well as the very words that His persecutors would say as they were crucifying Him. It is essential to understand that in this last cry from the cross, we also have a prophetic witness concerning the death of Jesus. *“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” (Luke 23:46).*

These words are found in *Psalm 31:5*: *“Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.”*

I want us to notice that Jesus does not quote all of this verse, and He also adds something to it.

First of all, we must notice that Jesus adds the word: *Father*. This would have been very significant for those who heard Him speak. It is extremely important to remember in regards to Jesus' adding the word *Father* to His quotation of Psalm 31 that the religious leaders, as well as a great number of Jewish people from the city of Jerusalem, were present when Jesus said this. *“Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said:” (Matthew 27:41).* *“And the people*

stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him,” (Luke 23:35).

Why is this important? *“Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18).*

These people would have understood perfectly well that when Jesus added the word *Father*, that it was a clear declaration of the fact that He was making Himself equal with God.

This explains to us why Jesus did not quote the second part of *Psalms 31:5*: *“...thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.”* Why did Jesus not say these words? He had no need to be redeemed, because He is God Who alone is the Redeemer.

In short, Jesus is ending His ministry and life in the same way that He began it; that is, by declaring that He is the Redeemer, the Messiah, the I AM, the Savior of the world that was prophesied and promised before the world was.

I would like to point out two more prophetic witnesses about His death just as a way to reinforce and deepen our understanding of these truths. *“Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:” (John 19:32-33).* *“For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken” (John 19:36).* This is the fulfillment of a prophecy given in *Psalms 34:20*.

I would like us to notice something else that is very important in John 19. *“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19:34). “And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.” (John 19:37).* John is clear to tell us that this was the fulfillment of a prophecy given in Zechariah 12:10 where we read: *“and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.”* What is incredible from this is verse is the fact that it is God Himself who is speaking. The word *“me whom they have pierced”* refers back to Zechariah 12:1, 2, 4, 9, 10 which makes it clear that it is God Himself who would be pierced. This means that Jesus’ fulfilling of this prophecy upon the cross refers to the fact that Jesus was God Himself Who was pierced.

We can say with all authority, that in every sense, the reality and record of the death of Jesus Christ as God the Savior in human flesh is undeniable and clear. How that can be disputed is something that I will never understand.

The Result of His death:

Why do we have such a clear reality and record of Jesus’ words and saving work on the cross? *“And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe” (John 19:35).* And, again: *“Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that*

were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54).

We have such a clear reality and record of Jesus’ saving words and work on the cross because God’s desire is that we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior. So, I must ask you: Have you seen with the eyes of faith the pierced hands of God Himself calling to you at this moment?

To the nation of Israel, He said: *“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me” (Isaiah 49:15-16).*

To Thomas in the New Testament, He said: *“But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast*

believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:24-29).

Friend, will you entrust your spirit, your eternal destiny, into His hands?

Dear brothers and sisters, listen to these words and rejoice in Jesus and His salvation.

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:31-39).

Conclusion:

How beautiful are these seven cries of Jesus from the cross that show us the heart of our God and Savior! How wonderful it is to understand that God loves us and wants us to be reconciled to Him and has done everything necessary to make that possible!

I hope this little book has brought you some spiritual blessings and helped you on your walk with Christ. It was truly a pleasure for me to study and present what the Holy Spirit taught me about our Lord and His saving work on the cross. But, I don't want to end this without telling the rest of the story.

Jesus' death on the cross was the payment for our sins, and the proof that the payment was sufficient to take them away completely was His resurrection from the dead three days later. He defeated sin, death, and hell; and in Him, we have that same victory! For this we can cry out: We serve a risen Savior! Because Jesus lives forever, we will live forever!

“But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification”

(Romans 4:24-25).

A Personal Appeal:

This study should cause you to consider your relationship and your attitude toward Jesus Christ. He is *“the propitiation for our sins”* (1 John 2:2, 4:10). Jesus is *“the author and finisher of our faith”* (Hebrews 12:2). He is *“the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Him”* (John 14:6). Therefore, rejecting Jesus Christ means rejecting God. Trying to please God through your own works, your own personal righteousness, or through religious rituals is to consider what He did on the cross as a profane thing, and in the end, will lead you to hell. *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (Hebrews 10:26-31).

So, I make this appeal to you. Now that you have received the knowledge of the truth regarding Jesus' saving work on the cross, what will you do? Will you repent and believe the Gospel or turn your back on His outstretched arms?

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”
(Romans 10:9-13).

