

Christ's Fourth Saying From The Cross

“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?” (Matt. 27:46)

Over 50 years ago, the tiny New Mexico community of Gobemador was forsaken by its inhabitants because of hard times. Although this community, located thirty six miles east of Aztec, is basically a dead community, an annual Santo Nino Reunion celebration is held there each year. A few years ago, recognizing Jose F. Valdez, a former citizen of Gobemador, for his selfless exploits during World War II, a glossy gray granite marker was placed in the old park.

Isaiah prophesied that Jehovah's Servant would be “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3). The Christ would be forsaken, not because of hard times and harsh conditions, but because “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). Thus, when Jesus came, we read that “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11).

The Savior was forsaken and accused by the religious leaders of His day (see Luke 23:10). After the leaders apprehended Him in the garden, His own disciples “forsook Him, and fled” (Matt. 26:56). While we learn several special lessons from the fourth saying of Jesus from the cross, it is certainly clear that no other experience of abandonment in His earthly sojourn came close to His being forsaken by His Father.

In this declaration, we hear a fulfilled prophecy! When Jesus cried, “My God, My God,” He was not disgusted with the divine arrangement of the cross. And when He added, “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” He was not questioning the divine plan. Rather, with total understanding of the prophetic and Messianic utterance of Psalm 22:1, He fulfilled the prophecy by quoting it in the hour of His crucifixion.

In this declaration, we hear a fervent prayer! While Jesus did not address His Father, He did call upon God. As man, Jesus cried out to God in obedience and love. The repetition of the phrase, “My God, My God,” like other double calls in the Bible [“Abraham, Abraham” (Gen. 22:11)] and [“Martha, Martha” (Luke 10:41)], reveals the importance and intensity of Christ's prayer. Like the Savior, may we make fervent petitions in our hours of great heaviness.

In this declaration, we hear a forsaken Person! The plea, “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” indicates that when Christ was made sin for us (see 2 Cor. 5:21), because of the terrible nature of sin, the Father turned His back on His Son. Jesus was forsaken by the Father that we may never be forsaken by Him. He cried out as an orphan that we may never feel like orphans. Christ was cut off that we might never be cut off from God and His grace.