

# EIGHT LAST STATEMENTS OF CHRIST

It's a common belief among Christians of all denominations that Jesus was crucified on a Friday, and that there are "seven last words" which He spoke while hanging on the Cross. Both of these concepts are erroneous. On Easter morning, we learned, by looking at the Resurrection from both Jewish time and Gentile time, that the Crucifixion took place, not on Friday, but on Wednesday. Hence three full days and nights in the grave. This morning we're going to see that in reality there are "eight last statements" of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## 1. The First Phrase-- **"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."**

It's found in Luke 23:34, **"But Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they [Roman soldiers] cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves."**

- A. It was of tremendous consequence that Jesus prayed for their forgiveness before He was judged for their sins. These people had slapped Him, beaten Him, spit on Him, lied about Him, ridiculed Him, and scourged Him. These were the ones who screamed, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" They pushed the Cross into an upright position, and then stood around to mock, and to laugh, and to ridicule. Yet the 1st word Jesus uttered on the Cross was a prayer for his enemies. He opened His public ministry with prayer, according to Luke 3:21, and now He closed His public ministry with prayer. After all, in Hebrews 5:10, He was **"...designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek."**
- B. When Jesus cried, **"Father, forgive them,"** He was praying for the lost souls of those bound for Hell and eventually the Lake of Fire. His prayer was soon to be answered. When we compare Acts 2:36-41 with Acts 3:17 -- 4:4, we realize something of the meaning and impact of His prayer. Through Peter's preaching at least eight thousand people were saved as an indirect result of Christ's prayer on the Cross.
- C. His prayer brings out another very important factor-- the blindness of the human heart. He said, **"for they do not know what they are doing."** Those who crucified Him were ignorant of His true identity as the Messiah of Israel and Savior of the world. They were blinded by the **"god of this world,"** Satan. They didn't realize that here was the One who was being judged for their sins, taking their place, and providing their salvation. Yet our Lord had made it clear on numerous occasions when He said:
 

**"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies,"** John 11:25. And, **"I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life,"** John 8:12.
- D. There was no excuse for their ignorance, **"the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God,"** had shone unto them. In His magnificent grace and undying mercy, the Lord of glory was **"not wishing for any to perish,"** and so He prayed for them. But the human heart is, as Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 17:9, **"...more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick."**

The one principle we learn here is that man's greatest need is the forgiveness and cleansing of sin. **"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,"** Romans 6:23. He took our *place*, was judged for *our* sins, and today His prayer on the Cross is still being answered, every time another person comes to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

2. The Second Phrase-- **"Today you shall be with Me in Paradise."**

Beginning in v. 39 of ch. 23 Luke records, how **"...one of the criminals who were hanged {there} was hurling abuse at Him, saying, 'Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us [look at the two key word here-- 'and us'-- he didn't want salvation, he was thinking in purely temporal terms; all he wanted was a free ride off the cross]!' But the other answered, and rebuking him said, 'Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed *justly*, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds [this is a remarkable bit of humility for a career criminal; he recognized his own volitional responsibility]; but [in contrast to you and I] this man has done nothing wrong [he recognized the impeccability of Jesus' humanity; in effect what he said was, 'this man is being put to death for nothing more than claiming to be the Messiah, and indeed He is!].'** And he was saying, **'Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom [this one simple statement is an expression of his faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel]!' And He [Lord Jesus Christ] said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise [is a Persian word meaning- *garden of the King*; it is the Gentile designation for Abraham's Bosom, the compartment of Hades where all OT saints went at physical death, prior to the ascension of Christ],'"** vv. 39-43.

- A. The second criminal recognized first of all that Jesus was a perfect man-- that He was sinless and had done absolutely nothing wrong.
- B. Now I want you to notice something. There was nothing in the world this man could *do* for his salvation. He was nailed to a cross! He couldn't join anyone's church, or come down from his death penalty long enough to be baptized-- keep in mind that if he'd been baptized, he would've had to be immersed, that's the only "true" baptism, right? He couldn't weep in front of an altar, or raise his hand, or walk an aisle. He was dying, he was helpless; but he turned to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith, and it turns out he went to *exactly* the right Person!

He also recognized that even though Jesus was hanging on a Cross, even though He too was suffering the death penalty under Roman law, He had a kingdom. Our Lord responded by promising him a place in Paradise, or Abraham's Bosom.

- C. These two criminals-- *kakourgos* is an adjective meaning lit.- *evil working*, hence as a noun we have- 'one who works evil'-- on their crosses picture the world today. One believed in Jesus Christ and was saved from an eternity in the Lake of Fire. The other rejected Him and will suffer the wrath of God forever.

**"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him,"** John 3:36-- corrected translation. What we see once again is that in the eyes of God the world is divided by one thing and one thing only-- its attitude toward Jesus Christ. It's not a matter of race, or nationality, or color, or creed, or rich or poor, or weak and strong, or any other arbitrary distinction we recognize in the temporal realm. The *only* division God sees is

believer and unbeliever-- whether a person has ever accepted Jesus Christ as his *own* personal Savior.

**Principle:** Your attitude toward the Son of God determines your eternal destiny.

3. The Third Phrase-- **“Woman, behold, your son!”**

We find it in John 19:25-26, which say’s, **“...But there were standing by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the {wife} of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby [this is John], He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’”**

- A. It’s interesting to note that through the centuries theologians of the Catholic persuasion have elevated Mary, the mother of Jesus’ humanity, to a position higher than the Lord Himself; and yet whenever Jesus addressed His mother, He never called her “mother,” or “mom,” but **“woman.”** He sought to emphasize that she was the mother of His humanity, *not* His Deity! Doubtless He was anticipating in His own mind some of the dangers and distortions that would eventually surface relative to her place in the plan of God.
- B. We can imagine the anguish in a mother’s heart, watching her Son die slowly and painfully. Every mother entertains the highest expectations for her children. Here she looks at her Son-- convicted and condemned after six bogus trials; unjustly nailed to a cruel Roman cross; naked, and skinned alive; His face beaten beyond recognition; a crown of thorns upon His head; Jews and Gentiles alike mocking Him, spitting on Him; Roman soldiers casting lots for the only piece of clothing He owned; a spear thrust through His side. She must have been torn with terrible grief and pain inside.

4. The Fourth Phrase-- **“Behold, your mother!”**

In the next v., v. 27, Jesus said to John, **“...‘Behold, your mother!’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own {household.}”**

Here are words of responsibility. Our Lord did a marvelous thing here, fulfilling the principle of the Law found in Exodus 20:12, which say’s, **“Honor your father and your mother...”** While He was on this earth Jesus was careful to obey every point of the Law. Even in His death, in the midst of horrible pain and agony, He took time to think of His mother, and to make provision for her.

We see here a beautiful picture, even in the end, of how Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law in every detail. Every negative as well as positive aspect of the Law was kept by the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. The Fifth Phrase-- **“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”**

Mark 15:34 say’s, **“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice [lit., kept on screaming, over and over], ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’”**

- A. Jesus Christ made it clear that the Father with whom He had eternal and unbroken fellowship had to break fellowship at that moment. We know immediately that this is the

time, when “**...He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross,**” 1 Peter 2:24. This was the unspeakable agony of the spiritual death prophesied in Psalm 22.

- B. This fifth phrase indicates that He was being judged *for* us. As a matter of divine integrity, the justice of God had to pour out the full measure of His wrath on the Son, while the humanity of Christ bore the sins of the world. Our sins separated Him from God the Father, who had to turn His back on His uniquely born Son for these three hours.
- C. It is impossible for Deity to die, or to suffer spiritual death. Hence the necessity of the virgin conception, which is the true miracle, for without it there is no virgin pregnancy and no virgin birth! God had to become man in order to pay the penalty of sin, which was spiritual death. He had to become a man in order to take *our* place on the Cross, in order to suffer execution in our stead.

#### 6. The Sixth Phrase-- “**I am thirsty.**”

We go back to the Gospel of John 19:28, which say’s, “**After this** [after leaving His mother in the care of John, the disciple whom He loved], **Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished** [i.e., His payment for the sins of the world had been rendered in full, as we’ll see from the 7th statement], **in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I am thirsty.’**”

- A. It is a phenomenal thing to realize how the Lord Jesus Christ loved the Scriptures, and how His life centered in and around them. Just think if we had that same attitude toward the Word of God. Consider if we had the joy and the reverence, the absorption and desire that He had for the written Word. The first great lesson we learn from the sixth phrase is the absolute *necessity* of the Word of God. *Everything* we know about the Son of God we find in the Word of God.
- B. The thirst of Jesus focuses our attention, once again, on the significance of the humanity of Christ, for Deity could never suffer the penalty of sin. It reminds us not only of His tremendous physical suffering, but of the fact that He is the God-man. And as the God man He is--
  - 1) Our High priest, and because He is our High Priest and we are *His* Royal Family, we have the right and the privilege to come before the Throne of Grace, anytime, anywhere.
  - 2) Our Mediator. As Mediator He must be equal both to God and to man. In hypostatic union, He *is* equal, and therefore He draws both righteous God the Father, and spiritually dead mankind together.
  - 3) Our Savior. Through His spiritual death He accomplished our redemption from the slave market of sin; our reconciliation to a just and righteous God; and “**...He Himself is the propitiation for our sins** [i.e., the perfect sacrifice to satisfy the righteous demand of the Father]; **and not for ours only, but also for {those of} the entire world,**” 1 John 2:2.
  - 4) Our King. His life is an eternal testimony to the fact that God keeps His Word. God promised David unconditionally that he would have a Son who would reign on his throne forever! This promise demanded that the 2nd Person of the Godhead, the

Executor of the Plan, take upon Himself true humanity, and that true humanity *be* from the royal line of David. He was the Son of David, the fulfillment of that promise, and He will return to keep that promise at the 2nd Advent. His humanity guarantees that we have a Savior, a High Priest, a Mediator, and a King-- the King of Kings and Lord of Lords-- who will return to this earth to reign forever and ever!

7. The Seventh Phrase-- **“It is finished!”**

A. John goes on to say in v. 30 of ch. 19, that **“When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It [His substitutionary work of *salvation*] is finished [perfect passive indicative of tele/w (teleo)- *finish, complete, conclude*]!’ And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.”**

- 1) The perfect indicative signifies action as complete from the present point of view. I.e., it views action as a *finished* product.
- 2) The perfect tense is intensive, and is used to draw attention to the existing results: Christ’s completed work of salvation-- redemption, reconciliation and propitiation. “When special attention is directed to the results..., stress upon the existing fact (of completion) is intensified. This is the emphatic method in Greek of presenting a fact or condition; ...of saying that a thing *is*.” Dana & Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek NT, pp. 200, 202. \* Parentheses mine.
- 3) An expanded translation would sound something like this-- **“It is finished *now* with the result that it stands finished forever!”** *Nothing* can be added to it, and *nothing* can be taken from it; it is a finished work of grace! Jesus made it very clear that to add anything, and I mean *anything*, to the finished work of salvation is sheer blasphemy!

B. There something else here that’s equally as important. The sin problem is *solved*. Sin is no longer the issue for the human race. The only issue is-- What do you think of Jesus Christ? Will you receive Him as your Lord and Savior by a simple act of faith? In childlike humility will you simply reach out and trust Him?

- 1) At the Great White Throne Judgment no one will be judged for His sins. The Word of God is abundantly clear that all who stand there do so because they have rejected Jesus Christ. The sin problem has been solved *once and for all!*
- 2) The issue at the Last Judgment is *all* your good works vs. the one truly good work of Christ on Calvary. If you reject Him and the righteousness found in Him you must stand on your own merit, our own good works. God is going to demonstrate, for all the universe to see, that no amount of asceticism, no amount of arrogant self-righteousness, no amount of human works, or human good, can ever measure up to the righteousness of Christ. And if you don’t have that absolute righteousness, then you don’t have eternal life. Cf. Revelation 20:11-15.

8. The Eighth Phrase-- **“Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.”**

For His last and final statement we go back to where we started, back to the Gospel of Luke, 23:46-- **“And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.’ And having said this, He breathed His last.”**

- A. When our Lord died on the Cross, it was voluntary. In John 10:17-18 He said, **“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again...”** He gave Himself, as **“...the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** Upon His physical death, His spirit went into the presence of the Father, His soul went into that compartment of Hades known as Paradise, and His body went into the grave to await that glorious moment when soul and spirit would reunite with body and Jesus Christ would rise from the grave.
- B. Notice the change in His last statement. It is no longer **“My God, My God”** as in the fifth phrase, now it is **“Father”** once again. That intimate, personal relationship has been *restored*. It is obvious that He is no longer paying the price for the sins of the world. The righteous demand of the Father has been satisfied, propitiated by the spiritual death of His Son.
- C. Through His spiritual death, Jesus fulfilled the analogy to the blood sacrifice of the OT. Only then was He ready to dismiss His spirit. Jesus Christ provided completely for our eternal salvation. You can rest assured that every sin ever committed-- past, present, and future-- was borne in that three hour period of time. Therefore when He bore our sins, He settled the issue of sin, once and for all!

For a pastor or evangelist to say that you must *do* something about your sins-- renounce them, feel sorry for them, confess them, forsake them-- is to detract from the eternal effectiveness of the Cross. It is not a person's attitude toward *sin* that saves; it is their attitude toward Christ and His work on the Cross. God was propitiated, satisfied, with the work of Christ; therefore, the emphasis must now be on the principle of Romans 5:8, that **“...God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were y**