

Psalm 22: 1-18

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

For years I have read this scripture and was quite perplexed by the shamelessness and urgency of this heartfelt inquiry. At first glance it would appear as though our Lord Jesus is at a loss for an explanation and totally confounded by God's apparent approval of this murderous act. One immediately thinks that somehow, somewhere there has been a breach of a contract, a betrayal, a broken covenant, an unaddressed expectation by the son to a wayfaring and irresponsible father. Was the Father absent because of the presence of the world's present and future sins being so heavily placed upon the son? Was this the one singular event that even an omnipresent God was compelled to distance Himself from? Being a holy God, did this event cause God caution as far as His holiness was concerned? Was this God's way of letting His son know that he was on his own? All of the sermons I have ever heard pertaining to this bewildered utterance of Christ have always offered the argument that because of the un-holiness of sin, God had to literally turn His back on His son who was being crucified and taking on the sins of the world.

This prospect adds weight to the Father's apparent about-face which is symbolized by the looming darkness that descends on this seemingly hopeless situation. It always amazed me that Jesus would be so concerned about God's presence, or lack thereof, while hanging on the cross as though something had gone terribly wrong and God was missing in action. I have struggled with trying to give legitimacy to such sermons but I simply could not resolve these concerns. Then one day God gave me revelation regarding why Jesus would say such a thing in the hearing of the very ones that He was actually trying to convince that He and the Father were one. That He was actually the son of God, and was in communication with His father at all times. I began to reflect upon Jesus' constant referrals to prophecy in an attempt to legitimize His declaration as the Messiah and how He would use His command of the scriptures to always make a point. Since scripture had no chapter and verse associated with it then, Jesus simply referenced the chapter and verse. Jesus recited Psalm 22: 1-18 beginning with the first sentence.

Those in attendance "who had ears to hear" would certainly recognize the statement and would presumably associate it with the remaining text of that portion of scripture. An examination of the scripture reveals God's ability and desire to deliver those who put their trust in Him, regardless of the circumstances. The scripture then goes on to point an eerily similar set of parallels that bring to prophecy an almost exact depiction of the events stated in the scripture. This is His crowning moment. Who knowing the contents of the area of scripture Jesus quoted could argue with the unrehearsed and unreferenced manifestation of this climax. In His dying breath lay His final appeal, His final declaration that the very scripture that they held in such esteem foretold of His coming, and His crucifixion, and that the scripture had now finally, and fully been fulfilled. To the very end, Jesus left them with indisputable and inescapable scripture to back up His claim, whether literally or symbolically. With His last dying breath, He was prompting them to open their eyes and look around them.

Didn't they notice the striking similarities between that scripture and the events taking place, or had someone orchestrated this murderous act based on that area of scripture hoping to use it to disqualify such a prophetic supposition. I don't think so! Interestingly enough, the scriptures in Mathew 27: 46 states that Jesus did not cry out this inspirational and prophetic prelude until it had been fulfilled down to the sentence where they divided His garments and cast lots for His clothing before He took His last breath. It would appear that Jesus only partially fulfilled this scripture during His crucifixion and that the rest of it is simply inspirational and designed to give us hope when our backs are against the wall in this life. But, remember that those of us who belong to Him, and have eternal life, will never die so our time-line is effectively continuous and it is through this continuity that scripture was fulfilled when Christ rose from the dead and epitomized the Father's ability to deliver to the utmost - for He had done it!