

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY?

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46)

“Why?” is the question of children and scientists. It is not a question we expect from Christ. He was God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). Why did He ever have to ask “why” about anything? The answer to this profound question has challenged theologians for two thousand years.

The question of Christ assumes even more significance when you realize that it is a direct quote from Ps. 22:1. This psalm gives details about the crucifixion centuries before it came to pass. By quoting these words Christ would focus the attention on this Messianic Psalm and the prophetic aspects of his death. Whether the question was asked by David, or Jesus, the answer to this question is still not easy. If you think the answer is easy, then why didn't Christ understand it?

The question “why?” often rises to the surface in the crucible of adversity. In one vision, for example, John saw the souls of them that had been slain because of the word of God. These faithful martyrs cried out with a loud voice asking: **“How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” (Rev 6:10)** They were told to wait a little longer until the total number of faithful martyrs was complete. Dare we ask “why?”

To this question we could also ask why God allowed Stephen to be stoned and the Jerusalem church to be persecuted? Why did God deliver Peter from prison but allow James to be beheaded? (Acts 12: 1 - 19) Why did God permit Nero to kill thousands of innocent believers? Why does God allow thousands of faithful believers to be martyred today? But all of these relevant questions pale into insignificance by comparison to the question of Christ. Why did God forsake Him?

The all knowing Christ frequently asked questions when He already knew the answer. **“Why do you worry?” (Matt. 6:28). “Why did you doubt?” (Matt. 14:21). “Why are you trying to trap me?” (Matt. 22:14). “Why are you so afraid?” (Mk. 4:40). “Why do you call me good?” (Mk. 10:18).** At Calvary, by contrast, He apparently didn't know the answer. Why?

When Peter drew his sword Jesus rebuked him saying: **“Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” (Matt 26:53-54)** Even without all the answers Jesus still knew what He was going through was something that “must happen”. Thankfully, He was acted on what He knew, and not on what He didn't know!

In one of His most vulnerable moments the chief Jewish leaders cried out: **“Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him” (Matt 27:42)** Jesus didn't do it! He could have done it, but He didn't! His life was draining away and He didn't understand why. At the same time, however, He was still faithful until death. At the same time He wisely committed His Spirit unto the Father. “It was finished”! Jesus came to earth to do the will of God and He did it!

The disciples of Jesus once stood at a crossroad when many turned back and no longer followed Him. Jesus asked the Twelve: **“You do not want to leave too, do you?”** That's when Peter answered: **“Lord, to whom shall we go?” (Jn. 6:68)** So also with Christ on the cross. Where could He go? There is only One God and Jesus knew it! Crying out to His Heavenly Father was the only rational option He had. The answer to His question “why?” would have to wait.

In retrospect, this story has a happy ending. That's why we are to: **“. . . fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Heb 12:2-3).** No! It won't be easy, but let's give it a try. Please “Fix your eyes on Jesus”, for by doing so we will not grow weary or lose heart.