

Seven Words from the Cross

Explanation

As Jesus hung on the cross, he spoke seven times. Interestingly, six of these seven sayings are reported by only one of the four Gospel writers, and the one saying reported by Matthew and Mark does not appear in either Luke or John. John, who was present at the cross, records three of the statements; Luke gives three others, including the famous words of forgiveness to his crucifiers and of assurance to the repentant robber next to him. Moreover, each of the Gospels uses different words to describe the death of Jesus, from simply breathing his last, to giving up his spirit, to placing his spirit into God's hands, to giving over or surrendering his spirit. One wonders if these differences are intentional and significant. They seem to be consistent with the overall messages of the individual Gospel writers.

Reference

James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (1915; reprint, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 607–14.

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1. 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?" (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34).

2. Then said Jesus, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk 23:34).

3. And Jesus said unto [the robber], "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:43).

4. 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!" (Jn 19:26–27).

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

6. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished" (Jn 19:29–30).

7. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46).

In **Matthew and Mark**, Jesus expresses abandonment, quoting Hebrew scripture in which King David recognized the abandonment of Israel (Ps 22:1). He gives up his spirit.

In **Mark**, Jesus simply breathes his last and expires.

In **Luke**, even on the cross Jesus continues teaching salvation, offering forgiveness and placing his spirit into the hands of the Father.

In **John**, Jesus shows eternal love toward his mother and disciple. He thirsts, completes his work, and surrenders his spirit.