

## 6. Psalm 22

October 4, 2007

Many of us watched the controversial movie "The Passion of the Christ" in 2004. In my opinion, even though there were many scenes that were extra biblical, it was the most realistic portrayal of crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

In your minds' eyes, I am going to ask to transfer yourselves to the foot of the three crosses where Jesus was hung almost two thousand years ago.

The air was thick even though it was only 9 o'clock in the morning. The people of Jerusalem smelled the blood of the man whom they once chanted as their Messiah and Savior and cried out, "Hosanna!" while He was entering into the city. They spreaded palm branches and their outer garments for the young colt to step on. It was a treatment for a victorious king. That was not thirty years ago, not even three months ago, it was even less than three days ago. Now they wanted His blood. They snarled at Him; they jeered at Him; they mocked at Him as if He did the most horrible thing in their lives personally.

The majority of records concerning the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in the Bible show us the scene of the crucifixion of Him at the foot of the cross. But this Psalm 22 is different. Instead of standing beneath the cross and listening to Jesus, we are going to hang on the cross with Him. We will view the crucifixion of Christ from a new position – from the cross itself.

Psalm 22 is called the Psalm of the Cross. It is so named because it describes more accurately and minutely the crucifixion of Christ than does any other portion of the Word of God. It corresponds, of course, to Genesis 22 and Isaiah 53.

There were seven phrases mentioned by Jesus while He was on the cross. In my opinion, these phrases by Him have direct connections with Psalm 22. Some commentators believe that He was quoting the entire Psalm 22 while He was on the cross. I don't see anywhere in the Bible that He did, though He quoted several verses out of Psalm 22.

### A. MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

*Psalm 22:1-6 To the Chief Musician. Set to 'The Deer of the Dawn.' A Psalm of David. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning? 2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; And in the night season, and am not silent. 3 But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel. 4 Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. 5 They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed. 6 But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people.*

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David was writing down this psalm which is a pure messianic one. It opens with the desperate cry of this poor, lone Man, forsaken by God the Father.

Some liberal Bible scholars tried to down play the horrible reality of crucifixion and transferring of our sins to Him that cause to be forsaken by the Father.

Why did God the Father forsake His only begotten Son Jesus when He needed Him most? Because on the cross in those last three hours, from noon till three in the afternoon, in the impenetrable darkness, He was made sin. Jesus became a sinner for us by reconciling all of our sins unto Himself.

The Father God was with Him when He was in prison, the Father was with Him when He was being beaten, the Father was with Him when they nailed Him to the cross. But in those last three hours He made His soul an offering for sin, and it pleased the Father to bruise Him.

We have no idea what it is like to be forsaken by God while we are on this earth. The vilest man and the loneliest man on this earth today are not forsaken of God. Anyone can turn to Him. But when Christ took my sins and yours upon Himself, He was forsaken of God. It was the human cry of intense suffering, aggravated by the anguish of His innocent and holy life. The only people who were forsaken by God were the ones who rejected Jesus to their last breath by their own choices and now dead.

I asked you underlined 'worm' in v6. What does He mean when He says, "I am a worm"? In other place in the Bible, He was portrayed as the Lion of Judah, but here He called Himself a worm. Why? It is because He has reached the very lowest place.

*Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

The interesting thing is that the word used here for worm means the worm, which was used by the Hebrews in dyeing all the curtains of the tabernacle scarlet red. When He said, "I am a worm," He meant more than that He had reached the lowest level. It was He who had said,

*Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool."*

By the way some heart-broken family members of 9/11 demanded answers from their pastors across America, "Where was God when these things happen?" after the four airliners slammed into the Twin Tower, the Pentagon and a field near the town of Shanksville in rural Somerset County, PA. Many of them didn't have an answer. One pastor replied, "The same place when the mankind crucified His Son on the cross."

## **B. FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY DO**

*Psalm 22:7-8 All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 "He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"*

Let's look through Jesus' eyes and see what He sees.

When we watched good old fashioned western movies, some criminals have been so detested that they have been taken from jail and lynched by an angry mob. But while the criminal was being hung, the mob would disperse. Tempers were cooled, and emotions were settled down. But not this crowd. They sat down and watched Him die. You have to be really low and cruel to do that. In fact, if you and I were

there, we might be the ones who sat down and watched Him die. The venom and wickedness of the human heart were being poured out like an open sewer as they remained there and ridiculed Him in His death.

But Jesus had compassion on them and asked the Father to forgive them. Doesn't that just blow our minds?

### **C. WOMAN, BEHOLD YOUR SON!**

*Psalm 22:9-10 But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. 10 I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God.*

Rather than looking at this blood thirsty mob with eyes of hate, He saw His mother with John down there.

*John 19:26-27 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.*

As He looked at her from the cross, wonder what went through His heart? For a brief moment, it might have taken Him back to Bethlehem, or while He was growing up Nazareth, even the time when she asked Him to do something about wine at the wedding in Canaan. Maybe, just maybe those memory took the horrible pain away from Him for a short moment.

At that wedding, He replied to her:

*John 2:4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."*

While He was hanging on the cross, His hour has come. The reason for His coming into the world is now being accomplished. This is the most important hour in the history of the world!

### **D. I THIRST**

Then His attention moves back to those who are doing the crucifying.

*Psalm 22:11-18 Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help. 12 Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. 13 They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; 17 I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. 18 They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.*

Describing these soldiers that were crucifying Him, He says they are like the bulls of Bashan. He is talking about the Rome soldiers. By the way, He also compares them to a roaring lion, because the lion was a symbol of Rome.

V14, 16 and 17 give accurate descriptions of the crucifixion. It is remarkable when you consider that crucifixion was unknown when this psalm was written. The Roman Empire was not even in existence, and it was Rome that perfected crucifixion that was started in the ancient Middle East. Yet here is a picture of a man dying by crucifixion. That is a prophecy.

David said on behalf of Jesus something that is indeed strange, "My heart is like wax." He died of a broken heart. Many doctors have said that a ruptured heart would have produced the blood and the water that John meticulously recorded in John 19.

As Jesus was hanging there ready to die, with excessive perspiration pouring from Him, He suffered the agony of thirst. That is why He said, "I thirst."

Addition to the bloody scene, there is one more thing many Christians try to ignore. Jesus was crucified naked. Rome wanted to bring all the humiliations as much as they could to the impending death-row prisoner.

Jesus went through it all, crucified naked, that we might be clothed with His righteousness, and so be able to stand before God throughout the endless ages of eternity.

### **E. FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT**

*Psalm 22:19-24 But You, O Lord, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! 20 Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. 21 Save Me from the lion's mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered Me. 22 I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You. 23 You who fear the Lord, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! 24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.*

If you have King Jimmy version, v21 says "unicorn". It is not a proper translation. It should be translated as 'wild bull'.

Jesus knew His assignment on this earth is about to be over.

### **F. TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE**

*Psalm 22:25-30 My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him. 26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; Those who seek Him will praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever! 27 All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the Lord, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You. 28 For the kingdom is the Lord's, And He rules over the nations. 29 All the prosperous of the earth Shall eat and worship; All those who go down to the dust Shall bow before Him, Even he who cannot keep himself alive. 30 A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation,*

The thief declared, in his own admission, that he was getting what he deserved. But he also knew that this man Jesus was innocent and realized that He was the King. So in his new-born faith he called out Jesus 'Lord'. Guess what happened to him when he was dead. He was ushered into paradise as Jesus promised, while the other thief who mocked Jesus until his last breath headed hell.

*Luke 23:42-43 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." 43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."*

We all make conscious decisions regarding eternal life. No one can be excused. We don't need to be concerned about other people's eternal destination before ours. We

need to take care of ours first, then the Holy Spirit will show us which one we should introduce Jesus to.

## **G. IT IS FINISHED**

*Psalm 22:31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, That He has done this.*

His redemption package for us is complete, nothing to add, nor subtract. We must come to Him in His way, no other way, because our righteousness is nothing more than a filthy rag. We cannot earn it; we cannot buy it; we must receive it as a gift.

Tetelestai. It is finished.