

Series: Christ in the OT

Text: Psalm 22

Message #3

SACRIFICIAL LAMB

Introduction

1. Psalms 22, 23 and 24 were each authored by David. They have been called the Shepherd Songs because they describe in a rich way the work of the true Shepherd for us. Jesus Christ is the Shepherd and we are the sheep!
2. Psalm 22 is a prophetic Psalm concerning the coming Messiah. As you read through it you will see numerous references to the death of Christ on the cross – too many to explain away. In John 10:11,14, Jesus speaks of Himself as the good Shepherd. **The good shepherd gives His life for His sheep.** That is a primary theme here in Psalm 22.
3. In a week or so we will consider Psalm 23. It is perhaps the most familiar passage in the Bible. It speaks of the Lord as the great Shepherd. In Hebrews 13, there is the familiar benediction. “May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep ...” Surely Psalm 23 speaks of this **great Shepherd who lives for His sheep.**
4. Psalm 24 is also a Messianic psalm that speaks of the coming of the Lord – His coming in power and glory. Peter, in his first letter (5:4), is talking to earthly shepherds who care for God's flock. As an encouragement to continue their faithful service, Peter writes, “And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.” Psalm 24 reminds us that **the chief Shepherd will one day come for His sheep.** In these three Psalms we have the death, resurrection, current ministry and return in glory of this wonderful Shepherd of the sheep. These prophetic, messianic messages were penned 1000 years before the incarnation of Christ!
5. Let's get started by exploring this incredible text of Psalm 22 together. We begin with the basic outline that is fairly obvious, and which should not surprise us because it is reflected in many other passages of Scripture – that of suffering with glory to follow. That was true for the Lord Jesus and in a lesser way, will also be true for us. That is why Paul could say to the Romans, **for I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.** We saw that is our study in Ephesians. We considered it when we studied Hebrews together. It is found in

Philippians and Colossians and in the Corinthian letters. Peter speaks often of suffering and then glory. In fact in speaking of the Lord Jesus, Peter wrote, **Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories**. This psalm begins with suffering and ends with glory – but this cannot be David's suffering and glory. No incident or series of incidents in David's life could account for the things mentioned in this Psalm. This must be speaking of the passion of the Savior, the Lord Jesus!

- I. SUFFERING – A REJECTED SAVIOR (1-21)** It is interesting to note the structure. In these first 21 verses, there seems to be the following groupings or stanzas: 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-11, 12-18, 19-21. The first, third and fifth sections or stanzas describe the sufferings of the subject of the psalm. The second, fourth and sixth sections are prayers to God in those sufferings. **As we move through the psalm, the intensity of anguish appears to diminish and confidence in God appears to intensify.** (Such was the experience of Jesus and such ought to be our experience as well. That was precisely Paul's point in 2 Corinthians 4 with the outer man wasting away but the inner man being renewed day by day. The suffering was never denied but in comparison with the glory to follow, it could hardly be compared). But the suffering was real and very intense!
- A. Forsaken by the Father (1-5) (It is important, before we go any further, to establish who is speaking in this psalm. True, the psalm was written by David, but who is speaking? Who is the subject? The author of Hebrews quotes verse 22 and tells us this is Jesus speaking. And I believe it is clear that He is the speaker throughout).
1. The record of the suffering (1-2) – Obviously this was quoted at the cross by Jesus – “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” (v. 1). Jesus seems to have been deliberately reviewing various passage of Scripture (OT) in His mind as certain things were done and said, “so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.” Psalm 22 appears to be the passage on which Jesus was meditating as He hung on the cross. Surely this describes the hours of darkness on the cross. These exact words were uttered by Jesus and recorded in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. The anguish of abandonment is clear but no answer is immediately given as to why this has occurred. In the midst of such abandonment and suffering there is...

2. Prayer to the Father (3-5) – This prayer affirms that the silence of God must not assume failure of the sovereignty of God or a breakdown in the faithfulness of God. God remains in complete control and He is faithful to His character and purpose. In fact, the address given (“Yet you are holy”) explains the silence as Jesus bore our sins. God hides His face from His own beloved Son because His Son has become sin for us; He has become our substitute. Jesus rehearses the faithfulness of God to His people throughout their history. That faithfulness and mercy were demonstrated in the rescue of His people. Surely that must have been a great comfort in the midst of such anguish! As God had again and again delivered His people, so He would now deliver His Son. (Forsaken, but not altogether forgotten!) (The record of suffering continues).

B. Despised by the people (6-11)

1. Record of suffering (6-8) Once again we will recognize the cruel words that were spoken at the cross by others – “He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him...” (Note verses 7-8). Compare with Matthew 27:39-43. This is one of the “I am” statements that we may have missed. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” He said, “I am the door.” He spoke of Himself as the bread of life and the spring of water welling up within to eternal life. Later we will see Him as, “I am the good shepherd.” But here He says, “I am a worm.” Jesus uses the term to show the utter rejection of the people toward Him, viewed like a maggot on garbage, He became despised and rejected that we might be loved and accepted by the Father! It was not enough to see that He was abandoned by God. Mockery, insults and various mocking gestures were added to express the people’s contempt adding to the utter despair! And yet there continue...

2. Prayers to the Father (9-11) Though rejected and mocked, the psalmist prophetically speaking for the Messiah, makes reference to the divine origin of Jesus’ birth. The prayer is that God would not be far off. Everyone else had deserted Him and the Father had turned away, but that rejection would not be permanent.

C. Crucified by His enemies (12-21)

1. Record of suffering (12-18) Jesus uses the metaphors of wild, ravenous beasts that had surrounded Him. (When people reject God, they act like animals). Obvious

references to physical pain/torture are included here – See verses 14-15, 17-18. This is particularly interesting because the Jews did not practice crucifixion, nor was it yet even “invented” as a method of execution until centuries later. (*Crucifixion arose as a means of torture somewhere in the East, perhaps with the Medes and Persians. Alexander the Great seems to have learned it from them and brought it West. The Romans learned it from the Phoenicians through Carthage and perfected it as a means of execution reserved for the worst criminals. It was a brutal, torturous, humiliating means of execution*). The psalmist refers to the waning strength and the excruciating thirst. The one described as living water is to be laid in the dust of death. In a few words, the psalmist has summarized the awful picture of the suffering of Christ crucified on a cross as recorded in the Gospels. Though there is some controversy in verse 16 in the Hebrew text, the Greek Translation of the OT, which was in existence in the first century and often quoted by Jesus, translates this “they have pierced my hands and feet.” That may not have made much sense to the ancient Hebrews at the time of David, but it made perfect sense to the first century Jews. This was a clear picture of crucifixion!

2. Prayers to the Father (19-21) Notice a turning point in the Psalm beginning at verses 19-21, and especially it is clear that the corner has been turned beginning in verse 22. The great victory of the cross is celebrated. As mentioned before, verse 22 is quoted in Hebrews as referring to Jesus (Hebrews 2:11-12). That text is the divine commentary on this Psalm and the divine authentication that this passage is messianic! “You have rescued me” in verse 21 can be translated “You have heard me” or “You have answered me.” (The NIV misses it here, translating this, “save me from the horns of the wild oxen.” More literally the text should read, “Rescue me from the mouth of the lions, from the horns of the wild oxen. You have heard me!”) This is a cry of triumph, not desperate call for help! The glorification of the Son had already begun before He was ever taken down off the cross! This turning point sets the stage for the second act of this messianic psalm as we move from suffering to glory.

II. GLORY – THE REIGNING KING

A. The reigning king is announced (22-26)

1. On that resurrection Sunday evening first century AD, Jesus made His appearance

to the faithful who had gathered in the Upper Room. Over the course of 40 days He would appear to individuals and small groups and to as many as 500 at one time and then later to all the redeemed in heaven and will remain with them throughout the ages of the ages!

2. Though the people had despised Him, He would not despise them. Though the face of God had been turned from Him, He would not turn from them when they cried out to Him! For now they had been redeemed by His sacrificial death, and the guarantee that the payment for sin had been received and accepted was validated by the resurrection of the Lord who is now the reigning King!
3. The afflicted shall be satisfied and those who seek the Lord shall find Him and praise Him. Those previously dead in their sins shall now live forever! This reigning King is not only announced, but...

B. The reigning king is worshipped (27-31)

1. He is exalted to the ends of the earth – “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.” The fulfillment of such a prophetic statement continues today!
2. He is exalted by all the nations – “All the families of the nations shall worship before you...He rules over the nations” The hope of the psalmist in Psalm 67 will be reality!
3. He is exalted by the living and the dead – “All the prosperous...even the one who could not keep himself alive” – these will eat and worship and bow before Him!
4. He is exalted by the yet unborn – This message shall be made known to the coming generations, to the peoples yet unborn – and that, my friends, includes we who now believe and to all those who will believe in Him! This is both cause for great rejoicing in the blessing of our salvation, and also a mandate to carry out our responsibility to make Him known! The message is, “He has done it!”

Conclusion

1. Before we conclude, let's consider those last words. These I think are the same words which Jesus spoke before He died (“For He has done it”, is written with God as the subject. Actually in Hebrew there is no object for this verb, so it could be equally translated, “It has been done” or, “It is finished.” (Compare with John 19:28-30).
2. Just as the story is told in the Gospels, so the story is proclaimed here 1000 years before the incarnation. The account begins in suffering and ends in glory. It begins with

despair and ends in worship. It begins with “My God, my God, why...” and it ends with “He has done it.”

3. For many of you, the path of life has been hard and filled with great suffering – but there is glory to follow for those who are in Christ Jesus. The reason there is glory in it is because the Lord has come and He has endured the awful pain for our sin and by His own declaration, “It is finished!” The payment for sin has been paid in full. Jesus truly paid it all. The work of redemption has been accomplished. That which remains is the acknowledgement, the appropriation and the proclamation of that message!
4. Because it is finished, because He has done it, I can say with Paul, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” And, “for this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”
5. Can you say that? Truthfully? You can if you caught the message of this psalm. Charles Wesley wrote a hymn called “And Can It Be.” We sing it sometimes. It goes like this: “And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior’s blood? Died he for me who caused his pain? For me, who him to death pursued?” Such wonder was so beyond imagination that Wesley based his whole hymn on “Amazing love, how can it be that thou my God shouldst die for me?” Wesley understood that indeed it was for him that Christ had died and that his only hope was found in Him. And so he continued to write, “Tis mercy all, immense and free; for O my God, it found out me!” The question remains has the mercy of God found you?
6. (Close with “Alas and Did My savior Bleed”)