

LISTENING AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS, 1000 B.C.

Psalm 22 — Portions will appear in the sermon.

22 My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?

² O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season I am not silent.

³ But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

⁴ Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them.

⁵ They cried unto Thee and were delivered; they trusted in Thee and were not confounded.

⁶ But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised by the people.

⁷ All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn; they shoot out their lip, they shake their head, saying,

⁸ "He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver him; let Him deliver him, seeing He delighted in him!"

⁹ But Thou art He that took Me out of the womb; Thou didst make Me hope when I was upon My mother's breasts.

¹⁰ I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou art My God from My mother's belly.

¹¹ Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

¹² Many bulls have compassed Me about; strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round.

¹³ They gaped at Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My body.

¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded Me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me; they pierced My hands and My feet.

¹⁷ I can count all My bones; they look and stare upon Me.

¹⁸ They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture.

¹⁹ But be Thou not far from Me, O Lord; O My Strength, hasten Thee to help Me!

²⁰ Deliver My soul from the sword, My only one from the power of the dog.

²¹ Save Me from the lion's mouth; for Thou hast heard Me from the horns of the unicorns.

²² I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.

²³ Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him! All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel.

²⁴ For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from Him, but when He cried unto Him, He heard.

²⁵ My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation; I will pay My vows before them that fear Him.

²⁶ The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek Him. Your heart shall live for ever.

²⁷ All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.

²⁸ For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the governor among the nations.

²⁹ All they that are fat upon the earth shall eat and worship; all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him, for none can keep alive his own soul.

³⁰ A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

³¹ They shall come and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this.

Our text is a Messianic Psalm which foretells of the Lord's sufferings and death. There are many such passages in the Old –Testament.



But this Psalm is remarkable in that the coming Messiah speaks directly to us through David. Jesus is talking of His sufferings and death about a thousand years before it happened. In this Lenten season we shall learn from Jesus' own lips how He felt on the cross. From this Psalm we have chosen seven of His utterances.

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1. "I am despised of the people." [Psalm 22:6](#).

Thus spake the Lord to Himself as He observed how they all "laughed him to scorn." They shot out their lips and said, "He trusted on the Lord that he

would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.” [Psalm 22:8](#) Yes, Jesus was so humiliated that He said v.6, “I am a worm and no man.”

It is hard to understand why the people should despise Jesus so much. He did only good things among them, healing their sick and speaking words of comfort. He came to seek and save that which was lost, and He paid for the sins of the world so that all can be saved by faith alone and by grace alone. Should such a man be so despised that He cried out, “I am a worm?” How can these things be? How perverse our human nature is we shall never fully understand. Even the murderer Barabas was held in higher regard among the people than the holy Son of God.

2. “They pierced my hands and my feet.” [Psalm 22:6](#).

It is evident from these words that this Psalm is truly Messianic, for David never had his hands and feet pierced, but that was done to Jesus when they drove the spikes into His hands and feet. What a cruel and inhuman way to kill a person.

Jesus chose this disgraceful way to save the world from all sins. Even the Apostle Paul was amazed when he thought of Jesus on the cross and how He died “even the death of the cross.” The cross, ordinarily a mark of disgrace, has become a sign of glory for us because Christ chose this way to redeem us. With the words of the hymn we say, “In the cross of Christ I glory, Towering o^ver the wrecks of time.”

3. “They part my garments among them.” [Psalm 22:18](#)

Jesus could see the Roman soldiers, like vultures, pounce upon His only earthly possessions. He could see and hear them haggle over His garments and finally decide to cast lots to determine who would get full possession of them. The soldiers regarded Jesus as already dead, He would have no further need of clothes. Perhaps it was at this point that the above words ran through the mind of Jesus on the cross. Humble, lowly Jesus, born in a manger, having no place to lay His head, having no earthly belongings except His clothes, and now these were considered a prize by the soldiers and they cast lots for them. Truly He became poor that we might be made rich.

4. “Why hast thou forsaken me?” [Psalm 22:1](#).

These are the words which Jesus spoke out loud when He was on the cross and many people heard him. From the lips of anyone else these words would be fairly simple and understandable, namely, that God was not with the speaker anymore and had turned from him, or was not favorably disposed toward him.



But think what these words mean coming from Jesus. He is “God of God, Lights of Light.” He is the second person in the holy Trinity and is born of the Father from eternity. Now Jesus meant what He said and was speaking the truth: the Father DID forsake Him on the cross. How could the Father forsake His Son? What happened in the Trinity? We are faced with one of the deepest mysteries of Holy Scripture. Since only the damned in hell know the real meaning of “forsaken of God”, then Jesus must have “been suffering the tortures and torments of the damned in our stead. It is just by this “forsaken” that we were redeemed from all sins.

5. “All my bones are out of joint,” [Psalm 22:14](#).

This is how a person must feel after hanging for a short while upon the cross. Practically the whole weight of the body would be pulling on the arms and shoulder joints. What awful torture! Such a crucified person would feel as though he were, as our Psalm says, “poured out like water.” Our Psalm mentions all these sufferings of the crucified One, not “because God takes special delight in these tortures, but because He wants to show us how much He loved us to give His Son into such a death.

6. 6. “My tongue cleaveth to my Jaws.” [Psalm 22:15](#).

Jesus refused to drink vinegar mingled with gall because He did not want to avoid pain, He came into this world to suffer and die for a purpose, to redeem the world. Without drink for many hours, and suffering a great loss of blood, Jesus felt exactly as these words say, “My strength is dried up like

a potsherd." He tried to swallow, but His tongue would not come off His jaws. It is remarkable that He was even able to cry out loud, "I thirst."

7. "O my God, I cry in the day time." [Psalm 22:2](#).

Jesus cried to God at night in the awful garden of blood, sweat, and tears. He cried to God all through His ordeal and crucifixion, in fact the whole life of our Lord was a life of prayer. He did not doubt that God would hear Him and He comforted Himself with the thought that the fathers trusted In God and He heard and helped them. Finally, when the Savior said, "It is finished," He received the answer to all His prayers. Then with childlike confidence He fell asleep with these words on His parched lips, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Seven words from the cross about 1000 B.C. Lent in the Old testament was no different than ours. They were saved by faith in the future sufferings of the Messiah, we are saved by faith in the finished sufferings of our Redeemer.

The Lenten season, above all, makes the love of Jesus to us stand out clearer and clearer. Surely He loves us poor sinners with a love beyond comparison. May we show our thanks to Him by leading a life that is pleasing in His sight. We thank Thee, Father, Son, and Spirit for Thy wonderful salvation. AMEN

PRAYER: Dearest Savior, as we again meditate upon Thy holy Passion in this sacred season, we are once more amazed at Thine infinite love for us worthless creatures. Thou didst become poor and lowly that we might all be rich forever. Accept our humble and heartfelt thanks for all that Thou hast done for us, dear Lord, for the sake of Thy bitter sufferings and death. AMEN