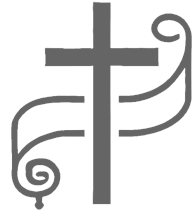


# Psalm of our Suffering Savior



A Devotional for Lent

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# Introduction

## ***What is Lent?***

Lent is a 40-day period of preparation leading up to Easter. Lent is a time of fasting, prayer, and daily devotion. It represents the 40 days Jesus spent fasting and being tempted by the devil in the desert.

## ***About the devotional***

I wrote *Psalms of our Suffering Savior* to help us “remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead” (2 Tim. 2:8). It is to be read and reflected on leading up to Easter (Resurrection Sunday!). We start with a reflection on Ash Wednesday and then follow Jesus from the Triumphant Entry until His Ascension, all the while looking through the lens of the Psalms.

We’ll be looking at Psalms that express Jesus’ experience. We will see that the Psalms express many patterns Jesus fulfilled. As Jesus said in Luke 24:44, “the Psalms must be fulfilled.” This devotional will reveal how Jesus fulfilled the Psalms.

The New Testament authors, over and over, argue that Jesus is the Promised One, the long-awaited Messiah, who fulfills the prophecies, patterns, pointers, and promises of the Old Testament (2 Cor. 1:20). Jesus will crush the serpent of old (Gen. 3:15) and lead the way back into Eden, He will bless all the nations of the earth, and He will set up His righteous and eternal Kingdom.

At first, the messianic expectations appeared to be nothing more than unrelated and random shards of glass. But the New Testament helps us see they all work together to form an astounding, almost unbelievable, stained-glass picture of Jesus, the long-awaited, promised Messiah. Without understanding the expectations for the Messiah, we’re left with broken glass, rather than a breathtaking mosaic.

Regarding prophecy, there are several Old Testament passages we could consider.

- His appearance will be disfigured (Is. 52:14; Matt. 26:67).
- He will be despised and rejected (Is. 53:3; Jn. 11:47-50).
- He will take sin upon Himself (Is. 53:4-6, 8; 1 Cor. 15:3).
- He will be silent before His oppressors (Is. 53:7; Matt. 14:60-61).
- He will be assigned a grave with the wicked and the rich in His death (Is. 53:9; Mk. 15:27-28, 43-46).
- He will be a descendant of king David (1 Chron. 17:11-14; Lk. 3:23, 31).
- He will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1).
- He will be preceded by a messenger (Is. 40:3-5; Matt. 3:1-2).
- He will have a ministry of miracles (Is. 35:5-6; Matt. 9:35; 11:4-5).
- He will enter Jerusalem on a Donkey (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:7-9).
- His hands and feet will be pierced (Ps. 22:16; Lk. 23:33).
- He will be hated without reason (Ps. 69:4; Jn. 15:25).
- His garments will be divided and lots will be cast for them (Ps. 22:18; Jn. 19:23-24).
- His bones will not be broken (Ps. 34:20; Jn. 19:33).
- His side will be pieced (Zech. 12:10; Jn. 19:34).
- He, the Mighty God, will be born (see Isaiah 9:2-7 and Matt. 1:23; Jn. 1:1-3, 14).

In *Psalms of our Suffering Savior* we will be focusing on the patterns and prophecies Jesus fulfilled from the Psalms. Remember “many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see” (Matt. 13:17)! So, let’s intentionally celebrate and “remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead”!

### ***Apoem***

Just a word and all wonders wrought,  
God announced, and behold, it was all good.

Creation had communion with the Creator,  
God walked in the Garden.

Yet with Adam the serpent did conspire,  
and brought the world into mire.

Beckoned to the grave,  
everything disarranged.

The curse burst upon the scene,

but in the midst a seed of hope was seen.

Yes, long of old,  
the Scriptures told,  
of a King who'd come.

In His wake,  
death shall quake,  
and the deserts they shall bloom.

Yet, many men came and went,  
was the hope of promise spent?

Many lambs, prophets, priests and kings,  
yet none with true salvation in their wings.

Darkness for a time,  
no prophet's voice was heard.

Yet in the darkness,  
I light it shone,  
and it would overcome the darkness.

Behold, O' world, your Prophet, Priest, and King,  
Jesus the Promised seed and Lamb.

The curse brought in shall be expunged;  
yes, plunged upon the Son.

Christ was crushed as promised,  
but in His crushing, crushed Satan, sin, and death.

Yes, He was cursed to reverse the curse.  
He felt our plight to set all things right.

He was born to die,  
that we might live.

The Deity  
incarnate brings  
salvation in His wings.

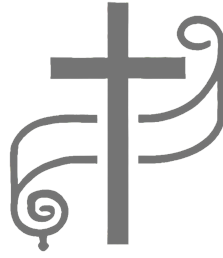
Man once again will be in the Garden  
because God's Son walked from Gethsemane to Golgotha.

No more brier prick or thorn to stick.  
All shall be made new.

May God richly bless you as you remember the good news of Messiah Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and reign.

*“He came to make His blessings flow. Far as the curse is found.”*

—Paul O'Brien



One

# Ash Wednesday & our utter need for a Savior

Ash Wednesday is a day that marks the beginning of Lent, 40 days of preparation for Easter. On Ash Wednesday, many Christians receive ashes in the shape of a cross on their foreheads. The ash serves as a reminder of human sin and frailty. Ash symbolizes the dust from which humans were created. The cross on people's foreheads represents the cross that Jesus died on to cleanse the world of sin. So, Ash Wednesday is a day set aside to think about our sin, weakness, and need for a Savior.

It is when we weep and howl in the agonies of distress that our rescue is all the more rejoiced in. When we see the contrast of our mourning turned into dancing and our ashes replaced with a crown, it gives us a picture of where we came from and what we deserve and what we get through the free salvation of Christ Jesus.

Ash Wednesday is a day of penitence, but it leads to a party—new life in Jesus! We see our dire state, and we see our sweet salvation! Ash Wednesday is a type of looking down—looking at ourselves and the state we're in. But we look down so we can have the right perspective as we look up and out to Jesus.

Ash Wednesday is a tangible and powerful symbol of our need. And when we know our need we rejoice in the One that comes for the poor and needy. Ash Wednesday reminds us that “we are dust and to dust, we shall return” but it also reminds us “that God is mindful of us.” He cares for us. He cares for us so much that Jesus took on flesh—the dust of the earth—to be a curse for us.

On Ash Wednesday we cry out: “Wretched person that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” But we don't stop there. We also say: “Thanks be to

God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 7:24-25)! Death and ashes are not the end! For all those who have trusted in Christ death will soon be swallowed up in glory (1 Cor. 15:54)!

Thankfully, as Psalm 103:8-17 says, the LORD is merciful! He doesn’t leave us in our dust and ashes but He is mindful of us and has compassion on us.

“The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
He will not always chide,  
nor will he keep his anger forever.  
He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.  
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;  
as far as the east is from the west,  
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.  
As a father shows compassion to his children,  
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.  
For he knows our frame;  
he remembers that we are dust.  
As for man, his days are like grass;  
he flourishes like a flower of the field;  
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
and its place knows it no more.  
But the steadfast love of the Lord  
is from everlasting to everlasting  
on those who fear him” (Psalm 103:8-17).

### ***Reflections***

- People often give something up for Lent, Jesus gave up everything for us. As Christians, we both owe Jesus everything and nothing. We are saved by grace through faith, it is not our doing at all! It is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8-10)! Yet, we are to offer our very selves—our everything—to Him in worship (Rom. 12:1).
- Because Jesus took on the dust and ash of flesh and died and rose, we can say this at the burial of believers:

As it has pleased our Heavenly Father in His wisdom to take [*name*] to be with Himself, we therefore commit [*his/her*] body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God in our Savior Jesus Christ who shall



change the body and make it new in the likeness of His own body of glory according to the working of His mighty power.

***Pray***

- Thank God for Jesus the perfect sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29) and ask the LORD what He would have you sacrifice.

***A Poem***

*Set Us Free*

Paradise,  
polluted and poisoned.

Our resounding plea:  
“Set us free.”

We are writhing and reeling from the Fall.

Our affections wander and wane,  
our struggles remain.

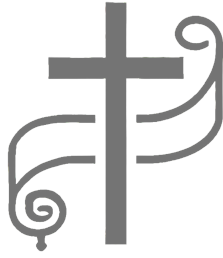
O’ Lord set us free.

We fettered our shackles,  
we tossed the key.

But O’ Messiah, set us free.

***Suggested Song***

- “Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy” by Fernando Ortega



Two

# The Triumphant Entry

This is the gate of the LORD;  
the righteous shall enter through it.  
I thank You that You have answered me  
and have become my salvation.  
The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.  
This is the LORD's doing;  
it is marvelous in our eyes.  
This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it.  
Save us, we pray, O LORD!  
O LORD, we pray, give us success!  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!  
We bless you from the house of the LORD.  
The LORD is God,  
and He has made His light to shine upon us.  
Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,  
up to the horns of the altar!  
You are my God, and I will give thanks to You;  
You are my God; I will extol You.  
Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;  
for His steadfast love endures forever!  
— Psalm 118:20-29 (Matt. 21:1-11)

In Matthew's passage about the Triumphant Entry, he quotes from and links to Psalm 118. Jesus likely sang this Psalm, along with the other Hallel Psalms (Pss. 113-18), with the disciples after He instituted the Lord's Supper (Mk. 14:26).

That's not surprising since Psalm 118 highlights God's steadfast love and has many Christ connections.

Psalm 118 talks about the gate that the righteous enter through to go into the presence of God (v. 20). That is not a gate that we can open on our own because we cannot be righteous on our own (Rom. 3:10). Actually, the Bible says even the best we can do on our own is like filthy rags (Is. 64:6). We need the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:19-22). Jesus is the gate that gives us access to God the Father (Jn. 14:6), He is the one that makes us righteous.

Jesus was the rejected stone (Matt. 21:42) but He is the Messiah, the cornerstone (Ps. 118:22). All promises rest upon Him (2 Cor. 1:20). When Jesus made His way to Jerusalem, the people cried out: "Hosanna! Save us, we pray, O LORD!" (Matt. 21:9). The people spoke better than they knew. They cried out to Jesus who is God in flesh to save—and soon He would. He would fulfill their prayer to save by answering the next cry of the crowds, that He be crucified.

The Psalm says, "The LORD is God, and He has made His light to shine upon us" (Ps. 118:27). Truly, God in flesh dwelt among us. And yet He was the "festal sacrifice" (v. 27). Jesus is finally triumphant not by overthrowing the Roman government but by overthrowing Satan, sin, and death through His death and resurrection.

And so our response: "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!" (v. 29). Psalm 118 acknowledges the steadfast love of the LORD five times and it is the bookends of the chapter. God's never-stopping, always-and-forever love is demonstrated through Jesus answering people's prayer for salvation. God the Son dies as the sacrifice for sinful people.

### ***Reflections***

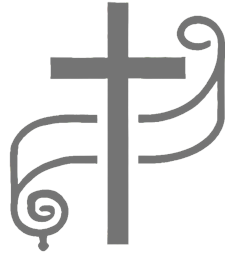
- Jesus brings victory and peace but not how and when people expected. Jesus crushes Satan, and all wicked powers, by Himself being crushed (cf. e.g. Gen. 3:15).
- The LORD God is a missionary God and He calls us to share the good news of Jesus with others.

### ***Pray***

- Thank God for His steadfast love.

### ***Suggested Song***

- "Hallelujah! What A Savior" by Ascend The Hill



Three

# The Hallel Psalms & the Supper

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory,  
for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!

Why should the nations say,

“Where is their God?”

Our God is in the heavens;  
he does all that he pleases.

Their idols are silver and gold,  
the work of human hands.

They have mouths, but do not speak;  
eyes, but do not see.

They have ears, but do not hear;  
noses, but do not smell.

They have hands, but do not feel;  
feet, but do not walk;

and they do not make a sound in their throat.

Those who make them become like them;  
so do all who trust in them.

O Israel, trust in the Lord!

He is their help and their shield.

—Psalm 115:1-9 (Mk. 14:26)

Psalm 115 is part of the Hallel Psalms. Hallel means “praise.” Jesus would have sung the Hallel Psalms (Ps. 113-118) with His disciples on the eve of Passover. Psalm 114 speaks directly of the exodus. From a New Testament perspective, we know that the salvation that began in Egypt will finally be fulfilled in and through Jesus.

The Hallel Psalms were probably the last psalms Jesus sang before His suffering and death (Mk. 14:26). Jesus would have sung Psalm 115 knowing that He was Himself definitively showing God's glory, love, and faithfulness. It is amazing also that Jewish people concluded the Hallel Psalms with the prayer:

From everlasting to everlasting thou art God; beside thee we have no king, redeemer, or savior; no liberator, deliverer, provider; none who takes pity in every time of distress or trouble. We have no king but thee.

Truly! Apart from Messiah Jesus, there is no "no king, redeemer, or savior; no liberator, deliverer, provider."

As we see in Psalm 115, idols are inept but God is a God of steadfast love and faithfulness. Whereas idols are inept God is involved; in fact, so involved that He came to this broken world in the form of Jesus Christ.

Idols are silver and gold but God came in flesh. Jesus has a mouth and with it, He spoke words of life. Jesus has eyes, and He saw this broken world and wept. Jesus has ears, and He heard the world's bitter cries. Jesus has a nose, and He smelled the putrid smell of death. Jesus has human hands, and they were pierced. Jesus has feet, and they carried a cross and were pinned to a cross. Jesus has a throat and with it He cried out: "My God, my God, why have Thou forsaken Me?!"

People taunted those who trusted in God then, and they still do so now. Jesus Himself was taunted as He was hanging on the tree. "Where is your God?!" they jeered. People are still screaming those same insults at us. "Where is your God?!"

People may say, "Where is your God?!" Yet, our God is in heaven and He does whatever He pleases. And He is pleased to love us. He is pleased to offer us salvation in Jesus. Brothers and sisters, when the world mocks, let's not be ashamed! Our God is no idol. He is alive and well. And He loves.

Jesus instructs us to use tangible means to remember God's very tangible love and so we are to take part in the meal of the Lord's Supper regularly until He returns (Lk. 22:18-20). The bread and cup symbolize the life of Jesus Christ given for us—His body broken, His blood poured out.

We are so prone to forget. So, fight to never forget. How great are God's steadfast love and faithfulness!

### ***Reflections***

- God's steadfast love and covenant faithfulness are seen in incomprehensible ways through Jesus' own body being broken and His blood being poured out for us. O' what incomprehensible steadfast love and covenant faithfulness! Surely God's love surpasses our understanding!

### ***Pray***

- Praise God that He is no inept idol but He has all-power and cares to save.

### ***A Poem***

#### *The Present State*

The nations plot and rage  
The world goes grinding on  
Many caught in her cogs  
Continually disarranged

The turmoil triumphs  
The plague it plunges all

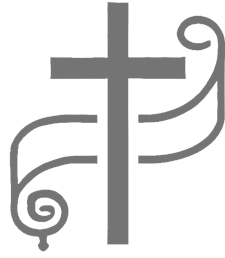
Here we fall  
We are the fall  
O' the hell we've made!

The world is groaning  
I reciprocate her pain

O' maranatha!

### ***Suggested Song***

- "Remembrance" (Acoustic) by Hillsong Worship



Four

# The Cleansing of the Temple

For zeal for your house has consumed me,  
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.  
—Psalm 69:9 (Jn. 2:13-17; Matt. 21:12-17)

That's exactly what happened to Jesus. He was consumed by zeal for the LORD's house.

Can you imagine the scene? The whole city was frantic with excitement and expectation as Jesus came into Jerusalem. Many expected that Jesus would soon bring freedom from Roman oppression and establish a reign of peace. People expected Jesus to ridicule Rome and inaugurate the Jewish state. Jesus, instead, condemns what's going on in the Jewish temple.

If Jesus' actions are unexpected it is because of misunderstanding or lack of zeal on our part. What Jesus did is in full agreement with Scripture (cf. Jer. 7:11; Zech. 14:21). The temple was to be a house of prayer, not a "den of robbers" (Is. 56:7). Specifically, the house of prayer is supposed to be "for all peoples" (v. 7). Because of all the selling, however, the court of the Gentiles would have been so filled with commotion that neither Jew nor Gentile would have been able to pray without distraction.

Jesus has concern for the poor, the sick, and the outsider. Jesus stands up for them even to the point of experiencing opposition. Jesus does more than just denounce injustice—He takes action against it. That is good news!

Jesus wants people—all people!—to have unhindered access to the LORD. He wants it so badly that He provides it by the sacrifice of Himself. Jesus died "to

gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad” (Jn. 11:52).

Jesus creates a temple of God that is made up of all nations! And there is no more dealing with moneychangers and purchasing a sacrifice because He is Himself the ultimate sacrifice. It is through Him, and Him alone, that all people, whosoever they are, can come boldly to God! And they can come freely. Indeed, they must go freely because there is no payment great enough and no payment necessary. It is by grace that we are saved.

***Reflections***

- What might be some ways as a modern church we might be missing it and might deserve the fierce rebuke of Jesus?
- Are you as jealous for all nations to be able to access God as Jesus was? What practical steps can you take to be part of Jesus’ mission to reach the nations?

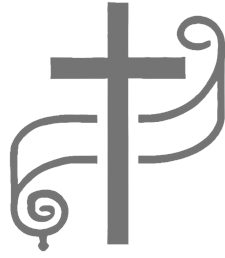
***Pray***

- Thank God that through Jesus there is a way for all people, whosoever they are, to come to become God’s friend.

***Suggested Song***

- “Rejoice” by Dustin Kensrue





Five

# The Betrayal & Rejection

Even my close friend in whom I trusted,  
who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.  
—Psalm 41:9 (Jn. 13:18).

Jesus came to His own people and they did not receive Him (Jn. 1:11). Jesus was hated, rejected, and persecuted (Is. 53:3; Jn. 15:18). His friends abandoned Him (Ps. 88:8, 18; Matt. 26:56), even after making a pledge of undying loyalty. Yet, even while He Himself was being betrayed He protected His friends (Jn. 18:7-8).

Jesus, as Hebrews says, can sympathize with us (Heb. 4:15). He knows what it is like to experience betrayal of the worst kind. Jesus was troubled in His spirit because one of His dear friends would betray Him. And it's no wonder that He was troubled. Have you ever been hurt by a close friend? It hurts.

Yet Jesus was betrayed, as the Scriptures said He would be (Jn. 13:18).

Judas, Jesus' "familiar friend" (Ps. 55:13), betrayed Him with a kiss (Matt. 26:48-49).<sup>1</sup> Jesus used to walk with Judas in the very same garden in which He was betrayed (Jn. 18:2-3). Jesus had also recently shared bread with Judas. Matthew's biography calls Judas "one of the twelve" (Matt. 26:14) to highlight the irony and tragedy of treachery.

Jesus felt the blow of a backstabber but His pain would be far worse than any knife could inflict.

When Jesus was betrayed and arrested there was a "detachment of soldiers" with Judas (Jn. 18:12) carrying torches and weapons. Jesus, however, had access to

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<sup>1</sup> A kiss was a common greeting in that culture, as it is in many cultures today.

“twelve legions of angels” (Matt. 26:53). Twelve legions would be some sixty-thousand. But He called upon known of them.

And even when Peter struck a man with a sword and cut off his ear (Matt. 26:51; Jn. 18:10), Jesus did not commend him. Instead, Jesus healed the man’s ear (Lk. 22:51).

One last amazing thing to consider... When the captors came to Jesus, He said to them, “Who is it you want?” (Jn. 18:4). They replied, “Jesus of Nazareth” (v. 5). Jesus said, “I AM HE;” and when Jesus said, “I AM HE,” they drew back and fell to the ground (v. 6-7).

Roman soldiers fell to the ground at Jesus’ response? Why? Because when Jesus said “I AM HE,” He was connecting back to Exodus 3:14 when the LORD revealed His name to Moses. Jesus was showing His power and showing that He is part of the Divinity Identity (see Ex. 3:14). As Jesus said before: “before Abraham was, I AM” (Jn. 8:58).

Jesus was in the beginning with God, and is God (Jn. 1:1-3). The world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him (Jn. 1:10; Ps. 33:6; Heb. 1:2; Col. 1:15-20). And so we see that the One who spoke the world into being and can make seasoned soldiers cower by mere words, is betrayed and arrested.

O’ the profound beauty and mystery! Jesus betrayed for us who so often betray Him...

### ***Reflections***

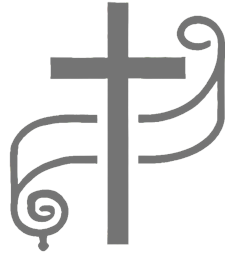
- Have you been ashamed of Jesus recently? One of the scariest verses in all of Scripture, I believe, is Matthew 10:32-33. It says: “Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

### ***Pray***

- Thank God that Jesus was rejected so that we might be welcomed.

### ***Suggested Song***

- “Lower Still” by My Epic (Lyric Video)



Six

## The Trial & Mocking

Let not those rejoice over me  
who are wrongfully my foes,  
and let not those wink the eye  
who hate me without cause.  
For they do not speak peace,  
but against those who are quiet in the land  
they devise words of deceit.  
They open wide their mouths against me;  
they say, ‘Aha, Aha!  
Our eyes have seen it!’  
—Psalm 35:19-21 (Matt. 27:24-34)

Jesus is on trial. He who calmed the storm and reached out and healed lepers is on trial. Jesus could have answered as God had once before when He was questioned. He could have said, “Who is this that darkness counsel by words without knowledge?!” (Job 38:2).

Jesus could have responded: “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?! (v. 4). Do you make the sun rise? (v. 12). Can you send forth lightning? (v. 35). Do you give the horse his might? (39:19). Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars? (v. 26).

And yet the One who created the universe by the word of His power and holds it together (Heb. 1:3), is on trial and even mocked. And the people cry out: “Crucify, crucify Him!”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> God answered both the crowd that cried “Hosanna!” and the crowd that cried “Crucify Him!” with “Yes.”

Jesus is hated without cause (Ps. 35:19; 69:4) and people are wrongfully His foe because He never did a single thing that was wrong (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15; 1 Jn. 3:5). And so, because He has never done anything wrong, He is attacked with lies and words of deceit (Ps. 35:20; 69:4). Jesus' accusers said, "Aha, Aha! Our eyes have seen it!" (Ps. 39:21). But they hadn't. They hadn't because Jesus was without sin.

Although Jesus had done no violence, and there was no deceit in His mouth yet it was the will of the LORD to crush Him (Is. 53:9-10). Why did the LORD do that? Why if Jesus was perfect, did God, as it says in 1 Corinthians 5:21, make Him who knew no sin, to be sin?

Why would Jesus be on trial for trumped-up charges? It was "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23) so that all those who trust in Him might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

Isaiah 53 tells us that Jesus' soul will make an offering for guilt. And even though He dies, He shall see His offspring and His days shall be prolonged. This seems to clearly foreshadow the resurrection. Notice also that in verse 12 He enjoys the spoils of what He accomplished through His sacrifice so He's clearly not still dead. In fact, He must live because He "makes intercession for the transgressors" (v. 12). The will of the LORD shall prosper in His hand (Is. 53:10 recall Acts 2:23). Out of Jesus' anguish, because He bears their iniquities, He makes many to be accounted righteous through faith in Him (Is. 53:11).

And so, Jesus was silent before His oppressors, "He opened not His mouth" (Is. 53:7; Matt. 26:63). He knew it was the LORD's will that He bear the sins of many (Matt. 26:39). And so Jesus laid His life down willingly (Jn. 10:18).

"Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so He opened not His mouth" (Is. 53:7).

### ***Reflections***

- In John Grisham's book, *The Innocent Man*, he writes about a man who was falsely imprisoned for a number of years when later he was found to be not guilty. It is distressing for us to consider a situation like that. The system failed him. So how much more when we consider that the sinless Son of God, the truly innocent One, was sentenced to a torturous death. And yet He did it to redeem us who are not.

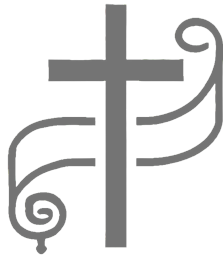
- Jesus' death was "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). Consider God's premeditated love. God's love for you in Christ is not an afterthought. If you are in Christ, you were not thought of at the last moment. Instead, God has had His affections on you since before the foundation of the world.

***Pray***

- God's love, power, and sovereignty are beyond what we can comprehend. Praise God for who He is and that Jesus—the Innocent One—died for us who are guilty.

***Suggested song***

- "Jesus Paid it All" by Celtic Worship ft. Steph Macleod



Seven

# The Crucifixion

Many bulls have compassed me:  
strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

They open wide their mouths at me,  
like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart is like wax;

it is melted within my breast;  
my strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs encompass me;  
a company of evildoers encircles me;  
they have pierced my hands and feet—

I can count all my bones—  
they stare and gloat over me;  
they divide my garments among them,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

—Psalm 22:12-18 (Jn. 19:17-24)

Psalm 22 has an amazing amount of parallels with Jesus' experience on the cross on Good Friday. It says he is surrounded by rough enemies that want to harm him (v. 12), he is attacked by their words (v. 13), he is exhausted and close to death (v. 14), he experiences fatal dehydration (v. 15), his hands and feet are pierced (v. 16), his bony frame is exposed (v. 17), and his garments are divided and cast lots for (v. 18 cf. Matt. 27:35).

Reading this Psalm you almost expect David to say something close to “Father, forgive them” because the account of Jesus' crucifixion is foreshadowed so many

times (see also Ps. 69:4, 9, 21). Instead, in somewhat of a parallel passage to this Psalm and in great contrast to Jesus, David calls for God's burning anger to overtake his enemies (69:24), he pleads that God would "add to them punishment upon punishment" (v. 27), and that they would be "blotted out of the book of the living" and "not be enrolled among the righteous" (v. 28).

Jesus, in contrast to David, says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). Jesus Himself receives punishment upon punishment, His life is blotted out, and He joins the unrighteous on a cursed cross (Is. 53:9; Matt. 27:38) to save His enemies, those who are far from Him. Jesus is the perfect lamb of God, the lamb without blemish, that takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:19).

Crucifixion is undoubtedly one of the most gruesome forms of torture and death humans have ever invented. So, it makes sense that a crucified messiah would seem a contradiction in terms to anyone, Jew, Greek, Roman or barbarian, asked to believe such a claim, and it will certainly have been thought offensive and foolish.<sup>3</sup> That's what the Apostle Paul himself said (1 Cor. 1:18, 23).

However, it is when Jesus' hands are pierced and affixed to the cross, when He is cursed (Gal. 3:13 cf. Deut. 21:23), that He able to more powerfully reach and bless the world. "They are the hands of a wonderful Architect who is building the frame of an eternal church." It is when Jesus' feet are pierced and He is fixed immobile to the cross that He crushes Satan under His heel (Gen. 3:15). It is when Jesus' hands are pierced as prophesied and through His posture on the cross that He welcomes sinners from every nation, tongue, and tribe.

### ***Reflections***

- The book of Zechariah was written in approximately 518 BC and look at what it says: "I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn" (Zech. 12:10)

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<sup>3</sup> The *Alexamenos graffito* shows how foolish many thought it was to worship one that had been crucified. The graffiti depicts a Christian worshiping an image of a man on a cross with a donkey head. A crucified man from Nazareth did not at first fit Paul's description of the Messiah, let alone his understanding of monotheism. Paul would have related to Peter when he said, "Far be it from me Lord" that you should suffer (Matt. 16:22 cf. 2 Sam. 7:13, 16; 1 Chron. 17:14; 22:10; Ps. 89:4, 29, 36-37 110:4; Is. 9:7; Ezek. 37:25). Paul with Peter and many others were looking for the One that would deliverer them from oppression, not be delivered into oppression (see again the confusion of the time in John 12:32-34 cf. 3:14; 8:28).

then later it says, “On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness” (13:1).

- In the midst of the struggles and psychological storms of life, the cross of Christ is a column of strength and stability. It screams out to us in our fog: “I love you!” The cross is the lighthouse to our storm-tossed souls.

### ***Pray***

- Thank God that Jesus bore our sin on the tree. Knowing His sacrifice demands we live wholly for Him, ask God to help you to do that.

### ***A poem***

The hope of the earth  
displayed as a horror

The Majesty  
in misery

macabre Messiah  
bleeding on the tree

Arms outstretched  
mocking sign reads:  
“King of the Jews”

The one for whom every being will bow  
bows his head in death

Messiah’s dead  
His body’s cold  
and all the promises begin to rot

Yes, the man who raised the dead  
now lays dead

The man who said He was the bread of life  
lays in the ground like a kernel

The whole movement of love, of healing, of freedom  
frozen in fear



It was as if spring had began to come  
all the buds were blooming  
everything was coming awake with color and life  
and then got stamped out  
crushed before full bloom

A fire destroyed spring  
and black ash was all that was left in its wake

The Life and all the flourishing that followed Him got snuffed out by the  
vast machine of death

In the darkness of His death a plague of panic and confusion festered and  
grew

“We thought he was the one... The messiah to set us free...”

“Did he not perform wonders?!”

“And who ever spoke like Him? He spoke unparalleled words of  
life, how could *He* be silenced in the tomb?”

“How could He who raised the dead, now be dead?!”

Yes, as Jesus’ body was silent and grew cold  
so did His followers mission.

There’s no commission for a crucified messiah  
His message dies with Him

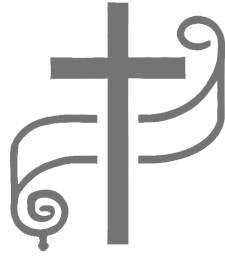
There’s no good news to share when your leader, your savior, your friend  
is still, silent, and dead.

The Lion sleeps  
Holy Saturday is silent

but soon life’s roar will awake the dead.

***Suggested song***

- "Rock of Ages" by the Modern Post



## Eight The Insults

But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

All who see me mock me;  
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;  
‘He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;  
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!’

—Psalm 22:6-8 (Matt. 27:35-44)

It is hard and painful to think of Jesus being mocked. And yet He was mocked and mocked ruthlessly. Jesus was mocked by the chief priests, the scribes, the elders (Matt. 27:41), by robbers (v. 44), and by soldiers (Lk. 23:36).

It didn’t stop there, though. The condemned would be crucified naked. The cross was an instrument of shame as well as pain. Much of the mocking that Jesus underwent occurred as He was vulnerable and stretched out on the cross.

The Righteous One becomes the Rejected One. The Great Exchange took place, the righteous for the unrighteous. Barabbas goes free and the beautiful Savior is bludgeoned. So in Barabbas’ deliverance, we see our own.<sup>4</sup>

The psalmist says, “But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people” (Ps. 22:6). And that was Jesus’ experience. Jesus, as Charles Spurgeon said, “felt himself to be comparable to a helpless, powerless,

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<sup>4</sup> Barabbas was a rabble-rouser. He was likely in some ways more in line with what people were hoping for in the Messiah. Someone that would rise up and defeat Roman rule. So, in some ways, it’s no wonder that Barabbas was chosen to go free instead of Jesus (see Matt. 27:16-26). Jesus, however, first needed to come to save people from their greatest problem, sin, and separation from God. He will soon come back to establish a reign of perfect peace.

down-trodden worm, passive while crushed, and unnoticed and despised by those who trod upon him.” The Christ of the cosmos was mocked as a maggot.

A whole battalion of soldiers came together to see the Messiah mocked. A counterfeit crown was placed upon His head, a crown of vicious thorns like talons (Matt. 27:29). They placed a purple robe on Him because purple was the imperial color (1 Macc. 8:14). All Jesus needed was a scepter to make the scene complete. And so Jesus was given a reed. And then they hit Him with it and spit on Him (Matt. 27:30).

The soldiers bowed mocking, not knowing that they mocked the King of the universe that was battered to bless the broken world. They didn’t know that when they said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” that He actually is the King of the Jews and the King of kings.

Yet the onlookers lob their blasphemies like grenades. “Save Yourself,” they cried, not knowing that if He saved Himself He would damn the whole human race. It was Jesus’ love, not the nails, that kept Him suspended on the cross.

The man who is utterly powerless—has all power. The man who can’t save Himself—saves others.

Blood flows from the face of the gracious Friend of Sinners as He’s mocked with a crown of thorns. As F.W. Krummacher has said, “It is in the face of eternal Love that they spit. It is the Source of life whom they smite with their fists, and it is He whom the heavens adore that they insult with their venomous tongues.” Jesus is not done, however. He must fall lower still.

The inscription above Jesus’ head as He hung on the cross was to mock Him but it truly testified in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew that “Jesus of Nazareth is the King of the Jews.”<sup>5</sup> And so it served as the first gospel tract. The man who is mocked as king—is King.

It is by Jesus’ helplessness that we find help. We do not have to sit helpless in our shame because Christ bore our sin and shame.

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<sup>5</sup> There are variations in the Gospels of what the inscription said, likely because it was written in three different languages and they may have been reporting different translations (e.g., Matt. 27:37; Lk. 23:37).

### ***Reflections***

- How can we ever complain about the insults that we experience when we consider what our Lord experienced? How can we who frequently meditate on the grace that was brought to us through Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection not extend grace and forgiveness to others? How can we exalt ourselves and quarrel with each other?
- "My friends, as often as we repose on the downy cushions of divine peace, or blissfully assemble in social circles, singing hymns of hope, let us never forget that the cause of the happiness we enjoy is solely to be found in the fact that the Lord of glory once extended Himself on the fatal tree for us" (F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Saviour*).

### ***Pray***

- Thank God that Jesus willingly bore insults for you. Ask God that He would help you to "not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ" knowing that it is the power of God for salvation to all who would believe (Rom. 1:16).

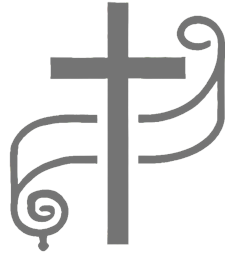
### ***A Poem***

#### *Shalom is Slain*

O' for the worlds that lay asunder,  
for the shalom that is slain.  
We ingrain habits of unrest,  
we fester and pass on spoil.  
O' for the earth to break,  
for all to be made anew.  
For the habits in my heart to pour out,  
and for living waters to ensue.  
God this world is broken,  
we are altogether damaged and damned.  
"Destroy the destroyers of the earth,"  
destroy what in me destroys.  
Shalom was slain  
but through the slain Messiah (is/will be) renewed.  
O' God, Maranatha!

### ***Suggested song***

- "The Old Rugged Cross" by Alan Jackson



Nine

# The Forsaking

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?  
—Psalm 22:1-3 (Matt. 27:45-54)

On the cross, Jesus cries out and quotes Psalm 22:1: “My God, my God, why have Thou forsaken me?!” This is especially pungent because Jesus, unlike all other humans, did not deserve to be forsaken. So, we could read the text: “Why have You forsaken *Me*, Me of all people?!” We know the truth, however. We know it was God’s will that He bear the sins of many.

Jesus’ forsaken cry comes at the end of three hours of darkness (Matt. 27:45). This is in great contrast to other momentous occasions in Jesus’ life. At Jesus’ birth, the star led the way and angels announced His arrival (Lk. 2:8-14). At Jesus’ baptism, the heavens were torn open and a voice from heaven said, “You are my beloved Son; with You I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). At Jesus’ transfiguration “a cloud overshadowed them,<sup>6</sup> and a voice came out of the cloud, ‘This is my beloved Son; listen to Him’” (Mk. 9:7).

Yet, when Jesus is on the cross crying out His forsaken cry the sky is dark and there is no voice from heaven. In Scripture darkness sometimes expresses God’s judgment as well as His nonappearance to bless and protect (e.g., Ex. 10:21-22; Is. 8:22; Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1:15).

However, it is through Jesus being forsaken by God that the temple curtain is ripped in two (Mk. 15:38) and we can now, through Jesus Christ, boldly go to God

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<sup>6</sup> God’s presence to bless is often seen in atmospheric symbols like clouds. We see this for example in the Exodus (Ex. 13:21).

our Father (Heb. 9:2–3, 12; 9:24; 10:19–20). As D.A. Carson has said, the curtain ripping at the time of Jesus’ death “is not some mere datum of interesting destruction. The destruction of the curtain makes a theological statement.” It is through Jesus being forsaken by God that a gentile centurion says, “Truly this man is the Son of God” (Mk. 15:39).<sup>7</sup>

Jesus cried His forsaken cry so that all who trust in Him will not have to for all eternity. Jesus died in agony, crying out, “My God, my God! Why have You forsaken me?!” so that we could die in peace. The voice that called out to Abraham to not touch Isaac is silent for the Son of God so that we too could be spared.

Later on, the psalmist says: “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death” (Ps. 22:14-15 cf. 69:17-21).

That too was Jesus’ experience. He was forsaken by God. His life was poured out like water as He drank the cup of God’s wrath and suffered severe thirst. John 19:28 says, “Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst.’” Yet in Jesus’ thirst, He was given sour wine. And so we see, as Philip Yancey has said, the One “who had made gallons of wine for a wedding party, who had spoken of living water that would quench all thirst forever” was dying with a parched tongue and the sour smell of vinegar on His beard.

Jesus died in the dark. Thirsty. Forsaken by God. Yet it is through Jesus being forsaken that He opens the way for whosoever will to come to God through the way that He made. Jesus is the way, He is the gate (Ps. 118:20; Jn. 14:6).

### ***Reflections***

- It’s helpful to realize in the midst of suffering that God takes our suffering seriously. God takes our suffering so seriously that He took it upon Himself.

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<sup>7</sup> This centurion would have observed many deaths and many crucifixions. And so, he is in a unique position to recognize the purity and power of Jesus. The centurion said, “Certainly this man was innocent!” (Lk. 23:47), after he saw Jesus call out and say, “It is finished. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” and breathe his last (Jn. 19:30/Lk. 12:46). The centurion must have been amazed by Jesus’ composure and everything else that had taken place surrounding Him. For example, the centurion may have seen the way Jesus treated His enemies (v. 34), His promise to the criminal on the cross (v. 43), His prayer to God (v. 46), not to mention the ominous darkness (v. 44).

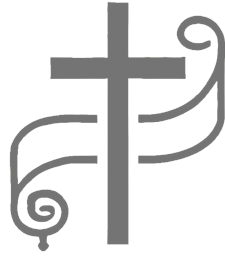
- Jesus, because He Himself suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted (Heb. 2:18). Jesus was “made like his brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God” (v. 17). So, as you struggle and strive in this fallen world, remember Jesus sympathizes with your weaknesses, because He was tempted in every way that we are, yet He never sinned (Heb. 4: 15).

***Pray***

- Thank God for sending Jesus to bear the wrath that we deserve.

***Suggested song***

- “Amazing Love” by Chris Tomlin



Ten

## The Committal

For you are my rock and my fortress;  
and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me;  
you take me out of the net they have hidden for me,  
for you are my refuge.

Into your hand I commit my spirit;  
you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God...

For I hear the whispering of many—  
terror on every side!—

as they scheme together against me,  
as they plot to take my life.

But I trust in you, O Lord;  
I say, 'You are my God.'

—Psalm 31:4-5, 13-14 (Lk. 23:46-49)

Jesus' life was bathed in the language of the Psalms. Yet, when Jesus quotes Psalm 31 He doesn't quote it exactly. Instead, He says, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Lk. 23:46).<sup>8</sup> And so, Jesus' dying moment was one of trust in His Father. Jesus trusted as He taught us to pray ("Our Father in heaven..."—Matt. 6:9-15). Jesus trusted as He brought a way for us too to go to the Father (Jn. 14:6).

And so we see that Jesus who cries out in despair—trusts God. And we see He laid His life down. Jesus committed Himself into the care of His Father<sup>9</sup> and said, "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30) and breathed His last. Jesus was in control of His life, and He

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<sup>8</sup> It is also interesting to note that when Jesus quoted Psalm 31:5 in his dying words He stopped short of its second line. That is, Jesus does not say, "You have rescued Me."

<sup>9</sup> Later Stephen would follow his Master and entrust Himself to Jesus (Acts 7:59). He also follows Jesus in saying "do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60/Lk 23:34).



laid it down. The fact that no one took His life from Him but that He laid it down also implies that He is able to “take it up again” (Jn. 10:17).

It is because Jesus trusted God His Father in His life and in His death, and because He freely laid His life down, that we have access to the Father. Jesus makes a way for us by being the perfect sacrifice. Jesus always perfectly trusted God.

So, through Jesus we can have God as our Father. We can go to Him in prayer as Jesus taught us (Matt. 6:9-15). We don’t have to be anxious like unbelievers because we know that we have a heavenly Father who knows all that we need (v. 32). And we can be assured of our Father’s love and care for us because He loved us so much that He sent Jesus (Jn. 3:16).

So it is through Jesus’ faithful and victorious work that we are adopted as sons and daughters. When Jesus spoke to Mary about God after His resurrection, He said, “My Father and your Father,” “My God and your God” (Jn. 20:17). Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection Jesus’ Father can now be our Father. Jesus has made a way for relationship!

The Bible says that in love God adopted all those in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:5) and has given them an inheritance (v.11). God the Father has even given the Holy Spirit as the down payment of our inheritance until we acquire full possession of it, to the praise of His glory (v.14).

### ***Reflections***

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation [or Second Coming] of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls (1 Pet. 1:3-9).

### ***Pray***

- Praise God that through Jesus we can come to God as Father.

### ***A Poem***

*The Life for our life*

damp, dark, cold, and silent  
enveloped in a shroud in the earth  
the Life lay lifeless

the only thing that truly is,  
is not?  
the Life lay lifeless?  
the Immortal Infinite slain?

damp, dark, cold, and silent  
from life's surmise  
but from a different gaze  
outside of life's maze  
Life lay not lifeless  
but death is now dead  
defeated!

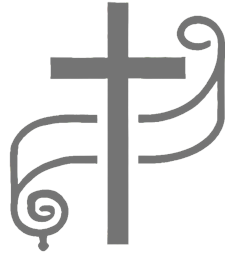
in violence He brought victory!

enveloped in mystery  
the great God of history  
was slain, for you, for me  
the foil was sprang  
it brought Him great pain  
our sin is the hand that bore it  
yet He took our blame  
to purchase our name  
He bore the frame of our cross

through vile, the victory  
in wrote woe, to wonder

### ***Suggested song***

- "Man of Sorrows" by Shane & Shane



Eleven

## The Death

“When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears  
and delivers them out of all their troubles.

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted  
and saves the crushed in spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous,  
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

He keeps all his bones;  
not one of them is broken.

Affliction will slay the wicked,  
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

The LORD redeems the life of his servants;  
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.”

—Ps. 34:17-22 (Jn. 19:28-37)

The Righteous One was not delivered. The Righteous One was afflicted and slayed. The Righteous One was condemned, condemned to die the terrible death of a criminal and slave.

Jesus was slaughtered. But it was not a senseless slaughter.

As the centurion nearby Jesus acknowledged, something more was going on behind the scenes. The centurion would have observed many deaths and many crucifixions. And so, he is in a unique position to recognize the purity and power of Jesus. The centurion said, “Certainly this man was innocent and the Son of God! (Lk. 23:47/Matt. 27:54; Mk. 15:39)

The centurion responded in that way after he saw Jesus call out and say, “It is finished. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” and breathe his last (Jn.

19:30/Lk. 23:46). The centurion must have been amazed by Jesus' composure and everything else that had taken place surrounding Him. The centurion may have seen the way Jesus treated His enemies (Lk. 23:34), His promise to the criminal on the cross (v. 43), His prayer to God (v. 46), not to mention the ominous darkness (v. 44).<sup>10</sup>

Jesus' death was not senseless, but according to Scripture. The Righteous One was slain in between two criminals. Jesus was, as Isaiah says, "numbered with the transgressors." Yet in being cursed Jesus was carrying out a rescue plan that had long since been written (Rev. 13:8). "When He was hung on the cross, He took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree'" (Gal. 3:13).

Jesus' death was according to Scripture because He is the Passover Lamb that doesn't have His bones broken (see Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12). Jesus "keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken." This is somewhat surprising. Since it was the day of preparation for the Sabbath, and the bodies could not remain on the cross on the Sabbath because then the land would be defiled (Jn. 19:31; Deut. 21:22-23).

When the soldiers wanted to hasten the death of a person being crucified they would sometimes break the victims' legs. When they went to Jesus, however, they saw that He was already dead, and they did not break His legs (Jn. 19:33).

So, when the soldiers came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they "pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water" (Jn. 19:34). These things took place, the Gospel of John says, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'Not one of His bones will be broken.' And again another Scripture says, 'They will look on him whom they have pierced' (Jn. 19:36-37; cf. Ps. 34:20; Zech. 12:10).

Jesus' death is not senseless because through Jesus' death we, who were dead in our sin, God made alive together with Jesus through faith. In Christ, God forgives us our sin, by canceling the record of it and burying it in the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19). The debt we owed was set aside, because God nailed it to the cross (Col. 2:14).

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<sup>10</sup> It also interesting to note that Jesus died, Matthew 27:45 tells us, around the 9th hour (or 3pm) and Josephus tells us that's when the Jews offered their daily evening sacrifice (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.65 cf. Ex. 12:6).

### ***Reflections***

- The Prince of Peace and King of kings had the cross as His dying bed. But He did it on purpose. Jesus became flesh and blood so that He could die, and through death destroy death (Heb. 2:14 cf. 1 Jn. 3:8) so that we could live. Live at peace with Him forever.

### ***Pray***

- Praise God for the living hope that He gives us. Death is not the end. Jesus died to pay for our sin and rose victorious over Satan, sin, and death.

### ***A poem***

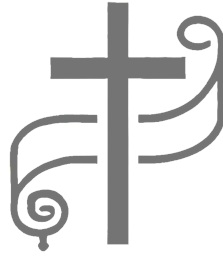
The Infinite held,  
pinned to a dirty cross.

Power restrained,  
redemption released.

The One who brought Lazarus from the dead,  
dead.

### ***Suggested song***

- “Glorious Day (Living He Loved Me)” by Casting Crowns



Twelve

# The Resurrection

I saw the Lord always before me,  
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;  
therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;  
my flesh also will dwell in hope.  
For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,  
or let your Holy One see corruption.  
You have made known to me the paths of life;  
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.  
—Psalm 16:8-11 (Acts 2:22-32)

In Acts chapter 2, Peter refers to Psalm 16 which is a Psalm that king David wrote. Psalm 16:27 says, “For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.” In Peter’s message he said: Friends, I can confidently tell you something about king David: He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us today (Acts 2:29). David is dead and his body rotted.

David did, however, as a prophet tell us that one of his descendants would sit on his throne (v. 30). So, David saw in advance and told us about “the resurrection of the Messiah: ‘His body was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did His body see decay’” (v. 31).

Paul tells us the same thing but he says it a little differently. He says King “David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption” (Acts 13:36). King David saw corruption. His body decomposed. So, David is not the “Holy One” that the Psalm refers to.

Paul goes on to say, “But He whom God raised up did not see corruption” (v. 37). Ding, ding, ding! Jesus is the Holy One! He is the long-awaited Messiah and forever King!

Jesus is the fulfillment of David’s prophecy. Jesus was neither abandoned to the grave nor did His body undergo decay. Peter said that God raised Him up and that he was a witness of that truth (Acts 2:32). And so Peter, the faithless denier, became faithful even to the point of death, and even the death of upside-down crucifixion.

Therefore, Peter’s body, and our bodies can dwell in hope (Ps. 16: 9) even when they are buried six-feet under because of the resurrection of Messiah Jesus! So, when those in Christ die we grieve but not as those with no hope (1 Thess. 4:13). We have hope because of Jesus’ resurrection (v. 14)!

Jesus is the first bodily resurrection in a long line of resurrections. Therefore, no matter what we face—“tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine”—nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (see Rom. 8:31-39).

Therefore, we don’t need to fear famine, we don’t need to panic at the prospect of a pandemic. Why not? Because Jesus says, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore” (Rev. 1:17-18).

The mortality rate for all of us is 100%. Hebrews 9:27 says, “It is appointed for man to die once, and after that the Judgment.” We will all die so what hope do we have? Jesus! His body did not see corruption! He is the suffering one as promised in Psalm 22 and He is the Holy One as promised in Psalm 16.

Through Jesus we have hope. His body did not see corruption, He rose from the dead. And all those who trust in Him will rise as He was raised. And so, “Fear not” (Rev. 1:17). Jesus is the First and the Last, He is the Living One. He died but behold He is alive forevermore.

### ***Reflections***

- I’m not sure where you are spiritually, but we all have a clock that’s tick, tick, ticking down. We will all die. It’s really important that we consider this because we all live with a death sentence we cannot escape. And, as Matthew McCullough says, “so long as death remains someone else’s problem, Jesus will remain someone else’s Savior.”

- “If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all he said; if he didn’t rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching but whether or not he rose from the dead” (Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God*).

### ***Pray***

- “Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

### ***A Poem***

#### *Heavens Hope*

Bound by sins darkened glow  
In this world of pain and woe

Helpless, hopeless to us He came  
And in the midst was slain

Darkest night, the Light extinguished  
Will we forever captives be?

Messiah’s mission ends in death?  
Where’s the hope of life and peace?

But by power He awaketh  
All of death He did breakth

By His death, deaths defeated  
Sins depleted of its power

Thus the hour of unrest  
Has become our hope, our joy, our rest

For in Christ’s death,  
Deaths defeated!

Yes, He burst the bonds that bound Him  
And leads many captives in His wake

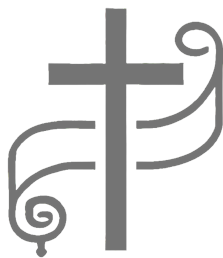
Yes, from the cross He is victorious



And all of heaven hails He's glorious!

***Suggested song***

- “Living Hope” by Phil Wickham



Thirteen

## The Ascension

The LORD says to my Lord:  
‘Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool.’

The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty scepter.

Rule in the midst of your enemies!  
Your people will offer themselves freely  
on the day of your power,  
in holy garments;

from the womb of the morning,  
the dew of your youth will be yours.

The LORD has sworn  
and will not change his mind,  
‘You are a priest forever  
after the order of Melchizedek.’

The Lord is at your right hand;  
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.  
He will execute judgment among the nations,  
filling them with corpses;  
he will shatter chiefs  
over the wide earth.

He will drink from the brook by the way;  
therefore he will lift up his head.”

—Psalm 110 (Acts 2:33-36)

As we saw in the previously on the resurrection, Peter looked at Psalm 16 and showed how Jesus’ resurrection was foretold. In Acts 2 Peter goes on to show that

Jesus is now at God's right hand, as Psalm 110 foretold.<sup>11</sup> Jesus Himself had quoted from Psalm 110 and stomped His critics (see e.g. Matt. 22:41-46). And when you look at 110:1 it's not surprising that they were stomped.

So, we see that Jesus is at God's right hand until... Until He makes His enemies His footstool. That means that Jesus is coming back—and the New Testament repeatedly says soon—to bring judgment, and pervasive peace through that judgment.

Jesus' death and resurrection shows that He is indeed the Lord and Messiah.<sup>12</sup> As the Lord and Messiah, He is coming back soon to vanquish every foe and establish His forever reign of peace. In His second coming, He will bring the Kingdom that was expected at His first coming.

The Lord's violence to violence alone will end violence. All over the New Testament we see that every knee will bow to Jesus (e.g., Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 17:14; 19:16). And that's a good thing. We need the Lord to, in the words of Isaiah, sweep the world with the broom of destruction (Is. 14:23). O' maranatha!

As the Lord Jesus ascended at the Ascension, He will descend. Except, all the world will see Him and His utter glory, power, and majesty! Even those who pierced Him (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7).

### ***Reflections***

- We must be ready because the Lord Jesus said, "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing My recompense with Me, to repay each one for what he has done" (Rev. 22:12). And that day, the day of the Lord, will come like a thief in the

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<sup>11</sup> No other Psalm is alluded to more in the New Testament than this Psalm (Matt 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; Luke 20:42-43; 22:69; Acts 2:34-35; 5:31; 7:55-56; Rom 8:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13; 5:6, 10; 7:17, 21; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 3:21).

<sup>12</sup> Jesus was, of course, both Lord and Messiah even before His death and resurrection—even before His incarnation. Jesus has always been the same ontologically—He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Functionally in time, however, there was a point in time before He had made "many to be accounted righteous" (Is. 53:11). There was a time before the mystery had been revealed (1 Pet. 1:10-11) that He is the Lord to which every knee will bow. Here's an illustration, and only an illustration: My brother-in-law and good friend is an actuary. As an actuary there are a series of tests that you have to take over the course of a couple of years before you are an actual actuary. My brother-in-law has the makeup of an actuary, he's good with numbers and likes math. So, "ontologically," or in his being, he is an actuary. But he was not an official actuary until he was formally recognized as such after his final test. It is similar with Jesus. Jesus in His being has always been Lord and Christ, that is who He is ontologically. He, however, was not recognized as such until after His resurrection. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by His resurrection (Rom. 1:1-4) but He had always been God ontologically (e.g., Col. 1:15-20).

night, we won't expect it. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for His return and His eternal Kingdom of peace, be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace (2 Pet. 3:14).

- Jesus' Ascension reminds us that we can go boldly and make disciples as He instructed us knowing that He has all authority in heaven and on earth.

### *Pray*

- Thank God that even right now Jesus, as our Great High Priest, is interceding for us. Thank God for the solid hope of Christ's return.

### *Poem*

Jesus rose forever as King  
and so we sing His praise.

Sin's sinewy grip of death  
defied, defeated, depleted.

Death got dealt a death blow.

The rhythm of life with the pulsating drum beat of death, rewrote and shattered.

The trumpet call rang out: Life!

The picture repainted.

The song rewrote.

The blossom of spring shuts the door on winter.

Gethsemane and Golgotha thrust upon the world the eternal garden.

Death is finished.

Life begins.

The bridge through death is opened  
and cannot be closed.

In resurrection's wake  
death forever breaks  
and life shall be breathed anew.

Jesus is first  
but won't be the last.

God defies death.

***Suggested song***

- “All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name” by Shane and Shane

