

The Cross

Psalm 22

Wayne O. Cochran
wayne.cochran@gmail.com

The Cross Foretold

- Psalm 22 writes of the events of The Cross a 1000 years before they occur.
- While David certainly had experienced suffering, abandonment, and at times lived on the brink of death, this Psalm certainly transcends the events of David's life.
- Scripture frequently describes events that become previews of larger future events. The Cross is often foreshadowed:
 - Abraham / Isaac Genesis 22
 - The Exodus, Passover Genesis 12
 - The Bronze Serpent Numbers 21, John 3
- The Cross was predetermined before Creation.
1 Corinthians 2:7-10, 1 Peter 1:18-20, Revelation 13:8.

Psalm 22 Intro

- Psalm 22 was put to music:
 - *“To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.”*
 - Progresses from a cry of despair and deep darkness to “the dawn” of praise declaring “his righteousness.”
- Was a well known Psalm.
 - Like Psalm 23, the opening line provided a cue for remainder of the Psalm.
 - Audience at The Cross would have immediately known the reference (bystanders thought he was calling for Elijah - Mark 15:35)

Psalm 21, 22, 23 were well-known Psalms — Jews would have memorized these (much like we have know Psalm 23).

The Cry of The Forsaken

Psalm 22:1-2

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the
words of my groaning?
O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.*

- A complete sense of abandonment in the midst of great suffering.
- A longing for an answer from God.

(We'll revisit this at the end)

An Appeal to the Trustworthiness of God Psalm 22:3-5

*Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*

- God has a track record of faithfulness to those who trusted in Him.

Mocking of The Crowd

Psalm 22:6-8

*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!”*

Matthew 27:29,31,39-42

Mark 15:20,31

Luke 22:63, 23:11, 23:35,36

Shaking heads Matt 27:39-42

Mocking the LORD's seeming position of not delivering Him (Matt 27:43-42)

Agony of Crucifixion

Psalm 22:14-15

*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.*

John 19:28 (Psalm 69:21) "I am Thirsty"

Note: Bones are out of joint, not broken (John 19:36, Ex 12:46, Num 9:12)

Piece Hands and Feet Psalm 22:16

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

- MT כארי ידי ורגלי ("like a lion my hands and my feet")
LXX ωρυξαν χειράς μου και πόδας ("they have
dug/pierced my hands and feet")
Dead Sea Scrolls, Syriac, Vulgate, and some
other Hebrew MSS agree with LXX

Casting Lots for Clothing

Psalm 22:17-18

*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*

Matthew 27:35

Mark 15:24

Luke 23:34

John 19:24

Psalm 22:19-21

*But you, O Lord, do not be far off!
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!
Deliver my soul from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dog!
Save me from the mouth of the lion!
You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!*

Not Forsaken!

Psalm 22:22-24

*I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted,
and he has not hidden his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him.*

Hebrews 2:12

The suffering of our High Priest brought us
salvation and we are His brothers!

Psalm 22:24-26

*From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.*

*The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord!
May your hearts live forever!*

Psalm 22:27-28

*All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.
For kingship belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.*

Psalm 22:29-31

*All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
even the one who could not keep himself alive.*

*Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a
people yet unborn,
that *he has done it*.*

“It is finished.” John 19:30

The Cry from The Cross Redux

Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34

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, ESV

Why did Christ make this cry?

Common Explanation

- This was the moment the sin of the world was placed on Christ, for he became sin.
(2 Corinthians 5:21)
- God's wrath, diverted from us, was poured out on Christ.
- God can not look on sin (Habakkuk 1:13)
- God the Son was momentarily separated from (forsaken by) God the Father.

Even though this is a common view, oft repeated (*and perhaps even correct*) there is no explicit Biblical text for this interpretation. Also raises some serious theological difficulties concerning the oneness of the Trinity. Perhaps there is another way to view Christ's quotation...

Alternative Explanation

- Jesus was quoting the first verse of a well known Psalm that would reveal His fulfillment as the suffering Messiah.
- The details of what was happening were described 1000 years earlier!
- In fact, Psalm 22:24 specifically states that *“He [YHWHY] has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted.”*
 - Psalm 22:22-31 The view turns from death and suffering to life!
 - Ephesians 5:2 Christ’s death was a fragrant offering (like the offerings of Leviticus 23:18).
 - Isaiah 53:10-12 gives a better view of how YHWHY saw His affliction.
- Jesus also references that last verse of Psalm 22 when with his last dying breath says *“It is finished”* (John 19:30).

So why forsaken?

- Jesus, our great High Priest (Hebrews 3:14-26), is identifying with us in our human emotion — when we are in extreme suffering it seems as if God has forsaken us.
- The answer, according to Psalm 22 is “I have not forsaken you!”
 - The crowd thinks “He has lost, He is forsaken” — quite the opposite! He was won, and Jesus’ High Priestly prayer in John 17 has been answered — He in One with the Father!
- The promise of Scripture: “He will never leave or forsake you.”
 - Deut 31:6,8
 - Joshua 1:5
 - 1 Kings 8:57
 - 1 Chron 28:20
 - Psalm 37:28
 - Psalm 94:10
 - Isaiah 41:17
 - Isaiah 42:16
 - Heb 13:5
 - Psalm 23:4!

Jesus will never leave us! Matthew 28:20

Another Textual Problem

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
from the words of my *groaning*? ESV, MT

O God, my God, attend to me:
why hast thou forsaken me? the account of my
transgressions is far from my salvation
LXX, Brenton

O God my God, why hast thou let me to live?
and yet thou hast delayed my salvation from me,
because of the words of my *folly*. Syriac

We know Christ was sinless — how do we explain the LXX translation? If it's correct could it be that our transgressions were imputed to Christ on the cross? Is he identifying with us in our sin — (as in His baptism)?

Consensus is that the Old Testament of the Peshitta was translated into Syriac from the Hebrew, probably in the 2nd century AD, ...

O God my God, look upon me:
why hast thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation
are the words of my sins. Latin Vulgate