

Cross Examination

Psalm 22

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connect groups

PATH

In this teaching, Pastor Skip examined the cross in light of Old Testament prophecy. Even though the expectation of the Jews at the time of Christ was for a conquering Messiah, the Scripture also paints a picture of a suffering and dying Messiah. This means He would need to come two separate times. In their rejection of Jesus, the people were actually fulfilling the very Scriptures they denied as referring to Christ. Pastor Skip looked at the incredible prophecies about Jesus' death and resurrection found in Psalm 22. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part is prayer and agony; the second part is praise and accomplishment.

I. The Torture of the Cross (vv. 1-21)

II. The Triumph of the Cross (vv. 22-31)

POINTS

The Torture of the Cross:

- The first part of Psalm 22 gives us a detailed record of the human suffering of Christ. Jesus was deserted by God.
- The first four of Jesus' final statements focused on others:
 - To weeping women: "Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28).
 - To God as soldiers drove nails into His hands: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).
 - To the repentant dying thief: "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).
 - To John regarding His mother Mary: "Behold your mother" (John 19:27).
- Darkness fell, and Jesus was silent for three hours. He broke the silence with words predicted in Psalm 22:1: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Or, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" (Mark 15:34).
- For the first time ever, Jesus felt separation from God. This was not a lapse in faith, but a cry of disorientation. As the Sin-Bearer, He felt the full effect of sin—our sin, which broke His intimacy with the Father.
- Verse 3 explains why Jesus had to be separate at this point: "You are holy." God's perfection can't mingle with our imperfection.
- On the cross, Jesus became the perfect substitute for all of us imperfect people (see 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- As Christians, we have an imputed righteousness, not an intrinsic one. That is, God counts us as righteous because of Jesus, not because of anything we have done.
- Jesus was also despised by people. He gave several *I am* statements, saying

He was the Bread of Life, the Light, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the resurrection, the Way, and the Vine.

- Verse 6 records another one: "I am a worm, and no man." This figure of speech revealed the poor treatment He received at the cross.
- In Hebrew, the word for *worm* is *tola*, meaning *scarlet*. The worm referenced was the crimson worm (*coccus ilicis*). When crushed, it produced scarlet dye, used to color the robes of kings.
- Jesus was like the scarlet worm, a crushed life whose blood changes our garments for eternity (see Isaiah 1:18).
- **Probe:** Pastor Skip mentioned that multiple prophecies in Psalm 22 were fulfilled in the torture and death of Jesus. Read the psalm as a group, pointing out as many prophetic fulfillments as you can. For more insight, visit evidenceforchristianity.org/refuting-the-skeptical-case-against-fulfilled-messianic-prophecy.

The Triumph of the Cross:

- There is an abrupt change in tone at the end of verse 21: "You have answered Me. I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You" (vv. 21-22). Because of the shift from despair to deliverance, we can infer that this is a reference to the resurrection.
- The first part of Psalm 22 is about the suffering One; the second part is about the salvation of many.
- The resurrection: Hebrews 2:12 quotes Psalm 22:22, pointing to Jesus' resurrection and the expansion of His kingdom on earth through the gospel.
- The expansion: Verses 22-31 describe the Father's assurance that the cross would save many, expanding His kingdom (see Acts 1:6-8).

- We see this progression predicted, as Jesus declared the glory of God among His Jewish brethren (see vv. 22-23), and His disciples preached His good news to "the ends of the world" (v. 27).
- We are included in this expansion: "A posterity shall serve Him.... They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this" (vv. 30-31, emphasis added).
- The completion: The last words of the psalm, "He has done this," (v. 31) point to Jesus' last words on the cross. In Hebrew, this sentence is one word, *asah*. In Greek, it is *tetelestai*, meaning "It is finished" (John 19:30).
- The psalm begins with "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (v. 1) and ends with "It is finished" (see v. 31).
- The great word of the gospel is not *do* but *done*. The task of salvation was completed with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus was forsaken so you would never be; He *wasn't* saved so you *could* be. He was covered by darkness so you'd experience light; He experienced death so you would have life.
- **Probe:** Pastor Skip said, "You may be experiencing the silence of God (as David did), the discipline of God (we all do), or the displeasure of God (because of sin). It may seem like God is distant, but what seems to be is not what is so." Discuss how the triumph of the cross changes everything—for you and the world. Why is the death and resurrection of Christ at the heart of the Christian faith?

PRACTICE

Connect Up: Andrew Murray said, "Salvation comes through a cross and a crucified Christ." Why do you think the Father accomplished salvation by this means? See Hebrews 9:22 for insight.

Connect In: Why is the death of Christ so central for the church, becoming one of the symbols of the faith? Why does the cross seem foolish to those that don't believe? See 1 Corinthians 1:18.

Connect Out: The apostle Paul said, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel... lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (1 Corinthians 1:17). Just as Paul was called to preach the cross of Christ, how are we to incorporate the death of Christ in our evangelism and outreach?