

In the previous lesson, we looked at Messianic psalms in general. Now, we'll look at a sampling of those psalms in more detail. Students will observe that some psalms clearly and directly focus upon the coming Christ, while others do so much more obliquely.

Put another way, the term Messiah or "anointed one" can have a historical root, referencing a king or David specifically. On the other hand, the term Messiah can be used in an eschatological sense, referring to a future person who is in ways superhuman and undertaking a superhuman task.

Messiah or "anointed one" can refer to a king (or David specifically) or to a future person who is in ways superhuman and undertaking a superhuman task.

Psalm 22: The Psalm of the Cross

Previously, it was noticed that Jesus spoke some of the words of this psalm while He hung upon the cross dying. Shortly before He expired, He cried out the opening words of this psalm, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).

Jesus' utterance of the first words of Psalm 22 likely were intended to draw our attention not merely to those few words quoted from the psalm before us, but to the entirety of the psalm.

Instead of causing us to debate whether, or how, God "forsook" His Son, we are called to see that the happenings at Golgotha had been poetically pictured ten centuries earlier. Greg Litmer, in *Messianic*

The Messianic Psalms (2)

Prophecies, lists six clear Messianic pointers in this psalm:

1. Jesus was forsaken (v. 1). David may have felt similarly, at times, when pursued by King Saul or his son, Absalom. But, it is in Jesus as He hangs on the cross bearing the penalty of the sins of the world that these words are most fully realized. We know that God has no fellowship with sin (Isa. 59:2). Jesus' use of the words demonstrate that they couldn't have been talking of David, alone.

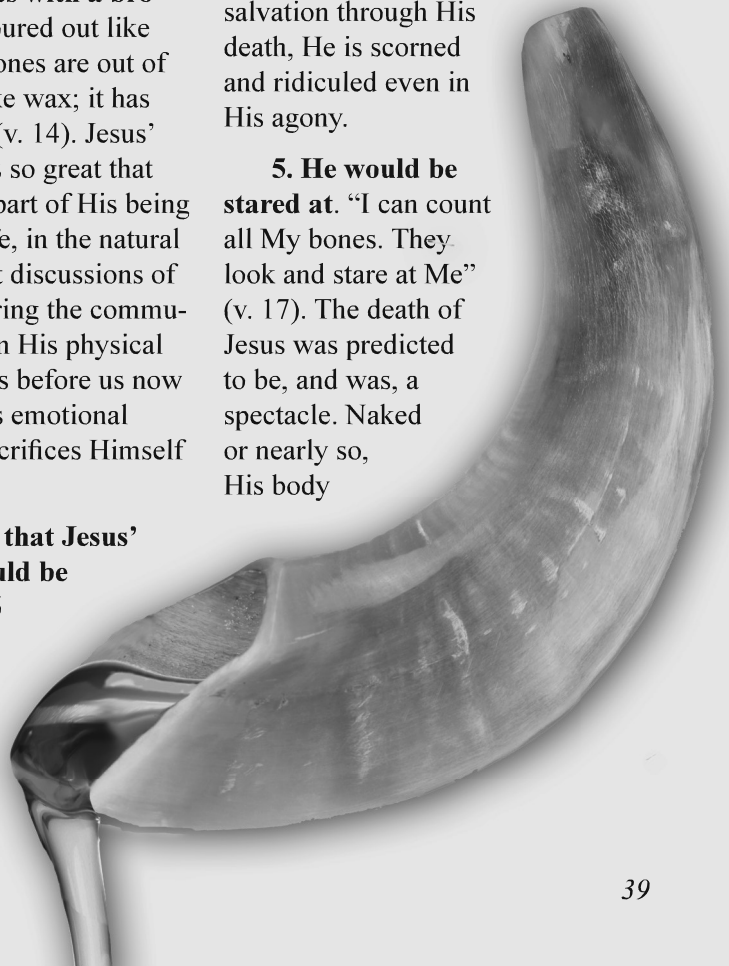
2. The Lord dies with a broken heart. "I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within Me" (v. 14). Jesus' physical suffering is so great that the very innermost part of His being "melts." Hope of life, in the natural sense, departs. Most discussions of the Lord's death during the communion supper focus on His physical suffering. The words before us now give insight into His emotional exhaustion as He sacrifices Himself for the world's sin.

3. It is foretold that Jesus' hands and feet would be "pierced." Verse 16 gives an interesting detail of the Lord's death, one that anticipates the Roman form of

execution, in contrast to Israel's mode, which was stoning. There is hardly any way to apply these words to David's experience.

4. The Christ was to be mocked. "All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!'" (vv. 7-8). This prediction, made a thousand years earlier, was fulfilled in amazing detail as described in Matthew 27:39-43. As Jesus affects salvation through His death, He is scorned and ridiculed even in His agony.

5. He would be stared at. "I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me" (v. 17). The death of Jesus was predicted to be, and was, a spectacle. Naked or nearly so, His body



stretched out unnaturally, blood, sweat, flies, groaning, it was a scene that riveted the eyes of all who were there, and we need to mentally stare back, remembering what our salvation cost.

6. The Messiah's garments would be divided and lots cast for them. "They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots" (v. 18). It is quite difficult to see how David could have been speaking of His experience. Again, there is quite a contrast between the tender love Jesus expresses from the cross and the hardness of the soldiers, more or less gambling for the only thing of value they see in Jesus.

The psalmist's own response in a time of suffering, when God seems to be absent, is typical of Jesus' experience the day of His torture and death. It begins with an expression of feeling forsaken, then turns to recall God's previous deliverances of His people and then evolves into a plea for God's help. Finally, there is a promise of future praise of God's deliverance.

The psalm foretells Jesus' loss of human dignity due to ridicule. It speaks of the physical effects of fear, terror, and anxiety. And, it describes a deteriorating body, including the impact upon the heart, bones, hands, and feet. A totally broken man, physically, is depicted.

Three Complimentary Psalms

It has been suggested that Psalm 22 is the first of three complimentary psalms that describe the work and offices of our Lord.



The tombs of the kings was believed to have been at this site in Jerusalem before the Romans turned it into a quarry.

- Psalm 22 The suffering Savior (cross)
- Psalm 23 The living Shepherd (crook)
- Psalm 24 The exalted Sovereign (crown)

Psalm 110: Jesus Is Both King and Priest

This psalm begins, "The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." David is believed to have written this psalm, and he speaks of Jehovah (LORD) speaking to his (David's) Lord. David, at the time, was king. So, to whom would Jehovah be speaking, who was higher in authority than the king? It had to be the messianic future king.

The New Testament record makes this conclusion obvious in several ways.

- As an angel announces the birth of Jesus to the shepherds, he says the one to be born is to be a "Savior" and "Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).
- Jesus Himself referenced this part of Scripture in a dialogue with the Pharisees about the nature and person of the Mes-

siah. The Pharisees had said the Messiah was to be the "son of David," likely focusing only upon the ancestral blood line. Jesus then asks them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool?' If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" (Matt. 22:41-46). Jesus sought to show them from the psalm that the Messiah would also be God's son, deity.

- The apostles also used this psalm to teach about Jesus in their preaching. In Acts 2:34-36, Peter used it to establish the lordship of the Messiah who had been slain for the sins of the world. He said, "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.' Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

This One Was King and Priest

Another obviously messianic indicator in this psalm is seen in the fact that the one portrayed was not only Lord and king, but also a "priest." None of Israel's kings ever legally combined these offices, though some made failed attempts. God's promise to David (2 Sam. 7:12-16) necessarily kept the kingship within the tribe of Judah and the priesthood was linked by covenant with the tribe of Levi.

The only model or precursor for this combination of offices was

Melchizedek, who lived in Abraham's time, before the covenant with Israel (Gen. 14:18-24; Heb. 6:20-8:6).

This could be no ordinary human king. God was inviting this person to sit at His own side. The New Testament teaches it was Jesus who so sat (Acts 2:33, 7:56; Heb. 1:3).

Human, Levitical priests could serve only a few years. The priest in view here is to serve "forever." Again, only Jesus fulfills the picture.

Work of the Messiah Foretold

Sitting at the right hand of God, ruling and reigning, as well as acting as mediator-priest, can speak of no one else but Jesus, after His resurrection and ascension to the Father. These roles continue "till I make your enemies your footstool."

This is spoken of further in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

Psalm 16: Confidence beyond the Grave

This psalm of David expresses the king's total trust in God, not only for the present, but for the unforeseen future. He speaks of God as the foundation of His inheritance, calls upon the Lord to preserve Him.

In particular, the psalmist says, "My flesh also will rest in hope." The underlying reason given for that hope is then declared. He writes, "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will you allow Your Holy One to see corruption."

Just what did the writer mean?

In Acts 2:25ff, David's words are applied to Jesus. David's "hope" was not immediately made reality, because he died and the audience in Jerusalem knew where David's tomb and remains were located. However, Peter explains that fulfillment came via David's offspring—the Christ. Thus, the resurrection of Jesus was what David spoke of and what, therefore, is the basis of David's hope and confidence in God.

Peter goes on to preach remission of sins available in Jesus' name. The apostle Paul later would elaborate at length on the connection between Jesus' resurrection, salvation from sin, and every believer's hope for his own future resurrection (1 Cor. 15).

Homework and Questions

Be sure to do your homework because what you discover will become part of our study and discussion during class.

1. List six things prophesied about Jesus on the cross, found in Psalms 22. _____

2. What can we learn about how to react to suffering from Psalm 22? _____

3. Do you think Psalm 22 is about:
 David's suffering Explain your answer in class. _____
 Jesus' suffering _____
 Both _____
4. Give at least two reasons why you believe Psalm 110 had to be speaking of Jesus. _____

5. Explain how the existence of David's tomb and remains meant the fulfillment of Psalm 16 had to be explained in Jesus. _____
