

GOOD FRIDAY 2010

"Flash Forward"

Psalm 22:22-31

We're all familiar with the expression, "My life flashed before my eyes." Some of you may even have experienced it.

Car crash survivors claim this extraordinary phenomenon happens in the moments during the crash. Time slows down and the person's entire life is replayed in flash images through their mind.

The images are seen as very quick pictures, and the experience can be recalled after the incident. Thousands of people around the world have reportedly had the life flash before my eyes experience.

Another strange occurrence that is attached to the life-flash-before-my-eyes phenomenon is that no sound can be heard. Everything is said to go completely silent. It is likened to sitting in a very dark cinema with only pictures flashing on the screen.

I see something like that happening with Jesus on the Cross in the closing verses of Psalm twenty-two. Only instead of seeing His life leading up to the Cross flash before His eyes, He seems to see His future life. He sees what will occur as a result of His death on the Cross.

What He sees is nothing short of marvelous. It is beautiful beyond our words.

Let's see if we can 'see' what Jesus saw, starting with verses twenty-two through twenty-six.

Psalms 22:22 I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

Psalms 22:23 You who fear the Lord, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!

Psalms 22:24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.

Psalms 22:25 My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.

Psalms 22:26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; Those who seek Him will praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever!

Jesus seems to be seeing Himself in the future “in the midst of the assembly” with His “brethren,” the “descendants of Jacob,” the “offspring of Israel,” gathered together in the “great assembly” praising the Lord.

This is a post-resurrection vision of the accomplishments of the Cross. Jesus saw a future time in which those who were crucifying Him would instead assemble with Him to praise the Lord.

Here is how this works out historically. His “brethren,” “the descendants of Jacob,” rejected Him at His first coming and the result was the Cross.

As a result of their national rejection of Jesus as their promised Messiah, there has been a pause in God’s dealings with Israel. As the apostle Paul stated at the end of the Book of Acts,

Acts 28:28 "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"

This is the time in which we live, called elsewhere “the fulness of the Gentiles.” The Gospel is going out to Jew and Gentile alike and the Lord is gathering a great congregation. When that congregation, which is the church, reaches its fulness, then Jesus will come to rapture and resurrect the saints of this time. We understand this return to be imminent, meaning it could occur at any moment with nothing that needs to be fulfilled before He comes.

After the saints of the church age are resurrected and raptured and safe in Heaven, in the place Jesus has been gone preparing for us, a seven-year period of time begins during which the Lord turns His attention back onto Israel. It’s the Great Tribulation. Jesus will call to those dwelling on the earth and multitudes will be saved - but most of them will be martyred.

The Great Tribulation ends with His Second Coming. At that coming all Israel will look upon Him whom they pierced and be saved (Zechariah 12:10).

All these saints were being seen by Jesus - all this great assembly that come out of the Cross.

As a devotion tonight, look at verse twenty-six again. Jesus saw “the poor eat[ing] and be[ing] satisfied.”

That’s you and me! Jesus saw **you**, a spiritual pauper, an impoverished beggar, shut-out from the banquet of salvation. By His death and resurrection you were invited to the feast.

“Those who seek Him” accept this invitation by grace through faith and are saved. Their “heart[s]” - your hearts - “live forever!”

This, then, is what Jesus saw in His flash forward. He saw **you**, saved and satisfied.

Scholars suggest that the closing verses of Psalm twenty-two have a change in the speaker. Instead of being the words of David or Jesus the Holy Spirit speaks.

His commentary reveals the conditions that will exist during the period of time we refer to as the Kingdom of God on earth, or as the Millennial Kingdom.

It is that period of time that begins with the Lord’s Second Coming and lasts for one-thousand years.

Listen to its general description.

Psalms 22:27 All the ends of the world Shall remember and turn to the Lord, And all the families of the nations Shall worship before You.

Psalms 22:28 For the kingdom is the Lord’s, And He rules over the nations.

Psalms 22:29 All the prosperous of the earth Shall eat and worship; All those who go down to the dust Shall bow before Him, Even he who cannot keep himself alive.

Psalms 22:30 A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation,

Psalms 22:31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, That He has done this.

This is clearly a description of conditions after the age in which we are living but prior to eternity. I say prior to eternity because in verse twenty-nine men are still described in terms of their mortality.

It's the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus will rule and reign from Jerusalem. It will be characterized by three things:

1. It will be characterized by revival, world-wide revival, as "all the families of the nations shall worship before" Jesus.
2. It will be characterized by "righteousness" as the Lord imposes the precepts and principles of the kingdom of God.
3. It will be characterized by the "recounting" of the Person and work of Jesus from generation to generation, or as we might say, evangelism.

The normal flash-before-your-eyes experience people report is silent. But I think if the Lord was having a flash-forward, then He heard this commentary.

Perhaps it even gave rise to His words from the Cross, "It is finished!" I suggest it because the last words of this psalm are "He has done this." It is the Hebrew equivalent of "It is finished!"

Jesus' last words, "It is finished," can be translated, *paid in full*. It is an accounting term meaning the debt is released. It is thus obviously full of theological importance.

Poetically it has been put like this: "He paid a debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay."

It's obviously a cry of triumph, but I don't think I ever thought of the joy it brought to Jesus. As He surveyed the wondrous Cross, there outside the city of Jerusalem, He saw Jerusalem as God intended it. He saw it as the

center of human government for the kingdom of God on earth and Himself the root and the offspring of David ruling from its throne.

It is always pointed-out that the first-century Jews were looking for their Messiah to come and throw-off the yoke of Roman persecution.

Well, He did. But because they were not ready to receive Him, to receive salvation, the kingdom on earth was delayed.

I wonder sometimes if I do not make a similar mistake. I so often want what is material, what is natural, what has some earthly substance. All the while Jesus is offering me something spiritual and therefore far greater.

I want Him to throw-off some yoke when He has told me that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

I don't think my life has ever flashed before my eyes, or that it ever will. But I can have a sort of flash-forward of my own as I contemplate the wonderful vision of the future that I am granted in God's Word.

The Lord is in Heaven preparing our eternal homes. He's coming for us imminently. We will be safe in Heaven, worshipping Him, while He deals with those who remain on the earth for the Great Tribulation. We will return with Him at His Second Coming to rule and reign with Him during the Millennial Kingdom. Then we will go into eternity where there will be only righteousness and no sin and where every tear will be wiped away.

Count your future blessings this Good Friday. They all stem from the Cross upon which Jesus died.

