

Unforsaken

Psalm 22:22-31

The psalmist declares, in verse twenty-one, "You have answered me."

What was the question?

Psa 22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?

What was God's answer?

Psa 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.

God did not forsake Jesus on the Cross. We can therefore see the question as somewhat rhetorical. It was the crowd at the Cross who were convinced that God had forsaken Jesus. He seemed far from helping Jesus; He seemed far from the words of His groaning.

He was not; the Cross was all part of the plan - a plan in which Jesus' death on the Cross would be accepted as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

God was, at that very moment, "in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (Second Corinthians 5:19).

Those who teach that the Father, in fact, forsook Jesus, turning His back on Him, use Second Corinthians 5:21 as their proof text:

2Co 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The argument is that, since Jesus was "made... to be sin for us," the Father had to turn His back to the Son.

What does it mean, Jesus was "made... to be sin for us?" It means, I think, He was our sin offering, our Substitute, Who took our place.

It doesn't have to mean Jesus was literally *made* sin.

Apologist Ron Rhodes stated it like this:

We conclude that the apostle Paul's intended meaning in Second Corinthians 5:21 is that Jesus was always without sin *actually*, but at the cross He was made to be sin for us *judicially*. While Jesus never committed a sin *personally*, He was made to be sin for us *substitutionally*.

Just as the righteousness that is imputed to Christians in justification is extrinsic to them, so the sin that was imputed to Christ on the cross was extrinsic to Him and never in any sense contaminated His essential nature.

Thus, Jesus was "made" our sin offering. He died instead of us, and His perfect righteousness was acceptable to pay our debt of sin.

The Cross solved the sin problem. But it doesn't end there. As a result of the Cross, Jesus is highly exalted.

Here is how the apostle Paul put it:

Php 2:7 [Jesus] made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Php 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Php 2:9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

Php 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

Php 2:11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Psalm twenty-two closes with its own description of the exaltation of Jesus to rule and to reign.

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

In the original context of the psalm, David had come through his trial, and wanted to give the glory to God. He probably called some sort of "assembly" to make his declaration.

Maybe it was the very first performance of this psalm. Opening night, as it were. In my Bible, the notation at the beginning of the psalm says, "To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Deer of the Dawn."

As to the future fulfillment of this, it looks forward to the return of Jesus, in His Second Coming, to be received by the Jews as their Messiah.

In the middle of the Tribulation, the antichrist reveals himself in an event Jesus called the abomination of desolation. The Lord warned the Jews of that generation to flee into the wilderness; to do it immediately; and, if they did, they'd be kept safe by Him supernaturally for the entire last three-and-one-half years of the Great Tribulation.

Here is that future, as seen by Zechariah:

Zec 14:1 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst.

Zec 14:2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Zec 14:3 Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.

Zec 14:4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south.

Zec 14:5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You.

The Jews will be saved:

Zec 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

In the Revelation it says,

Rev 1:7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

The Cross was the D-Day that guarantees the V-Day!

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

"Jacob" and "Israel" refer to ethnic Jews - the physical descendants of Abraham - who will be saved in that glorious Second Coming of Jesus.

Today there is a resurgence of teaching that when the New Testament mentions Israel, somehow it means all who are believers in Jesus, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

They say Jesus was the true Israel; and all who are in Him are Israel.

We reject that. The New Testament consistently maintains distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, and between Israel and the church.

God must fulfill His unconditional promises to the physical descendants of Abraham; and that's just what He is going to do through the Great Tribulation.

Psa 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.

The crowd at the Cross, thinking Jesus forsaken, were directed by Jesus to Psalm twenty-two. In the first twenty or so verses, they would see the crucifixion predicted at least a thousand years prior; and they'd see words they themselves were speaking.

A valid conclusion, to a thoughtful person, would be "God has not despised nor abhorred Jesus; He hasn't hidden His face from Him; He heard Him, and is accepting His sacrifice for my sins, and the sins of the whole world."

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

The "great assembly" probably refers to folks, in the Millennial Kingdom, who come from all over the earth, to worship the Lord. For His part, Jesus gives praise to His Father.

What "vows" will Jesus keep? It's a way of saying that He totally, completely, and absolutely fulfilled everything in God's Word. It's an amplification of His cry from the Cross, "It is finished."

William MacDonald, in his excellent *Believers Bible Commentary*, suggests that there is a change in speakers for the remaining verses of the psalm. He says, "Now the Holy Spirit speaks, describing the ideal conditions that will prevail during the peace and prosperity of the Millennium."

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

Psa 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.

Psa 22:28 For the kingdom is the LORD's, And He rules over the nations.

This is a general summary of the conditions that will prevail in the Kingdom. We will never achieve such a kingdom of men. It requires the righteous benevolent theocracy of Jesus Christ.

Psa 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.

This is simply a way of describing the frailty of human life. It is appointed to all men to die, "to go down to the dust."

No one can "keep himself alive" can also be translated, "no one can keep alive his own soul." Spiritual life is in view - a spiritual life that can only be yours by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ.

Psa 22:30 A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the
Lord to the next generation,
Psa 22:31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a
people who will be born, That He has done this.

The Kingdom of Heaven on earth is called the Millennium because it lasts one-thousand years. Multitudes will be born to human parents. There will be great need for evangelism, as folks will still need to get saved.

Jesus, on the Cross, was therefore assuring the Jews that their promised kingdom was still to come. It must be postponed, because of their rejection of Him.

But He will establish it, at His Second Coming, when all Israel is saved.