

Commentary on Psalm 22 by Chuck Smith, Palm Sunday 2025

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Next Sunday is Easter.

Breakfast starts at 8:30, please bring your food hot, ready to serve.

**Easter Worship Service 9:30 special music with The Greatest Gift,
from Waterboro, Maine**

April memory verse:

(Commandment 1)

Exodus 20:2&3

² I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

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Psalm 22 is one of those prophetic psalms which stands out probably among all of the Messianic psalms. This psalm is again a psalm of David, and it is a very graphic description of death by crucifixion. Now, at the time that David wrote this, stoning was the method of capital punishment. Actually, it was almost 1000 years later that crucifixion was introduced by the Romans as a form of capital punishment. So that David would describe death by crucifixion is sort of a miracle in itself, and yet, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he wrote graphically of the death of Jesus Christ. The very first phrase of this psalm was quoted by Jesus on the cross. As Jesus cried out,

My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Psa 22:1)

In that cry of Jesus from the cross, we understand more completely the agony in the garden, as He was seeking to, if possible, escape the cross. For in the garden we read that He was praying, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, Thy will be done" (Matthew 26:39). And that thrice repeated prayer in the garden, sweating as it were great drops of blood to the ground. The agony of Christ in the garden is explained of the cry of Christ on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But He was forsaken of God for a moment. And the reason for His being forsaken is given to us in this psalm in verse 3. But He was forsaken by God for a moment in order that you would not have to be forsaken by God eternally. He was forsaken by God when God placed upon Him the iniquities of us all. He bore the penalty of our sin.

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You see, sin always results in separation from God. God said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Talking about spiritual death, where man's spirit is separated from God. Now when the Bible talks about death, as a general rule, it is talking about spiritual death which is the separation of a man's soul and spirit from God. We talk about death when a man's soul and spirit are separated from his body, but you may be walking around, all of your body motor functions working, and seem to be very much alive, but God looks at you and says, "Hey, you're dead." Your soul and spirit are separated from God; your spirit is dead. "You," Paul said, "hath He made alive who were dead in your trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1).

So here we see when Jesus took upon Himself all of our sin, because sin does separate from God, as Isaiah the prophet said in chapter 59, "God's hand is not short that He cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that He cannot hear, but your sins have separated you from God." Always the result or the effect of sin. So when God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. The cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

So Jesus identifies this psalm. Maybe He was trying to give a hint to the disciples, "Go back home and read the psalm, you'll know what's going on. Read the whole thing, you'll understand what is happening." The rabbis would often in those days just give you the first verse of a psalm and expect you to go home and do your homework, read the whole thing. Maybe Jesus was following one of their methods, just giving them the first verse of the psalm, knowing that then they would then go search out the whole psalm.

My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, and thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent (Psa 22:1-2).

Remember that darkness covered the land, and so crying in the day, crying in the night, the darkness. But the reason why the separation, forsaken:

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of Israel (Psa 22:3).

The holy God could not be in fellowship with sin. It is impossible that a holy God be one with sin. And the word *fellowship* means a oneness, a community, a commonness. When God placed upon Jesus the sins of us all, it brought that separation. "For Thou art holy," the reason for His being forsaken.

Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and you delivered them. They cried, and they were delivered: they trusted, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; I am a reproach of men, and despised of the people (Psa 22:4-6).

This, of course, was prophesied in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, how He would be despised and rejected of men. "A reproach of men, I am despised of the people."

Commentary on Psalm 22 by Chuck Smith, Palm Sunday 2025

All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake their head, saying, He trusted in the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him (Psa 22:7-8).

Remember the high priest and all when Jesus was hanging on the cross, they said, "Ha ha! He trusted in the Lord to deliver Him. Now let Him come down if He is truly the Messiah, and we will worship Him." All of these things.

But thou art he that took me out the womb: you did make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly (Psa 22:9-10).

Now, again, where does consciousness, or where does life begin? If there is indeed something within the plants of some form of primitive understanding, or maybe it is highly sophisticated, more highly than we are. Who knows? They have found that there is quite a consciousness of the child in the fetal state. That from, about the twelfth week the child begins to have very normal functions, sleeping, the awake times. If the mother yells, it might wake up the child. Runs down the stairs, the baby wakes up and kicks. And at that point it begins to recognize the mother's voice, and that is why the child is always more comfortable with the mother than even with the grandmother when it is first born. Because it is used to the mother's voice; it has been hearing it for sixth months. After the third month the child begins to hear the mother's voice. "Thou art my God from my mother's belly." And so it speaks really of an awareness, a consciousness. "You did make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast."

Be not far from me; for my trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: the strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion (Psa 22:11-13).

Now, again, descriptive of the cross:

I am poured out like water (Psa 22:14),

Remember when they thrust the spear in His side, there came forth blood and water.

all my bones are out of joint (Psa 22:14):

One of the things that takes place during crucifixion, as a person is hanging there, and usually held there by the spikes, your muscles after awhile begin to fatigue and give way. And when your muscles give way, your body begins to drop and actually the joints, because the muscles have fatigued, the joints begin... your body begins to fall out of joint, actually, from the hanging there. And this description of all my bones are out of joint, of course, the excruciating pain of the joints loosening, often killed the prisoner.

my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue (Psa 22:14-15)

Commentary on Psalm 22 by Chuck Smith, Palm Sunday 2025

That thirst, that horrible thirst that you receive when you are hanging there, and through the sweat your body liquids are dissipated. Then you get that horrible thirst, the dry mouth, the cotton taste.

my tongue cleaves to my jaws; for thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet (Psa 22:15-16).

Now, the Jehovah Witnesses seek to teach us that Jesus was crucified on a pole, that the cross is actually the pagan Tou symbol, and so the church is actually worshipping a pagan symbol. They tell this to all of their poor deceived people. And they then quote from a sixteenth century book and show them the pictures of this sixteenth century book written by a monk in which he describes the struttural, the pole, and the many methods of crucifixion of the Roman government. And he shows the picture of this man who is crucified on a pole, his hands above his head, one spike through his hands, and then, of course, the one spike through his feet. And they say that the church, in picturing Christ on a t-shaped cross, actually the pagan symbol Tou, and the whole church is following Babylonian paganism and so forth; the whole church is Babylon. We are the only ones that tell you the truth. And they deceive the people. It is interesting that in the New Testament it speaks about the nails, plural, in His hands. The nails, plural, in His hands.

"They pierced My hands and My feet." What the Jehovah Witnesses didn't tell the people is that this same sixteenth century author and the book that they take the picture from, and they quote him, supposedly translating the Latin that is there, they don't tell the people that they have mistranslated the Latin that is there, and on two pages further on the book, he has the t-shaped cross. And he says this no doubt is the kind of the cross that Jesus was crucified on, because it refers to their nailing the nails through His hands and His feet. And they don't tell the people that they have deceived them. They have taken one page of the book, mistranslated the Latin from it, and a couple of pages later, the same author in the same book shows the type the cross that we usually think of when we think of the cross, and says "This no doubt is the shape of the cross that Jesus was crucified on." But that's what I say, they are... I feel sorry for the people that are deceived. It is the leaders in New York that are going to have to really answer to God for the deception of these poor people around the United States, keeping them in deception and darkness. My heart goes out to them.

I may tell all my bones: for they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture (Psa 22:17-18).

Now you remember when Jesus was crucified, they tore His garment, divided it into four, but with the coat they said, "Oh this coat is nice. It been woven all the way from the top to the bottom without any seam. Let's not tear it; let's cast lots to see whose this will be." So here it was prophesied. Now Schoenfield, who is called a scholar by many of those men who like to pat each other on the back and tell each other how brilliant they are, declared that the whole Passover, crucifixion of Jesus was a gigantic plot that Jesus set up. And that the disciples had spiked the vinegar that they finally put to His

Commentary on Psalm 22 by Chuck Smith, Palm Sunday 2025

lips, to put Him in a swoon so that they would think that He was dead. And that after they had buried Him, of course, the disciples came and whisked Him away. And it was just all a big plot, and Jesus set the whole thing up. He deliberately angered them. He deliberately set the whole thing up so that He actually plotted the whole crucifixion and everything else. And it was just a big, gigantic plot of Jesus. Well, it was very ingenious of Jesus to somehow get the soldiers to go along with the plot and not to tear His robe, but to cast lots for it. That was very clever of Him indeed. And even to get the high priest to go along and say, "Oh, He saved others, Himself He cannot save. If He is the Son of God, then let Him come down. He said He delights in Him, okay, if God wants Him then let Him save Him." Schoenfield just turns out to be a liar like so many others and his book of fraud. And it turns out that Schoenfield's book is the fraud, not Jesus. As is always the case.

But in one sense, of course, it was a plot, and Jesus was a part of the plot. It was a plot that was hatched by God before the foundations of the earth. For Christ was crucified before the foundations of the earth. "You, according to God's predetermined council and foreknowledge, with your wicked hands have crucified and slain" ([Acts 2:23](#)). You see, when Peter talks about the cross, he talks about prophecy, the foreknowledge of God. Yes, it was a plot. God plotted it a long time ago, and Jesus carried it out. But it is your salvation and it is my salvation.

But be not far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the wild oxen ([Psa 22:19-21](#)).

Now on the altars they had on each corner of an altar a horn, a single horn going up as the horn of a wild oxen. And when they were really desperate and really wanting to cry out unto God, they go unto the altar and they'd grab hold of the horns of the altar. You remember when Joab, the general of David was... after David, when he was dying he said to Solomon, "Now Joab has spilt so much blood, now take care of him. Don't let his old gray head go down to the grave in peace." And so when Solomon was doing the cleanup for David, after David's death, he ordered them to bring Joab, because of all of the innocent blood that he had shed, in order that he might give his life. And Joab ran into the altar and he grabbed hold of the horns of the altar. And the guy came back and said, "He is holding on to the horns of the altar." Well, when they were really desperate they would run in and grab hold of the horns of the altar, and there they would pray and intercede unto God.

I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee. Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard ([Psa 22:22-24](#)).

God heard Jesus when He cried.

Commentary on Psalm 22 by Chuck Smith, Palm Sunday 2025

My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: and shall praise the LORD. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD (Psa 22:25-27):

Now the salvation that went out to the Gentiles is predicted.

with all the families of the nations they'll worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. And all they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him (Psa 22:27-29):

So the intimation of the resurrection. "Even those that have gone down into the dust of the earth, shall bow before Him." In Philippians we read, "God has given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow," every knee shall bow, "and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father." So God has given to Him the kingdom. The kingdom is the Lord's. He is the governor.

and all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: none can keep his own soul alive. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this (Psa 22:29-31).

And so the gospel has come to us, of the glorious work of Jesus Christ in His death for our sins. The fulfillment of Psalm 22.