

Calvary in the Light of Psalm 22

By Lyle W. Lange

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Introduction

Psalm 22 has often and properly been called “the Holy of Holies of the Psalter.” It is the noblest of the Passion Psalms. By inspiration of the Holy Ghost Christ gave His people of both the Old and New Testaments an “inside” view of His vicarious suffering for our sin. As we study Psalm 22, we are struck by the intensity of our Savior’s suffering His physical suffering was great. Greater still was the deep spiritual suffering which He felt in His soul. This far surpassed all bodily suffering. The reason for it St. Paul clearly stated: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21). In what this suffering consisted no man on earth can fathom nor is the human vocabulary able adequately to describe and depict it. In Psalm 22 we come face to face with the terrible consequences of our sin and the blessed, comforting revelation of God’s love for us sinners. Truly God’s love surpasses all understanding. As we study this Psalm may the Holy Ghost lead us in contrition to the foot of our savior’s cross, and there may He comfort and strengthen us with the good news that our Savior truly has paid for all our sins.

Typical Or Direct?

The first question we must face is whether Psalm 22 is typical or direct Messianic prophecy. Very few of the older exegetes denied the Messianic character of this Psalm. Only Theodore of Mopsuestia (428), the most notable representative of the Antiochian school of exegesis, denied its Messianic nature. All the other early writers recognized it. Many modern exegetes tend to favor the personal interpretation, referring the Psalm to one person, such as, Job, David, (cf. Kissane); the ideal interpretation, making the Psalm a statement of the things which would befall the ideal righteous man (cf. Hengstenberg); or as the national interpretation, referring the experiences related here to post-exilic Israel (cf. Bittenwieser). Yet, quite often their prejudices prevent them from realizing the Messianic nature of Psalm 22.

As we address ourselves to the question of typical or direct, we will bear in mind the hermeneutical admonition to guard against minimizing the OT as well as reading too much into it (Do not dive into the Old Testament and come up in the New). In the final analysis, the text and context of Psalm 22 as it occurs in the OT and as it is used, quoted, and alluded to in the NT alone can determine whether Psalm 22 is typical or rectilinear. I am convinced that Psalm 22 is a direct prophecy made by Christ concerning Himself, given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through the pen of His servant, David. Only in the mouth of our Savior do these words make sense. Not only the first words but also the last words of this Psalm were spoken by our Lord on the cross. The depth of suffering and the height of victory far surpass anything David, Jeremiah, and Job experienced.

Commenting on his belief that Psalm 22 is direct Messianic prophecy, Prof. August Pieper wrote,

How little the typical interpretation serves one’s purpose. Delitzsch himself discloses, when he says: “In Psalm 22, however, David descends, with his complaint, into a depth that lies beyond the depth of his affliction, and rises, with his hopes, to a height that lies beyond the height of the reward of his affliction.” And it is a completely unsuccessful attempt at justifying the typical interpretation when Delitzsch has recourse to the poetical use of the hyperbole and that this exaggeration is made use of by the Spirit of God, who changes it into the prophetic. With this explanation the Psalmist inspired by the Holy Spirit is made into a fibbing babbling (*zum flunderden Schwaetzer*).¹

Other exegetes who favor the direct Messianic interpretation are Luther, who called this Psalm “a prophecy of Christ’s death and resurrection,”ⁱⁱⁱ Stoeckhardt, Leupold, and Lenski (Eisenach Old Testament Selections). Prof. Paul Peters, Prof. emeritus at our Wis. Lutheran Seminary, also listed Psalm 22 as directly Messianic.ⁱⁱⁱ

Thus, the Holy Spirit furnished the believers of the OT and the NT with a personal account of the Savior’s suffering, given by God’s suffering Servant Himself. In this Psalm we find details recorded and insights given that even the evangelists of the NT do not record for us. Truly the NT sheds light on Psalm 22. Just as surely Psalm 22 sheds light on the accounts of the four Gospels. We precede not only to view Psalm 22 in the light of Calvary, but also *Calvary – In the Light of Psalm 22*.

Strophic Outline and Homiletical Approach

Psalm 22 follows the pattern of the psalms of Lamentation. The introduction consists of a question addressed to God as to why He will not help. In the body of the Psalm we find the Sufferer describing His distress. The conclusion of the Psalm expresses the certainty that His prayer has been granted.

A number of symmetrical strophic divisions have been suggested for this Psalm. The divisions suggested here have the purpose of making it possible to use Psalm 22 as a basis for a Lenten series. Seven divisions are suggested, making it possible to use this Psalm for six midweek Lenten services and for Good Friday. It is unfortunate that more use is not made of Psalm 22 during the Lenten season. Portions of it are alluded to in Lenten series based on NT texts. Yet, I have not read a series based entirely on Psalm 22, even though there is plenty of material in this Psalm to preach on. R.E. Golladay in his *Lenten Sermon Outlines* includes an Old Testament Gospel Series based on Isaiah, and an autobiographical series entitled, *Jesus Speaks During His Trial*. A Lenten series on Psalm 22 would certainly fit under both headings, OT Gospel series and autobiography.

In preaching on Psalm 22 care would have to be taken not to produce a “cliff-hanger” series where we would “wait until next week” to see if the Sufferer makes it or not. Even from the beginning the “outcome” never is in question. Leupold entitles Psalm 22 “The Victorious Sufferer.” The triumphant faith of the suffering Savior and His resurrection form the background from which the entire text is viewed. If care is taken to preach the text, instead of using the text as a pretext, reduplication and repetition can be avoided.

Luther’s remarks on preaching on the passion of our Savior, quoted by Golladay, are to the point:

To preach the passion of Christ our Lord properly, it is not sufficient to read the narrative to the people, but we must add admonition and instruction, that they may realize and remember why Christ suffered thus, and in what way they are benefited by His passion. The method pursued by the Papists...which was only calculated to arouse the emotions of the people and to fill them with pity and lamentation, must be rejected as utterly useless... if we attentively consider the preaching of the apostles and prophets, we shall find a totally different method of preaching on the passion of our Lord. They did not waste words on the simple story of the event, but presented it unadorned, and pointedly and briefly. But of the meaning of this passion, and how it is effective for us if properly applied - of this they spoke repeatedly and much.^{iv}

Psalm 22 has two general divisions: (We follow the Hebrew numbering of the verses)

- 2-22: Forsaken By God
- 23-32: Delivered By God

Theme: Christ Is Victorious In His Passion

- 2-6: Christ asks why God has forsaken Him, as He has never forsaken His people in the past.

- 7-11: Christ relates the scornful treatment experienced at the hands of His enemies and turns to God Who had always helped Him.
- 12-14: Christ relates the danger threatening from His enemies and pleads, for Gods help.
- 15-19: Christ relates the extremity of His suffering and its cause.
- 20-22: Christ pleads for God’s help and triumphantly declares God has heard Him.
- 23-27: Christ proclaims His deliverance to His brethren and calls upon then to praise God for their salvation.
- 28-32: Christ proclaims that His righteousness will be declared to all the world from generation to generation.

Introduction

(Note: we follow the AMR numbering of the verses)

1. “For the choir director, concerning the Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.”

This Psalm was written by King David. The *lamed* indicates authorship (*lamed auctoris*). This Psalm was intended for the “choir director.” The word is the participle of *niseah*: to lead in music. Hence, the choir director. David put the Psalm into the hands of the choir director with the intent and purpose that he might rehearse it with the Levitical choirs and so introduce it to Israel for public worship. According to 1 Chron. 15, six directors were set over the basses and eight over the tenors. Henan, Asaph, and Ethan were over them all, leading with cymbals. Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was in charge of the singing.

The designation “*al-aijeleth ha shahar*” either means “according to the tune - the Doe of the Dawn” or “concerning the Doe of the Dawn.” The former translation would take “Doe of the Dawn” as a melody used to sing the Psalm to. The latter expression would consider “the Doe of the Dawn” the subject matter of the Psalm. Luther and Stoeckhardt favor this view. Luther translates, “Of the Hind which was hunted to death early in the morning.” Luther felt the character of the Psalm leads one to think of a doe hunted to death in the early morning. He thus viewed this as a description of Christ’s suffering. While this cannot be proven conclusively, I am inclined to agree with him. Thus the translation, “Concerning the Doe of the Dawn.”

Strophe 1 (2-6)

2. My God, If God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are the words of my crying so far from obtaining help for Me?
3. My God, I call for help by day, but a You don’t answer; also by night, but I have no rest.
4. But you are holy, dwelling among the praises of Israel.
5. Our fathers trusted You; they trusted you and You delivered them.
6. They cried to You and were delivered; they trusted in You and were not disappointed.

Parallelism*: 2a = 2b; 3a = 3b; 4a // 4b; 5a // 5b; 5b = 6a; 6a = 6b.

2. The first words of this Psalm are the same words that Jesus spoke on the cross. It should be stated at the very outset that Jesus did not merely adapt these words to His need. As Lenski stated: “It is not due to the fact that David wrote this line that Christ made it His cry on the cross, but because Christ would thus cry out on the cross David wrote it as a prophet.”^v Only the Holy Spirit could have led David to place at the head of this Psalm Christ’s cry of agony on the cross.

* = synonomous

// synthetic

≠ antithetic

Matthew and Mark record these words of Jesus in the NT (Matt. 27:46 and Mark 15:34). Jesus spoke these words in Aramaic. Thus He did not use ܘܢܝܢܘܒܘܬܘܢܝܘܢ but ܘܢܝܢܘܒܘܬܘܢܝܘܢ which is the Targum word for the former. A comparison of the texts of Matthew and Mark seems to set forth differing versions of these words.

Matthew: **Ηλι ηλι λεμα σαβαχθανι; τουτ' εστιν, Θεέ μου θεέ, ινατί με εκγατέλιπες;**

Mark: **Ελωι ελωι λεμα σαβαχθανι; ο εστιν μεθερμνευόμενον Ὁ θεός μου ὁ θεός μου, εις τί ἐγ κατέλιπές με;**

Yet, there are no problems. *Eli* is the Hebrew word, retained in the present text of the Targum. *Eloi* is Aramaic. The best MSS. have *Eloi* in Matthew also. In the old Greek *Theos* is usual for the vocative as in the NT. Matthew adopts the vocative form *Thee*. *Eis ti* and *inati* both mean the same thing: why. The *prosches moi* (attend to Me) of the LXX is evidently an insertion, as neither the Gospels nor the Hebrew text give warrant for it.

Christ cries out: My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" the "why" (ܘܢܝܢܘܒܘܬܘܢܝܘܢ) is emphatic.^{vi} Matthew and Mark indicate that Christ spoke these words about the ninth hour, after darkness had enveloped the earth from 12 to 3 P.M.^{vii} A sign wrought in the sun by God indicated what was transpiring on Calvary. The impossible had become fact: Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, was forsaken by God. We are here dealing with a mystery which transcends all understanding. It is no wonder Luther shut himself up for three days and nights, existing only on bread, when he interpreted this Psalm.

What elicited this cry from our Savior? It was not the physical agony He endured, great as it was. Rather, God had taken the sins of the world and placed them on Christ. (II Cor. 5:21; Is. 53:6) Christ thus experienced God's just verdict of condemnation, having taken on Himself the sins of all. God had withdrawn from Him every token of grace and comfort. He no longer felt a ray of divine mercy. Our Substitute suffered the wages of our sins. As Peter wrote, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross" (1 Peter 2:24). Isaiah had written: "After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities" (Is. 53:11 NIV). Christ suffered the torments of hell we had earned.

The question is raised, How could the Son of God suffer? The answer lies in the mystery of the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ. Chemnitz observed:

Because of the hypostatic union of the two natures, whether the person is called God or man, the entire person, which consists of the divine and human natures, must be understood. For the attributes of the natures are communicated to the person in the concrete sense of the word.^{viii} Scripture attributes those things which are the properties of the human nature not only to Christ as man but also to Christ as God, and conversely those things which are properties of the deity are attributed in Scripture not only to Christ as God but also to the Son of Man.^{ix}

Concerning this question Athanasius wrote:

Did the Logos therefore not suffer? Reply: Not by nature; yet He suffered to the utmost, because He united to Himself a body which could suffer, so that the suffering is not by dispensation of the nature of the Logos. For the Logos suffered by the dispensation of the union, but not in the nature of the deity.^{x,xi}

Christ, the Son of God, did suffer for us. If only His human nature suffered, as Zwingli sought to establish with his alloiosis, then He could not have saved us. As Luther observed: "For if I believe this that only the human nature has suffered for me, then Christ is to me a poor Savior, then He Himself indeed needs a Savior."^{xii} "We

Christians must know that if God is not also in the balance, and gives weight to the scale, we sink to the bottom.”^{xiii}

How could Christ, Who had so carefully outlined for His disciples His redemptive work, cry out “Why” on the cross? The answer must lie in our Savior’s exinanition. Jesus revealed that in His humiliation the hour of judgment was hidden from Him (Matt. 24:36). So also, while He suffered the torments of hell for us He cried out “why?” To act as our Substitute He had laid aside the full use of His attributes. Yet, His cry was not a cry of despair. It was a triumphant cry of faith. Even when forsaken by God, He still clung to Him in faith, crying, “My God, My God.” This triumphant faith Jesus reveals in the rest of His prayer. He says, “Why are the words of My crying so far from obtaining help for Me?” Literally, the second stich reads “Far off my deliverance the words of my groaning.” הַנִּשְׁעָרִים ^{xiv} comes from the verb לָשַׁעַר . The root means to roar (as a lion). It was also used in the noun to refer to the cry of a wretched person wrung forth by grief. הַנִּשְׁעָרִים means salvation, coming from the root שָׁעַר , to save. It corresponds to $\sigma\omega\zeta\omega$ in the NT. The basic idea is that of deliverance from danger. The Sufferer raises the question of why His words have not obtained the help He sought.

3. This verse repeats the thought of the previous verse. The Sufferer reminds God that He continually has besought Him for help. Yet, He receives no reply, no surcease from agony. The question is raised as to when Christ cried “by day and by night.” It is true that the Gospels do not record such prayers for us. Yet, it can also be surmised that the heart of the Savior was, according to His custom, in constant communion with His Father during the depths of His suffering. The author of Hebrews tells us: “During the days of Jesus, life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the One who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what He suffered and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (Heb. 5:7-9). The agony of Christ in Gethsemane culminated in His forsakenness on the cross. This is “the cup of suffering” He contemplated on Maundy Thursday, and drank to the bitter dregs on Good Friday. The $\alpha\nu\epsilon\beta\acute{o}\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu\dots\phi\omega\nu\eta\ \mu\epsilon\gamma\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta$ (Matt. 27:46) and also the $\kappa\rho\alpha\nu\gamma\eta\ \iota\sigma\chi\upsilon\rho\acute{\alpha}$ of Heb. 5:7 (which I do not believe refers exclusively to the passion in Gethsemane) calls to mind the הַנִּשְׁעָרִים of 2b. When Christ’s passion reached its climax, days and nights of wrestling in prayer had preceded it. The great cry which proceeded from His lips was an outgrowth of His great struggle in prayer, seen in Gethsemane, intensified on Calvary.

All of this was part of His “learning obedience.” Though forsaken He persisted in prayer. He did not give up nor despair. He obeyed the will of His Father to the letter. What Christ was experiencing was “out of character” for a faithful God. Even though God had forsaken Him, Christ knew the victory had to be His, as God is faithful to His promises.

4-6. These verses show us that Christ’s hope was anchored in the holiness and faithfulness of God. “But you are holy”, Christ prays. שִׁדְדָּךְ (in the LXX and NT ἅγιος) conveys the idea of position or relationship as existing between God and man. God is holy. From His nature, position, and attributes He is set apart and to be revered as distinct from all others. He is pure from every thought or deed of evil. He is thus exempt from all the shortcomings of man. It is for this reason that Israel praises God. In the Tabernacle and Temple God was said to be enthroned above the mercy seat (cf. Ex. 25:22). Thus, the praises of Israel for blessings received are said to be the throne of God. These songs of praise acted as memorials to God’s deeds of deliverance. They were like the wings of the cherubim, upon which His presence hovered in Israel.

Because of God’s holiness Christ could therefore expect God would do as He had done in the past. As it was with the fathers, so it would be with Him. The fathers had set their hope upon God. $\text{הַבְּרִי$ (corresponds to $\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$) means to throw your cares upon someone. The faithful of the OT had placed their confidence in God, and He had always delivered them. This is what God had promised in Deut. 28 to Israel. This is what He did.

The fathers had trusted God, and they were never disappointed. $\text{שִׁבְיָ$, to put to shame, has the meaning of to fail in hope and expectation. It refers to the shame and disappointment that comes to one whose faith is

shown to be vain. The LXX uses κατασχώνω, which Paul also uses in Rom. 5:5: “And hope does not disappoint us.” Nestle lists this as an allusion to Ps. 22:6. All of Scripture makes it very clear: Those who trust in God will not be let down. Christ also could expect that God would deliver Him, even though He was then forsaken. God had sent Him to be man’s Substitute. Therefore, God would not fail to deliver His suffering Servant.

Homiletical Outline (Following English numbering of verses)

Christ Was Forsaken For Us.

- I. He was forsaken because of our sins. (1-2)
- II. He was forsaken so we would never be forsaken. (3-5)

In the first part we may point out the cause as to why Christ was forsaken. First of all, our sins had separated us from God. We deserved to be forsaken eternally. Secondly, God in love did not want to forsake us eternally. Thus, He sent Christ to act as our Substitute. God’s love found the answer to satisfy His justice. He put all our sins on Christ, and He suffered the punishment we had earned. Thus, God reconciled the world to Himself so we could dwell eternally with Him.

In the second part we can point out the blessed results of Christ’s suffering. Christ relates God’s faithfulness as was so evident in His past dealings with Israel. He never deserted them. All who trusted in God were never disappointed. Christ also knew the victory over sin, death and hell would be His. It was, as His resurrection attests. Therefore, we can be assured that our sins were paid for in full and that God will never forsake us. Even when it may seem as if God has forsaken us, we know this cannot be. Christ was forsaken so we would never be forsaken. This hope we have will never let us down. It is guaranteed to us by our Savior’s vicarious suffering and glorious resurrection.

This fact is also of comfort to us as Pastors. When statistics sag and problems mount, let us remember that our Savior who suffered for our sins still says to us: “Lo, I am with you alway.” He most certainly is with us as we proclaim the wonders of His grace.

Strophe 2 (7-11)

7. But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by people.
8. All who see Me mock me; they open their lips wide in scorn, they wag their heads, (saying)
9. “Trust in God: Let Him deliver Him; Let Him rescue him if he delights in Him.”
10. But you are He Who took Me from the womb, Who made me feel safe at My mother’s breasts.
11. I was cast upon You from birth; You have been My God from My mother’s womb.

Parallelism: 7a = 7b; 8a = 8b; 9a // 9b; 10a // 10b; 11a = 11b

7. Christ here described the shameful treatment He was to receive at the hands of His enemies. He described Himself as “a worm and not a man.” The figure of a worm is used to designate someone who is utterly helpless and an object of contempt (cf. also Job 25:6; Is. 41:14). Thus, in His sufferings Christ appeared to His enemies utterly helpless, forsaken by God and man. He was an object of contempt for them, as was evidenced by the abuse then heaped on Him. So helpless and contemptible did Christ look to them that He appeared as “not a man.” Rather He appeared to be like a helpless worm that fills men with a feeling of contempt. He had become “a reproach of men.” This is the same as saying He was scorned by man. He was “despised by people.” The passive participle of הִזְוָה^{xv} occurs in the construct state before a genitive of cause.

These words of prophecy do not stand alone in Scripture. This is exactly the same picture the holy Spirit used 212 centuries later through the pen of Isaiah to describe God’s suffering Servant. Isaiah wrote: “This is

what the Lord says... to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation” (49:7). “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (53:3). “Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness” (52:14, NIV). All of this parallels the thoughts in our verse. It is an extremely strong way of saying how great Christ’s sufferings were. Those who saw Christ’s terrible suffering regarded it as punishment for His own sins. They persistently misunderstood His sufferings, their purpose and nature. Christ’s suffering, mistakenly regarded by the mob as punishment for His sins, was in reality His vicarious atonement for ours. For as Paul wrote: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” (Gal. 3:13).

8. The contempt felt by the mob for Christ would break forth into visible expression. All those who saw the apparently helpless state of God’s suffering Servant would join in mocking Him. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record for us the fulfillment. They relate the mockery of the mob in general, the chief priests and rulers, the soldiers and the robbers. The LXX translates “mock Me” with the word ἐκμυκτηρίζω. It means to mock, sneer, literally, turn up your nose at someone. This same word is used by Luke (23:35) in the history of the passion. Delitzsch remarked: “Fulfillment and prediction so exactly coincide, that no more adequate expressions can be found in writing the gospel history than those presented by prophecy.”^{xvi}

Those mocking the Savior open their lips wide in scorn (literally, make mouths at Him). So great is their scorn that they sneer at Him. They “wag their heads”, shaking them as a derisive gesture toward this Messiah Whom they think of as a miserable failure. The LXX use of κινέω for the Hebrew word נָנַי is again repeated in Matt. (27:38) and Mark (15:29). It is interesting to note that whereas the LXX uses a series of aorists to translate the verbs in verse 8, the Gospels follow more closely the Hebrew tenses, using present participles dependant on a verb in the imperfect for the Hebrew imperfects found in this verse. Thus the repetitive action of the Hebrew imperfects is retained over against the pictorial quality of the aorist.

9. Christ revealed here the ultimate object of His enemies’ mockery. It was His faith in God. “Trust in God!” was the advice Christ gave to all as He walked the dust of this earth. This is what He at all times practiced. Now His enemies mockingly tell Him to “practice what He preached.” “Go ahead and trust in God!”, they advise Him. “Let Him deliver Him if He really delights in Him,” they mock. They think it a forgone conclusion that God could not delight in such a Sufferer. They shared the same miserable misconception that Job’s three friends held; If things go well for you it is because you were good; if things go bad for you it must be because you were a terrible sinner. Thus, they felt God couldn’t delight in this Sufferer, as He was suffering so intensely.^{xvii}

There is a textual problem in this verse. The LXX, the Syriac, and Matthew use a finite verb in place of the imperative found in the text. For this to happen גַּל would have to be taken as an infinitive construct and substituted for the infinitive absolute, which then might be used instead of the finite verb. Yet, in poetic language, the abrupt transition from one person to another is not uncommon. Ps. 37:5 and Prov. 16:3 show the imperative to be a common idiom. גַּלֵּל really means to roll. Used with גַּל it means to transfer what is rolled away from oneself to another. Thus, the expression גַּל אֶל־יְהוָה really means to roll upon Jehovah your way, or, commit all your concerns to God.

There is also a question of whether כִּי is causal (because) or conditional (if). The LXX translates with ὅτι. Yet, Matthew uses εἰ. This would indicate the conditional thought is required.

10. What His enemies attacked, Christ asserted. “But You are He Who took Me from the womb, Who made Me feel safe at My mother’s breasts.” The כִּי־אֶתְהַלֵּךְ is emphatic. With it Christ establishes the reality of the loving relationship in which He stands with God. His enemies mocked: “Let Him rescue Him if He delights in Him.” With this emphatic turn Christ emphasizes the thought “and so it is.” God did delight in Him. This was a

fact. He could look back on His whole life and see how God had sustained Him till the present. God had been with Him from the womb onward. While He was a suckling child, God caused Him to trust in Him, thus making Him feel secure. The hiphil of **הִטְרַף** is used here. The hiphil has the causative idea. Thus, God caused Him to have faith and confidence from the very beginning. Note: again Scripture teaches that little children can believe.

11. Here Christ reasserts His relationship to God. He was cast (hophal of **הִלְפָּה**) upon God from His birth (lit., from the womb. From conception onward He was God's and God was His. Since there had always been that relationship of trust and faith, Christ in His suffering could cling to the hope that God would help Him as He had in the past (cf. the deliverance from Herod, etc.).

Homiletical Outline (Using English verse numbers)

He Trusted In God.

- I. This is what caused Him to be scorned. (6-8)
- II. This is what gave Him assurance. (9-10)

Satan is always eager to ridicule our faith. In this way he hopes to make us despair and give up the faith we have. In our text Christ related that He was an object of contempt to the people (a worm-not a man). The reason why men mocked Him was that Christ was forsaken on the cross. Satan moved the mob to ridicule Christ's trust in God, thus attempting to drive Christ to despair. Satan also tries to drive us to despair when problems arise and we feel forsaken. He still uses the scorn of the world in an attempt to achieve his goal.

Yet, Christ did not despair. He could recall the confidence God had instilled in Him since conception onward. God's faithfulness in the past was the basis of His future hope. God also has begun faith in our heart. We also have the record of His faithfulness to us. We too have this confidence: "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6).

Strophe 3 (12-14)

- 12. Don't go far away from Me, for trouble is near, for there is no one to help Me.
- 13. Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.
- 14. They come for Me with their mouths wide open, as a lion, tearing and roaring.

Parallelism: 12a // 12b; 13a // 13b; 14 // 14b.

12. Christ petitions: "Don't go far away from Me." A negative command or prohibition is expressed by the negative with the imperfect. **לֹא** is used to stress permanent prohibition (never). **עַל** is used to stress immediate prohibition (now). The **עַל** used here indicates the urgency of the petitioner's request. The urgency is stated: "For trouble is near, for there is no one to help Me." Christ is surrounded by His enemies. They threaten Him. Even though God had forsaken Him, there was no where else to turn. Christ knows that there is only one who could help - His God.

Here we view the mystery of Christ's exinanition. He had stilled the tempest, raised the dead, healed the sick. He could summon twelve legions of angels with a single request. In one of our hymns we describe Him as the "Help of the helpless" (552:1). Yet, to win our salvation He laid aside the full use of His divine powers and submitted to His enemies. He took our place under the wrath of God and was forsaken for us. All the legions of Rome together with all the demons of hell could not have nailed Christ to the cross nor kept Him there. It was His love for us that did. His love for us led Him to lay aside the full use of His power and to plead, "There is no

one to help Me.” He became weak for us, for we are powerless and helpless to save ourselves. Through His willing submission He conquered the unholy trio that held us captive.

13. Christ compares the enemies who surround Him with bulls of Bashan. Bashan was that region in northern Palestine from the Jabbok to Mt. Hermon, famous for its rich pastures and cattle. Because of the lush pasturage the bulls would be robust and vigorous. Thus, the enemies of Christ are portrayed as a herd of enraged bulls encircling their victim to cut off any escape.

14. Christ’s enemies are described in another way. פִּתּוּךָ means to tear in pieces. Hence, the idea of opening the mouth in a threatening manner like a beast of prey is derived. The literal translation “They open their mouths upon Me” could perhaps be rendered “They come at Me with their mouths wide open.” A further explanation is added: “As a lion, tearing and roaring.” As a lion attacks its prey with its teeth bared, roaring viciously, tearing at its prey, so Christ’s enemies surround Him. They act as a predatory animal, thirsty for the blood of its prey. As we read the Gospel accounts, we see this attitude displayed by Christ’s enemies. These were the shouts of “Crucify Him! Let His blood be on us and our children!” The sneers of the rulers, the mocking of the soldiers, the insults of the criminals, and the ridicule of the mob - all acting like bloodthirsty beasts of prey.

Lest we be carried away with indignation at the cruelty of Christ’s enemies, let us remember we are not spectators in arena watching a performance taking place below us. St. Paul reminds us: “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Thank God that we who were Christ’s enemies by birth have been reconciled to God through the blood of His Son and made His children by the quickening of the Holy Ghost!

Homiletical Outline (Using English numbering)

He Humbled Himself.

- I. He laid aside the full use of His divine power. (11)
- II. He willingly laid down His life. (12-13)

Many modern critics of the Bible contend Christ was simply a helpless victim of the Jewish establishment. As we look at our text, it may appear so. Yet, we must go beyond the surface impression of our text to find why Christ Who had so often before displayed His almighty power now cries out for help. The answer lies in His willing non-use of His power. He humbled Himself. Because of our sin, we are powerless to rescue ourselves. Thus, Christ took our place. To become our Substitute, He laid aside the full use of His divine powers. He had them. He just didn’t make full use of them. Thus, the “Help of the helpless” cried out for help. What an amazing display of His love: Because of His desire to gain our salvation Christ willingly laid down His life for us. This meant submitting to the power of His enemies. They had no power over Him. He gave Himself willingly (cf. John 10:17-18; 19:11). Thus, it only appeared as if His enemies had control over Him. Christ in reality was offering Himself to reconcile us to God. Thank God we are now reconciled to Him and members of His family!

Strophe 4 (15-19)

15. I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has become like wax; it is melted within Me.
16. My strength is dried up like a piece of broken pottery, and My tongue sticks to My jaws; and You bring Me into the dust of death.
17. For dogs have surrounded Me, a gang of ruffians has encircled Me; they pierced My hands and My feet.

18. I count all My bones; they feast their eyes, they gloat over Me.
 19. They divide My clothes among them and for My garment they cast lots.

Parallelism: 15a // 15b; 15c = 15d; 16a = 16b // 16c; 17a = 17b // 17c; 18a ≠ 18b; 19a = 19b

15. In this verse Christ describes the effect His sufferings have had on Him. As true man He got tired, thirsty, and thus also suffered. He tells us: “I am poured out like water.” שָׁפַךְ means to pour out. In the niph'al it could have either a reflexive or passive meaning. Here, the passive would fit: to be poured out. The idea is that the individual's strength is so dissipated that he cannot rise because of weakness. Christ's physical sufferings had sapped His strength greatly. Yet, not so greatly as being forsaken by God.

Koehler comments:

This suffering of the Holy One can be understood only if we bear in mind that the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Is. 53:6), and that in His conscience Jesus felt these sins as though they were His own; hence the agony of His soul. (Matt. 26:38). He experienced in His heart the fierceness of the wrath of God (Ps. 22:14, 15).^{xviii}

Keeping this in mind, we understand Christ's comment: “My heart has become like wax; it is melted within Me.” Truly, the greatest agony Christ bore was the punishment for our sins. This, so to speak, melted His heart within Him.

It is true that Christ's physical agony is also depicted here. Christ comments: “All My bones are out of joint.” $\text{פָּרַד$ means to separate by breaking. In the hithpa'el the rendering would be “to be put asunder.” We know that none of Christ's bones were broken (Ex. 12:46, John 19:36). His bones being out of joint must have been caused by the distorted position into which the crucifixion thrust Him.

Delitzsch and Stoeckhardt refer the phrase “My heart has become like wax” to the congestion of blood in the head and the heart, often the immediate cause of death for the crucified person. Many have felt Christ died of heart failure. Yet, Christ's death was completely voluntary. Koehler wrote:

The death of Christ was an absolutely voluntary act on His part (John 10:17-18). Men die, whether they will or not (Heb. 9:27); death is inevitable, brought on by various causes. However, when Christ bowed His head and gave up the ghost (John 19:30), it was not of physical exhaustion or any other abuse, but because He willed to die just then.^{xix}

16. Christ relates that His strength has been dried up by His suffering as a broken piece of pottery is scorched by the sun. A result of His suffering was that His tongue lacked saliva as a natural lubrication. Thus, it stuck to His jaws. John relates for us that Christ did cry out “I thirst” as He hung on the cross (John 19:28).

In the last stich Christ reveals the cause of His sufferings: “And You bring He into the dust of death.” וַעֲפָרָה and מָוֶת connected by a maqqeph, indicating the close relationship, of the words and their similarity in meaning. “To be brought down to the dust” is an idiom meaning “to be brought to the grave.” The addition of the word “death” simply adds further emphasis. שָׁפַת , to put or place, is used in the imperfect, thus emphasizing what is in the process of accomplishment.

The Sanhedrin had carefully plotted the murder of Christ. Judas carefully sought the opportunity to betray Jesus. Pilate said: “Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” (John 19:10). Yet, 1000 years before His incarnation the Savior clearly revealed why He would die on Calvary: “You bring Me into the dust of death.” This was God's will to save mankind, and this will God's Son carried out. Thus, He voluntarily submitted to His enemies to carry out His Father's will. His crucifixion did not come as a surprise. As Peter said on Pentecost: “This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge” (Acts 2:23).

17. Christ again returns to the subject of His enemies. He compares them to dogs. In the orient, troops of fierce, starving dogs who had no masters often wandered around the towns and villages. They would feed on whatever they could find (cf. 1 Kgs. 14:11; 16:4; 2 Kgs. 9:10,35). In Persia the sick and aged were frequently set outside to be devoured by these roving packs of dogs. Thus, the term dog was also applied to fierce and cruel men (cf. Ps. 59:14-15; Phil. 3:2; Rev. 22:15). By their actions Christ's enemies made themselves resemble vicious dogs on the attack.

Christ also calls His enemies “a gang of ruffians.” רָעַע means to make a loud noise. In the hiphil it means to do evil. The active participle denotes a continuing state. Thus, these men are characterized by their evil deeds. The evil that they do Christ relates: “They pierced My hands and My feet.” A thousand years before it happened, Christ speaks of the manner of His death—by crucifixion.

There is a textual problem here. Is כְּאַרְיִי to be translated as a finite verb (they pierced) or “as a lion”? “As a lion” is the translation most modern translators adopt. The question is this: 1. Is the word here a combination of the preposition and כִּי and אַרְיִי, meaning, as a lion? 2. Is the word here a form of פָּוַר, which means to dig or bore through? It is admitted that if it is a verb form, it would be a rare form, being doubly Aramaic. First, the א would have to be inserted into the participial form, after the Chaldee manner. Secondly, the form as it stands would have to be an apocapated plural, standing for אַרְיִיִם. Yet, there are a number of factors which dictate that we take this as a finite verb.

1. The translation “as a lion” does not fit the context, even if the verb of the previous stich is supplied.
2. While it is rare to have such a doubly Aramaic form; it is nevertheless acknowledged even by many scholars who choose the translation “as a lion.”
3. All of the ancient versions take it as a verb, and most in the sense of “to pierce” (cf. LXX, Jerome, Vulgate).
4. The little Masora states that this form which occurs in two different places (Ps: 22:16; Is. 38:13) has two different meanings. The translation of “as a lion” for Is. is undoubted.
5. Jacob ben Chayyim states that in the best MSS, he found a Kethib and a Qere on the word כְּאַרְיִי, כְּאַרְיִי.
6. כְּאַרְיִי is actually the reading of some MSS. The sense would be the same whether we read כְּאַרְיִי as a participle pl., or if we read אַרְיִי as the preterite of the verb.
7. The word אַרְיִי is used in verses 14 and 22 to designate lion. אַרְיִי is not used.

18. In this verse Christ relates the intensity of His suffering anti. the unsympathizing attitude of His tormentors. He said: “I count all My bones.” The intensity of His suffering coupled with the forcible stretching of His body by the crucifixion make His bones stand out. Yet, the mob has no sympathy. Both verbs in this verse have the connotation in certain contexts of looking at with pleasure. Instead of sympathizing with the Sufferer, the mob looks with pleasure on His sufferings. A reading of the Gospel accounts certainly bears this out.

19. Here Christ reached across the centuries and revealed another detail of His suffering: “They divide My clothes among them and for My garment they cast lots.” The is the inner garment worn next to the skin (cf. the χιτὼν ἄραφος Jesus wore). The אַרְיִיִם were the outer clothes. Since the enemies of Christ regard Him as good as dead, they dispose of the property He had left, His clothes. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell us this was done on Calvary. The remark “This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled” is not textually well-attested in Matthew, but there is no doubt as to its genuineness in John. He relates: “When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ‘Let’s not tear it,’ they said to one another.

‘Let’s decide by lot who will get it.’ This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said...” (John 19:23-24). This prophecy and its fulfillment is another cogent proof that Scripture was given by divine inspiration.

Homiletical Outline (Using English numbering)

Behold Christ’s Love For You:

- I. He suffered and died so you would have: life. (14-17a)
- II. He experienced shame and poverty so that you might be rich. (17b-18)

In preaching on this section we would need to be careful not to dwell on the physical sufferings of Christ so that all we elicit from our congregations is sympathy for Jesus and indignation toward His enemies. In the first part we may relate the cause of Christ’s suffering: “You bring Me into the dust of death.” Because of our sins and to pay for our sins Christ suffered. Our sins brought this suffering on Christ, and His love for us moved Him to submit to this suffering. The result is, through Christ we have life. In the second section we may point out that Christ did not demand the glory that was His. Rather, He submitted to the shame of the cross so that we could live with Him in glory. To make us wretched sinners rich with His righteousness He became poor.

Strophe 5 (20-22)

20. But You, O Lord, don’t go Far away. O My Strength, hurry to help Me.
21. Save My life from the sword, My precious life from the power of dog.
22. Save Me from the lion’s mouth - Yes, You have heard (and saved) me from the horns of the wild oxen.

Parallelism: 20a = 20b; 21a = 21b; 22a // 22b

20. Contemplating the fury of His enemies, Christ again turns to God. The “You” is emphatically placed at the beginning. Christ addresses God as Jehovah, the covenant - God of free and faithful grace. לָךְ with the imperfect again stresses the immediate urgency of the request. Christ pleads for the nearness of God, a comfort He does not have when forsaken by God. He addresses God as His Strength (i.e., Source of My strength), pleading for quick help. Though forsaken by God for our sins He turns to Him for help.

21. Christ prays that God would save His life from the sword. He pictures death as imminent as a sword hanging over His head. The word נַפְשִׁי has the meaning of soul (ψυχή). It is the animating principle of the body as well as the personal center of desire, inclination, and appetite. It is often used in expressions which either relate to the loss or preservation of life. Thus, the translation “save My life.” Yet, we also need to emphasize that Christ, as true man, had both a body and a soul. Apollinaris denied that Christ had assumed a rational soul, an error that was condemned already in the early Church.

The parallelism of the second member reasserts the plea of the first. Christ’s enemies had been referred to as dogs before. He now prays for deliverance from the power of His enemies, whom He had willingly submitted. הַיְחָדָה (LXX: μονογενῆ) has the basic meaning of “the only one, that which is most dear.” It is used in the sense of an only child or also of one forsaken. Many prefer the latter meaning here, feeling Christ is referring to His being forsaken by God. Yet, the parallelism of the verses would seem to indicate the first meaning is preferable. We have only one soul, and thus it is both precious and dear.

The sufferings of Christ were a great trial for His human nature. Since Christ’s human nature was real, His sufferings also were very real. Chemnitz wrote:

We must consider the emphasis of the words which Scripture uses when it says: “He began to be terrified,” “to be very heavy” (Mark 14:33), “and to be sorrowful” (Matt. 26:37), and likewise, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death” (Mark 14:34); and “so great was His agony that His sweat trickled down as clotted blood” (Luke 22:44)... It is certain that Christ because the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily, could easily have repelled all the attacks of the enemy and averted every feeling of grief. But it was then the time of His humiliation. The Deity did not exercise His power at that time but kept it withdrawn, as it were, and in quiet, as Irenaeus so nicely put it, yielding to the wrath of the Father against the sin of the human race, so that His human nature could suffer, be crucified, and die.^{xx}

22. Christ’s plea “Save Me from the lion’s mouth” is a repetition of His prayer in verse 21. He pleads for deliverance from His enemies. He pictures Himself as a victim on whom a lion is about to close its mouth. Some feel this reference to a lion stands for Satan. Here and in Paul’s statement of 2 Tim. 4:17 (I was delivered from the lion’s mouth) many have been influenced by 1 Peter 5:8 (the devil prowls around like a roaring lion). Yet, there is nothing in the context to warrant this assumption. It is granted that Satan was the instigator of Christ’s enemies’ assaults on Him. Yet, there would need to be something in the context to indicate this must refer to Satan.

In the middle of this verse there is a sudden change in mood. Christ turns from His prayer and triumphantly declares God has heard Him. He declares, “Yes, You have heard (and saved) Me from the horns of the wild oxen.” The *waw* and the perfect of the verb indicate the change in mood. רָאִיָּ refers to a wild animal resembling an ox. Some have identified it as the buffalo or oryx. The LXX translated μινόκερος, thus giving rise to the idea of the unicorn. The LXX also takes the verb נָצַח as an adjective with the first person singular suffix. Thus, the LXX translated “from the horns of the unicorns my humility.” This is not accurate. Rather, Christ confidently asserts God has delivered Him from His enemies, whom He compares to wild oxen.

The word קֶרֶן (horn) with מִן forms a pregnant construction. The idea is completed when the verb “and saved” is added. Where Christ declares “Yes, You have heard”, the Hebrew has a “*perfectum confidentiae*”. This perfect is used to express facts which are undoubtedly imminent and from the perspective of the speaker are already accomplished. Thus, the first section of this Psalm closes with a declaration of confidence. Christ, who began by saying, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?,” now closes with the assertion, “Yes, you have heard and saved Me.”

Homiletical Outline (Using English numbering)

Learn To Pray With Confidence

- I. In the hour of His need Christ turned to God. (19-21 a)
- II. Faithful to His promise God answered Him. (21b)

Many times we tend to get discouraged when we don’t see the answer to our prayers as rapidly as we would like. From Christ we learn to pray with confidence. Though forsaken by God, He still turned to Him, recognizing Him as His Source of strength. We also can turn to God with confidences especially since we have Christ as our mediator, through Whom we can address God as Father.

Christ was not disappointed in His confidence. Jehovah, the covenant God of free and faithful grace, answered Him. Because of God’s promise and Christ’s mediation we also are confident God will hear us. It is not a matter of “if”.. We only need await the “when” and the “how” of God’s answer.

Strophe 6 (23-27)

23. I will proclaim Your name to My brethren; in the middle of the assembly I will praise You.

24. You who fear the Lord, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor Him! And, fear Him, all you descendants of Israel!
25. For He did not despise nor loathe the Sufferer's suffering. And He did not hide His face from Me, but when I cried to Him for help, He heard.
26. From You comes My praise in the great assembly. I will pay My vows before those who fear him.
27. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever!

Parallelism: 23a = 23b; 24a = 24b = 24c; 25a = 25b = 25c; 26a // 26b; 27a // 27b // 27c

This second section of the Psalm exudes the spirit of triumphant joy and praise. There is even a formal difference between the first and second half of the Psalm. In the first section the statements of each verse are shorter, like gasps breathed in distress. In the second section they are longer, indicating the Speaker is freed from pain. This second section describes the blessed fruits of Christ's passion. Christ praises God for His deliverance. It is true that no formal mention is made here of the resurrection of Christ. Yet, the entire second section speaks of the benefits of the divine absolution God pronounced upon the world when He raised Christ from the dead on Easter Sunday morning. Christ dwells in the midst of his Church. His atoning work is proclaimed to the ends of the earth. Christ is exalted! Man is redeemed! This is the spirit of the second section of this Psalm.

23. Christ says, "I will proclaim Your name to My brethren." To proclaim the name of the Lord means to make known His great works, especially those of salvation in connection with God's suffering Servant. When God proclaimed His name to Moses (Ex. 34), He emphasized His grace and mercy in forgiving sin. Thus, Christ will proclaim to all the gracious works of God in the salvation of sinful clan through His atoning sacrifice. This is part of His prophetic office as the Messiah of God (cf John 17:8,14,20,26). He accomplishes this through the proclamation of the Gospel, whether by the universal priesthood of all believers or by the called servants of the Church. As Paul wrote: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare Gods people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph. 4:11-12). Even today our Lord is still proclaiming God's name to His brethren. Every graduate from our worker training institutions at home and abroad is acting as a servant of our Lord in proclaiming the name of God.

Christ says He will proclaim Gods name to His brethren. אָח stands for the brother or any relative, confederate, or friend. Topically used it expresses some similarity of disposition or manners. Since Christ calls these "My brethren," they must be like-minded people, spiritually and inwardly related to Him. He is referring to believers. This is further elucidated by the parallel expression: "In the middle of the assembly I will praise You."

The Hebrew word for "assembly" comes from the verb קָהַל, meaning to call together, assemble. *Kahal* often referred "to the congregation of Israel or gatherings at religious feasts. Concerning this word Girdlestone commented:

Israel was regarded as a vast family, the women and children forming an integral portion of it, except for public or judicial purposes, and none excluded except through wilful disobedience of the law of Moses, or (for a time) through ceremonial uncleanness. This great family was addressed, both by Moses and the prophets, in the singular number, as if they might be regarded as one, in spite of their diversities of age, circumstances, and dwelling places. This fact illustrates the teaching of the NT, where we find that there was One Person who concentrated in Himself the fulfillment of much that had been spoken to Israel in its corporate capacity, and became in his turn a center of unity to a spiritual Israel, gathering together into one all the children of God that were scattered abroad.^{xxi}

The LXX translates *Kahal* with ἐκκλησία. The reference thus is to the Church, the assembly of believers called together by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel. The writer to the Hebrews (2:11) cites this passage to prove that Christ is a true man. He lives now in an exalted state, but still is true man. He calls those who believe in Him His “brothers” (cf. Matt. 28:10, John 20:17). As Hebrews tells us: “In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the Pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers” (Heb. 2:10-11).

24. Christ calls upon His brethren to praise God for His great salvation. His brethren are described as those who “fear the Lord” and are “the descendants of Jacob and Israel.” Whether a believer is physically descended from Jacob or a spiritual ascendant of Israel (Jacob), all who fear the Lord are called upon to honor him. כָּבֵד, to honor, in the Piel has a special connotation. The normal, basic idea of the Piel is to busy yourself eagerly with the action indicated by the verbal stem. This idea is even expressed outwardly by the strengthening of the second radical through the Daghes Forte characteristic. Thus, Christ calls upon His brethren eagerly, with all their heart, to honor the God of their salvation.

25. Here Christ relates the substance of His preaching and the reason for us to praise God. “For He did not despise nor loathe the Sufferers suffering (lit., the affliction of the Afflicted). And He did not hide His face from Me, but when I cried to Him for help, He heard.” From the depths of His suffering Christ cried to God and He answered. Christ was victorious in His passion. He carried out His Father’s will. He rose from the dead. God accepted the sacrifice of His Son, our Substitute. This is our reason for praising Him, the God of our salvation.

26. Christ declares His thanksgiving for His deliverance. The will and the power to praise as well as the deliverance comes from God. Thus Christ says: “From You comes My praise in the great assembly.” It is God Himself Who has put this great subject of praise into His heart.

Christ shows His thankfulness by saying: “I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.” According to Lev. 7:11ff., the person rescued from peril was required to bring a thank offering to fulfill the vows He made to God when in peril. Using this imagery, Christ speaks of bringing a thank offering to God for His deliverance. In what does that thank offering consist?

27. Christ answers: “The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied, those who seek Him shall praise the Lord.” When the laying of the fat pieces upon the altar and the sprinkling of blood was completed, the remaining flesh of the thank offering was used by the offerer to make a joyous meal. The reference to the poor and afflicted joining in the feast would flow from God’s commands concerning tithes (Deut. 14:29; 26:12) and the harvest feast (Deut. 16:11). God prescribed that the poor, widows, and orphans be allowed to share the benefit of the tithe and feast.

Who are these afflicted? עָנִי stands for a person of lowly, modest, and pious character who prefers to bear injuries rather than return them. Thus, it does not stand for those who are poor in this world’s goods. Rather, it stands for those who are poor in spirit, who are oppressed by the world in general. Stoeckhardt relates it was a technical term to describe the true Israel. These afflicted ones also are described as those who seek the Lord. שׁוֹרֵץ has the idea of frequenting a place. The participle characterizes these people as those who constantly seek after the Lord. Thus, those who are poor in spirit will eat and be satisfied by the thank offering the Messiah brings. His thank offering is that He proclaims the name of God, that is, proclaims the Gospel. Through the Gospel in Word and Sacrament Christ feeds His people with life and salvation. For this His people praise Him.

To His guests Christ says, “May your hearts live forever!” Christ wants His guests who feast at the banquet He has prepared for them to know that their joy will not be for a short time only. Rather, the feast Christ has prepared for his people will strengthen them in their faith and preserve them to eternal life. Even though this reference is not specifically restricted to the Sacrament of the Altar, they are reminded of the

benediction spoken to those who have communed: “May the true body and blood of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of all your sins, strengthen and preserve you in the one true faith unto life everlasting.”

Homiletical Outline (Using English numbering)

Christ Dwells With His Brethren.

- I. He proclaims to them their salvation. (22-24)
- II. He sustains and comforts there forever. (25-26)

Christ, the Pioneer of our salvation, has earned for us the privilege of being His brethren. He dwells in the midst of His Church, proclaiming the grace of God in His victory over sin, death, and hell. As part of His prophetic office He still proclaims the name of God today through the Gospel proclaimed by His servants. It is this Gospel in Word and Sacrament which Christ used to sustain and comfort His brethren. The feast Christ prepares for us is no ordinary fare. It consists in the message of salvation which sustains and preserves His brethren to life eternal.

Strophe 7 (28-32)

28. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all families of the nations shall bow down before You.
29. For the kingdom is the Lord's; and He rules over the nations.
30. All the rich of the earth will eat and bow down; before Him all those going down to the dust will bow down, even the one who cannot keep himself alive.
31. Posterity shall serve Him; the Lord will be spoken of to the coming generation.
32. They shall come, and declare His righteousness to a people yet to be born, that He has fulfilled it.

Parallelism: 28a = 28b; 29a = 29b; 30a; 30b = 30c; 31a = 31b; 32a // 32b

28. In the previous strophe Christ had spoken of the results of His redemptive work within the Church. Now He indicates that the results of His atonement will reach much farther. The Gospel will be proclaimed to the very ends of the earth. The heathen nations will hear and Christ will gather them into His flock. What Isaiah prophesied so clearly several centuries later, David's Son and Lord now foretells through the pen of His servant.

“All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.” וָשׁוּבָה, to turn, return, is a word frequently used of conversion. Girdlestone comments concerning this word; “Conversion or turning to God is in reality a re-turning, or a turning back again to Him from whom sin has separated us, but whose we are by virtue of creation, preservation, and redemption.”^{xxii}

To the very ends of the earth, Christ declares, His Gospel will be taken. Heathen people will hear and take to heart the good news proclaimed to them. They will be converted through the Gospel proclaimed to them. No class or race of people will be excluded, for Christ relates, “All families of the nations shall bow before You.”

יְגוֹלָם simply means a people. It is used of nations at large and also of Israel (Is. 1:4). In the plural it is used of the other nations besides Israel, often with the added notion of being foes, barbarians, strangers to the true faith. It is sometimes used opposite אֲרָצוֹת, which is more commonly used for Israel. The LXX rendered אֲרָצוֹת with λαός, and יְגוֹלָם with ἔθνος. We see this carried out in the NT where Simeon relates: “My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles (ἔθνη) and for

glory to your people (λαός) Israel” (Luke 2:20-32). Thus, Christ here foretells the evangelizing of the heathen. They will bow down before God. הִתְפַּלֵּא, to bow down, is used here in the hithpalel, the reflexive of the rare palel conjugation. This gives the added idea that the outward act of prostration is accompanied by the inner devotion of the heart.

It should be of great encouragement to us that almost 3000 years ago our Lord talked about the mission work we are carrying on today. He has given us the privilege of acting as His messengers to carry the good news to the ends of the earth, to all nations. From the mission fields of the United States to Africa, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, Puerto Rico, South America, Japan, and elsewhere, the Gospel is proclaimed. Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Africans, people from all nations till hear and be converted.

29. Christ here speaks of the world wide rule of God’s grace. “The kingdom is Jehovah’s,” Christ declares. “He rules over the heathen.” Because the previous verse spoke of the evangelizing of the heathen, the would assume that the idea related here also refers to God’s rule of grace in the hearts of His people.

30. Christ here relates two different classes of people who will benefit from the preaching of the Gospel: The rich and the poor. God is no respecter of social standing. His Gospel is meant for all. Even those who are scarcely able to keep themselves alive will benefit from the Gospel. “Going down to the dust” is a reference to those about to die, as the last phrase explains.

31. Christ encourages us with the news that “Posterity shall serve Him, the Lord will be spoken of to the coming generation.” From generation to generation Christ will gather people into His fold. This is because His Gospel will be proclaimed from generation to generation. It will not return to Him void. This should encourage us then to move forward with the Gospel. Our Lord has given us His promise His Word will not be preached in vain.

32. The theme of this verse, in fact, of this entire strophe, is “They shall come and declare His righteousness.” הִתְפַּלֵּא, righteousness, here stands for the righteousness which Christ won for us sinners rather than the righteousness of His divine essence. It comes from the root פִּלְא. It is not possible here to go into a complete discussion on this important word. A few comments Girdlestone makes will suffice. He writes:

We have no one word which can convey the idea of righteousness and that of justification, as they are set forth in Scripture. In this case, as in many others, we see the wisdom of God in selecting Hebrew as the means of communication with His creatures, because here the ideas of righteousness, justification, and acquittal all cluster around one verbal root, and are seen to be parts of one whole.^{xxiii}

One generation will tell another of the righteousness God has prepared for us. They will proclaim “that He has fulfilled it.” Concerning this verse Prof. Peters commented:

Our King James version has supplied the object of “he hath done,” with which the Hebrew Psalm closes, with the demonstrative “this.” The reader will naturally ask what the demonstrative refers to. The last Hebrew word of the Psalm, הִתְפַּלֵּא, means “accomplished, fulfilled” and we can translate this last sentence: They shall come, and declare His righteousness to a people yet to be born, that He has fulfilled it, namely “His righteousness.” These are the words of our Lord on the cross: “It is fulfilled.” Not only the first words but also the last word of our Psalm were spoken by our Lord on the Cross.^{xxiv}

In the same vein Delitzsch comments:

This one word, so full of meaning, implying the carrying through of the work of redemption,... comprehends everything wit in itselfIt is the last word of the Psalm, just as τετέλεσται is the last word of the Crucified One. The substance of the Gospel in its preparatory history :and its fulfillment, of the declaration concerning God which passes from generation to generation, is this, that God has accomplished what He planned when He anointed the...Son of David as mediator in His work of redemption.^{xxv}

Homiletical Outline (using the English numbering)

His Righteousness Will Be Proclaimed.

- I. It will be proclaimed in all the world. (27-29)
- II. It will be proclaimed from generation to generation. (30-32)

This text not only offers a positive approach to the meaning of Good Friday, but also the opportunity to preach a mission sermon on Good Friday. What better use could be made of our Savior's Passion than to proclaim the blessed results of it for us and all men. Sometimes Good Friday can develop a sort of "sepulchral" aim for us. It is the day on which we commemorate our Savior's death. Yet, we don't want to give the impression that we are leaving our Savior in the tomb "over the weekend" until Easter. Good Friday gives us an opportunity to preach the Law, but especially the Gospel. There is no Gospel without the resurrected Christ. The Apostles tied Christ's death and resurrection together in their preaching, and so should we.

From this text we can proclaim the positive message of the Gospel as related in the word "He has fulfilled it." We can point out that this message has worldwide implications. It is meant for all men, and will never be proclaimed in vain. Generations yet unborn will hear this message because the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Conclusion

Psalm 22 is truly the Holy of Holies of the Psalter. It tells us of the great price of our redemption and also of our Savior's suffering in our place. It tells us of the victorious Sufferer who gives us the privilege of being His messengers to proclaim the wonders of His grace. In view of God's boundless love for us, we join with St. John in saying: "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen" (Rev. 1:5-6).

Endnotes

ⁱ Quoted from a paper by Paul Peters, "Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Prophecy," delivered to the Arizona-Cal. District Pastoral Conference held at Zion Lutheran Church in Phoenix, Ariz., Oct. 1967.

ⁱⁱ Luther, *Auslegungen Über Die Psalmen*, Luther's Sämtliche Schriften, Vierter Band. St. Louis, p. 147.

ⁱⁱⁱ Peters, *op. cit.* p. 11.

^{iv} Golladay, R.E., *Lenten Sermon Outlines*. The Wartburg Press, Columbus, Ohio. 1935, p. 429.

^v Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis Minn 1943, p. 1118.

^{vi} The form מִלְרָ (milra with conjunctive accent Munah) is used before the guttural ר instead of the usual form מִלְרָ (milel). The conjunctive munah gives additional emphasis to the word, accenting the ultimate rather than the penultimate syllable. This indicates the piercing nature of the cry.

^{vii} Matthew writes ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν. Mark and Luke use ἐφ' ὅλον τὴν γῆν. That this was not a natural eclipse of the sun would be evident from the following:

1. This was the Passover time, and the moon was full.
2. The darkness occurred when the sun was at its zenith, shining with its strongest light. The darkness continued for 3 hours into the afternoon.

3. Luke adds τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος; the sun failing. When the sun itself fails, the entire dayside of the earth will be in darkness.
4. The early Christian fathers cite Phlegon, chronicler under Hadrian, who mentions this darkness coupled with an earthquake. Thus, the darkness must have been universal and supernatural.

^{viii} In the *genus idiomatum* the property which belongs to one nature in the abstract is attributed to the person in the concrete. One nature is not predicated of the other in the abstract. Otherwise, there would be two Christs. It is not correct to say that the humanity is an essence generated from the Father from eternity nor that the deity was pierced with a spear. However it is correct to say that the Son of Man ascended where He was before, and that the Lord of glory is crucified.

^{ix} Chemnitz, *The Two Natures of Christ*, translated by J.A.O. Preus. Concordia Publishing House. St. Louis, MO. 1971. p. 83.

^x *Ibid.*, p. 201.

^{xi} Cf. also the statements of Augustine: “Being incapable of suffering in his own nature, He suffered in ours.” “The Logos with His eternity preserved intact was born in time; with his impassibility intact he suffered; without surrendering His immortality; He died. He tasted death because he was true man, and He swallowed death because He is true God.” Chemnitz, *op. cit.* p. 200.

^{xii} *Concordia Triglotta*, The Formula of Concord, Thor. Decl. VIII, Of the Person of Christ. p. 1029, 40.

^{xiii} *Ibid.*, p. 1029, 44.

^{xiv} The translations of the LXX and Vulgate, “transgressions,” may be referred to an interchange of Ϟ with λ.

^{xv} ך is a lamed he verb. Yod was originally the third root letter. This has survived in many of the verb forms. In the Kal part. Pass. Yod had survived as a full consonant.

^{xvi} Delitzsch, *Commentaries on the OT, Psalms*, Vol. I. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1968. p. 313.

^{xvii} Note the parallel between this assault on Christ and that of Satan in the wilderness. At the time of Jesus’ baptism, the Father had said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). Satan attacked this assertion with his first temptation, “If you are the Son of God.” Satan’s insinuation of “Is this any way for the Father to treat his Son?” was aimed to lead Jesus to doubt his Sonship. When Christ asserted that God could miraculously preserve Him as He did with Israel in the wilderness, Satan then attacked Christ’s assertion of faith. Later, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the Father again asserted concerning His Son: “With Him I am well-pleased.” As Christ hung on the cross, Satan reattacked this assertion with the cries of the mob, “If you are the Son of God... He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God’” (Matt. 27).

^{xviii} Koehler, *A Summary of Christian Doctrine*, 1952. pp. 98-99.

^{xix} *Ibid.*, p. 99. See also Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 77. See also footnote 45 for the quote from Quenstedt.

^{xx} Chemnitz, *op. cit.* pp. 62-63.

^{xxi} Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the OT*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1897, pp. 229-230.

^{xxii} *Ibid.*, p. 92.

^{xxiii} *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159

^{xxiv} Peters, *op. cit.* p. 11.

^{xxv} Delitzsch, *op. cit.* p. 328.