

Perhaps some of you think it's a little bit strange to use Psalm 22 on the Sunday before Christmas. This is more of an Easter Psalm. Those of you who have been attending each Sunday know that several weeks ago I started a series on Old Testament Prophecies of Christ's first advent. I did this in anticipation of the Christmas season. And I expect the Lord willing to complete this series next Lord's Day morning. But that's the reason we find ourselves with Psalm 22 this morning because I have sought to follow something of a chronological order in connection with these prophecies. But if I do need some justification for using a Psalm like this this morning let me ask you to look again at verse 9 and 10. And you will see that this is a Christmas psalm after all. Nine and ten, but thou art he that took me out of the womb, thou didst 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. This Psalm has really been called the Psalm of the cross. To be sure it was the Psalm of David as you doubtless can see at the heading of the Psalm meaning that it was written by David and to some extent reflects the experience of David but a careful reading of the Psalm shows that this sets before us not only the sufferings of David and perhaps to some extent represents the sufferings of all of the people of God but it is stated in such a way that it really cannot be fully descriptive of any one but our Lord Jesus Christ. One writer says that reading through this psalm it seems more like history than it does like prophecy. But as we read through the Psalm this morning and I am sure that this was not the first time for most of you you noticed expressions which are either found in the Gospels with reference to the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus or expressions which closely resemble those which are found in the Gospel. Let me just briefly survey those for you for just a moment. Verse 1 of course indicates -that this is what we call a Messianic psalm. Because verse 1 gives us one of those seven expressions that the Lord Jesus spoke when He was upon the cross when He said My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me. If you were to look for these expressions in the Gospels you would find several interesting things about this. One is that you

would find thinking of all seven expressions you would find that three of the words that the Lord spoke from the cross are in the Gospel of John. Three different words making a total of 6 are in the Gospel of Luke. Matthew only gives one and Mark only gives one and the one that they give is the same. And it's this quotation from Psalm 22:1. Moreover to emphasize the importance of this saying this is the only one of the seven sayings that is translated into Hebrew or given in Hebrew. Probably the quotation from Mark is taken from the Syriac but basically they are the same. And you remember those words as you have read them in the New Testament. Eli, Eli, lamasabachthen i, which is to say My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me. So whether you knew it or not when you used those expressions you are using Hebrew words. Verse 8 of the 22nd Psalm says he trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him seeing he delighted in him. And if you were turned to the New Testament in Matthew chapter 27 verse 43 you would find that people in the crowd undoubtedly without any idea that they were borrowing an expression from the Old Testament said basically this same thing. He saved others, himself he cannot save. If you be the Son of God come down from the cross and we will believe you. Verse 16 of Psalm 22 especially the last part of the verse is obviously a reference to the cross. Where the Psalmist says they pierced my hands and my feet. Verse 18 they part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture. And I understand that this was not the usual thing for soldiers to do but in John 19 and verse 24 it is stated that this is what they did with the garment of the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee is found in the New Testament in Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 12. Verses 27 through 30 are verses which are clearly in line with many salvation passages in the Old Testament and some of the salvation passages in the New Testament where the Psalmist here is prophetically anticipating the time when the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as waters cover the sea and when all the ends of the earth shall turn to the Lord and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him. And then if you look at the very last expression

in the Psalm it reads in the King James that He hath done this. There are many who feel that this ought to be translated that he hath finished this. And if this is the case then this corresponds with the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross when He said It is finished. I don't think that we can make any point out of that but it is interesting to know that there are students of the Old Testament who translate that expression in that way. So as you go through the Psalm there is overwhelming evidence that this relates to the Lord Jesus Christ and to His first coming. In preparation for the message this morning last Thursday I began reading Psalm 22, 23, and 24 together. I have read them over 20 times. I mention this to encourage you to do the same thing because these three Psalms form a trilogy of Psalms. Psalm 22 is a Psalm of Christ in which you see Him as the suffering one. Psalm 23 is a Psalm of Christ in which you see Him as the shepherd. Psalm 24 is a Psalm of Christ in which you see Him as the coming sovereign over all the earth. The order in which they appear you can see is very significant and it is such a blessing to read through these Psalms again and again and to see that from a human standpoint as the book of Hebrews tells us our Lord learned some things through what He suffered. And to see that Psalm 22 is a preparation for those wonderful truths of Psalm 23 and that Psalm 22 and 23 both anticipate the time when the Lord Jesus Christ will come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. So when we think of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth it is very important for us to know why He came. And if you were to take the various Old Testament passages even which speak of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ you would find that there is more than one answer to this question, why did Jesus Christ come to the earth. Of course the greatest and the most important answer for us is that He came to provide salvation for us. Two or three weeks ago Gary spoke on Isaiah 53 in which you see very clearly laid out that the Messiah came to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. We also find as we look in the Bible from the Garden of Eden on through the Old Testament and into the New Testament that the Lord Jesus Christ came to complete that marvelous revelation of God which is given in

the Old Testament increasingly as you go through the Old Testament but never completed in the Old Testament. When the Lord Jesus Christ came He said what no prophet before Him could say, He that has seen me has seen the Father. And so after the Lord Jesus came while the Scriptures are something like 1500 years anticipating His coming after He comes the Scriptures are completed in about 100 years. Because God has no more to say to us, no more to reveal concerning Himself than what he has revealed in His Son. The Lord Jesus came for the purpose of finishing that work. But there is another reason and I want to focus on this this morning because I believe that this is the emphasis in Psalm 22. And that is the emphasis that is mentioned in the book of Hebrews 4. If you want to follow me as I read these verses you may. The fourth chapter and the last three verses of the chapter, 14, 15 and 16, will you listen as I read. Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Now I suggest to you this morning on the authority of Scripture that this is a part of the Christmas message. Not only that when Jesus Christ was born He was born to be a Savior. And He was born as the Son of God to complete the revelation of God. But He was born as a human being so that He could be touched with all the feeling of our infirmities and therefore become a high priest who today represents us at the right hand of the Father who can enter into our sufferings and into our trials and into our difficulties and this is what gives such tremendous significance to the statement let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace because we have a high priest there who is touched with all the feeling of our infirmities and there we obtain mercy and there we may find grace to help in time of need. Now going back to the beginning of this Psalm let me say this morning that no one is saved very long until he experiences what the saints in past days have called God's desertions. That is really the subject of this psalm instead

of entitling it Forsaken of God I could have entitled it, God's desertions. And it's most interesting to see that we have here in this first verse of Psalm 22 something that no human being can possibly explain. I have heard people say you know God didn't really forsake the Lord Jesus, God couldn't forsake the Lord Jesus because God and His Son were so intimately related to each other that there couldn't be such a separation as that. And yet I want us to see this morning that both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament it is specifically stated that God did forsake the Lord Jesus. Now I am not here this morning to even pretend that I can explain what that means because I don't know what that means. It goes far beyond my comprehension and I don't know what the Lord Jesus was experiencing when He uttered this cry from the cross anymore than I know what David was experiencing when he wrote this. Possibly when he was being pursued by Saul. But I do know that there are times in the lives of God's people when as far as our praying is concerned it seems that God isn't listening. As far as our circumstances are concerned it seems that God is more on the side of unregenerate enemies than He is on the side of His people. Nobody can read the story of the cross and see how the Lord Jesus Christ became the victim of these ungodly sinners when they did what they wanted to do and ultimately were able to nail the Lord Jesus to the cross, when they spit upon Him and they made a crown of thorns and crushed it down upon His head and so mutilated His body that as we learn in Isaiah 55 His visage was so marred more than any man which is a Hebrew way of expressing that as you looked at the cross when the Lord Jesus Christ was hanging on the cross you look again and again and again to be sure that that was actually a human being that was upon the cross, the Lord Jesus suffered to such a great extent at the hands of men. But you see here as evidence that when you and I as the people of God go through these times when we don't understand why God seems so far off and why His Word seems so cold and our prayers go day after day unanswered. Why it is and we cry out from our souls, My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me but you see when you come to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and

to find help in time of need there is one who is sitting upon that throne who knows exactly what you are talking about. Because He experienced it in a far deeper way than you and I ever will. Now when we look at this Psalm it's been divided in various ways. Some of you are acquainted with a great English preacher perhaps he was from Scotland from the British Isles at any rate Graham Scroggy I had the privilege of hearing this man in my home church when I was a boy, very tall dignified man, he wore his collar backwards, very gifted student of the Word. Graham Scroggy says that Psalm 22 begins with a sob and ends with a song. Spurgeon interprets this Psalm as having to do entirely with the cross. In fact he suggests as others have that when the Lord Jesus Christ said My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me it is very possible that the Lord Jesus went on and quoted the entire 22nd Psalm from the cross. We of course can't prove that but it is an interesting suggestion isn't it. Dr. Scroggy makes the division in this Psalm that is a little bit different from what Mr. Spurgeon says, Dr. Scroggy says that the verses that I read to you this morning verses 1 through 21 have to do with the cross but between verses 21 and 22 where you started reading you have the resurrection and the rest of the Psalm has to do with the resurrection. Andrew Bonar another gifted Scotch preacher has still another idea. He says that verses 1 through 21 have to do with our Lord's first coming and verses 22 through 31 have to do with His second coming. The first part has to do with his sufferings, the last part has to do with the glory that should follow. Now all of these ideas have their merit and it's interesting to see what different men have seen in this Psalm and I am sure that there are many other different ideas all worthy of consideration and all certainly bearing upon the truth that we have in this wonderful Psalm. But for our consideration this morning let me divide the Psalm into three parts instead of two parts. I want to maintain that first part verse 1 through 21 but I want to divide the latter part of it into two sections. And the first part let's call this the Messiah's prayer. Because really as you go through the Psalm you are conscious of the fact that the Messiah is speaking to the Father. Then in verses 22

through 25 the first part of that second section you have the Messiah's praise. And such words of praise are in amazing contrast with those first 21 verses. And then from verse through the end of the Psalm though they certainly could be considered praise you have what I want to call this morning the Messiah's prophesy. So you have His prayer, His praise and His prophesy. Now in looking at this Psalm in the time that we have this morning I want you to relate this Psalm to your difficulties as I relate this Psalm to my difficulties. It is very possible that some of you this morning are going through a time when you are experiencing what we call God's desertions. Perhaps this morning as you met with the Lord you have prayed in affect maybe not using these words but this is on your heart. Maybe you wondered if there was any point in falling to your knees and crying out to God but in your heart was this feeling, My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me. Now when the Lord Jesus prayed and in this Psalm which we could also entitle the Lord's Prayer, you see that the Lord Jesus suffered in three different ways and it's evident. In the first two verses when He says, 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 but thou hearest not and in the night season and am not silent. This is the kind of suffering that every child of God knows something about. Suffering that you can't really describe in words. It's the suffering where you hurt internally, when your soul is in agony and when you are confused because you don't know what God is doing. We can really take anything can't we except to feel that for some reason God might be against or God isn't interested in our needs or God isn't listening to us. That was one kind of suffering and the Lord Jesus knew that. And then there is that suffering that comes from ridicule and reproach and you see that in verses 6 through 8. All that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head and they are saying he trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him seeing he delighted in him. You remember all of the amazing things that the Lord Jesus had had to say about the Father and about the Father's concern for him and here his enemies just

throw these words back in His face. Why the Word of God means nothing, faith means nothing and that's the kind of suffering that we often experience, the ridicule and the reproach of men. And then there is probably no passage in Scripture at least in the Old Testament that describes the sufferings of the Lord Jesus any more in detail than verses 11 through 21. If there is a passage that compares with it it would have to be Isaiah 53. Some feel that there isn't even anything in the New Testament that compares with this description of the Lord Jesus. How He likens His enemies to wild animals as unreasonable as wild animals. How His bones are out of joint, His heart is like wax that's melted in the midst of his bowels. His strength is like a dried up piece of pottery. His tongue cleaves to his jaw. He's brought into the dust of death. His hands and his feet have been pierced. It would be a hard person who could read through a passage like that and not have his own heart just moved with the terrific sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord is obviously confused and dismayed and yet He's very intense in His praying. But He has all this kind of suffering. And you need only to read this and I need only to read this to find that my sufferings are nothing in comparison with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. But I also find that as the Lord prayed He sought to draw some encouragement in different ways and let me point out just three ways in which He sought encouragement. After crying out in the agony of His heart in verses 1 and 2 then He suddenly stops to think about the character of God and He says but thou art holy O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel and this simply means that though I don't understand what God is doing and though I can't understand His desertion and I can't understand why He doesn't answer prayer and I can't understand why He doesn't do something yet there is one thing that I can understand and that is with all of my confusion I can be sure of one thing and that is that God is too holy ever to do anything that is wrong. I mentioned to the Tuesday Bible Class this week that it seems that when God is getting ready to do a work in the hearts of His servants this is what He does with them. He told Moses take your sandals off your feet, the ground you are standing on is holy ground. When



Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and he heard the angelic beings singing, what were they singing, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. And this is an encouragement so that you can say in the midst of your troubles that even though you don't understand what God is doing if anybody is wrong, I am wrong. God never is wrong because He's holy. But there's another line of encouragement. Our fathers trusted in thee, look at the word trusted, they trusted and thou didst deliver them, they cried unto thee and were delivered, they trusted in thee and were not confounded. Now this means our fathers trusted and trusted and trusted and kept on trusting and this means that when they started to trust, God didn't do anything for them either. And when they continued to trust they still didn't see any answer. But then as they continued on trusting ultimately God manifested the fact that He was listening to them all the time and He delivered them. And oh how encouraging it is to take our Bibles and read them and see that no man has ever trusted the Lord in vain. Not even our Lord Jesus Christ. But there is a third line of encouragement and it has to do with these verses and again I am coming to you with a couple of verses that I can't explain. Verses 9 and 10 thou art he that took me out of the womb, thou didst 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. I am speaking this morning I know to some who have very small children. Maybe your child isn't even old enough for you to be able to communicate to them the way you will be able to some day. But you know this verse and verses like Paul gives us in Galatians 1 when he says but when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb. You know here is an evidence that you and I can pray and expect to see that before our children are able to understand us God is able to minister to their hearts. Isn't this amazing, thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. Who can understand the amazing working of God. That long before you and I are able to get through to our children and tell them of the Lord Jesus God in ways beyond our comprehension ministers to them. Oh what encouragement that is. And when you and I think of what God has done

in our lives then we can see that since God's purposes go right back to our birth according to the statement here in the Psalm you and I can be sure that when we come to those difficult times in our lives when it seems that the presence of God has been withdrawn from us, God is not going to give us up and Paul told this to the Phillipian believers when he said, he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. And thank God He never gives up on any work that He begins. But you see that work with all of us had an earlier start than we are conscious of. Well there is so much more that I could say about the prayer of our Lord here but let's look at this word of praise for just a moment and I may not get to the last part where he speaks of the way in which this wonderful salvation is going to be felt to the ends of the earth but let me give you his words of praise anyway and then you can see the other for yourself. Look at what the Lord says, I will declare thy name unto my brethren verse 22, this is the place where the Lord calls us His brethren. There is as far as I know never any time in Scripture when a sinner saved by grace calls the Lord Jesus brethren. But He calls us brethren. And He's going to declare God's name to his brethren in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee, now listen and visualize the Lord Jesus saying this, and it's interesting to me to contemplate the fact that the Lord Jesus may have said this from the cross. It is very possible if He didn't say it from the cross that the disciples heard it but if this is a Messianic Psalm and this Psalm has to do with the Lord Jesus, the coming of the Son of Man then these are His words to us. Now, Ye that fear the Lord, now that includes me and that includes most of you, perhaps all of you, if you know the Lord as your Savior it includes you. You that fear the Lord do what, say it. Praise Him. All ye the seed of Jacob, do what? 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 and when he cried unto him he heard my praise shall be of thee in the great congregation, I will pay my vows before them that fear him. Now listen we have an encouragement to trust God that is not included in the prayer

of the Lord Jesus Christ in the first 21 verses. Do you see what it is. Do you ever contemplate the thought you know I am just wasting my time by trusting the Lord. I am wasting my time by waiting upon God. I better take things into my own hands and do something because God isn't doing anything. Do you know what the greatest encouragement in the Bible to trust God and to keep trusting and to keep waiting upon God, do you know what the greatest encouragement is. There can't be any greater encouragement than this. I need to trust God when I don't understand Him, when it seems that He's turned His back upon me and when He's not listening to my prayer and when things instead of getting better are getting worse. I need to trust God if for no other reason because Jesus Christ highly recommends it. He sends out the cry, you that fear him praise him, all ye the seed of Jacob glorify him, fear him all the seed of Israel for he has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him for when he cried unto him he heard him. Whose He talking about. He is talking about Himself. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus, His ascension and being seated at the Father's right hand is God's testimony to the saints of every generation that you and I can safely trust Him. He will not fail. He is listening and in His own time you and I are going to see that He is still the God who does exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. You see the Lord Jesus went through all that He went through on the cross so that He could tell you and tell me to praise Him, to glorify Him and to keep on trusting Him. And isn't it wonderful that as the Psalm closes and gives us that wonderful anticipation of the fact that someday in the new heavens and the new earth as one of our young men read to us Friday night when we were gathered here with our high school young people. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Oh what a wonderful thing it is to know that at this Christmas time the Lord Jesus came not only to provide salvation, not only to complete the revelation of God but to become our great high priest and to let us know that you and I can never make a mistake when we continue to trust Him.