

“Christ in the Old Testament”
Lesson 19
The Messianic Psalms -- Part 2 -- Psalm 8
March 11, 1997

Intro: Yesterday morning I was reading the preface to a book that has been a great blessing to me for many years. It is a commentary on the book of Proverbs written by Charles Bridges. He was born in 1794 in England, and died in 1869. He was a member of the clergy of the Church of England, soundly evangelical, and a man deeply taught in the Scriptures. His commentary on Proverbs actually takes his readers to every part of the Word of God. Spurgeon said of him that “while explaining the passage in hand, he sets others portions of the Word in new lights.”

I mention him because in his preface, he quoted several people regarding “Christ in the Old Testament.” I am not acquainted with some of them, but that does not lessen the importance of what they had to say on the subject we are considering every Tuesday morning. He himself reminded his readers “that the Book of Proverbs is a part of the volume entitled--’the word of Christ.’ (Col. 3:16).” And then he continued: “And so accurately does the title describe the Book, that the study of it brings the whole substance of the volume before us.

Then he quoted a Mr. Cecil who said, “If we do not see the golden thread through all the Bible, marking out Christ, we read the Scripture without the Key.” And Bridges added that “unquestionably Christ is the Sun of the whole Scripture system.” Added to this was a comment from a man he called Professor Franke who said that “much joy, comfort, and delight (is) to be found in the writings of the Old Testament...when we perceive Christ is so sweetly pictured there. Another similar statement followed (and again I do not know who this lady was): “It has been recorded of Mary Jane Graham, ‘that she was delighted in the course of her study of the Book of Proverbs to have Christ so much and so frequently before her mind.

One final statement from Augustine: “The Old Testament has no true relish if Christ be not understood in it.” (All of the above statements are taken from Bridges’ Preface to his book on Proverbs, p. ix.)

So we are not walking on paths which have not been walked on before.

Last week we began considering the Messianic Psalms, the Psalms which speak of Christ. And our first Psalm was Psalm 2. We know that this is a Messianic Psalm because it is quoted four times in the NT, and referred to Christ. I mentioned that one way we can identify a Messianic Psalm is by the way it is quoted in the NT. And so there is no doubt about Psalm 2.

Today I want to consider with you Psalm 8. And so, even though we are in a new lesson, I am numbering this Psalm in my notes as II.

II. PSALM 8.

First let me read the Psalm, and then give you the NT quotations that are taken from this Psalm. (Read.)

There are four quotation in the NT, but actually the third is mentioned twice in the same passage.

- 1) Verse 2 is quoted in Matt. 21:16 and has to do with the ministry of our Lord while He was here on earth, His ministry to children. The difference between the rendering in the OT, “strength,” and Matthew’s quotation of it in the NT, is that the NT quotation was taken from the LXX (as many OT quotations were). But there is no contradiction here because “praise” is “strength.” Praise glorifies God, and strengthens both

those who give the praise, and those who hear the praise.

- 2) Verses 4, 5, and 6 are quoted in Heb. 2:6-8, and definitely referred to Jesus. See Heb. 2:9.
- 3) Verse 6 is quoted two times in 1 Cor. 15--in verses 25 and 27.

So we are definitely on good ground to call Psalm 8 a Messianic Psalm. Note also that this Psalm was written by King David. We learned that the same was true also of Psalm 2, not from any superscription appearing at the beginning of the Psalm, but Peter in his prayer in Acts 4 ascribed it to David. See Acts 4:25. And so the Messianic Psalms were given to David and written by him following the promise that God made to him in 2 Sam. 7 which we considered a couple of weeks ago. Franz Delitzsch said in his commentary on the Psalms, For, just as the Gospels do not contain any discourses of our Lord belonging to the time prior to His baptism, and just as the New Testament canon does not contain any writings of the Apostles from the time prior to Pentecost, so the Old Testament canon contains no Psalms of David belonging to the time prior to his anointing (Vol. I, p. 148).

This is a Psalm in which the glory of God is exalted. The Psalm begins and ends with a statement about the excellency of the Lord's Name. His Name reveals His character. And so for Him to have *an excellent Name*, means that *He is excellent in His character. God is an excellent Person.* “Excellent” not only means *glorious*, but it means *powerful*.

Notice that in the Psalm, David used the word “our” at the beginning of the Psalm, and then concluded the same way in verse 9. But in the middle of the Psalm, beginning with verse 3, he said “I.” So it evidently was a Psalm written for all of the people of God to sing, but when he turned from God to man, he emphasized how astonished he was at the honor which God had placed upon *puny man*. This is a point which is not always comprehended by men as it should be. And how different this is from the way God and man are considered in today's world! Our tendency is to forget God and to exalt man. But once we consider the glory of God as He is revealed in the Word and in His works and in His Son, we are amazed that God even thinks of man, or that He cares for man.

But let us consider an outline to help us think through this brief, but wonderful, Psalm.

- 1) The glory of God (vv. 1-2).
- 2) The insignificance of man--in comparison with creation (vv.3-4).
- 3) The glory and honor placed upon man by God (vv. 5-8).
- 4) The glory of God (v. 8).

It seems that this Psalm spans all of time--from eternity to eternity! God's Name is glorious in the beginning, and it is glorious at the end. What God set out to do, He has done. But we know now that His purposes as far as the earth is concerned will be fulfilled, not in Adam, nor in any who are merely the sons of Adam, but in the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ! But let us consider the Psalm in detail.

1) The glory of God (vv. 1-2).

Notice the different way in which “Lord” is printed. First, all in caps; second, with the first letter capitalized, followed by small letters. All in caps is *Jehovah*--the ever-living, unchanging God; “Lord” is *Adonai*, which means sovereign, controller, master, owner. I think it would be accurate to say that *Jehovah* speaks of what God is in Himself, but *Adonai* speaks of what He is in relation to His people, and to the nations, and to all of creation. David is ascribing full glory to God. His Name is excellent in the earth, and His glory is above the heavens. So all of creation is intended. Delitzsch said, “For the primary thought of the Psalm is this, that the

God, whose glory the heavens reflect, has also glorified Himself in the earth and in man” (I, pp. 149, 150). And He will yet do this to an even greater degree when our Lord reigns and the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas. Cf. Isa. 11:9-10:

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

But the LORD has His enemies among men, those who do not want to have anything to do with Him, and who certainly resist with all of their might any indication of submission to God. But this mighty God, rather than being distressed and dismayed at the rebellion of men, has ordained that by the praise of the smallest of children, His enemies shall be overcome. And this is where we need to consider how this verse was used by our Lord, the Messiah, while He was here on earth. Please turn to Matt. 21:12-16, and let me read these verses to you. (Read.)

The Lord had cast the money changers out of the Temple. And this was followed by *children* who cried out, “Hosanna to the son of David,” and this greatly displeased the chief priests and the scribes. And so they said to the Lord, “Hearest thou what these say?” And then it was that the Lord quoted for them Psalm 8:2. The Lord does not need great armies to overcome His enemies. He can silence forever His enemies and avengers by the praise of little children. Children are unsophisticated, and readily accept the truth. It is only as they get older that they get skeptical and resistant to the truth. Children “still” the enemy and the avenger. This means that they put a stop to all of their opposition. An “avenger” is one who is out to take vengeance, or to punish someone. The crowd that crucified our Lord, and crowd which railed upon Him, were avengers. So we have here in this verse a reference even to the Cross of our Lord. This is an excellent illustration of what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians about our “calling”:

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are;

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

There is probably more in this verse than we can understand now about how God will yet use children to assist Him in overcoming His enemies. And this is not said for the glory of children, but for the glory of the Lord.

Now let us go on to the second part of the Psalm.

2) The insignificance of man--in comparison with creation (vv. 3-4).

David in this Psalm gives us an important lesson. It is this: *Begin with God, and then look at creation and at man.* This is the only way to get the right perspective. If we start with man, we will always go wrong, and usually that means that we will forget God altogether.

Will you notice that David was not a Darwinian? He did not believe in evolution; he was a creationist. He believed that the heavens were made by *the fingers of God*--which speaks of how delicately God has fashioned

everything that we see in the heavens. He is responsible for every marvelous detail of the heavens. He “ordained” the moon and the stars. He prepared them, and established them. It is by God’s power that they continue to exist. But all of this did not come to David with occasional passing thought; he *considered* them. He looked at them, watched them, and thought about them. This is what David had in mind when he wrote Psalm 19:

- 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
- 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.
- 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard (Psa. 19:1-3).

And the Apostle Paul gave expression to the same truth:

- 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
- 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.
- 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:18-20).

But in the light of the glory of God as seen in His creation, David marveled that God would even think about man, and even more that He would visit man with His constant care. Man is so puny even when seen in creation. He is so weak and helpless, so dependent upon God. David does not seem to be thinking here of man in his corruption and sin, but simply man as a creature in the universe. Here we have a great God in a great universe which He has created, and man seems to be so insignificant a part of it all. David marveled that in the light of the greatness of God and of all that He was continually doing throughout the universe, in the heavens and on the earth, that God would even remember the people whom He had created.

But instead of forgetting man, God has “crowned him with glory and honor.” And so in the next verses we see:

3) The glory and honor placed upon man by God (vv. 5-8).

The order in glory of God’s creatures is:

- 1) Angels first.
- 2) Man second.
- 3) Animals, birds, and fish.

When David said that man was made “a little lower than the angels,” he was not speaking of how close we are to being like the angels, but as is sometimes the case, “a little lower” means *for a little while*. In our place in creation there is actually a lot of difference between us and angels. But in the plan of God this is only for *a little while*. Don’t believe these people who would like for us to believe that the world is millions, or even billions, of years old. God has not given most of our scientist the understanding they need to know how this world came into being, and so their timing is completely off! God didn’t need millions or billions of years to do what He did in creation. He simply spoke the word, and it was done. The whole creation came into existence in one week! And that is to the glory of God.

But what did David mean that man has been “crowned with glory and honor”? What can it mean but that man was created in the image and likeness of God--and man is the only one of God’s creatures who has that distinction. Angels weren’t created in His image. And neither were monkeys, or apes. Man is set apart from all creation as God’s one creature whom God made to be like Himself. Today when man is inclined to worship himself, he doesn’t begin to realize the glory which God has placed upon man.

But now look at verse 6 because we are not finished with the glory and honor which God placed upon man. God made man *the lord of creation*--with a small "l" on lord. "To have dominion" is to make him *a ruler*, God made man *to reign* upon the earth. Everything was put "under his feet."

This is what the account of creation tells us. Cf. Gen. 1:26-28:

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Moses, in writing Genesis 1, used a different word for "dominion," but the idea is the same--that of ruling over all creation.

But now let us turn to Hebrews, chapter 2, where this passage is quoted. Cf. Heb. 2:6-8. (Read.)

Notice in particular the last statement of verse 8 in Hebrews 2. It is not a part of Psalm 8. "But now we see not yet all things put under him."

Man is not the lord of creation today. Man has no control over rivers when they overflow their banks. Man has no control over hurricanes and tornadoes and earthquakes and famines. Man is not in control of the storms at sea. Man is not in control of animals, nor of the birds of the air, nor of the fish in the sea. Man does not have control even of himself. The nations of the earth are not under man's control. Man is not in control of disease and death. *But the fact remains forever in Scripture that God made man to have dominion...* Sin has made man a slave upon the earth over which he was made to have dominion. Is this one case where God is going to have to give up on one of His purposes, and admit defeat?

No! Never! God's purposes are never defeated! He will accomplish all of His will. But what is the answer? It is found in Heb. 2:9-10:

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their

You see, when God revealed to David the truth that we find in Psalm 8, and when God said in Genesis 1 at the time of creation, that man was to have dominion, even then He was thinking of His Son. The Lord Jesus in becoming a man was made "a little lower than the angels," but, before He could assume dominion over all of the earth, He had to suffer and die for the sins of His many sons whom He was bringing to glory. He did that at His first coming. When He comes the second time, then we will see Him as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We see in our Lord's earthly ministry indications of His dominion. He conquered every disease. He raised the dead. He spoke to the raging seas, and they instantaneously became calm. He cast out demons. He changed water into wine. But what is more important, He changed the hearts of men, delivering them from Satanic bondage and bondage to sin, and set them free. He even raised Himself from the dead. He had authority to lay down His life, and He had power to take it again. Oh, the amazing glory of our Lord Jesus Christ even in the

days of His humiliation. *What will it be like when He comes in glory?* Let me read one passage which tells us what it will be like. Please turn in your Bibles again to Isaiah 11, and follow in your Bibles as I read the first nine verses. (Read.)

Before I leave this fourth section of Psalm 8, let me ask you to turn to 1 Cor. 15 where we have two brief quotations from Psalm 8. I am referring to 1 Cor. 15:25 and 27. Psal. 8:6 says "thou hast put all things under his feet." We don't see it yet, but it is spoken of in Psalm 8 as having already taken place because, due to the power and glory of God, it will most certainly come to pass!

Is it any wonder that David concluded this Psalm as he did? He ended as he began--with

4) The glory of God (Psa. 8:9).

As I said earlier, it seems that we have gone in this Psalm from eternity to eternity, or from a created world to a redeemed world. If we can praise Him for His creation, how much more shall we praise Him when He shows Himself as Redeemer and Sovereign over all the earth. Through all of the history of the human race, God's Name remains the same: "excellent"! There is no name greater than His Name. Should this not remind us of what the Apostle Paul said in his letter to the church at Philippi about the coming glory of our Lord Jesus Christ? Cf. Phil. 2:9-11:

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In that day the prophecy spoken by King David will finally be fulfilled. The Man, Christ Jesus, the only Mediator between God and man, will take His rightful place as King over all the earth.

Concl: What man lost by his sin, Christ has regained by His incarnation, death, and resurrection--and infinitely more! And so if in viewing his creation we can say, "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth," how much more will we be able to sing the same praise to the LORD when His purposes in redemption are finally fulfilled.

"O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth."

“Christ in the Old Testament”
Lesson 20
The Messianic Psalms --Part 3 --Psalm 16
March 25, 1997

Intro: Our lesson today is the third of the Messianic Psalms: Psalm 16. As I have done with the two preceding Psalms, I want to begin by showing that this Psalm is Messianic through the quotations of it which we have in the NT. Such quotations leave absolutely no doubt that the Psalm speaks of Christ.

- 1) The Apostle Peter quoted from it in Acts 2:25-28. He was quoting Psa. 16:8-11.
- 2) The Apostle Paul quoted from it in Acts 13:35. He was quoting Psa. 16:10.

Both men related it to the resurrection of Christ, and Peter seemed to see in Psa. 16 as well a reference to the ascension of our Lord. Both men showed also that the verses in the latter part of Psalm 16 could not have applied to David because he died and they knew where his tomb was. It is clear that David was the writer of Psalm 16. The first part of the Psalm speaks of the hope and delight that David had in the Lord while in the latter part of the Psalm he was speaking prophetically of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we read this Psalm we can see why David deserved to be called *a man after God's heart*. Obviously he had found his greatest joy in the Lord, a joy which he experienced on earth, but a joy also that would carry him through death into heaven itself where he would enjoy the presence of the Lord as never before.

When the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip when he was reading in Isaiah 53, “I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” (Acts 8:34), he was raising one of the biggest questions in the interpretation of prophecy. We face that in this Psalm. Do some of these words belong to our Lord, or are they the words of David as he spoke of our Savior. It seems to me that most of the Psalm contains the words of the David, but he was clearly referring to our Lord Jesus when he said as we have it in verse 10, the latter part, “Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” This definitely has to do with Christ, and the quotations in the NT prove this beyond any question. Jesus Christ is God’s “Holy One.” And He is the One Who, although He died, never did His body “see corruption.” He was raised from the dead, glorified, and death now has no more dominion over Him. So David’s delight in God and in His Holy One not only was his experience in life, but through death, and into the glory that is to come. Because we not only have here a prediction of the resurrection of our Lord, but also of the resurrection of David, and with him, all of the saints, the people of God.

But let us look at the Psalm in as much detail as our time will allow.

III. PSALM 16.

First, let me give you an outline:

- A. David’s prayer (v. 1).
- B. David’s delight in the Lord and in His people (vv. 2-3).
- C. David’s attitude toward other gods (v. 4).
- D. David’s testimony (vv. 5-6).
- E. David’s praise (v. 7).
- F. David’s delight in God’s presence (v. 8).
- G. David’s present joy and future hope (vv. 9-11).

It seems that David himself divided this Psalm into two parts by giving his prayer, or petition in verse 1, and then expressing his praise in verse 8. Obviously he had found blessing in his fellowship with the Lord that is

rare among the people of God. But his testimony in this Psalm is certainly intended to be an encouragement for all to follow him in his precious fellowship with the Lord. So let us look first at his prayer.

A. DAVID'S PRAYER (Psa. 16:1).

This is surely one of the most important prayers that we as the people of God can pray, and need to pray. David was setting the pattern for all of the people of God. The word “preserve” suggests that he wanted the Lord to build a hedge about him--a hedge of thorns--which would serve a twofold purpose: It would keep others out, and keep him in. We have as much to fear from our own folly and sinfulness as we do from what the Devil or people can do to us. There are dangers within and without. And there are many passages in the NT which speak of our need to be *kept*. Cf. what the Apostle Paul said in 2 Tim. 1:12:

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

And who can forget Jude's benediction at the end of his epistle:

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen (Jude 24-25).

And I think also of what Peter said about the Lord keeping us:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

This is a prayer we need to pray daily, and to thank the Lord, too, that He often keeps us when we don't ask him to keep us. We are continually subject to dangers from within our own hearts as well as from circumstances and people and the Devil outside of us.

You will be interested to know that when David addressed God as “God,” he was recognizing that whatever the danger might be which we face, “God” is sufficient to meet every emergency because He is “the Almighty God,” the meaning of the word that David used in this Psalm. He is able to do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” And it was in this God that David was trusting. David could have written a book with the title of Jerry Bridges' great book, *Trusting God*. And think of all of the wonderful verses we have in the Psalms which were given to us by God through King David. The same is true of Solomon in the books he wrote. For example, that old favorite of us all, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart...” (Prov. 3:5-6). Solomon must have learned to trust the Lord by watching the way his father lived.

But we must go on to verses 2 and 3 where we have:

B. DAVID'S DELIGHT IN THE LORD AND IN HIS PEOPLE (Psa. 16:2-3).

Notice here that our translators have spelled the word Lord in two different ways to show us that they are the translation of different words in the original. “LORD” all in caps is the Hebrew name, *Jehovah*. When Lord is spelled with a capital L, and then small o-r-d, it usually means *Adonai*. Jehovah speaks of God as the ever-living, never-changing God. So David knew that He never had to be concerned that God would die, or that He

would even change. The One Whom He loved, and in Whom He was trusting, was not only the Almighty God, but One Who had always lived, and Who was eternal and unchanging. This One David has made his Master, as the word Adonai suggests. David somehow understood that he was a servant of the living God. And so, speaking to his soul, he reminds himself of the glory of the One in Whom he had placed his trust.

The last phrase of verse 1, translated, “my goodness extendeth not to thee,” actually means as it is translated in the NASB, “I have no good besides Thee.” David meant that he never needed to go beyond the Lord to find the goodness, the blessing, that he needed day after day. With David the Lord was not just One among many in Whom he was trusting; the Lord was His sole object of trust. This speaks of the great delight that David had in the Lord. There was no question in his mind but that the Lord could meet every need that he might have.

However, as far as his joy and delight was concerned, it extended also “to the saints that are in the earth.” David called them “the excellent, in whom is all my delight.” When David called them “excellent,” he meant that they were the greatest people on earth. He loved the Lord’s people. He delighted in them. He wanted to be with them.

When you put together what David said about the Lord in verse 2, and then about the Lord’s people in verse 3, doesn’t this seem to indicate that David was obeying the two great commandments in the Law--loving God first, and then loving the Lord’s people second--and both of these were so far ahead of everyone else and everything else, that nothing else was in the running for David’s affections.

C. DAVID’S ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER GODS (Psa. 16:4).

At this point the tone of the Psalm changes momentarily as David reflected upon the fact that there were multitudes in the world who did not feel about the Lord, or about His people, as he did. They were *hastening after another god*. David did not specify a particular god because people in the world follow different gods, but they are all false gods. They *hastened after their gods with the same kind of devotion that David had for his God*. But instead of having joy, and the prospect of even better things to come, they not only had sorrows, but *multiplied sorrows!* David not only felt compassion for them, but at the same time he was turned away by what they were doing. And not only did he refuse to share with them in their offerings, but he did not want even the names of their gods to be upon his lips. How wonderful it would be if we all had such an abhorrence of evil!

It is apparent at this point that David was getting his guidance from the Word of God. Cf. Ex. 23:13:

And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

See also Joshua 23:7.

But after this brief word about the heathen, David returned to his subject.

D. DAVID’S TESTIMONY (Psa. 16:5-6).

The heathen take their portion in those who are not gods. Evidently some of the Israelites took great pride and joy in the land which was their inheritance. But David found his joy in the Lord. The Lord was his inheritance, and He was David’s chief delight.

And then he said that the Lord was the portion of his cup. Matthew Henry made this interesting comment about the meaning of the “cup.”

The portion of our cup in this world, with which we are nourished, and refreshed, and kept from

fainting. Those have not God for theirs who do not reckon his comforts the most reviving cordials, acquaint themselves with them, and make use of them as sufficient to counterbalance all the grievances of this present time and to sweeten the most bitter cup of affliction (Vol. III, p. 289).

Not only that, but the Lord is just as concerned about keeping Himself for David as David was in claiming the Lord as his inheritance. The “lot” was David’s portion--which was the Lord. And the Lord *maintained it*. That is, the Lord sustained David in this wonderful fellowship. This was in line with David’s request in verse 1. The Lord was preserving this relationship which brought such great joy to David.

In verse 6 where he continued to speak of the Lord as his inheritance, David said that “the lines” which marked out his inheritance (in the Lord, understood), were “pleasant places.” Again David was speaking of the delight that he had in the Lord, and how lovely and delightful he had found his fellowship with the Lord to be. He had “a goodly heritage.” It was completely satisfying and pleasing to him. It was like David had sought out all of the words that he could to describe how much he loved the Lord, and how he delighted in the fellowship that he had with the Lord, knowing that it would never end.

Spurgeon said about this verse:

David believed in an overruling destiny which fixed the bounds of his abode, and his possessions; he did more, he was satisfied with all the appointment of a predestinating God (*The Treasury of David*, I, p. 203).

Now in the light of all that has gone before, we come to David’s praise.

E. DAVID’S PRAISE (Psa. 16:7).

None of what David has said about the joy he had in the Lord, and the blessings he had received, were due to any goodness or merit in himself. It was all of grace, and so he owed a debt of gratitude to the Lord. He was grateful for the “counsel,” the truth which the Lord had made known to him, and, in his case, through him to all future generations of the Lord’s people who would be so blessed and guided and supported by what David had written. His “reins” were the inner parts of his being. God was teaching him outwardly through the Word, and then God kept increasing his understanding “in the night seasons” when things always appear to be the darkest.

Many feel that from verse 7 on to the end we have words which could have been spoken by our Lord Jesus. The study of His humanity, how He grew, what He learned, and all the ways of the heavenly Father with His beloved Son, is one of the most profitable studies in Scripture. Our Lord’s life on earth had many parallels with the life of David, only with our Lord Jesus His life here on earth was one of uninterrupted fellowship with the Father. And praise and thanksgiving were a vital part of our Lord’s ministry.

Consequently it is not surprising that David returns to the theme which has found expression throughout this Psalm: his continuing delight in the Father.

F. David’s delight in God’s presence (v. 8).

The Apostle Peter, speaking on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, said that these were the words of David. The translation of this passage in Acts 2:25-28 reads like this:

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in

hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

In Psalm 16:8 we read that David said, "I have set the LORD always before me." He, of course, was not able to put God wherever he wanted God to be, but the meaning is simply that he continued remembered that God is with us always, and he recognized and delighted in the reality of His presence. This was the way David lived. The presence of the Lord was a glorious reality to him, and therefore he was able to stand during all of the trials of his life.

Paul spoke this way when, in his last epistle, he said this:

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion (2 Tim. 4:16-17).

We all have our Lord's promise that He will never leave us, nor forsake us. Cf. Heb. 13:5-6. And what a comfort this is! Every day and throughout each day we need to set the Lord before us, recognize that He is present with us, and seek by His grace always to do that which is pleasing in His sight. A part of this, a major part, is to be meditating on the truth of the Word.

In contrast with what David did in setting the Lord before him, we have this statement from him in Psa. 86:14 regarding wicked men:

O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.

G. DAVID'S PRESENT JOY AND FUTURE HOPE (Psa. 16:9-11).

What is the result of habitually setting the Lord before ourselves? We see the answer in verse 9.

"Therefore my heart is glad." This is where true joy begins, *in the heart*.

A second result: "And my glory rejoiceth." In Peter's message which is recorded in Acts 2 (verse 26), coming from the LXX, this statement is translated, "and my tongue was glad." Fausset, in the JFB Commentary, had this to say:

The tongue is the *glory* of man above the brutes; it is the *soul's* interpreter, whence it derives its "glory." It is also the instrument of glorifying God, which is man's highest *glory*. David not only exults internally, but makes his *tongue* and *flesh* also partakers of his joy (JFB, III, p. 134).

The third result is, "my flesh also shall rest in hope." Verse 10 clearly shows that here David was rejoicing in the fact that not even death is capable of taking away our joy. In fact, as the concluding verses of the Psalm show, we are destined to experience in the presence of the Lord "fulness of joy." See verse 11.

The last two verses describe for us the "hope" which David had. As I have said many times before, all of the doctrines of Scripture begin at some point in the Word of God, and then as the revelation continues, more and

more is revealed until we have all that God has been pleased to tell us. Because we have the completed revelation of God in the NT, we have more light on our “hope” than David did. But, as usually was the case, the saints of the OT had more understanding of the truth than we give them credit for.

In verse 10 we see that David knew that his final destination was not Sheol. Here David was rejoicing in the glorious truth of bodily resurrection. The book of Hebrews, chapter 11, verses 17 through 19, tell us that even Abraham believed that God was able to raise the dead. And Job expressed the same hope in Job 19:25-26:

25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

There will be a time when the body and the soul shall be separated, but they will be reunited when the Lord comes for us. David was probably using the word “soul” here to speak of his whole being--body, soul, and spirit.

And why did David have this strong hope? Because, as the latter part of verse 10 tells us (and this is the statement that marks this out as a Messianic Psalm), God will not allow His Holy One to see corruption. Implied in this statement is the belief that the Messiah would die, but His body would not “see corruption” as dead bodies usually do. *He would be gloriously and eternally raised from the dead. And the resurrection of the Holy One was the ground of David’s hope that he, too, would be raised from the dead.*

Fausset brings out the fact that somewhere along through time the Jews made “thine Holy One” plural, so it would read, *thine holy ones*. This would keep it from indicating that the Messiah would die. But there is overwhelming evidence that the singular is the right form, and that is confirmed by both of the quotations of this passage which we have in the NT: Peter’s quotation in Acts 2, and Paul’s quotation in Acts 13. The Messiah was Deity, and it was only because of His infinite perfection that He could die and redeem all like David who were the chosen ones of God.

But the last verse of this Psalm shows us that the Lord had given David insight beyond the truths of the death and resurrection of the Messiah--these two great realities which gave David his hope, and which give us our hope. It is that God will “show” us “the path of life.” “Show” is the common word in Hebrew for *knowing*. The NASB translates the first of verse 11, “Thou wilt make known to me the path of life.” “The path of life” is the way to heaven and glory. You will occasionally hear of Christians who are worried about finding their way to heaven. There is no need to worry; David knew, and we know, *that God personally will see to it that we get there*. In Psa. 73:23 and 24 we have these words which were written by Asaph:

23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

At the end of Psalm 17 we see more about what David understood by revelation of the future purposes of God in our salvation:

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness (Psa. 17:15).

This was David’s version of what the Apostle John was to say later in 1 John 3:2:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

What will we have when we get to heaven, according to Psa. 16:11? There we will experience “fulness of joy.” This means *satisfying joy*. There will be nothing in heaven to mar our joy. David had joy, great joy, in his fellowship with the Lord here on earth, but it is never completely *full*. But when we get to heaven there will nothing to mar our joy. Never again will we be able to sin. Never again will there be any interruption in our

fellowship with the Lord. The Lord gives us great joy here and now, but what we have now is only a slight foretaste of the joy that will our when the Lord comes.

And what will be the reason for our joy then? We will be *in the presence of our God, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the presence of the blessed Holy Spirit*. It is in setting the Lord before us here on earth that we have joy; in heaven it is the same Triune God Who will give us that "fulness of joy" that we are all looking forward to. This was David's hope, and this is our hope. And there will be no end to those "pleasures for evermore."

Concl: Although this brings us to the end of Psalm 16, let me remind you that we know now that there will be a whole generation of the Lord's people who will not experience physical death, but will glorified without seeing death when the Lord comes. Every generation of the Lord's people has hoped that they would be the ones who would not have to die. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we were that generation? You know, the Lord could come today, we would be "caught up" to meet Him. Those who are now "with the Lord" will be resurrected before we are "caught up," and so shall we ever "be with the Lord."

That is the way the Bible speaks of heaven; it is being *with Him!* In the passage many of us have recently learned, or recalled what we had learned before, we are told that the same grace that brought us salvation teaches us that we are to be "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." We are not just to believe that He is coming, but we are to be expecting Him *momentarily*. Let us be looking for Him today. And if we really believe with all of our hearts that He might come today, we are going to make sure that our lives are in order, and we are going to be doing all that we can to spread the Gospel of God's grace. The reason the Lord hasn't come is because there are still some of His elect who must be saved. This is what the Apostle Peter said in 2 Pet. 3:9 to answer those who ridiculed the promise of our Lord's coming, since He had not come back immediately as many believers thought He would. This is how Peter answered them:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

Let us set the Lord before us today, enjoying precious fellowship with Him, and at the same time looking forward to the greatest of all joys when He comes and we are forever with Him!

“Christ in the Old Testament”

Lesson 21

The Messianic Psalms -- Part 4 -- Psalm 22

April 1, 1997

Intro: In coming to Psalm 22, we come to a trilogy of Psalms, all having to do with the Messiah. Arthur Clarke describes them by saying that **in Psalm 22** we see Christ as the Savior; **in Psalm 23** we see Christ as the Shepherd; **in Psalm 24** we have Christ as the Sovereign--“the King of Glory.” He was good at alliteration, and so spoke of Psalm 22 as having to do with the Cross, Psalm 23 with the Crook, and Psalm 24, with the Crown. (See his *Analytical Studies in the Psalms*, p. 71.)

As we shall see, it is not entirely true to say that Psalm 22 has to do only with the Cross because the latter part of the Psalm anticipates the reign of Christ upon the earth. But it is the Cross that prepares the way for the crown which our Lord shall some day wear as King of kings and Lord of lords. The two divisions of the Psalm which seem to be recognized by many expositors (possibly most of them), are vv. 1-21, and vv. 22-31. Verse 21 is actually a transition verse between the two parts because in it we see that the Messiah, Who felt deserted by God in the first part of the Psalm, knows that the Lord has heard him: “For thou hast heard me”--in the middle of verse 21. So in the first part, as Andrew Bonar pointed out, we have *the Messiah’s suffering*, and in the second part, *the Messiah’s glory*. (See his *Christ and His Church in the Book of Psalms*, p. 76.)

As we have done before, I want to point out the NT references which enable us to identify this Psalm as a Messianic Psalm:

- 1) All who are familiar with the Bible will recognize the first part of verse 1 as words spoken by our Lord on the Cross. Cf. Matt. 27:46 and Mark 15:34.
- 2) Verses 7 and 8 anticipate what we read in Matt. 27:43: “He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”
- 3) In verse 16 we read, “They pierced my hands and my feet.” This agrees with what we read in Luke 24:39-40 where we read that the Lord appeared to His disciples and said,

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.

Also in Zech. 10:12 we have this prediction concerning our Lord’s second coming:

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

- 4) Cf. v. 18 with John 19:23-24:

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

- 5) Verse 22 is quoted in Heb. 2:12. Reading verses 10 and 11 with verse 12, this is what we have: Heb 2:10-12

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

There are many other statements in this Psalm which can be related to other parts of Scripture which have to do with the Messiah, but these which I have given you are the most prominent, and are sufficient to show that Psalm 22 is really a Messianic Psalm.

So Derek Kidner is right when he called this Psalm, “The Psalm of the Cross” (p. 105). It leads on to glory, but as the Word clearly teaches in many places, there could not have been a Crown for our Lord without the Cross. All of these references show that not only is this a Messianic Psalm, but it is one of the greatest of the Messianic Psalms.

We can’t overlook the fact that this Psalm also reflects some of the trials and triumphs in the life of David, but, taken as a whole, the words of this Psalm go far beyond what David ever experienced. No one ever suffered like our Lord did when his soul was made an offering for our sins.

But now let us examine the truth given to us in this Psalm. Remember the two divisions: verses 1-21 having to do with the sufferings of Christ, and verses 22-31 having to do with His glory.

IV. PSALM 22.

A. The Sufferings of Christ (Psa. 22:1-21).

The first half of verse 1, spoken by our Lord from the Cross, clearly identify this Psalm as Messianic. David surely experienced this feeling of separation and desertion from God during many of the trials which he experienced, but none ever felt what Kidner called “the punitive separation He accepted in our place” (p. 106). Never had our Lord experienced what He experienced on the Cross, and we can only sense from the words how terribly the judgment which our Lord experienced affected Him, especially in what it meant in His relationship with His Father. This could very well have been the worst of His sufferings, and enables Him to enter with us in our sufferings in those times when we feel abandoned by God.

Notice how He dwelt on “My God.” Twice He said this in verse 1, and we have it again in verse 2. See it again in verse 10.

The words, “so far,” indicate further how forsaken the Lord felt as He was hanging on the Cross. See also v. 11, and then v. 19. A “roaring” is *a cry of distress!*

Verse 2 is an example of praying without ceasing. It made no difference if the Messiah (or David) cried “in the daytime,” or “in the night season,” the result was always the same: no answer! A “cry” is an audible cry for help. And it is loud as though the Messiah (or David) were trying to reach a God who was far away. But it was all to no avail.

In verses 3-6 the Messiah takes courage in reviewing two things:

- 1) The character of God in verse 3.
- 2) The experience of the people of God in times past in verses 4 and 5.

In speaking of his God as “holy” the Messiah was recognizing the separation that this word suggested between God and man. He was infinite in His perfection and majesty; man was corrupt and defiled and completely unworthy of even the least of the mercies of the Lord. Fausset speaks of the holiness of God as “unapproachable majesty.” And because God is “holy” in His character and in all His ways, He had a permanent dwelling place in the praises of the people of Israel. That is, He was always, and under all circumstances, worthy of the

praises of His people.

Looking at the experiences of the people of God, time and time we see how "the fathers trusted" in God, and He delivered them, and they cried out in their distress, and we not only delivered, but they "were not confounded." To be confounded is to be put to shame, or to be disappointed, and then to be confused as a result. The word "trusted" is found three times in verses 4 and 5.

It is difficult to think of this verse, and especially the word "worm" as relating to the Lord Jesus, but this shows the depth of His humiliation in becoming a man. Many who profess to know the Lord despise any idea of man being a "worm." But that is because they overlook the true nature of man. But the Lord in becoming a sacrifice of our sins was despised even by men. And His arrest and crucifixion would seem to indicate that He was defenseless and helpless before His enemies. His God apparently did not hear Him, nor did He intend to help Him. Isaiah 53:3 gives us a perfect description of what it meant that our Lord became a "worm" for us:

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Even though our Lord was far above us, yet He took a place even lower in order to help us in our distress because of our sins. The Cross is a clear illustration of the depths to which our Lord humbled Himself, and was actually humiliated before men. It is no wonder that He was scorned like He was. And this is brought out even more by the ridicule which was heaped upon Him.

Verses 7 and 8 show how despised the Lord was, and how they taunted Him. And this is what we read about in Matt. 27:43. Here we see that the enemies of our Lord seemed to indicate that all that the Lord had said about the Father, was meaningless. He claimed to trust in the God, and that the Father delighted in Him, but His experience was a contradiction of the claims that He made. Such accusations could not but help cause our Lord the greatest possible humiliation.

Verses 9 and 10 bring us back to the conception, the birth, and the infancy of our Lord in His humanity. He was born utterly dependent upon the Father, like any other human being. "Thou art He that took me out of the womb." All through our Lord's infancy and childhood, it was apparent that God was taking care of Him, preserving Him, and meeting His every need. He was "cast upon" God from before He was born. The Lord's condition in those early years was a demonstration of how completely dependent He was upon God, His God.

Beginning with verse 11 the Lord began to plead in a special way that He would experience as a Man the same loving, faithful care that He had experienced as a child. It shows that regardless of what our age might be, we are still utterly dependent upon God, just as dependent as we were in our childhood. And our Lord was made to feel this as He faced the suffering of the Cross. We must never think that it was *easy* for the Lord to die. Death is never easy, and it was more difficult for our Lord than for anyone else because of the nature of His death. His soul was being made an offering for our sins.

In verse 11 our Lord sensed that "trouble" was near, but the Lord was "far" off. And He was left absolutely without any help. Such words show how utterly destitute the Lord felt that He was.

In verse 12 He described his enemies as "many bulls" and "strong bulls." One bull can be deadly in his attack, but here were "many" and they were "strong." And they had him surrounded so that there was no way that He could escape from them. This made the circumstances our Lord faced even more ominous. Fausset, speaking of this description of our Lord's enemies among the Jews and the Gentiles said that they were "strong" and violent while the Lord was like a gentle deer, or *hind* (taken from the title of this Psalm which means *the Hind of the morning*). His enemies were strong, but He was weak. But the term "bulls" alone could not adequately

what our Lord's enemies were like; they were also like hungry, angry lions with their mouths wide open, ready to attack, and tear, and consume.

By way of contrast verse 14 shows that in the flesh the Lord was no match for His enemies if the Lord were to stay afar off! He was like water. His bones were out of joint so that they could not support Him. This was a description of total weakness. The Lord Who could still the storm, raise the dead, and so many other mighty works, at this point was a picture of total weakness--"a worm, and no man." He said, "My heart is like wax." This means *as wax before a fire*. All strength was gone. All courage was gone. It describes what the Apostle Paul said in 2 Cor 13:4. He said that our Lord was "crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God." It is impossible for us to understand the utter weakness of our Lord when He suffered and died on the Cross.

Verse 15 continues the description. His strength was dried up like a clay pot ("potsherd") which had been sitting in the sun. The Lord was suffering from dehydration. And this is what caused His thirst, and was a part of that which contributed ultimately to His death. This is how David described his condition before he confessed his sin. Cf. Ps. 32:4: "For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." If such was David's experience before he confessed his sin, think of what it meant to our Lord to be "made sin."

"Dogs" in verse 16 is probably a description of the Gentiles. And again, as in verse 12 we have the word, "compassed." The Messiah in His death was surrounded by His enemies, and there was no way to escape. And we have a description here of the death He died: crucifixion. There has been much discussion about the meaning of the expression that is found here, but the reading of the Authorized Text seems to be the best. And it certainly agrees with what happened to our Lord.

To "tell" inverse 17, is *to count*. Isaiah tells us that our Lord's body was so emaciated when He was on the Cross that it hardly looked like a human being. Everything that the Lord experienced took its toll upon His body. His condition was clearly seen by Himself, by His enemies, and even His bones seemed to stare at Him so terrible was His condition.

Verse 18 tells us what the soldiers did to our Lord's garments. Fausset said,
The dividing of Messiah's garments was not merely for gain, but in mockery of the sufferer, as it all was over with Him now, and He and His kingdom were lost for ever. These soldiers were, in spite of themselves, helping to set up the kingdom of glory, based on His sufferings (III, 150).

This second on *the sufferings of the Messiah* is concluded by a final prayer in vv. 19-21. The Messiah still pleads for the "far off" God to come near, and to hasten to help Him. He asked to be delivered from the sword, from the power of the dog, and from the lion's mouth.

The parallelism in verse 20 shows that the Messiah's "darling" is His "soul." Lit. it means, *my only one*. It was His life--all He had left. But this may very well be an appeal for resurrection.

Verse 21 conveys a sudden change which is not clear in the English. The word which is translated "unicorn" here probably refers to a wild ox of some kind, some of which were very huge, and deadly! But the idea is that at the very moment when all seemed most hopeless, *the Lord heard and rescued Him. And this is the turning point in the Psalm--from suffering and death, to glory!* When the Lord hears, we know that the answer is certain. And so we come to the second and final section of the Psalm:

Matthew Henry made this comment on this prayer of our Lord, the Messiah:

Let that encourage us to hope that we shall be delivered from the lion's mouth, that we be not torn. He that has delivered, doth and will deliver. This prayer of Christ...was answered, for the Father heard Him always. And, though He (God) did not deliver Him (Christ) from death, yet He suffered Him not to see corruption, but, the third day raised Him out of the dust of death, which was a greater instance of God's favour to Him than if He had helped Him down from the Cross; for that would have hindered His undertaking, whereas His resurrection crowned it.

And then Matthew Henry added:

In singing this we should meditate on the sufferings and resurrection of Christ till we experience in our own souls the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings (III, 313).

And now let us move on to the second and final part of the Psalm.

B. The Messiah's Glory (Psa. 22:22-31).

Verse 22 is the verse which is quoted in Heb. 2:12. Let me read that verse with the verse immediately before it:

- 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,
- 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee (Heb. 2:11-12).

It becomes more apparent at this point, especially by the use of this verse in Heb. 2:12, that *salvation is the reason for the Messiah's suffering*. And this point becomes continually clearer as the Psalm moves on to its conclusion.

Think of this verse as *the Messiah praising His God*. To declare the Name of God means to show forth His glorious attributes--the love of God, the grace of God, the wisdom and power of God, and on and on. And the Messiah does this with those whom He calls "His brethren," that is, the elect. It is only those who have been redeemed, and have had their eyes opened to the truth of God, Who are capable of understanding the glory of God which He has displayed in salvation. What an amazing relationship we have with God and with our Lord Jesus Christ! We are in the family of God, and although there is no time in Scripture where the saints call the Lord Jesus, "Brother," yet He is not ashamed to call us His "brethren."

In verse 23 the Messiah calls upon the elect of Israel to praise the Lord, and to glorify Him. Glorifying God is what the Messiah said in verse 22 that He would do. To fear the Lord is to honor Him not only as God, but as our Redeemer and Lord. It is the OT term for trusting God, for believing in Him. None but the redeemed can properly fear the Lord. This is what Solomon called "the beginning of wisdom." Eternal life begins when we first begin to fear the Lord. This is evidence of our salvation, when pleasing God becomes our main purpose in life, and we delight to do the Father's will as our Lord did.

Two different words are used for "fear" in verse 23. The first means that we are to stand in awe of God for all that He is, and for all that He has done with our Son for our salvation. The second has to do with seeking to abide with God, seeking His favor and blessing, always remembering our need and our unworthiness, and, at the same time, remembering His transcendent glory and majesty.

We as the redeemed do not glory in ourselves, nor do we take any glory for our salvation. All of the glory belongs to the Triune God. One way we can praise the Lord, and glorify Him (speaking of the Father), is in song. And as we began by fearing the Lord, so are we to continue to fear the Lord day by day throughout our

lives.

Why are we to praise the Lord? Our answer is in verse 24 which does not speak of us (although we have been afflicted by our sin), but it has to do with our Lord Jesus Christ. In the first part of the Psalm as our attention is focused upon the sufferings of our Savior, *it appeared as though God had forsaken His Son*. But that was not the case. Our Lord was "not despised"--not regarded with contempt when His soul was made an offering for our sin. Nor did God *abhor* Him--treat Him as detestable. Our Lord was treated that way by Jews and Gentiles alike, but that was not true of God. He did not permanently hide His face from His Son, "but when He (Christ) cried unto Him (God), He (God) heard." And the Father saved Him out of His distresses by raising Him from the dead.

And so, for the second time (vv. 21 and 24), the Messiah rejoiced because God has heard Him, has heard His prayer, and has wonderfully answered. Answered prayer for us, too, is to bring to us *fulness of joy*. Cf. John 16:24.

Delitzsch, in his commentary on this Psalm, called this verse (25), *the Lord's thank offering*. Lit. it could be translated, "My praise shall be from Thee." How true this is of us as well. We get our praise from the Lord. Cf. Heb. 13:15, "By Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually..."

A vow is a promise, or promises, made to God during a trial in return for deliverance. And, of course, the vows which the Son made to the Father had to do with us! The Lord Jesus at Calvary was not seeking for His own glory except it result in glory for us, the elect of God, as well.

Verses 26 and 27 begin to show us the fruit resulting from our Lord's death and resurrection.

"The meek" are those who realize how poor and lowly they are, and how unworthy they are of the salvation of the Lord. They come to "eat," to partake of the Lord and the benefits of His work, and are "satisfied." In their own hearts they know that God requires nothing for salvation except that which has been provided by God in the death of His Son. Those who seek the Lord because they have been drawn to Christ by the Spirit, will "praise Him." And they shall live forever as the possessors of everlasting life.

In verse 27 we see the extent of the Messiah's work. The use of the word "all" two times in this verse does not mean that all people will eventually be saved, but it means that people throughout the world will "remember" what Christ has done (speaking of the Gentiles), and from all nations there will be those who will come to worship before God. This does not mean that they knew the Lord before, or that they even knew *about* Him, but it means that once the message reaches those who God intends to redeem, and for whom our Lord Jesus Christ died, they will not be able to forget the message, but that it will result in their salvation. The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And this goes on generation after generation as God continues to fulfill His purposes in salvation which were established before the foundation of the world, but realized through the death and resurrection of His Son. It is certainly true *that our Lord Jesus Christ did not die in vain*.

From verse 28 on we see more about the far-reaching extent of the work of our Lord. It has seemed throughout history that the kingdom was Satan's. And truly he is "the god of this world," but always under the sovereign control and limits of God Himself. But God will set His own King upon the throne of the earth. Then it will be known that "He is the governor among the nations." He will be King of kings and Lord of lords.

The meaning of verse 29 seems to indicate that even among the "fat," i.e., the prosperous of the earth, there

will be those who will come and eat of salvation and worship the Lord. And also among the lowly of the earth because all "go down to the dust." "None can keep alive his own soul." It is appointed unto all to die (unless we are among those who are to be living when the Lord Jesus returns). But not even death can rob us of the life which has been provided for us by God through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord never married. He had no family according to the flesh. But He has "a seed," those who have been redeemed by the grace of God and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. They will serve Him and be faithful to Him. In addition, "it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." This is translated by the NIV, "future generations will be told about the Lord." God declares that the message of the Gospel, will not die. It will not be destroyed. The truth of salvation will be proclaimed from generation to generation. There is no other message of hope for either Jew or Gentile. And this point is emphasized in the last verse of the Psalm.

We are assured by verse 31 that their will always be those who will "declare his righteousness." This is what we are doing when we preach the Gospel. Cf. Rom. 1:16, 17. And the Gospel is a message of God's love and what He has done in Christ to make His love known.

Kinder says that the phrase, "that he hath done this," is close to being equal to that triumphant statement our Lord made from the Cross when He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Kinder's words are, "The Psalm which began with the cry of dereliction, ends with the word, *He has wrought it*, an announcement not far removed from our Lord's great cry, "It is finished" (p. 109).

Concl: The Gospel is the message of what God has done for the salvation of sinners. It is not a joint project between God and man, God doing His part and man doing his. Man has no part. Man, if left to himself, will never seek God nor His salvation. But God in His grace seeks those whom He has chosen for salvation, and the work that Christ did on the Cross positively guarantees that everyone whom God has chosen and given to His Son, shall, without a single exception, be saved, and saved for all eternity. God even gives us our faith to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. What a God we have! And what a Savior we have! And what a glorious salvation is ours--all through Christ, and all by the grace of God.

“Christ in the Old Testament”
Lesson 22
The Messianic Psalms --Part 5 --Psalm 23
April 8, 1997

Intro: Psalm 23 is the second of three Psalms which go together. In Psalm 22, as we saw last week, we have Christ as the Savior. In Psalm 23 He is the Shepherd. And in Psalm 24 He is the Sovereign. Or, as it has also been pointed out, in Psalm 22 we have the Cross, in Psalm 23 we have the Crook, the Shepherd's Crook, and in Psalm 24 we have the Crown.

There is no question but that our Lord can lay claim to all of these roles. He is our Savior Who purchased our redemption when He died on the Cross. He is our Shepherd Who feeds us, protects us, and guides us as His sheep. And He has always been sovereign, but the day is coming when He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. And so we can very truthfully say that Psalms 22, 23, and 24 are Messianic Psalms.

Our basis for claiming that Psalm 23 is a Messianic Psalm is different from what we have had in the Messianic Psalms which have preceded this: Psalms 2, 8, 16, and 24. All of them were quoted in the NT where the quotations applied to Christ. With Psalm 23 it is different. *There are no quotations of Psalm 23 in the NT.* But what we do have are passages in the NT which refer to our Lord as a Shepherd. And so we will look at those as we begin our study of Psalm 23.

V. PSALM 23.

A. NT passages where Christ is referred to as a Shepherd.

There are five of them to which I want to call your attention--one of these is a quotation from the OT, and it is found in two of the Gospels, but is not quoted from Psalm 23. We will look at these first.

1. Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27.

The quotation from Matthew is found after the Lord instituted the Lord's Supper, and the Lord and His disciples left the Upper Room to go to the Mount of Olives. And then we read this in Matt. 26:31 and 32:

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee (Matt. 26:31-32).

The quotation in Mark 14:27 is almost identical with the one in Matthew so we will not need to turn to it. But in both Gospels the quotation is from Zech. 13:7, which reads,

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

This verse, and especially by the quotations which we have of it in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, clearly identifies our Lord Jesus Christ as a Shepherd. When our Lord died on the Cross, He, the Shepherd, was smitten. And in Matt. 27:56, when the Lord was arrested, Matthew recorded this: "Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled." And so in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, the sheep were scattered.

The second NT passage I want to call your attention to is:

2. John 10:11, 14.

This, too, is a very familiar passage. Let me read from verse 11 down through verse 16. These are all words

which our Lord spoke.

- 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
- 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.
- 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.
- 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.
- 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.
- 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd (John 10:11-16).

Verses 11 and 14 give us our Lord's claim to be the Shepherd of the sheep, His people. In verse 14 he said that He was to give His life for the sheep. In verse 14 He repeated the claim, and added that He knew His sheep, and that they knew Him.

All of this was introduced by our Lord in the opening verses of John 10 where He was speaking of a shepherd and his sheep. You can follow me in your Bibles as I read from the middle of John 10:3 down through verse 5:

- 3b ...: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.
- 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.
- 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

The Lord knows us by name. He leads us in and out of the fold to find pasture. But the Lord's own sheep know His voice, too, and they will not follow the voice of a stranger. This tells us something very important about professing Christians who leave the Lord to follow those who bring false teaching.

How fitting it is that the Lord Jesus should be called “the good shepherd” because how could He have possibly manifested His amazing goodness and grace and mercy and love any more than in what He did in giving Himself to save us from our sins?

However, the emphasis here in John 10 is upon our Lord as our Savior from sin. And so in this respect the Shepherd Psalm, Psalm 23, has connections with Psalm 22, the Psalm of the Cross.

The third passage that we need to look at is in:

3. Hebrews 13:20-21.

In John 10 our Lord called Himself, “the good Shepherd.” Here in Heb. 13, the writer of Hebrews called Him, “that great shepherd of the sheep.” The two verses have this to say about God and about our Lord Jesus::

- 20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
- 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Heb. 13:20-21).

I think that you can see that, as John 10 had to do with what the Lord did to save us, this verse has to do with what God is doing in our lives “through Jesus Christ,” “that great shepherd of the sheep,” to make us what He wants us to be. It would take a “great Shepherd” to do this, wouldn't it? We know from other passages that God's purpose in saving us was, and is, to make us like the Lord Jesus. That calls for a “great Shepherd.” When you think of what we were when God saved us, and how much more He has to do before His work in us

is finished, we have to say that only a “great Shepherd” could possibly accomplish such an amazing transformation in each one of us.

The last two references are in the 1 Peter.

4. 1 Peter 2:25.

In the 24th verse of this chapter the Apostle Peter was speaking of what Christ did when He died for us on the Cross. So let me read verses 24 and 25 so you can see the connection.

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (1 Pet. 2:24-25).

Verse 25 alludes to Isa. 53:6. (Quote.)

The Apostle Peter was indicating in this passage that we were sheep when we were going astray. In John 10:16 we read where the Lord said that He had other “sheep” which were not of that fold, evidently speaking of Gentiles who were to be saved. All of these verses together support the doctrine of election. And we could add to them John 10:25-26 where the Lord was speaking to the Jews, i.e., Jewish leaders:

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

He did not say that they were not His sheep because they did not believe; He said that they did not believe “because” they were “not of his sheep.” There is a big difference between those two statements. We don’t become sheep when we believe; we believe because we are sheep, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

So 1 Pet 2:25 calls our Lord the Shepherd and Bishop, or Overseer, of our souls--further support that Psalm 23 speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The fifth and last NT passage which speaks of our Lord as our Shepherd is found in

5. 1 Peter 5:4.

But as I have done with the other verses, let me give you the context of this verse. Peter was addressing himself to the elders in this passage, and this is how he exhorted and encouraged them:

2 Feed [or *shepherd*] the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (1 Pet 5:2-4).

The Lord Jesus is “the **good** shepherd.” And He is “the **great** shepherd.” And this passage in 1 Peter 5 tells us that He is “the **chief** shepherd.” All elders are shepherds, but they need to remember that they serve under, and are responsible to, “the chief shepherd.” It is from the Chief Shepherd that we will get “a crown of glory” if we are to get one at all. The Lord may use men as His instruments, but He never gives His people completely over into the hands of the “undershepherds.” He is the One Who is always in control, and no one can ever pluck us out of His hands.

So there is a lot of NT teaching to support the doctrine which we are considering today, that the Shepherd spoken of in Psalm 23, is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Savior and our Lord. He is “good,” and He is “great,” and He is “the chief.”

Now let us look at Psalm 23.

B. The exposition of Psalm 23.

I doubt if there is any OT passage that is better known than Psalm 23--and I am sure that I could add to that, there is no passage that is better loved. In fact, it is a favorite even among people who don't know Him as their Shepherd. They like to think that the Lord cares for them, and that He is available every time they need Him, but they cannot honestly say what David said at the beginning of Psalm 23, “The Lord is **my** shepherd.” If we can't say that, and do not know what it means to be able to say that, then we can't claim the rest of the Psalm.

And let me remind you that David knew what a shepherd was, and he knew what a shepherd was supposed to do, because He was a shepherd before he became a King. In 2 Samuel 7 after David told the prophet Nathan that he wanted to build a house for the Lord, the Lord said that David was not to build Him a house, but that the Lord would build a house for David, meaning that David and his sons were to be the family from which our Lord Jesus Christ would come. And this is what Nathan was told to tell David on behalf of the Lord:

Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel (2 Sam. 7:8).

A “sheepcote” is the place where sheep live. It can refer to the sheepfold, or even to the pasture where the sheep graze. So David's training for the throne was in taking care of sheep. As the King of Israel he was the Shepherd of God's flock, and so he is an outstanding type of our Lord Jesus Christ in the OT. *David's heart was in every Psalm that he ever wrote, but I am sure that I am right when I say that he never wrote any Psalm in which more of his heart was expressed than in Psalm 23.*

In thinking through this Psalm more than one commentator has recognized that the imagery of the Lord as our Shepherd is really limited to the first four verses of the Psalm, and that the last two verses, growing out of the first four, show us the Lord as our Friend. A shepherd does not prepare a table for his sheep; this is what a friend does. Neither does a shepherd anoint the heads of his sheep with oil; this is what a friend does. The relationship that a shepherd has with his sheep has its limitations, but our fellowship with the Lord Who has spoken of us as His fellows in Heb. 1:9, which is an expression which means that we partake in what He is, even that we are partners. It is one of the NT words for *fellowship*. No one has a closer relationship to the Lord among all of His creatures than do we, His people.

So let me follow Derek Kidner and F.B. Meyer, and others, who divide the Psalm into two parts:

- 1) The Lord is my Shepherd (vv. 1-4).
- 2) The Lord is my Friend (vv. 5-6)--One with Whom I enjoy the greatest fellowship.

1. “The Lord is my Shepherd (Psa. 23:1-4)."

In the light of what we have seen in the NT, which always throws even more light on the OT, what did it mean for David to be able to say, “The Lord is my Shepherd”? In the Hebrew the emphasis is clearly upon “the Lord.” It is equal to saying *the Lord is my Savior*. It put David in a place where he admitted that he formerly had been like a foolish sheep who had gone astray and had gone his own way rather than going God's way, or finding his way to God. He is saying that there was a time when he was lost, but that the Shepherd found him.

He was admitting that he had not sought the Lord, but that the Lord had sought him. And from John 10 we can say that he had always been one of the Lord's sheep, that God had chosen him in eternity past (according to Eph. 1), but that the day had come in his life when the Lord found him, and claimed him as his very own, never to let him go again. David knew that a shepherd had to be prepared to give his life for his sheep. He had on one occasion killed a bear, and on another had killed a lion. But the Lord was so good that He was not only prepared to give His life, but He gave it. David understood the Gospel and knew how blessed the man (or woman) is who has had his transgressions forgiven, and his sins covered. David would have no objection to saying that when the Lord became His shepherd, He also became His Lord. How wonderful are those words, full of the most precious meaning, when not only David could truly say, but you and I by the grace of God can also say, “The Lord is my Shepherd because He is my Savior first of all.” If He is not our Savior, He is not our Shepherd. And how very, very important it is that we understand this.

Now if you can truly say that the Lord is your Shepherd, you can also say, “I shall not want.” The word *want* which you come across many times in the KJV of the OT, means *lack*. David was declaring that if you have the Lord as your Shepherd, you have the one and only Person Who will be completely sufficient for every need that you will ever have. With the Lord as our Shepherd, we don't need another shepherd. He is the sufficient One. Remember what Paul wrote to the Philippians in Phil. 4:19. In Psalm 34:10 David wrote, “The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

And then David went on to explain what he meant.

Verse 2 speaks of *peace*. The pasture is there where the sheep can feed until they have all that they want, and so they rest, lie down, with the abundance of God's provision all around them. And sheep will never drink from turbulent, rushing water, according to what I have learned. In fact, they can become sick if water gets up into their noses. The shepherd is aware of this, and so he leads the sheep beside still waters. This verse should make us think of Romans 5:1, “Therefore being justified...” And yet it is through the Word that we are nourished and satisfied. It is through the living water of Scripture that we find refreshment.

And all of this leads to the restoration of our souls in verse 3. Delitzsch says in his commentary on this Psalm that to restore is to bring back something that has flown away. If we were always attentive to the Lord and responsive to His Word, feeding daily upon it, there would be no need of restoration. But unfortunately we fail. We neglect the Word, or we continue to read it, but we don't meditate on it, we don't feed on it, we don't make it our very own, and so we are like those whose souls have flown away and need to be brought back.

The Lord knows when this happens even though it may take us a while to realize the trouble we are in. He ministers to us. And then “he leadeth” us “in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.” Unfortunately our days of wandering are not necessarily over when the Lord claims us for Himself. He brings us back, and often uses measures of discipline to keep us in His paths. And He does this not just for the benefit and blessing that comes to us when we walk in His ways, but He does it for His own Name's sake. Our failures reflect upon Him, and so for the glory of His Name He brings us back from our wandering. If the Lord were to give us what we deserve, how different our lives would be. But because of the honor of His Name, He graciously brings us back from straying, and restores us.

A restoration is a revival. How often our hearts get spiritually dull, and we lose our delight in the Lord and in His Word! It is as though our souls have flown away. But the Lord knows the remedy, and He puts things back in order in our lives. This is what happens when a sick person gets well. He is restored. And when we get spiritually sick, the Lord restores our soul. The problem is not in our environment, nor in the troubles that we may be going through, nor in the people we have to deal with. The problem is internal, and that is where only

the Lord can do what needs to be done. Notice the **He's** and **me's** in verse 2 and 3. The Lord as our Shepherd takes the action, and we benefit tremendously from what He does for us.

This verse speaks of the greatest tests we can face, and perhaps the greatest of all--physical death itself, which we all have to face. There are many crises we face in life, and it is wonderful to know that the One Who has been leading us all along, now comes by our side to be "with" us in a very special way. The Lord as our Savior and our Shepherd is sufficient for every need that we face through life and through death. The "rod" is a weapon for the protection of the sheep; the "staff" is for the shepherd to lean upon, but also it is used to control the sheep. And these are a comfort to the sheep.

It is wonderful to know that as dark as death can be, it is a valley through which we pass into glory. It is not our permanent state. And while those we love and have cherished in our walk through this world, cannot go with us, yet the Lord does. Has He not promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"? He is with us through life, and He is with us through death. This is why David could begin this Psalm by saying that since the Lord was his Shepherd, He would never lack for anything. The Lord would provide for him through all of his pilgrimage.

Now at verse 5 we come to the last two verses which speak of:

2. The Lord is my Friend (Psa. 23:5-6).

Every child of God knows that he has enemies. Think of the life of David and how he continually was confronted with enemies. Even his brothers were not friendly toward him. Saul became one of his worst enemies. Absalom, his own son, became his enemy. And he faced nation after nation which was at enmity with him. But to the glory of God David had seen enemy after enemy defeated as the Lord moved ahead, protecting His servant, and leading the way to victory after victory. The Lord's provision continue to be abundant, and often his enemies, as reluctant guests, were forced to look at his victory celebration, no longer a threat to David.

To eat at the Lord's table was not only the highest honor, but it spoke of the close bond which existed between David and the Lord. The anointing with oil may have been a reference to the position in Israel that the Lord had given him. Regardless of what the particular circumstance may have been, it spoke of how the Lord delighted in David, and the response of David was that his cup was running over--an expression indicating how great his joy was in the Lord and in all of the Lord's dealings with him.

Verse 6 indicates that the life of David was a life marked with the goodness of God, and the mercy of God, and he knew that these two attributes of God would be evident in his life for all of his days. The word "follow" means *pursue*. It was not a case where he would have to seek them, but that he would not be able to get away from them.

Expositors differ on the meaning of, "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." In the parallelism of the verse, "for ever" stands with "all the days of my life." So we can say that it means that he would have a place of abiding fellowship with the Lord throughout the rest of his life, but we know also that throughout eternity our fellowship will be uninterrupted, and it will reach heights that were never possible here on earth.

Concl: Through all of the trials of David's life, because of the unfailing faithfulness of the Lord, his Savior and Shepherd and his constant Friend worked all things together for good. And David's life became a foretaste of heaven on earth. May it be so with us. Let us rest in all that we have in our great and good and chief Shepherd. And let us cultivate the friendship of Him Who "sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24).

“Christ in the Old Testament”
Lesson 23
The Messianic Psalms -- Part 6 -- Psalm 24
April 15, 1997

Intro: Today our lesson is the third in the trilogy of Psalms which begins with Psalm 22. I have been telling you each week for the past two weeks that Psalm 22 portrays Christ as our Savior, Psalm 23 reveals Him as our Shepherd, and now we come to Psalm 24 where we see Christ as our Sovereign.

We can also say that from our standpoint, Psalm 22 has to do with *the past work of Christ* when He died for us on the Cross--although the work of salvation is a continuing work in each one of us. Psalm 23 has to do with *the present work of Christ* as our Shepherd. Psalm 24 has to do with *the future work of Christ* when He will reign on the earth as “the King of glory.” W. Graham Scroggie, in his commentary on the Psalms, says that in Psalm 22 we see grace, in Psalm 23, guidance, and in Psalm 24 glory. So, in addition to all that these three Psalms have to tell us about Christ, they form a kind of spiritual biography of all of us as the children of God. We begin with grace, we will end with glory, and in between we have the marvelous guidance which the Lord gives to us as His people.

In most of the Messianic Psalms which we have considered up to this point, we have had NT quotations to support our claim that the Psalms speak of Christ. But that was not the case with Psalm 23 (which is never quoted in the NT). Psalm 24 is quoted once. You will find the quotation in 1 Cor. 10:26 where we read, “For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof”--and you can see right away that 1 Cor. 10:26 is a quotation of the first part of the first verse of Psalm 24.

In addition, the reference in this Psalm to “the King of glory,” who is identified as “the Lord of hosts,” cannot possibly refer to anyone but our Lord Jesus Christ. “He is the King of glory” (Psa. 24:10). He is the One Whom, according to Psa. 2:6, God will set upon His holy hill of Zion--not heaven, but Jerusalem!

Now there can be no doubt but that this Psalm was written by David, and has a more limited application to him, as was the case with Psalm 22. But just as Psalm 22 goes far beyond David and his sufferings, so this Psalm (24) goes beyond him as well, and can only be explained in its fullest application to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We know from Scripture that our Lord, according to the flesh, was *David's greatest Son*, and that He is the final Heir of David's throne. We also can see from Scripture that David was, and continues to be throughout Scripture, a type of Christ. So that when the ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem, as we are told in 2 Samuel 6, all of the joy and celebration which accompanied that great event was prophetic of the yet future date when our Lord will assume His throne upon the earth. In the first Messianic Psalm which we considered, Psalm 2, we had that statement of the Lord God when He said, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Psa. 2:6). Just before the Lord ascended, His disciples asked Him, “Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). The Lord did not rebuke them by saying that there would be no restoration of the kingdom to Israel. He simply responded with these words: “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7). *There are many promises which God gave to His people Israel in the OT if there is to be no future reign of Christ on the earth.* Paul told the Corinthian church, “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:25).

Perhaps a word of explanation would be helpful for all of us here. Many who follow what is called, *the Reformed Faith*, say that Christ is reigning now, and then go on to deny any future reign of Christ on the earth. It seems to me that they are combining two great truths to support their amillennial point-of-view. The two great truths are 1) the sovereignty of God, or of Christ, and 2) the reign of Christ upon the earth. No Christian

will deny that God is sovereign now, that He always has been sovereign, and that He always will be sovereign. The sovereignty of God is one of the most comforting truths in all of Scripture. Today, as we look at our nation going steadily in the wrong way, things are not out of control. God is in control, and He is working all things out according to His own will. But the reign of Christ on the earth will be a special, world-wide demonstration of the sovereignty of God. It seems to me to be very important to keep these great doctrines distinct even though they are both evidences of the authority and power of God.

There are three divisions to the Psalm: vv. 1-2, vv. 3-6, and vv. 7-10.

In the first the Lord is glorified and the Creator of the world. In the second we see an emphasis upon the hill of the Lord, “His holy place.” This has to be Jerusalem, or, as it is sometimes referred to, Zion. In the third He is “the King of glory.” We move through the Psalm from the earth, to our Lord’s holy hill, and then to the gates of the Temple. So it is like we are walking in a procession. In the first section there is an emphasis upon the power of our Lord as the Creator. In the second, upon His holiness. And in the third, upon His glory. Actually all three are evidences of His glory, what the Apostle John called, “His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14). The continuity of emphasis upon the Lord from the beginning of the Psalm to the end shows that Christ is the One Who is prominent throughout the Psalm.

Let us think first, then, about:

I. CHRIST, THE CREATOR (Psa. 24:1-2).

In Psalm 8, one of the Messianic Psalms, we found a reference to our Lord as the Creator. Let me read the part of that Psalm to which I refer: Psa. 8:3-6

- 3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
- 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
- 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.
- 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

I may have commented on what I am about to say when we were studying Psalm 8, but even if I did, let me point out what we are missing in our generation. Unbelieving scientists and other educators have done such a thorough job of indoctrinating us in the false teaching of evolution, that our generation has been robbed of the impact which should be made on us when we recognize that this world did not evolve into what it is today, but it was created, created by God. There is no other reasonable explanation for our existence, nor for the existence of all that we have in this world. How majestic are the words which we find in Psa. 8:1-2. Read them and think about them. (Read them.) This is the truth. All other explanations for the origin of the earth and the world, are wrong. Christ was active in creation as the Creator. Nothing was made without Him. And because He made it, as verse 2 tells us taking us back to Genesis 1, it belongs to Him! And not only that but everybody who has ever lived on the earth belongs to Him, as His creatures. And the mountains, the rivers, the vast farm lands, the living creatures of all kinds--it all belongs to the Lord! He regulates the seasons, and the weather is what He makes it. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork” (Psa. 19:1). The Apostle John was speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ when he said in John 1:3, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” And it didn’t take millions of years for Him to make it. In Psalm 33 we find these great words:

- 6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his

mouth.

- 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.
- 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
- 9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast (Psa. 33:6-9).

For the most part, the world has rejected and disowned God. We want to have nothing to do with Him. But this Psalm among many other passages of Scripture tells us that the Lord is not going to be pushed aside forever. And it is so much better, and safer, to learn that now rather than later.

The doctrine of creation is foundational to our understanding of ourselves and of everything around us, as well as being basic to our understanding of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. And personally I believe that theistic evolution is an attempt to compromise with a world which wants nothing to do with God.

So it is extremely important that we recognize our Lord Jesus Christ as the Creator, and we are to stand in awe of Him because of what He has done. The whole world is marveling at the way Tiger Woods played golf this past weekend. But as great as that was, it shouldn't even be mentioned when we are talking about Christ, the Creator.

Now, from that basic truth, we are faced with:

II. TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS (Psa. 24:3-6).

It is the Lord we are talking about. “It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves” (Psa. 100:4). We cannot ignore Him except to our eternal loss. Once convinced of His wisdom as the Creator, and His power as the Creator, and His eternal Godhead, we are forced to recognize how much greater He is than we are, and, prompted by the Holy Spirit, we ask the questions that we find here in Psa. 24:3. (Read.)

This is not talking about heaven. These are questions which focus on the place where God the Son has seen to put His name. The people had to go *up* to go to Jerusalem, but let us all recognize that when we seek God, we are always going *up*, we are moving to higher ground. Who can go where He is, and if any should get there, how can they stand, how can they stay there?

Now when you compare the Lord Jesus with the people He has created, and you see what sin has done to them, you realize that man should not even think of approaching such a “holy” Creator. “The hill of the Lord” is “his holy place”!

There are answers to those questions, and they are given to us in verse 4. (Read.)

Let us examine these statements so that we will understand the qualifications for fellowship with such a God as our Lord, because qualifications are what the Lord has given us here.

- 1) “Clean hands” -- James must have had this verse in mind when he wrote James 4:8, which says,
 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts,
 ye double minded.

The Bible has a lot to say about our hands. Our hands contribute to much that is displeasing to God. Instead of using our hands to serve God and to do what pleases Him, our hands are responsible for getting us into a lot of trouble. But this is outward, isn't it. The second is inward:

- 2) “A pure heart” -- The Bible tells us that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who

can know it?” (Jer. 17:9). Cf. Gen. 6:5. If the Lord is showing us our need, He shows us that the reason we have dirty hands is because we have defiled hearts. But only the Lord can show us the relationship between the two.

3) “Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity” -- This is what idolaters do. But this is what we are all guilty of doing. When Samuel was rebuking the people of Israel because they had rejected the Lord and had asked for a king, he said this to them:

20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

21 And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain (1 Sam. 12:20-21).

When Paul was telling Timothy what would happen to people when they would reject the Word of God, He said this:

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

4) “Nor sworn deceitfully” -- This is not only telling lies, but doing is declaring with an oath that you are telling the truth.

Do you qualify for fellowship with God? Let the Word of God give us the answer. Cf. Rom. 3:19-20:

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

These are the requirements for those who would ascend into the hill of the Lord, and those who would stand in His holy place. However, instead of mentioning these characteristics of all people as though it made it impossible for anyone to hope to ascend into the hill of the Lord, they are mentioned as being qualifications that can be met! But how? By our own efforts? Never!!! The person who ascends the hill of the Lord to stand in His holy place, is acting contrary to human nature. Therefore, we must conclude that he is being drawn by God because no one can come to God any other way unless His is being drawn. He is cleansed from all of the defiling effects of sin, receives the blessing of eternal life from the Lord, which is “righteousness from the God of his salvation.” Only through Christ can we be made acceptable to God. It is not by our works, but by the grace of God, as we learn from Eph. 2:8-9.

“Generation” in verse 6 means *the kind of people who are really seeking the Lord*. They do not come to the Lord wanting to remain the same that they have been, but they come to have their hands cleansed, and their hearts purified, to be turned in the right direction, and to have their hypocrisy and lying taken away. Remember that James tells us that if we can control our tongues, we won’t have trouble with the rest of our bodies.

So what all of this means is that before we can hope for fellowship with the Lord, we need the blessing of justification. We don’t make ourselves acceptable to God; it is Christ Who does that when He saves us. And then it will be in our hearts to seek the Lord. Then we will delight ourselves in Him.

All attention is now focused upon seeking the Lord, and seeing His face. “O Jacob” is generally interpreted as meaning, *O God of Jacob*. And this probably is speaking of “Jacob” as the name of the nation. Often Jacob’s original name in Scripture is used instead of his new name, Israel, to picture the marvelous grace of God in saving people who have shown themselves over and over again to be unworthy of His salvation.

Now we come to the last section of the Psalm.

III. THE ENTRANCE OF “THE KING OF GLORY” (Psa. 24:7-10).

Who is speaking in this section? Some say that it was David, and it may originally have been David. He came with the ark of the covenant where God dwelt, and so he called for the gates and doors to be opened because “the King of glory” as entering. Since this was Christ, it would be an indication that even the presence of God with the people as they followed the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, were following Christ.

I am inclined to think that the words in verses 7 through 10 are words which those who have ascended into the hill of the Lord and who are now standing in His holy place, are saying. This is not a scene in heaven, but a scene on earth. The earth is emphasized from verse 1 on. Those who have ascended are awaiting the arrival of the King of glory Who is obviously on His way. And in their eagerness to see the King, and to be with Him, verses 7 and 8 are repeated in verses 9 and 10. The gates need to be lifted up, and the doors need to be opened to let the King of glory come in. *As always in Scripture, when we have repetition, it is for emphasis and to show how intent the people were to see the Lord.*

Our Lord carries many titles as we learn from the Gospel of John. But here He is called, “the Lord of glory.” Why? Because He is not an ordinary Sovereign. He is the Lord Who is God. It is an expression of His Deity. There is probably a suggestion here of our Lord’s return in glory. There will be no question Who He is when He comes in His glory.

Concl: So we have here a picture of our Lord’s return in glory, but we also have a picture of how He makes Himself known to those who diligently and lovingly seek Him. We see Him by faith now as He has revealed Himself to us in the Word, but when He comes, we will see Him in His glory!

This Psalm teaches us that we start with our Lord as the Creator, and see ourselves as His creatures, subject to Him, under His authority, a part of His vast creation. But even such a glimpse of Him as our Creator, makes us realize our creatureliness. At the same time we see a glimpse of His glory, and we realize, like Isaiah did of old, how unfit we are to stand in His presence, and how amazed we are that He would be concerned about us. But, as we have seen in this Psalm (24), this is what often leads to our salvation, and then we experience the heart-hunger of those who seek to know their God. Who is He? We see added descriptions of Him in verses 8 and 10. He is the glorious Victor, and the One Who is by His power sufficient for all that His people can ever desire.

May God give us a heart to know Him, and may we seek Him with the eagerness that is displayed here in this Psalm. This Psal

“Christ in the Old Testament”
Lesson 24
The Messianic Psalms -- Part 7 -- Psalm 40
April 22, 1997

Intro: In the beginning of our study of the Messianic Psalms I pointed out that one way we can know that a Psalm is Messianic, that it, that it speaks of Christ, is by quotations of that Psalm in the NT. We have such evidence in Psalm 40. Verses 6-8 are quoted in Hebrews 10:5-7, and there they are referred to the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps the most significant statement regarding this quotation and its meaning even in Psalm 40 is found in Heb. 10:9. (Read.)

The first four verses of Hebrews 10 teach us that the Law of Moses was never intended to be a way of salvation. It was only “a shadow of good things to come,” but it was “not the very image of those things.” The word “shadow” is a good translation. Even a little child knows that there is a difference between him and his shadow, or her and her shadow. There are similarities between the two because our shadows differ. But what the writer of Hebrews meant was that there were things about the Law which were a shadow of those good things to come, specifically, as the passage in Hebrews 10 goes on to show, the sacrifices. The OT sacrifices of animals were shadows of Christ and His death on the Cross. The shadows could not save because they were only shadows. They were not “the very image” of those “good things to come.”

The animal sacrifices of the OT could never take away sin, and the proof of this was that they were offered over and over. If they could have taken away sin, then they would no longer have been needed. But their repetition indicated that they were not the Savior. And that is one of the basic differences between the OT sacrifices, and the sacrifice of Christ. He died once, and His death so completely satisfied God regarding the sins for which He died, that no further sacrifice is needed. (Read Heb. 10:12-14.)

This is entirely in harmony with what the Apostle Paul wrote in Rom. 8:1-4:

- 1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.
- 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
- 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

And we find very similar teaching in Rom. 3:19-22:

- 19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
- 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.
- 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;
- 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

When Paul was preaching on his first missionary journey in Antioch of Pisidia, he made this same point:

- 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:
- 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39).

This was not popular preaching in the Apostle Paul's day, and it was not popular preaching in David's day.

We see this in Psalm 40 because in verse 9 he spoke of preaching this, and in verse 10 he said that he had not concealed this message in his heart, but immediately after that, in verse 11, David began to plead with the Lord for His mercies and His lovingkindness and His truth, or faithfulness, because according to what he said in verse 14, there were those who were seeking to destroy his soul, i.e., take his life, and evidently the problem was that David was preaching a message that was contrary to what most of the people believed--that they were saved by keeping, or trying to keep, the Law.

Perhaps we should not be surprised today when even those who claim to be the people of God get very upset when we preach the doctrines of the grace of God instead of some kind of a system where our works figure into our salvation. And the work which many, perhaps most, of the Lord's people are interested in protecting today is the so-called doctrine of *man's free will*! There is no such doctrine in Scripture, but people think that there is. They will point to a verse like John 3:16 and say, “Didn’t the Lord say that ‘whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life’?” And we have to say, “Certainly He said it.” But He also said this in John 6:44:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

And the Apostle Paul, writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit, said in Rom. 3:11-12:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

According to Phil. 2:13 it is God Who works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, and if He does that for us after we are saved, then we ought to realize that it is even more necessary for us that He enable us to do His will by believing in Christ before we are saved. Those two familiar verses, Eph. 2:8-9, tell us that all of our salvation is a gift from God. Even our faith is a gift from God. So we can't boast about having anything to do with our salvation. It is God's work in our behalf--from start to finish!

What I have just been saying is not popular preaching today. In fact, you preach the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation, and many of the Lord's people will call you a heretic. But I say, “Let them call us heretics. We are standing in a line of people who were true to the Word of God like David, and even Moses himself, and Paul, and John and hosts of others. Man is a sinner, affected in every part of his being by sin, including his will. It is not free; it is in bondage to his sin. And if God leaves any person to himself, or herself, that person will be content to live his life without God, and without Christ, and then willingly die without Christ. The only hope we have that we will be saved is that God will give us life, and then we will come to Christ.

So I want you to see that what David believed was not popular in his day, and what Paul and Peter and John preached, was not popular in their day. And if we are preaching what they preached, it will not be popular in our day. People generally are bound and determined to take some of the glory for their salvation. So I hope you can see that the teaching about man having a free will, is false doctrine!

So you can see that David was speaking about some very important, and very powerful truth, truth that was revealed to him by God. David knew that he was a child of God solely because of the grace of God. But let us examine it in the light of Psalm 40, one of the truly great Messianic Psalms.

I said in the beginning that there is another way that we can tell that a Psalm is Messianic. That is when what is written in the Psalm clearly goes beyond the experience or capability of the writer. So we have double evidence in Psalm 40 that this is a Messianic Psalm:

1) It is quoted in the NT.

2) The part of the Psalm that is quoted in the NT clearly goes beyond the experience of David.

This latter point is brought out clearly when we look at the divisions of the Psalm:

- 1) Verses 1-5 of Psalm 40 speak of *David's praise*.
- 2) Verses 6-8 give us *David's prophecy*.
- 3) Finally, in verses 9-17 we have *David's preaching and his prayer*.

I. DAVID'S PRAISE (Psa. 40:1-5).

We can't always explain the reason behind the way the Psalms are arranged, but Derek Kidner has made a suggestion about the Psalms which lead up to Psalm 40. This is how he began his comments on Psalm 40:

The theme of waiting, expounded in Psalm 37, has had its painful applications in Psalms 38 and 39, but now its triumphant outcome (*Psalms 1-72*, p. 158).

It illustrates what Solomon said in Prov. 13:12, “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.” Hope is what we have because of the promises of God, but so often when we pray the Lord makes us wait, and, as Dr. Kidner said, waiting is always painful. We pray for help from the Lord, and He has promised to give us help, but help does not come. And this raises all kinds of questions in our minds: Is there something wrong with me that the Lord is not answering my prayer? Am I asking for help when I don't deserve it?

One of the hardest things that we as the Lord's people have to contend with is unanswered prayer. It is painful. We don't have the time to read all three of these Psalms, 37, 38, and 39, but notice Psa. 38:15, and then the last two verses of that Psalm, verses 21-22.

Then notice Psa. 39:7, and then the last two verses of that Psalm, verses 12-13. David was in really agony of heart and soul because his prayers were not being answered.

But then in the light of all of that pain, notice how elated he was at the beginning of Psalm 40. Obviously his prayers had been heard and answered, and his heart was full of thanksgiving and praise to God. In fact, God had done so many “wonderful works” for him that, according to verse 5, he had lost count. “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.” And that is what David was experiencing as he began to write Psalm 40. Let us examine his praise.

In verse 1 where we read in the KJV that David “waited patiently for the Lord,” he was not expressing that he had been happy to wait, but that he waited and waited for the Lord because he really had nothing else that he could do. He may have had the feeling that the Lord was not hearing him, but he now could say that the Lord “inclined unto me,” that is, He bent over to hear me so as not to miss a word which I said, and He “heard my cry.” This expresses the total attention that the Lord gave to him. To David it was that the Lord listened to him as though He, the Lord, had nothing else that He was interested in at the moment, and as though He had nothing else that He had to do.

From the words, “He inclined unto me,” on through the first part of verse 3, all that David had to say was about what the Lord had done:

- 1) “He brought me up” and “out.”
- 2) “He...set my feet upon a rock, and...”
- 2) “He put a new song in my mouth...”

I don't think that David was speaking here about the time when he was saved, but he was describing the trouble that he had been in. His situation from a human standpoint had been hopeless, like Jeremiah who would have died if the Lord had not rescue him from the pit that his enemies had put him in.

And David rejoiced to know that not only had he been able to sing a song which he had never sung before, but that the Lord would use his experience as an encouragement to others. He said, “Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” One reason why it is so important for us to trust the Lord in our trials is because others are watching to see how we do, and what we do.

Illus: Allison wanting her apple cut like Granddaddy cut his. It made me wonder about how many other ways she had been watching me. If others see us trusting the Lord, and see how the Lord delivers us, they will be more inclined to trust in the Lord when they go through their trials.

In verse 4 we see that although the waiting had been very painful, and often confusing, yet blessing, happiness, awaited David at the end of the line if he were really trusting in the Lord. Let others scorn a child of God for his trust in the Lord; they “turn aside to lies” and so miss the great happiness that comes to those who wait for the Lord and experience His deliverance. There always will be the gainsayers. Let them talk. To turn away from the Lord and the promises of His Word, is to turn aside, out of the way, to lies.

And so David concluded this section of praise with verse 5. He had been talking *about the Lord* up to this point; now we see what he said *to the Lord*. He was not only thankful for the Lord’s works, but for the Lord’s thoughts toward him. We can take comfort in the Lord’s thoughts before we see the Lord’s works in answer to our prayers. This reminds me of what the Lord said to Jeremiah in that dark period in Israel’s history:

- 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.
- 12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.
- 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart (Jer. 29:11-13).

Where do we find the Lord’s thoughts? They are all through His Word. We see expressions of His love for us. We see promises that He will never leave us, that He will always provide for us, and that He is always working everything in our lives together for good.

Try as we may, we will never be able to count all of the Lord’s wonderful works, nor all of His precious thoughts toward us, but we need to keep praising Him continually for all that He is continually doing for us even when we may not be seeing our prayers answered. If His blessings weren’t upon us continually, we couldn’t survive in this world.

This brings us to:

II. DAVID’S PROPHECY (Psa. 40:6-8).

I don’t want to overlook the fact that these three verses have a secondary application to David. Trials, coupled with the delays we face in having our prayers answered, are all used by the Lord to deepen our love for Him and our desire to be more faithful to Him in our lives.

One thing that David learned during this time of testing which is described in Psalms 38 and 39, was that the Lord did not primarily want his sacrifices; *the Lord wanted him!* “Mine ear hast thou opened” is usually referred by commentators to the practice of a servant not wanting to leave his master when his master offered him his freedom. The servant would have an awl driven through his ear lobe to show that he wanted to be his master’s servant *forever!* This is described in Exodus 21 and Deuteronomy 15. And so David could say that he delighted to do the will of God, and that the Word of the Lord was written in his heart.

This is usually the result of our trials. You would think that our trials would turn us against the Lord. But that is not the way the Lord works. Trials cause us to search our own hearts. Trials make us more zealous in doing the Lord's will and in redeeming the time for His glory. When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church about the sin that they were tolerating, he had to use strong language which hurt the believers. In 2 Corinthians 7 he spoke of how the Lord had used that letter to bring about godly repentance. And he expressed his joy over what the Lord had done in their lives in these words:

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter (2 Cor. 7:9-11).

When Peter spoke of the fruit of trials when he wrote these words:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls (1 Pet. 1:7-9).

Trials make us love the Lord more. They make us trust the Lord more. And they make us more joyful in the Lord. It is no wonder that Peter said that the trial of our faith was much more precious than gold that perishes. God truly works all things together for good for those who love Him.

When David spoke of "the volume of the book," he probably used this expression to refer to the will of God which had been decreed for himself, not just to be king, but to do the will of God, and to do it with "delight." Again we see that, while the will of God for each one of us includes our work, yet the will of God concerning the way we live always takes precedence over the work that we do.

But how do all of these verses refer to our Lord Jesus Christ?

As these three verses (6-8) refer to our Lord, He came because the sacrifices and offerings which were prescribed according to the Law were not sufficient to take away a single sin. As we have seen, they were merely shadows of the one sacrifice that the Messiah would make of Himself which would be sufficient for all of the sins of all of His people. And "the volume of the book," of course, has to do with the Word of God, the Old Testament, in which we see the promises concerning the coming of Christ. Franz Delitzsch says that this refers to the book of Deuteronomy, but it certainly can't be limited to Deuteronomy alone. It is true that "Moses wrote of me" (John 5:46), but so did David, and so did Isaiah, and many others. This is why we can call our study, "Christ in the Old Testament." From all eternity it was the plan of the Godhead that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, should be the One Who would become a Man so that He could die for mankind and become the Savior of all who would trust in Him. And He did this, not with reluctance, but with joy, with delight, not because He delighted in the suffering (because He did not), but because He loved the Father and took supreme joy in doing His will.

So in these words we have the Cross of Christ, the offering of the one sacrifice by which guilty sinners could be, and most certainly would be saved. Much more could be said about those wonderful verses (6-8), but we must go on to the final section of the Psalm.

III. DAVID'S PREACHING AND HIS PRAYER (Psa. 40:9-17).

I put these two together because it seems that it was David's preaching, his proclamation of the Gospel, that brought about further suffering, which led to his prayer.

Verses 9 and 10 tell us about David's preaching. He did not preach salvation by the Law; he preached salvation by the grace of God. He did not hold back on what God had revealed to him. He did not hide in his heart what God had revealed to him about justification--which must have been what he meant when he spoke of "thy righteousness" in verse 10. These verses (9 and 10) show how bold King David became in proclaiming the true Gospel message. May the Lord give us the same kind of courage to speak of the grace of God in salvation.

But his preaching led to more praying.

Verses 11 through 13 show that his first concern was for himself. In the light of what he understood about the inadequacy of the Law, and the "amazing grace" which God had displayed in sending His Son, the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, he was overwhelmed with a sense of his own sinfulness. Verse 12 tells us that he was overwhelmed with the number of his sins, and by the terrible nature of his sins, so that he was like the publican in the parable our Lord taught who could not lift his eyes to look up. David said, "I am not able to look up. His sins *took hold* of him, and his heart failed him. And so his prayer for himself was, "Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me" (v. 13).

Again, let me say that I don't think that David was speaking here in Psalm 40 about the time when he was first saved. We all learn more about sin after we are saved than we knew before we were saved, or even just after we were saved. The longer we know the Lord, and the closer our fellowship with Him is, the greater will be the realization of how many our sins are and how terrible they have been. Remember that it was in one of Paul's last letters to be included in the Scriptures that he said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1:15).

Following David's prayer for himself, we see his prayer against those who were persecuting him. This is in verses 14 and 15. It is interesting to me that David did not pray for the salvation of his enemies. Some of his strongest prayers in his Psalms were for the destruction of those who opposed him. Perhaps it is because, in most cases, but not all (remember Saul of Tarsus) when men get to the place where they openly, and persistently, and violently oppose the Gospel, they are sealing their own doom.

The tone of David's prayer changes in verse 16. Just as the preaching of the Gospel brings out the enemies of God, so the hearts of the elect are made to rejoice "in" the Lord, and to say "continually, The Lord be magnified." God's Word may be hated by many, but the proclamation of His Word never returns "void" to Him, but always, in spite of the worst opposition, it accomplishes that which pleases God and prospers in accomplishing His purposes. See Isa. 55:10-11, "For as the rain cometh down..."

In the last verse we see that David has not forgotten what he had mentioned in verse 5 concerning the thoughts of God. How important it is in a new crisis not to forget what the Lord has taught us previously about ourselves, but especially about Himself. David had been led to taste of the grace of God more deeply. We see this because his heart has been humbled even more. He said, "I am poor and needy"--"poor," meaning *humbled* and *afflicted*; "needy," meaning *wretched* and *distressed*. He knew that the Lord at that moment was thinking about him, that the Lord knew about these fresh troubles, but he was also confident that the Lord would help him and deliver him. But the need again called for him to wait upon the Lord. And so the Psalm

closes with his appeal to the Lord, “Make no tarrying, O my God.” *Do I need to point out from this Psalm that one of the main purposes of our trials and testings, of the opposition that we face because we love the truth of God, is that we learn to pray.* It is even said of our Lord that He “learned obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

Concl: I can’t finish this study without pointing out to you another very important truth that we find in this Psalm. It is in the joy and peace and hope that came to David’s heart through his understanding of *the character of God and his relationship with God.* See especially verses 10 and 11, and then verse 17.

And this was true also of our Lord Jesus Christ during His life here on earth. His confidence in the Father never wavered. It is true that He was confused by the way God withdrew the manifestation and enjoyment of His presence as our Lord was being made sin for us, but it was our Lord’s knowledge of the Father that continually sustained and encouraged Him through all of the trials of His life. Therefore, in all of our trials, one question that we should continually ask ourselves is, What is the Lord seeking to teach me about Himself? And, as Psalm 40 makes very clear, in learning about God, we also see ourselves as we really are, and how dependent we are upon the Lord alone to deliver us, and to help us.

And so we see that Psalm 40 is another portion of OT Scripture which shows us Christ. May we feast upon this Psalm again and again for the comfort and enrichment of our own souls.

“Christ in the Old Testament”
Lesson 25
The Messianic Psalms -- Part 8 -- Psalm 41
April 29, 1997

Intro: One thing that the Messianic Psalms help us to understand is that our Lord Jesus Christ truly was “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15). The words “touched with the feeling of” are the translation of one Greek verb, συμπαθέω. We get our words *sympathy* and *sympathize* from that Greek word. It means lit. *to suffer with*. He enters into our sufferings because of all that He suffered. But we need to remember that He suffered far more than we do. Even though He was the Son of God, in His humanity He would suffer more deeply than we do because of the absolute perfection and purity of His character. He has compassion on us because He knows, better than even we do, what we are going through in our trials.

The verse which makes this a Messianic Psalm is verse 9. It is quoted in the NT. In John 13 where we have the account of our Lord washing the disciples feet, He had said to them all after Peter had at first refused to let the Lord wash His feet. But then when the Lord said that if He did not wash him, Peter would have no part with Him. And so Peter responded by saying in John 13:9, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” Then the Lord responded by saying, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all” (John 13:10). And then in verse 11 the Apostle John added this word of explanation: “For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.” And then on down in John 13 to verses 18 and 19 we read that the Lord said this:

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

The Scripture which the Lord quoted was Psa. 41:9.

To lift up the heel is an expression in Hebrew which means to kick! A. R. Fausset said in his commentary on this chapter that “the lifting of the heel is an image from a horse kicking at his master” (Vol. III, p. 191). And then he related this statement to what the Lord said to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus when He said, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:5). This also is probably related to what Gamaliel told the Sanhedrin in Acts 5:38 and 39 when he warned them about opposing Peter and the other apostles. This is what he said:

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God (Acts 5:38-39).

It is commonly agreed that David wrote this Psalm at the time when Ahithophel abandoned him and joined the rebellion under Absalom, David's son. So this means that Ahithophel was to David what Judas was to our Lord. David was a type of Christ; Ahithophel was a type of Judas. To eat bread with the King was among the highest honors that could be given to anyone. On the other hand, to despise that and turn traitor to the King was the greatest possible treason. For such a friend to become such an enemy was the worst kind of a betrayal. There is no question but that the betrayal of our Lord by Judas hurt the Lord very deeply. You may remember that when Judas came with the soldiers to arrest our Lord, and Judas had kissed the Lord, the Lord said to Judas, “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48). The Lord considered the kiss as a part of the kick.

But now let us turn to the exposition of the Psalm so that we can get the full impact of what Ahithophel did to David, and the full impact of what Judas did to our Lord.

We need to keep in mind even as we think about our Lord's sufferings, that this was *a Psalm of David*. *And the way David handled his sorrow gives us some understanding of how the Lord handled the sufferings which were heaped upon him, one of the most severe being His betrayal by Judas.*

It is very clear that we have three parts to this Psalm, the middle part being the longest.

- 1) The first part shows how David was clinging to the promises of God and to the faithfulness of God in keeping those promises. We have this in verses 1-3.
- 2) The second part gives us David's plea for God's mercy--and this takes us from verse 4 through verse 10. Notice that David mentioned the mercies of the Lord in verses 4 and 10, so his prayer began and ended on the same note.
- 3) The third and last part gives us David's thanksgiving to God for delivering him from his enemies. See verses 11-13.

When we relate David's experience to that of our Lord, we can see the same points of emphasis in the life of our Lord. But let us proceed.

I. DAVID'S FAITH (Psa. 41:1-3).

Verse 1 is an OT beatitude, and it has a place in Scripture like those mentioned by our Lord in Matthew 5 at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. David knew this, and had not ignored it. And so it seems that in verse 1 David was speaking about himself. He had been one who had considered the poor, and he probably was thinking of those times which he described in Psa. 35:10-16. (Read.)

We see the same emphasis in Psalm 112. (Read.)

Job was speaking of the same in Job 29-31.

See also these words found in the book of Proverbs:

- 1) Prov. 14:21:
He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.
- 2) Prov. 19:17:
He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.
- 3) Prov. 21:13:
Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

And let me give you one example from the prophets, the prophet Isaiah: Isaiah 58:1-12. (Read.)

So, what David was doing in the first verse of this Psalm was that he was reminding the Lord of the promise He had made for blessing and happiness to those who were mindful of the poor--this OT beatitude!

To consider the poor means to be aware of their need, and to understand their plight. We are inclined to think of “the poor” as those who are financially destitute, but that is not altogether the idea here. A rich man can be very poor because of physical illness, such as Job (who had been a very rich man), or David who seems to have suffered physically as well as from persecution by his enemies. A poor person can be one who is dejected and despondent. The expression includes all of these conditions--the physically poor, the materially poor, the emotionally poor. We can ignore those with needs around us, or we can be aware of them, and do what we can to help them. Our Lord Jesus certainly excelled in this.

And the promise that accompanies this beatitude is, “The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.” It is very similar to the NT beatitude, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Cf. Matt. 5:7.

And to show what the Lord does to deliver the one who considers the poor, David, in verses 2 and 3, gives five promises from the Lord. Note what they are. (Read verses 2 and 3.)

Notice: All of the blessings mentioned come from the Lord. He may use people, but the blessing itself always comes from the Father, as James said in Jas. 1:17, “Every good gift and every perfect gift...”

After these wonderful promises comes:

II. DAVID’S PRAYER (Psa. 41:4-10).

Those of you who were here on Sunday morning will remember that I spoke to you about *the mercy of God*. And I brought out that God’s mercy is to relieve our miseries--those things in life which make us unhappy, which depress us, which fill us with fear and anxiety and make us apprehensive.

Well, there is no question but that David here was miserable even though he was really trusting in the Lord. And so he pled with God for His mercy.

Isn’t it interesting how when we run into any kind of trouble we begin to reflect upon ourselves, our relationship with the Lord and how it can be improved, how we have sinned against the Lord in different ways, possibly by the ways we have wasted time, or how our attitude has been wrong, or other sins which we have been inclined to ignore? And even though we may need healing for our bodies, or deliverance from our enemies, we are overwhelmed with the realization of our own sin. And so David began by pleading with the Lord for the healing of his own soul. The “I” at the beginning of the verse is in the emphatic position in the Hebrew just as it is in our English translation. It is as though David was saying, “I, David,” or “I, the King, or “I, the man after God’s heart,” “I...I have sinned against thee.” And David knew immediately that all of the good things that he had done to help others could not take away a single sin which he had committed. Oh, how important it is that daily we seek the healing necessary for our souls--the healing of God’s forgiveness! And it is only God Who can forgive our sins. This must come first.

But then David went on. We can see that he was both persecuted by his enemies and sick in body, a disease which appeared to be fatal.

Verse 4 tells how David was afflicted by *the tongues of his enemies*. Do you remember what James said about our tongues? Cf. Jas. 3:6:

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

And then two verses later in James 3:8 he wrote this: “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”

When the Apostle Paul was describing the depravity of man in Romans 3, he said this:

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness (Rom. 3:13-14).

And Solomon said, “An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire.” Some people can do as much damage with their tongues as others can do with a sword. David’s enemies were just waiting

for him to die, and they wanted to forget even his name. They did not know, or had forgotten if ever they knew it, what Solomon said about names: "The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot" (Prov. 10:7). Today we thank the Lord for David, and rejoice in remembering him. But most of his enemies we do not know, have never heard their names, and pity the one we remember in this Psalm: Ahithophel.

The same violent use of the tongue continues in verse 6. But in this case it is shielded by hypocrisy. They may profess to be concerned for David, but it is all "vanity," empty, meaningless words. And all the time their hearts are planning iniquity. And when they leave, they tell what is in their hearts.

Verse 7 tells us that those who hated David conspired together to make matters worse for him. To "devise" means to lay plans, to plot and contrive how they can make matters even worse for David. It was while they were with David that they were planning in their hearts to do more evil to him.

How closely the actions of Judas parallel what Ahithophel and the other enemies of David did. The action of Judas was especially treacherous and blasphemous because it was just after he received the sop from the Lord that he went out to betray the Lord Jesus. Let me read to you what Matthew Henry had to say about Judas at this point, relating it even to the troubles which David faced:

Judas, as an apostle, was admitted to the highest privilege: he did eat bread with Christ. He was familiar with him, and favoured by him, was one of his family, one of those with whom he was intimately conversant. David saith of his treacherous friend, He did eat of my bread; but Christ, being poor, had no bread he could properly call his own. He saith, He did eat bread with me; such as he had by the kindness of his friends, that ministered to him, his disciples had their share of, Judas among the rest. Wherever he went, Judas was welcome with him, did not dine among servants, but sat at table with his Master, ate of the same dish, drank of the same cup, and in all respects fared as he fared. He ate miraculous bread with him, when the loaves were multiplied, ate the passover with him. Note, All that eat bread with Christ are not his disciples indeed. See <1 Cor. 10:3-5>.

(2.) Judas, as an apostate, was guilty of the basest treachery: he lifted up the heel against Christ.

[1.] He forsook him, turned his back upon him, went out from the society of his disciples, v. 30.

[2.] He despised him, shook off the dust of his feet against him, in contempt of him and his gospel. Nay,

[3.] He became an enemy to him; spurned at him, as wrestlers do at their adversaries, whom they would overthrow. Note, It is no new thing for those that were Christ's seeming friends to prove his real enemies. Those who pretended to magnify him magnify themselves against him, and thereby prove themselves guilty, not only of the basest ingratitude, but the basest treachery and perfidiousness [which is faithlessness] (from Matthew Henry's Commentary and his comments on John 13:18-30).

The "evil disease" which they spoke of in verse 8 is lit. *a thing of Belial*. They were saying that David was sick as a judgment from God, and so the Devil was free to attack him. Thus they were claiming that God was on their side, and that David was getting the very thing that he deserved because of his sin. They were saying the same thing about David that Job's "miserable counselors" said about him. And they said, "Now that he lieth he shall rise up no more." This was their hope; this was what brought them joy.

But what hurt David the worst is expressed in verse 9. (Read.)

What a compliment it is to call a person "mine own familiar friend." A "familiar friend" is a friend you feel safe with. He is a friend you can confide in. He is a friend that you especially like to be with, a friend who makes you happy and through whom you have peace. There is really no greater compliment that David could

have given to Ahithophel. A true friend “sticketh closer than a brother.” David had felt that Ahithophel was a friend like that. And although our Lord knew the heart of Judas, and knew from the beginning that Judas would betray him, yet he treated Judas as His “own familiar friend.” But Judas and Ahithophel were made of the same stuff: *they were false friends, which is no friend at all.* David had “trusted” him. Many times they had eaten together. But finally Ahithophel had by his actions *kicked* David as he might have been kicked by a horse or a mule. And Judas treated our Lord the same way.

But David had a Friend in God Who would never turn against him. He would never fail him nor forsake him. And our blessed Lord, although His disciples forsook Him and fled, and although because our Lord was dying for your sins and mine, and the sins of all of His people, was for a time forsaken even by God, yet in His last moments He knew that He could safely commend His spirit unto the Father, which He did, and then released His spirit.

Studying Psalm 41 again has made me realize as I have never realized before how deeply affected our Lord Jesus was by the betrayal of Judas. Our Lord knew that it was coming, but that did not make it any easier for Him. So when you and I have friends whom we felt were genuinely our friends, but who show themselves to be otherwise, let us remember David, but even more let us remember our Lord. David cannot help us in such a time of need, but our Lord can. And remember that Psalm 41 is one passage of Scripture which tells us that our Lord can be, and is, “touched with the feeling of our infirmities, yet without sin.” *But let us also pray that we will never be to our Lord the kind of a friend that Judas was. I am afraid that there have been many down through human history who have claimed to be friends of Jesus, but in times of temptation and trial have shown themselves to be, not friends, but enemies.*

And so we come to the end of David’s prayer in verse 10.

Notice the contrast with which the verse begins. The Lord would not be an Ahithophel to David, and David knew that he was safe with the Lord. But he did not appeal to the Lord on the basis of friendship, but on the basis of *mercy*! And by this appeal we see David’s humility, his sense of unworthiness to seek the blessings he needed from God. And if that were the basis of David’s appeal to the Lord, it has to be ours as well. David prayed that he would be “raised up,” which meant here, healed--that he might “requite” his enemies. He meant that he wanted to “repay” (NASB) them--not by seeing them fall under the judgment of God, but by showing them that their charges were false, and that the blessing of God was truly upon him.

Are we not justified in seeing a parallel here in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ? Our Lord’s enemies belittled and humiliated our Lord because He claimed to be the Son of God. He did not come down from the Cross to prove that He was God’s Son. He stayed on the Cross to show that He was the Son of God. He tasted death for us. He paid the penalty we should have paid for our sins. And the Apostle Paul stated at the beginning of Romans what was one message of the resurrection of our Lord. This is what he wrote:

- 1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,
- 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)
- 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;
- 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:1-4).

Finally, we come to:

III. DAVID’S THANKSGIVING (Psa. 41:11-13).

How important it is for all of us to be constantly seeking to live in the favor of the Lord. Our Lord Jesus sought that continually because He said, "I do always those things that please Him" (John 8:29). We will be afflicted and wounded in the battle with the enemy, but victory is assured! We triumph through Christ. David was victorious over Absalom and over Ahithophel and all of their men. Our Lord was the greatest of all victors because he conquered sin and death and hell and all of the forces of evil. And He it is Who gives us the victory.

And verse 12 we see that even though David had to confess in verse 4 that he was a sinner, and that he had sinned, yet his "integrity," his completeness before the Lord, was sustained by the Lord Himself, and he once again was brought to the full enjoyment of the very presence of the Lord in his life.

Is it any wonder that David closed with the thanksgiving that he did in verse 13? "From everlasting, and to everlasting," is like saying from eternity to eternity--all through eternity past, throughout all of the years of time, and through the endless eternity yet ahead of us, the Lord is worthy of our praise. "Amen, and Amen."

Concl: This is not only the end of Psalm 41, but it is the end of Book I of the five books of the Psalms.

The end of Book II is Psalm 72, and it ends this way:

- 18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.
- 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory;
Amen, and Amen.
- 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended (Psa. 72:18-20).

Psalm 89 is the last book of Book III, and it concludes this way: "Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen" (Psa. 89:52).

Book IV ends with Psa. 106:48, and this is the verse:

Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen.
Praise ye the LORD.

Book V, the end of the last book, has as its last verse: "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD" (Psa. 150:6).

Every book ends in praise to the Lord. And this is a powerful message for all of us that our lives, too, should be filled with thanksgiving to the Lord. How thankful we should be that although the world, the Devil, and all of his demons, were arrayed against our Lord, and although His own disciples fled from Him to escape the danger and death that He died, yet our Lord came forth victorious, and all of Scripture confirms beyond any doubt that the Lord is our Friend, and that He will never fail us.

One hymn we all love is ascribed to a Catholic, Bernard of Clairvaux, who lived back in the 10 and 1100's, but who obviously had a very deep love for our Savior. The hymn is, *O sacred Head, now wounded*. I will never forget hearing Dr. Bob Smith read the verse I am going to read to you at a service where he spoke at the Cannon Beach Bible Conference, and the tears rolled down his cheeks as he read it. This is the verse:

What language can I borrow To thank Thee, *dearest Friend*,
For this thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever; And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never Outlive my love for Thee.

May that praise for our "dearest Friend," and that prayer, come from our hearts today, and always.

“Christ in the Old Testament”
Lesson 26
The Messianic Psalms -- Part 9 -- Psalm 45
May 20, 1997

Intro: We have positive proof that this is a Messianic Psalm because verses 6 and 7 are quoted in Heb. 1:8-9 and applied to our Lord Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 1 the writer was showing how our Lord Jesus Christ was greater than angels. Angels had a special place in the minds and hearts of the people of Israel because, as Paul said in his letter to the Galatians, the Law of Moses “was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Gal. 3:19). In Stephen’s message recorded for us in Acts 7, he told the Jews to whom he was speaking that they had “received the law by the disposition of angels” (Acts 7:53). And it had to be the very same fact that the writer of Hebrews was referring to when in Heb.2:2 he wrote of “the word spoken by angels.” This would explain why unregenerate Jews were inclined to place the Law above the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not believe that He was the Son of God, and so whatever he said could not, to their thinking, be as important as the Law which God had given to Moses through the ministry of angels. So the writer of Hebrews had to show the Jewish believers to whom he was writing that our Lord was greater than angels. To do this he quoted from Psalm 45:6-7. And this is what he said, reading verse 7 of Hebrews 1 along with verses 8 and 9:

- 7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.
8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

So there is no question but that Psalm 45 is Messianic. He is the King of Psalm 45. We know that one of the characteristics of the Godhead, including our Lord Jesus Christ, is sovereignty! But He has not yet set up His throne upon the earth to reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords, and so we must recognize that *Psalm 45 is prophetic of times yet to come.*

There have been many attempts to relate this Psalm to Solomon, or to some other king of Israel or Judah. Fausset, in the JFB commentary says that

Solomon, the type suggests much of the imagery, but the inapplicability of the rest to him (as the *warlike* character of the King, vv. 3-5) shows that the Messiah alone is the ultimate reference (Vol. III, p. 197).

In the light of this fact, it is interesting to link Psalm 44 with 45. David Baron, a Jewish expositor of the later 1800's and the early 1900's makes this interesting observation:

The connection of this Psalm [46] with the preceding one is very apparent. In the 44th, which is a litany of the remnant of Israel in the midst of the final tribulation at the time of the end. We hear the appeal of those who for His sake “are killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” [See verse 22 of Psalm 44.] The last verses of that Psalm form one long, piteous cry for God’s help and interposition (*Types, Psalms, and Prophecies*, p. 151).

(Read Psa. 44:23-26.)

And then Mr. Baron continued by saying, “*To this cry the 45th Psalm is the answer*” (italics mine). And then he added:

Here we see Israel’s Shepherd starting forth, at the voice of the cry of His slaughtered sheep, for their help and deliverance (*Ibid.*).

The outline of this Psalm is very simple:

I. THE PSALMIST’S INTRODUCTION (v. 1).

II. THE KING (vv 2-9).

III. THE BRIDE (vv. 10-15).

IV. THE KING (vv. 16-17).

I. THE PSALMIST'S INTRODUCTION (Psa. 45:1).

It would be good if we all felt about the Word of God like the Psalmist did in this case. His heart was full. The word “inditing” describes a fountain that is gushing forth. It indicates that he could not restrain himself if he tried. He was like the Apostles Peter and John who, when they were told that they were not to speak anymore nor teach in the name of Jesus responded by saying,

19b ... Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:19b-20).

He was undoubtedly so overwhelmed with the truth he was about to put to writing for two reasons:

- 1) Because he himself delighted in the King.
- 2) Because the truth about the King held such hope for the people of Israel.

Derek Kidner said that “the present verse tells of a theme almost clamouring to be heard; the poet’s heart is ‘astir’ with it..., and the words come fluently” (p. 171).

So there was a great deal of excitement in the Psalmist’s heart, and it must have been his desire that his reader’s would share his excitement as they learned what he had to say. It was “a good matter” that was his subject. He had good news to tell. It had to do with the King. And to say that his “tongue” was “the pen of a ready writer” only served to emphasize how he could hardly wait to get into his subject.

Matthew Henry had this to say about verse 1:

1. The dignity of the subject. It is a good matter, and it is a pity that such a moving art as poetry should ever be employed about a bad matter. It is touching the King, King Jesus, and his kingdom and government. Note, Those that speak of Christ speak of a good matter, no subject so noble, so copious, so fruitful, so profitable, and so well-becoming us; it is a shame that this good matter is not more the matter of our discourse.

And then he continued:

It was well expressed: I will speak of the things which I have made. He would express himself,

[1.] With all possible clearness, as one that did himself understand and was affected with the things he spoke of. Not, “I will speak the things I have heard from others,” that is speaking by rote; but, “the things which I have myself studied.” Note, What God has wrought in our souls, as well as what he has wrought for them, we must declare to others, <Ps. 66:16>.

[2.] with all possible cheerfulness, freedom, and fluency: “My tongue is as the pen of a ready writer, guided by my heart in every word as the pen is by the hand.” We call the prophets the penmen of scripture, whereas really they were but the pen. The tongue of the most subtle disputant, and the most eloquent orator, is but the pen with which God writes what he pleases. Why should we quarrel with the pen if bitter things be written against us, or idolize the pen if it write in our favour? David [or whoever the writer was] not only spoke what he thought of Christ, but wrote it, that it might spread the further and last the longer. His tongue was as the pen of a ready writer, that lets nothing slip. When the heart is inditing a good matter it is a pity but the tongue should be as the pen of a ready writer, to leave it upon record.

(from Matthew Henry's Commentary)

E~~z~~a, in Ezra 7: 6, is called “a ready scribe in the law of Moses.” This means both that he was qualified and skilled to write, but that he was eager to do so, and diligent in seeing that it was done.

II. THE KING (Psa. 45:2-9).

All that is said here is in exaltation of the King--and let us keep in mind that He was speaking of our Savior Who is also a King. His glory was beyond anything that could ever be seen among “the children of men.” When our Lord was here on earth, Isaiah described Him by saying that “when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isa. 53:2), But that was during the time of His humiliation. The Psalmist here in Psalm 45 was speaking of the time of His glory. His beauty, His glory is unsurpassed and indescribable. He will be seen then as perfect Man, but also in His glory as God. Fausset said,

The inward beauty, beaming forth in His outward expression, tones, gestures, and deeds, formed the ground of the Divine and everlasting blessing which follows (III, p. 198).

All of this could be seen in His earthly ministry, but what will it be when we see Him in His glory. “Grace is poured into his lips.” And therefore God’s eternal blessing was upon Him. This should make us realize how often we forfeit the blessing of God because there is so little grace in what we have to say. And we need to remember that James tells us that if we control our tongues, we will not have any trouble with the rest of our bodies. Controlling the tongue not only means to refrain from saying the wrong things, but to say the right things. May grace be poured into our lips as well. It is the Holy Spirit Who does the pouring.

Beginning with verse 3 we see that the King is a man of war, and this is where the response to Psalm 44 begins. The Lord may delay His response to His people, but He does not forsake them.

Notice He is called, “O most mighty.” We learned in our consideration of Psalm 24 that the Messiah is “the Lord strong and mighty.” And in Isa. 9:6 the Lord is called, “the Mighty God.” He take His sword for warfare, and it is His intention to use it for judgment upon those who have afflicted His people. Then His “glory” and His “majesty” was be displayed for all to see, and what a terrible day that will be for the enemies of the Lord.

Verse 4 indicates that the Lord will be victorious. He will “ride prosperously.” No one will be able to stand against our Lord in His mighty power. Up until the time that the Lord returns, there will be the temporary triumph of evil, as opposed to the truth, and of pride in contrast with meekness, and with iniquity instead of righteousness. But all of that will be changed. The Devil will have his victories, but it will only be temporary, until the Lord girds His sword on, and defeats His foes. Undoubtedly this is a part of the excitement that the Psalmist was feeling in his own heart.

God has often had to judge Israel for her unbelief and disobedience. One of the main purposes of the Tribulation period will be to judge Israel and to bring Israel back to the Lord. Isaiah spoke prophetically of this time in Isaiah 59. Let me read to you Isa. 59 beginning with verse 12 and reading down to the end of the chapter. Notice that it is because of how the truth and meekness and righteousness have been violated that the Lord girds on His sword and enters into judgment with the enemies of His people.

Verse 4 concludes with the statement, “And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.” This can be translated, *Thy right hand shall cause thee to witness terrible things.* David Baron referred to Psa. 65 in this connection. Verse 5 tells us this:

By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.

In Psa. 45:5 we learn that the Lord not only has a sword (v. 3), but He has a bow and arrows, and that He destroys His enemies. Actually it is against the people of God that the enemies had done their damage, but since they are the Lord’s people, they are the Lord’s enemies as well. Men by nature hate God, and particularly hate anything that has to do with His rule over them.

When Moses gave the people of Israel that song that they were to learn and sing (Deut. 32), even at that time he spoke prophetically of the mighty power of God over His enemies. We don't see this displayed now as it will be displayed some day, but it should encourage us to know that in the end the Lord will be victorious. (Read Deut. 32:39-43.)

Again in Psa. 45:5 we see that the Lord will be victorious.

As we come to verse 6 we come to the verses (6 and 7) which are quoted in Hebrews 1:7-8, indicating that the Psalmist was speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ as King.

Here His victory is viewed as complete. Things will never again be like they were before. His kingdom is eternal. And His rule is right and righteous. The Lord will show that only that which is pleasing to God will ultimately prevail. All other kingdoms and governments are temporary, and will come to an end. But the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will never fall.

Illus: We have seen on our TV's how the rebels have come into the capital of Zaire, and have been merciless in their treatment of the people. This only speaks of more trouble ahead. No leader can possibly succeed in the long run who responds to wickedness with more wickedness.

The Messiah is called "God" here in verse 6. Baron called this "one of the most striking passages in the Old Testament in reference to the Divine character of Messiah" (p. 167). And because He loves righteousness and hates iniquity, He will be "anointed with gladness above thy fellows." God *anoints* His Son, and He is the One Who will be pre-eminent.

When we come to verse 8, the tone of the Psalm changes from warfare to a wedding. But verses 8 and 9 still deal with the King. Perhaps we are to take the anointing of verse 7 and apply it to the statement about the garments of the King which we have in verse 8. And we need to relate verse 8 to verse 2. Verse 2 speaks of the person of the King; verse 8 of His garments, His wedding garments. And all of this is seen in connection with the King's home: "ivory palaces." It is a glorious scene that is described here, and a very joyous one as well. "Kings' daughters in verse 9 must be a reference to Gentiles who have turned to the Lord, and they attend the Queen "in gold of Ophir." Fausset mentions that David had gotten much gold from Ophir for the temple, and that Solomon had imported large quantities of it as well. Cf. 1 Chron. 29:4; 1 Kings 9:28. Evidently there was nothing finer.

At this point in the Psalm the emphasis shifts from the King to the Queen.

III. THE QUEEN (Psa. 45:10-15).

Who is the Queen? Who is to become the wife of the King? It seems that all of this points to Israel, the elect of Israel. Cf. Isa. 54:4-10; 62:1-7.

We may not be able to say who is addressing the Queen here. It could be the Psalmist, or it could even be God! Whoever it was, it was obviously intended that the Bride would not miss a word, but she needed to think about what was being said, and seek to understand it all. It is a most amazing thing that is happening. Again, this was the reason for the Psalmist's excitement which he expressed so strongly in verse 1. The scene is one in which we see *the grace of God*.

The Queen to be is told to "forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." This is like the call that was

given to Abraham before he left Ur of the Chaldees. In applying this to Israel it suggests that much in the nation was displeasing to the Lord. Israel was not to forsake the true Word of God, but she was to forsake all that had been added to that Word and all of the ways in which Israel had neglected the Word, so that she could be wholly devoted to Christ.

Verse 11 indicates that the more the Queen would give herself to the King, the greater would be His delight in her. David Baron said this:

The application of these words to the relations of Christ and His people carries with it a striking thought that He is affected by the completeness of our self-surrender and dependence. He pours love on the unworthy, but that is a different thing from the love with which He responds to such abandonment of self and other loves. Holy, noble living will bring a smile into His face and draw Him nearer to us. But whilst there is all this sweet commerce of love and giving, the Bride is reminded that the King is her Lord, and is to be revered as well as loved (*Op. cit.*, p. 191).

This is what the Lord was emphasizing in John 14:21 and 23. (Quote.) It is not surprising that we should love the Lord, but it is amazing that He should take such delight in us, His people.

In verses 12 through 15 we have the description of the marriage and the procession which leads up to the marriage. Verse 12 tells us that "the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift." This speaks of the people of Tyre. She comes with a gift as beseeching Israel for admittance into the kingdom of God. It is not to be purchased by money at any price, but it shows that what was possibly the richest city in the world could not be satisfied with her riches. And in the light of what the Lord said about how difficult it was for the rich to enter the kingdom of God, this is evidence of the power with which the Lord will draw the heathen of the world to Himself and to His Son. To "entreat" the favor of the people of God is to entreat them with such a strong plea that they cannot be removed.

What a wonderful day that will be when, as our Lord said,
And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:29).

Verse 13 does not speak of the inner glory of the Bride (although she has that), but that, being brought into the palace of the King, she displays her glory. She is called "the king's daughter," as in verse 10, to show the spiritual nature of this Psalm. She occupies both positions--a daughter by spiritual birth, and a Bride by her calling and her relationship with the King.

In verses 14 and 15 we see that the Queen does not come of her own accord (although she certainly comes with a willing heart), but she is "brought." This is expressive of the will of the King. In ancient times, as we learn in the case of Queen Esther, death could be the penalty even for a wife if she were to come to the King without being called (unless he chose to show favor toward her). Three times we have the word "brought" in these two verses. Not only is the Queen "brought," but also the virgins, her companions--which is probably another reference to the Gentile nations. The Queen is brought resplendent in her glory, "in raiment of needlework." These garments are not of her own making, but the provision of the King. What will be true of Israel will be true of all of the redeemed. It is as the Lord said of His people in John 17:22a, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them."

Verse 15 shows what a joyous occasion this will be, not only for the Queen and all of her attendants, but for the King as well. This ought to remind us of Jude's great benediction in Jude 24-25:

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the

presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

The two words, “gladness and rejoicing” seem to indicate an exuberant joy yet coupled with and controlled by a joy that is fitting for the occasion. This is in contrast with the out-of-control joy that is often displayed by the charismatics, as though the wilder it gets, the more genuine it is. We need to remember what the Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth about those who had the gift of prophecy (and the same applied to those who had the gift of tongues):

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints (1 Cor. 14:31-33).

Thus, the present occupation of many in what they call “holy laughter” is not of God, but of the flesh, and very likely also, an instrument of Satan himself. The Lord would have all things done “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40).

“They shall enter into the king’s palace” is evidence of their complete acceptance.

In the last two verses of our Psalm we return again to the King.

IV. THE KING (Psa. 45:16-17).

In verse 16 we see that as glorious as have been many of the “fathers” in Israel (Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, etc.), the glory of the children will be far greater because it will be the glory of absolute perfection. And their impact will be felt throughout the earth. The reign of the Messiah-King will be world-wide.

And not only that but we see that the glory of the Name of the King will be forever. It will be “remembered” because His is a Name which is above every name, the Name at which every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ [Messiah] is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Cf. Phil. 2:9-11.

Concl: John Calvin concluded his comments on Psalm 45 by pointing out, as many have done before and after him that this Psalm can only find its application to Christ, that it brings to us a responsibility in our generation which we cannot and must not overlook. This is what he said:

To find, therefore, the true accomplishment of what is here said, we must come to Christ, the memory of whose name continues to prosper and prevail. It is no doubt despised by the world, nay, wicked men, in the pride of their hearts, even reproach his sacred name, and outrageously trample it under their feet; but still it survives in its undiminished majesty. It is also true, that his enemies rise up on all sides in vast numbers to overthrow his kingdom; but notwithstanding, men are already beginning to bow the knee before him, which they will continue to do, until the period arrive when he shall tread down all of powers that are opposed to him. The furious efforts of Satan and the whole world have not been able to extinguish the name of Christ, which being transmitted from one generation to another, still retains its glory in every age, even as at this day we see it celebrated in every language. And although the greater part of the world tear it in pieces by their impious blasphemies, yet it is enough that God stirs up his servants every where to proclaim with fidelity and with unfeigned zeal the praises of Christ. *In the meantime, it is our duty diligently to use our endeavours, that the memory of Christ, which ought to prosper and prevail throughout all ages, to the eternal salvation of men, may never at any time lose any of its renown* (italics mine).

This statement is found on pages 193 and 194 of Vol. 5 in Calvin’s *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*.

And now let me add to Calvin’s words the way David Baron concluded his great exposition of this Psalm. And I am sure that every sincere servant of the Lord who has ever attempted to expound this wonderful Psalm would say “Amen” to David Baron’s words which are found on p. 199 of his very valuable work, *Types, Psalms, and Prophecies*:

And now, before laying down my pen after this unworthy and inadequate exposition of this glorious Messianic prophetic song, let me, too, add my feeble note of praise by repeating the last prophecy and prayer of David the son of Jesse:

17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun:
and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with
his glory; Amen, and Amen.

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended (Psa. 72:17-20).

May the Lord give us the same exuberant joy as we think of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to reign upon the earth, knowing what it will mean to the elect of Israel, the elect of the nations of the earth, as well as to the Church “which is His body.” And may the Lord give us the same readiness that this Psalmist had to speak and to write of the present and future glory of God’s “only begotten Son.”

“Christ in the Old Testament”
Lesson 27
The Messianic Psalms – Part 10 – Psalm 69
September 30, 1997

Intro: Last Fall we began this study of “Christ in the Old Testament.” We took our authority for such a study from our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He said, for example, when He was speaking to a group of Jewish religious leaders, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” You will find that statement in John 5:39. And then farther down in that same chapter he pointed out to those leaders who claimed to be followers of Moses,

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? (John 5:45-47).

In the last chapter of the Gospel of Luke we have two very convincing times when the Lord ministered to His own disciples, and He pointed out to them that the very things that had taken place in Jerusalem when our Lord was crucified, was all according to OT prophecy, just as it was according to many types that we have in the OT, such as, that which happened to the Passover Lamb. Let me give you those statements.

The first was to two disciples who were leaving Jerusalem and returning to their home in Emmaus, a little village a short distance from Jerusalem. And during our Lord’s conversation with them, Luke 24:25 and 26 tell us how He rebuked them, and then verse 27 tells us what the Lord did with them. Let me read those verses for you:

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:25-27).

In the same chapter when the Lord met with the eleven disciples, He said this:

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:44-48).

In the light of our Lord’s teaching in these passages, we can say that it is really impossible to understand the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments if we do not understand that Christ is the theme of the Scriptures, and that Christ is the key to the Scriptures. So it is impossible to find any study of the Bible that is more important than this. Christ Himself appears in the OT in what we call *theophanies*, or *Christophanies*. He is seen in many types. I have already mentioned the Passover Lamb which was a type of Christ. And the Lord is the subject of many, many prophecies which we have in the OT. In the third chapter it is our Lord Jesus Christ Who was referred to as *the seed of the woman*.

Another way in which we find support for this study is through the many times in the NT quotations are made

of Old Testament passages, and referred to Christ.

I do not claim that I am including every reference to Christ in the Old Testament in our studies of this great subject, but at least we are getting most of the major references.

In March of this year we started considering the Messianic Psalms, the Psalms which speak of Christ. By the time the class was closed for the summer, we had looked at nine Psalms: 2, 8, 16, 22, 23, 24, 40, 41, and 45. Today, in getting back to those Psalms which speak in a special way of Christ, I want to consider with you **Psalms 69**.

If you examine the writings of men who have written on the Psalms, you will find some differences of opinion as to what Psalms should be considered as Messianic. But Psalm 69 appears on almost everyone's list. Dr. Charles Feinberg, in his unpublished notes on the Psalms, calls Psalm 69 *A Psalm of Reproach*. The word *reproach* is found more times in this Psalm than in any of the other Psalms. See vv. 7, 9 (2x), 10, 19, 20. V. 9 is quoted in Rom. 15:3 and related to our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are at least three verses, or passages, in the Psalm which indicate that it is Messianic in nature:

- 1) Verse 4.
- 2) Verses 7-9.
- 3) Verse 21.

Often in the interpretation of OT passages, we need to ask ourselves and answer the question which the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip concerning Isa. 53:7-8. His question was, “I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” The statements in Isa. 53 which the eunuch was concerned about were these, especially the underlined part:

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken (Isa. 53:7-8).

And Philip began at that same Scripture to show the eunuch that Isaiah was not speaking of himself, but he was speaking of Christ.

Spurgeon indicated in his commentary on this Psalm that if we were to ask the eunuch's question here, the answer would be “of himself, and also of another man.” And that other Man is the reason we are considering this Psalm. The other Man was Christ, making this a Messianic Psalm.

Isaiah 53 is a unique passage because it is occupied entirely with prophecies concerning our Lord, but Psalm 69, which was written by David, goes back and forth from David to our Lord. And even those which speak prophetically of our Lord, had some application to David as well. But a verse like verse 5 would apply only to David because our Lord was without sin. However, the references to the coming Christ which we find in many of David's Psalms indicate that David was a type of our Lord in many ways, but never in his sin.

Psalm 69 has three major divisions:

- 1) David reviewed his suffering before God in vv. 1-21.
- 2) David prayed against his enemies in vv. 22-28.
- 3) David praised God in anticipation of His blessing in verses 29-36.

Let us now examine the Psalm.

I. DAVID REVIEWS HIS SUFFERINGS BEFORE GOD (Psa. 69:1-21).

The words of David as he began this Psalm certainly are reminiscent of the prayers of the Lord as He approached the Cross. The hopelessness of David's situation is portrayed here. He described himself as a drowning man. He thought that his life would be taken from him. In verse 2 he spoke of being both in “deep mire,” but also as being swept away by “deep waters.” In verse 3 we see how David's whole body had been weakened by what his enemies had done. It had affected both his throat and his eyes. He was waiting for God to do something to help him, but thus far no help had come.

The sufferings of David were terrible, almost unto death on many occasions. But as terrible as they were, they could not begin to compare with the sufferings of our Lord Whose soul was made an offering for sin. He prayed in the Garden that if it were possible His cup might pass from Him. He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. And yet He remained surrendered to God.

Verse 5 reminds us of what the Lord experienced from His enemies. Cf. John 15:18-25:

- 18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.
- 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.
- 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.
- 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.
- 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.
- 23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also.
- 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.
- 25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

The Lord did say in John 7:7 that the world hated Him because he testified of it that their works were evil. But this should be cause for thanksgiving. It certainly was no legitimate reason as to why they should hate him.

But David experienced what his Lord was to experience—hatred with a cause. And this is what makes the world's hatred that much more difficult to bear. Added to that was the fact that David often gave back what he had not taken away. And to an infinite degree that which was true of our Lord. He was not responsible for our sin, but He took our sin upon Himself as though He were to blame. He “bore our sins in his own body on the tree.”

Verse 5 belongs to David alone. The Lord has never been foolish, nor has He ever been guilty of sin. There is something about troubles, even though we cannot see that they are deserved, which makes us look at ourselves. David made no attempt to hide his folly. He did not try to excuse his sin. The first words of this Psalm are words which we should never forget: “O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.” People may not be able to find anything against us, but God can always see that which displeases him. “There is none righteous, no, not one.”

Verse 6 also gives an effect that suffering has. It makes us concerned for others who are waiting on God, and seeking Him. And there is always the concern lest what we are going through have the wrong reaction on

others who may not understand the nature of our trials. David knew that he was not being punished for his sins, but as was the case with Job's "friends," others may feel that we are suffering under the judgment of God.

In verse 6 David said "for my sake" twice; in verse 7 it is "for Thy sake," referring to the Lord.. "Reproach" is *disgrace* or *scorn*, which David received from Shimei. "Shame" is *disgrace* and *dishonor*. Actually these two words are close to being synonyms. It means that shame upon shame was heaped upon David. And we know that was true concerning our Lord. In such circumstances people do a bad thing, and then seek to follow it with a worse thing. They seem to delight in doing all of the evil that they can possibly do. David felt all of this keenly, as our Lord certainly did.

Both with David and with his Lord, those who should have been the closest to them, turned against them. Judas, whom the Lord called His *friend* became as a stranger to Him. And the suffering becomes even greater when one's family joins in what the enemies are doing.

In verse 9 we come to another verse which shows that this is a Messianic psalm. Do you remember the account which the Apostle John related in John 2:13-17?

- 13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,
- 14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:
- 15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;
- 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.
- 17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

V. 9 is ^{also} quoted in Rom. 15:3 and applied to Christ.

Often it is the greater zeal which we show for the Lord and His work that gets us into trouble. People do not understand when one of God's children takes a stand against something which others approve of. The moneychangers must have had the approval of the Sanhedrin, but in this instance where the Lord drove them out, it only added to the reasons why His enemies were more determined than ever to destroy Him. So when we are zealous to obey God and to do His will, when others are going in an entirely different direction, the same kind of reproaches that fell upon our Lord, fall upon us.

Verse 10 indicates that weeping and fasting only brought on more reproach.

Verse 11 indicates that even putting on sackcloth only added to David's shame, and to the shame of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wasn't the Lord arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, the place where He had gone to pray?

Verse 12 indicates that the high, the elders who sit in the gate, and the low, the drunkards with their song, were united in their desire to bring the greatest possible reproach upon David, and the same was true of our Lord. Even when the Lord was dying on the Cross, think of how they hurled their taunts and ridicule at Him. The more we understand of this Psalm, the more we see how perfectly it describes the sufferings of our Lord and all of the reproach which was cast upon Him.

A change takes place here in what David was doing.

He had started by calling upon the Lord to save him. Then from verse 2 down to verse 12 he explained to the Lord why he needed to be saved, his experience typifying in many ways what our Lord would have to go through. *But beginning with verse 12 David was praying for himself.*

We all know from the many times we are told that the Lord prayed, that very little is said about what He said in His prayers. Perhaps this Psalm, which is so Messianic, reveals for us what was the Lord’s burden as He prayed for Himself. In Hebrews 5 we learn a little about our Lord’s praying. Listen as I read Heb. 5:5-10 to you:

- 5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.
- 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
- 7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;
- 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
- 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
- 10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

We can read also the first twenty-one verses of Psalm 22.

How wonderful it is to read in these passages, especially here in Psalm 69, and to see how completely David was trusting in the Lord! But then it is even more wonderful to see that the words of David’s prayer represent to us how our Lord prayed, and how completely the Lord trusted the heavenly Father. David’s hope was in no one but God. And the same was true of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the prayers are recorded in the Word of God so that we will know how to pray when we face the opposition of an evil world.

In verse 13 David said that his prayer was coming to Lord God “in an acceptable time.” This means a *pleasing* time. It must mean a time that was pleasing to God. God wants us to come to Him and to cast all of our care upon Him. When we are in trouble, it is always a delight to God that we come to Him. He never wearies of our coming. But it must grieve Him when we do not come, when we choose to bear our own burdens rather than cry to Him in our times of need. Let us always remember this.

Relate verse 14 to what David said in verse 2. In both verses you have “deep waters” and “mire.” And the same ideas are carried over into verse 15. They picture the most helpless and hopeless condition.

And then relate verse 16 to verse 13. In both verses David was pleading according to the glorious attributes of God. In verse 13, God’s mercy, and “in the truth [faithfulness] of thy salvation. In verse 16 it is God’s lovingkindness which is so good, and again, as in verse 13, “the multitude of thy tender mercies.”

Then beginning with in verse 17 the petitions become shorter, but very urgent. Doesn’t verse 17 remind you of our Lord’s prayer from the Cross, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” We had that also in Psalm 22. “Hide not thy face from thy servant.”

Then we have:

- 1) “Hear me speedily” (v. 17b).
- 2) “Draw nigh to my soul” (v. 18a).
- 3) “Redeem it” (v. 18m).
- 4) “Deliver me because of mine enemies” (v. 18b).

It must be the case that our most effective prayers are, or can be, those that are the shortest.

Back in verse 5 David told the Lord that he was aware that the Lord knew all about his foolishness and his sins; here in verse 19 David took comfort in the fact that the Lord knew also his reproach, his shame, and his

dishonor which he had experienced, and there was not a one of David’s enemies but what the Lord knew him by name, all that he had said, and all that he had done.

In verse 20 we see ^{how} depressed and discouraged David was, and when he looked for someone to take pity upon him and to help him, “there was none...I found none.” Here is a hint of what the Lord experienced in His heart when all of His disciples “forsook Him, and fled” (Matt. 26:56; Mark 14:50). *We must never minimize the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and think that what happened to Him did not affect Him as it would have affected us.*

Instead of help, but did our Lord get. Verse 21 is another verse to show us that this Psalm is Messianic. (Read.) And then we need to remember what is written in Matt. 27:34 and 48:

34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

Thirst is one of the dreadful effects of crucifixion. Kidner pointed out in his commentary that the word for “gall” is sometimes translated *poison*, and is sometimes used in poetry for *snake venom*. Whether or not the Lord’s enemies were trying to poison Him, we cannot say. But we do know that they were not trying to relieve His thirst, but to make His death even more bitter. We may never know what intense suffering the Lord was experiencing which made Him cry out, “I thirst.” This section of the Psalm ends with no relief in sight, and it brings us to the second main part.

We see in this next section,

II. HOW DAVID PRAYED AGAINST HIS ENEMIES (Psa. 69:22-28).

Most commentators have remarked on the contrast between David’s prayer at this point as compared with the prayer of our Lord on the Cross, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). And there certainly is a great contrast. At the same time we need to remember that verses 22 and 23 were quoted by the Apostle Paul in Rom. 11:9-10 as he explained what has happened to the nation Israel as a result of her persistent rejection of God and His Word which actually reached its greatest point in the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. What David prayed in Psalm 69 has actually happened. The Apostle Paul in Romans 9-11 wrote to show that God had not cast away His people permanently, but it was only “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11:25).

However, we must remember that countless numbers in Israel have passed into eternity without either faith in God or faith in promised Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also important to recognize that such prayers as we find in these seven verses were not prayed by David as an attempt for his own personal vindication, but out of jealousy for the glory of God Whose Name was being blasphemed by the people. Our Lord often spoke in the strongest language to those who were rejecting the truth. It is good for us to remember, and to remind others of the solemn words found in passages such as Heb. 10:28-31:

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But let us look at the prayer.

In verse 22 “the table,” which is often a symbol of the blessing of God and the faithfulness of God, can become “a snare” and “a trap” to people. Many, many people have made the mistake that Solomon referred to in Ecc. 8:11,

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Spurgeon made this comment about verse 22:

It is very easy for the daily provisions of mercy to become temptations to sin. As birds and beasts are taken in a trap by means of baits for the appetite, so are men snared full often by their meats and drinks. Those who despise the upper springs of grace, shall find the nether springs of worldly comfort prove their poison. The table is used, however, not alone for feeding, but for conversation, transacting business, counsel, amusement, and religious observance: to those who are the enemies of the Lord Jesus the table may, in all these respects, become a snare (Vol. 2, p. 182).

That which was intended by God for the blessing of mankind, can instead become in His hands “a snare” and “a trap.” These are solemn words which no one should overlook.

Verse 23 is sometimes fulfilled in a physical way, as it was with Samson. But a far greater blindness is spiritual blindness, people who hear the Word, and can even quote the Word, but have not been given the blessing of being able to understand the truth. They have eyes, but they see not. They have ears, but they hear not. They have hearts, but they do not understand. Only God can make us see and hear and understand. Man does not have that ability in himself. And so when God does not give that ability, or withdraws that which men have once had, that person is enveloped in total darkness. And what are the consequences? “Make their loins continually to shake.” Man is left in utter weakness, and he is continually overwhelmed by fear!

We go on in verse 24 to read that the God Who daily loads us with His benefits, as we read in the preceding Psalm, Psa. 68:19, can pour out His indignation upon people, and try as they may, they cannot escape His anger. It *takes hold of them*.

The sins of those who reject God are often passed on to their descendants. Peter referred to verse 25 of this Psalm when he was speaking of Judas in Acts 1:20. There is nothing that we can do for the blessing of our families more than to walk with God ourselves. On the other hand, when we turn from God, as God warned His people in the giving of the Law (see Ex. 20:5), He will often visit the iniquity of the fathers to the children of the third and fourth generations.

In the last three verses of this prayer we see how the situation with sinners gets progressively worse. In verse 26, as with the case of David (and later the Messiah), who was under the discipline of God, instead of seeking to relieve him, they added to his sufferings. Consequently, having given themselves to sin, they become the slaves of sin (v. 27). And they are removed farther and farther from righteousness, i.e., being made right with God. And then the end is irreversible. They are blotted out of the book of the living. This does not mean that they were once saved, and then had their salvation taken away, but that there was no possibility that they would ever be saved.

Esau was an example of this, and we read about him in the book of Hebrews, chapter 12, verses 14 through 17:

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his

birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

The Psalm ends on a brighter note.

III. DAVID PRAISED GOD IN ANTICIPATION OF HIS BLESSING (Psa. 69:29-36).

It is good to praise the Lord after prayer has been answered, and we have His blessings in hand. But it is much better to be able to praise the Lord even before prayer is answered, in the assurance that the blessing is sure to come. This is what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote Phil. 4:6-7. This is what David was doing in the closing verses of this Psalm. This was true also of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Heb. 12:1-2.

David described himself in verse 29 as “poor and sorrowful.” His circumstances were yet unchanged. But it is clear that his faith was in God, and unshaken. This is evidence of the marvelous grace of God. He gives us songs in the night. And so what does David do?

The answer is in verse 30. He cannot yet thank for the deliverance, but he does rejoice in the Lord. He will praise “the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.”

Too often we do not praise the Lord because we cannot bring a sacrifice, but there is always one sacrifice that everyone can bring regardless of what our circumstances might be, or how hopeless the future may seem. This is “the sacrifice of praise.” Cf. Heb. 13:15.

Now we have seen in the preceding verses that rebellion against God affects our families and friends in a detrimental way. Just the opposite is true when we are faithful to the Lord and can praise Him even in the midst of our trials. See verse 32 and verse 33, and then see how it seems to turn the whole universe into one great anthem of praise to God. *Just as there is no way for us to calculate the damage we can do to ourselves and to others when we sin, so there is no way to calculate the blessings that will come when we trust God and praise Him even before our prayers are answered!*

But this is not all.

In verses 35 and 36 we see how David’s faith is strengthened. It probably seemed at times that the work of the Lord was coming to an end. The future looked very dark. But he was assured as he praised the Lord and exalted Him that God would not fail. He would save Zion. He would build the cities of Judah. His people would dwell there. Their descendants would inherit it, “and they that love His Name shall [without a doubt] dwell therein.”

We must not overlook the fact that our Lord Jesus was the Supreme Example of One Who trusted the Lord as He was dying on the Cross. His last words were words of surrender and faith to the sovereign will of God when He said, after crying out with a loud voice (apparently in the extreme agony and suffering of His soul, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost” (Luke 23:46).

Concl: Probably none of us will ever have to suffer like David did, and we know that we will never have to suffer like our Lord Jesus Christ did. Therefore, this Psalm should be both a rebuke to us for those times in our lives when we have not trusted the Lord as we should, and have doubted his word, but also an encouragement for us to know that since God did not fail David, nor did God fail His own beloved Son, neither

will He fail us. And let us remember that trusting the Lord not only brings glory to God, it not only pleases Him, but it brings blessing also to our families, our friends, and to others in ways that we will never know unless we learn of it in glory.

Our sins harm us. They harm also our loved ones. And they grieve and dishonor our God Who loves us with an eternal and unchanging love. But on the other hand, when we trust the Lord we are glorifying Him, and we become a blessing to our families and our friends when they see the sufficiency of the grace of God in us. We can't do it in our own strength, but we can "do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" us.

Illus: The Scottish couple in Vancouver who helpless sat on their basement floor because neither of them could get up. But while they waited, they sang hymns and prayed for help to come. And help eventually did come. *That incident has been a blessing to me for ^{almost} ~~over~~ 50 years, and it continues to be a blessing.*

May the Lord enable us to trust Him in all of our trials that we may glorify Him and be a blessing to all who know us.