

The Gospel of John

Finding God in Scripture

John 19:23-24

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing in the Gospel of John. You have heard me say several times that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. The more I have read and studied the scriptures, the more I realize that they have to be inspired by God. One of the convincing factors of the inspiration of scripture is the harmony that exists throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament we see prophecies made over a thousand years before Christ that tell of the events that the Messiah will experience. John often refers to the Old Testament to prove that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies concerning Him as the Messiah. It is from the Old Testament scripture that we can identify Jesus as being the Messiah. The fact that Jesus was able to perfectly fulfill each prophecy concerning Him was in itself a miracle. We saw a few weeks ago that, by human experience, it would be utterly impossible for one man to accomplish this. That was the purpose of John writing his Gospel.

John 19:35 (NASB)

³⁵ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

Thus it is imperative for us to read and study God's word in order to understand His ways and believe.

Stand and Read Scripture

John 19:23-24 (NASB)

²³ Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts: a part to each soldier, and the tunic *also*; but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. ²⁴ So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it, *to decide* whose it shall be." *This happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled:*** "They divided My garments among themselves, and they cast lots for My clothing." Therefore the soldiers did these things.**

Prayer

BODY:

I. WHY IS SEEKING GOD IMPORTANT?

Ever since Adam and Eve's sin in the garden Satan has done his best to mislead us. The lies of Satan has been so thorough that the natural man can perceive only bits and pieces of the real truth about God. As a result, our conceptions about God are blurred. It is only

when God chooses to reveal Himself to us that the pieces begin to fall together as our eyes are opened to truth. Then, truly seeking God becomes possible.

Jesus tells us...

John 17:3 (NASB)

³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Here Jesus is telling us that our desire to seek God and to know Him better, is the essence of eternal life. The most important thoughts our minds can entertain are thoughts of God, because they will determine the quality and direction of our life. Seeking God, then, is an ongoing responsibility and a privilege for all Christians.

But we also know that seeking God is not always an easy thing to do. Not because God is elusive, but because our minds are saturated with misconceptions and deceits planted by Satan and reinforced by the culture, not to mention the sinful nature of our own hearts and the general deceitfulness of sin. But the good news is that these mistaken beliefs are done away with when we come to know God and grow in our relationship with Him. This starts when we turn to Him for salvation and put our trust in Jesus Christ. When we are saved, we receive the indwelling Holy Spirit who helps us to know God and even transforms our hearts to want to seek Him.

Romans 12:2 (NASB)

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

How can we be transformed and have our minds renewed to a new way of understanding? We learn the truth about God and seek Him through reading His Word (the Bible). We seek God also through prayer and in times of worship. We seek God both individually and corporately. Spending time with other believers in Jesus who are also seeking God is important to help us continue to seek Him.

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NASB)

²³ Let's hold firmly to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let's consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds, ²⁵ not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

II. MESSIANIC PSALM 22.

Psalm 22 contains several prophecies that are fulfilled through the overall events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus our Messiah. Because the New Testament refers to this Psalm around 15 different times, the early church gave it the nickname of "the fifth gospel." It was written by David approximately 1044 years before Christ.

There is too much information surrounding this prophecy and fulfillment to cover them all. But I would like to go through some of them this morning. I would encourage you to spend time this week reading the entire Psalm 22, and identifying the areas of New Testament scripture that reflect their fulfillment.

In our text this morning, John refers to a prophecy from Psalm 22. Psalm 22 is a perfect example of how the Old and New Testament scriptures can help us to believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

John 19:23-24 (NASB)

²³ Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts: a part to each soldier, and the tunic *also*; but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. ²⁴ So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it, *to decide* whose it shall be." *This happened* so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: "They divided My garments among themselves, and they cast lots for My clothing." Therefore the soldiers did these things.

This verse, at first glance seems somewhat insignificant until you understand that it was foretold over 1000 years ago by David. It is interesting how John described the event. He asserts that the soldiers divided the clothing in this way because David through the inspiration of God, **proclaimed** that it would happen. " *This happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.*" "Therefore the soldiers did these things." We can be certain that the soldiers had no knowledge of the prophecy, but they did it exactly as it was predicted. The Old Testament passage that John was referring to is found in...

Psalm 22:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ They divide my garments among them, And they cast lots for my clothing.

Isn't it amazing how God wrote of even very insignificant events in order for us to recognize His Son when He was sent to us!

Now let's start at the beginning of the Psalm and see some of the events that it predicted would happen during the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. Keeping in mind that when David penned this Psalm that death on the cross by Roman crucifixion had not even been thought of yet.

Psalm 22:1 (NASB)

²² My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

Nailed to the cross, Jesus cried out with these very words at the time of His crucifixion.

Matthew 27:46 (NASB)

⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabaktanei?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Likewise, the Psalmist explains:

Psalm 22:7-8 (NASB)

⁷ All who see me deride me; They sneer, they shake their heads, *saying*, ⁸ "Turn *him* over to the Lord; let Him save him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

The gospel writers similarly report:

Luke 23:35-37 (NASB)

³⁵ And the people stood by, watching. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." ³⁶ The

soldiers also ridiculed Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!"

The end of verse 8 says "Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."

Although it was said in ridicule by the people at the cross it accurately described how God rescued Him. God delivered His Son by raising Him from the dead through resurrection, the most convincing of all miracles, to prove that Jesus was the Christ.

Psalm 22:12 (NASB)

¹² Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.

The Hebrew word here has a literal meaning of "they crown me."

The New Testament tells us that the Roman soldiers placed a crown of thorns on Jesus head.

Matthew 27:29 (NASB)

²⁹ And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and *put* a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Psalm 22:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a piece of pottery, And my tongue clings to my jaws;...

Due to his time in prayer at the garden where He was "sweating blood" and being up all night only to endure a mock trial and being scourged and having soldiers slap Him and press a crown of thorns on His head and having to carry His own cross until he fell beneath the load, Jesus' strength was completely gone.

"My tongue clings to my jaws" suggests that He was thirsty but there is another Psalm that foretells His thirst in much more detail. Listen to this!

Psalm 69:21 (NASB)

²¹ They also gave me a bitter herb in my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

How would anyone come up with this except God? When Jesus was on the cross, we are told that Jesus said "I am thirsty." and the soldiers put a sponge of sour wine up to His mouth.

Psalm 22:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.

Surrounded by hostile gentiles ("dogs" and "evildoers"), Jesus is nailed to a Roman cross through His hands and feet. As one New Testament passage puts it:

Acts 2:23 (NASB)

²³ this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

We know from the Gospel writers that none of the bones of Jesus were broken during the crucifixion.

Psalm 22:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me;

Sometimes we are privileged to be shown the prophecy, its fulfillment, and its meaning in the New Testament.

Psalm 22:22 (NASB)

²² I will proclaim Your name to my brothers; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

The writer of Hebrews gave us the meaning of this prophecy.

Hebrews 2:9-15 (NASB)

⁹ But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of His suffering death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the originator of their salvation through sufferings.

¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for this reason He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying, "I will proclaim Your name to My brothers, In the midst of the assembly I will sing Your praise."

¹³ And again, "I will put My trust in Him."

And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me."

¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Due to the death of Christ on the cross we can become "children of God" and be freed from the fear of death when we believe and follow Jesus.

Psalm 22:29 (NASB)

²⁹ All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, All those who go down to the dust will kneel before Him, Even he who cannot keep his soul alive.

Those who believe in Christ will read God's word and worship Him. Everyone who dies, including those who will face spiritual death will kneel before Him.

Philippians 2:8-11 (NASB)

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

III. COINCIDENCE, PLOT, OR PROPHECY?

These parallels leave us with three possibilities:

1. It is a mere coincidence. The details just happen to line up as they do.
2. It is an early Christian plot. The gospel writers invented the details of Jesus' execution to make it match the Psalm.
3. Psalm 22 is, indeed, a prophecy of Jesus.

There are just too many details to be coincidence. The conspiracy theory may seem plausible at first, but breaks down on closer examination.

In all four gospels, the narrative of Jesus' death matches up very well with the narrative of the Psalm. Many of the details are directly connected to the methods of torture and execution contemporary to the Roman society of Jesus' day. The gospel writers could not just make them up to match the Psalm. No one would have believed them if they were not practices that the Romans would really do. The Psalmist wrote before such practices were invented, but the gospel writers wrote while they were still happening. They could not simply invent them to match the details of the Psalm because they were describing events from their own time and place. Their contemporary readers would catch the errors if they contrived unrealistic scenarios to make Jesus' death connect with the Psalm.

If the Gospel and New Testament writers had written of events that did not happen in order to force false connections to unrelated prophecies, the people in his day, who had also experienced these events, would **not** have embraced their testimony and Christianity would have quickly died. Also the fact that these men were willing to suffer the loss of their possessions, imprisonment, torture, and even death for what they said about Jesus clearly indicates they believed with great conviction.

CONCLUSION:

The Psalm as a whole parallels very well with Jesus' own suffering in stunning detail. By reading the crucifixion narratives in the Gospels and then this Psalm back to back, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that they are describing the same events. Listen to how David describes the effect of the Messiah's suffering.

Psalm 22:27 (NASB)

***27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord,
And all the families of the nations will worship before You.***

David's own suffering did not cause all the nations of the world to worship the one true God of Abraham. Neither did the suffering of any of the kings, prophets, or patriarchs of old. But Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection have done exactly that. To this day, more families of more nations all over the globe continue to come to God through the testimony of Jesus' suffering and deliverance. Not only do the details of the events fit, but what's more, the stated result of the events not only fits Jesus but fits Him exclusively. This simply cannot be said of any other person. Psalm 22 is just one of many prophecies that was miraculously fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

John 20:30-31 (NASB)

30 So then, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name.

He is Lord!