

JESUS THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

By Mark Paynter THD

Having established that Jesus was a historical person, we now address the question of whether the information that we have concerning the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus fulfils Old Testament prophecy. This is crucial if we are to accept the New Testament as the Word of God.

There can be no doubt that Jesus claimed that He was the Messiah. Even at an early age Jesus was conscious that he must be about His father's business (Luke 2:49). Jesus was not referring to the business of His earthly father Joseph but rather to that of His heavenly Father God. "At age twelve, He was conscious of a *unique relationship with God*, a relationship unlike other children: God was His Father, and He was the Son of God, the *unique Son* in the sense that He alone had been begotten of the Father."¹ Immediately after His baptism and temptation in the wilderness Jesus entered the synagogue at Nazareth and read from Isaiah 61 before declaring that on that day that Scripture had been fulfilled. As Robertson notes Jesus action and statement were extremely significant for they "could only mean that the real year of Jubilee had come, that the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah had come true today, and that in him they saw the Messiah of prophecy."² Later Jesus claimed; "I and the Father are one" (John.10: 30). To His disciples Jesus declared; "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9-10) and addressing the Jews declared; "Before Abraham was born, I Am" (John 8: 58). Jesus disclosed his Messiahship to the woman at the well in Sychar (John 4: 26) and accepted Peter's declaration that He was the "Christ of God" (Luke 9: 20). Even when on trial in response to the High Priests demand to tell the Sanhedrin whether He was the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus responded; "Yes, it is just as you say" (Matthew 26:63-64; Mark 14:61-63). By these statements Jesus was unreservedly declaring Himself to be the Son of God.

Since the Old Testament foretold of the coming Messiah and Jesus openly claimed to be that Messiah, it has to be asked how well did the life and ministry of Jesus fit the Old Testament description of the Messiah. In order to evaluate this let us take a closer look at a sample of Old Testament prophecies and see how well Jesus fits these prophecies.

The first promise of the Messiah

The earlier part of Genesis 3:15 contains a prophecy of human history. Genesis 3: 15 depicts human history as a stage upon which a "play of conflict is to be acted out, a conflict between the godly and the ungodly—between the good and the evil—upon the earth "³ However mans ultimate enemy is not other men but the fallen angel and great tempter of men, Satan. God will not allow Satan to ultimately triumph over mankind, and in Genesis 3:15 God announces that a future descendant of Eve will defeat Satan. Other Old Testament prophecies would expand upon this initial thought and eventually reveal that the promised seed is the Messiah. Genesis 3:15 is therefore the first definite promise of the Messiah who would come as Saviour to the World and defeat the plans of Satan. The prophecy was unconditional: the Savior would come and He

¹ Preachers Outline Study Bible commentary on Luke 2:49-50

² Robertson's Word Pictures commentary on Luke 4:21

³ Preachers Outline Study Bible commentary Genesis 3:15

would destroy the serpent (tempter) in order to redeem mankind and reconcile man with God. Galatians 4:4-5 declares speaking of Christ “when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

Prophecies concerning the birth of the Messiah

In Isaiah 7: 14 God through the prophet Isaiah declared 700 years before the birth of Christ that a virgin would bring forth the child who would be called Immanuel, which means God with us. Matthew 1:22-23 makes the claim that this child to be born of a virgin is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Micah’s prophesy of Micah 5: 2 adds additional details concerning the birth of the Messiah. “For Isaiah predicts the means of the ruler’s birth, and Micah predicts the place of His birth”⁴ Micah prophesies “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting.” In this remarkable prophecy Bethlehem Ephrathah which is in Judah is identified as the birthplace of the Messiah. Matthew 2: 1 specifically states that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. Furthermore Micah uses the phrase “Ruler in Israel” in Micah 5:2 to indicate that the Messiah will come in the line of David, in addition Micah uses the phrase “from of old, from everlasting” to indicate that the Messiah pre-existed His birth. Thus in Micah 5: 2 we find a hint of the incarnation of Christ. Both John (John 1:1-2,14; Rev.1:8) and Paul (2 Tim 1:9) declare that Jesus was the one who was in the beginning; from time eternal He was with God and was God. Remarkably as hinted by Micah at a specific point in history the Messiah took on human flesh and dwelt amongst us in order that He might redeem us.

The line of the Messiah

Various Old Testament passages that prophecy that Jesus would descend through the line of “Abraham (Gen.22: 18), Isaac (Gen 26: 4), Jacob (Gen.28: 14), Judah (Gen 49:10), Jesse (Isaiah 11:1-5) and King David (2 Samuel 7:11-16)”⁵ In the New Testament we find through the genealogies of Matthew (Matthew 1) and Luke (Luke 3:23-28) that Jesus descended through this line. As Muncaster comments “The kingship of Jesus came from David through the line of Joseph, his stepfather (as recorded in Matthew), while His physical descent from David came through the line of Mary (as recorded in Luke).

One of the most remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah and his lineage was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah at the time when the Babylonians captured the Southern kingdom. Jeremiah prophesied in Jeremiah 22: 30 “Thus says the LORD: ‘Write this man down as childless, A man *who* shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah. In this prophecy Gods place a curse upon the then King of Judah Jehoiachin and his future offspring. The prophecy does not mean that King Jehoiachin would be childless but that none of his offspring would rule Israel. Since King Jehoiachin was a king descended from the line of David, this prophecy appears to be a direct contradiction of the prophecy given to David that the Messiah,

⁴King James Version study Bible. 1997, c1988 (electronic ed.) (Mic 5:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ Muncaster page 176

who was coming to rule, would come from the line of David (2 Sam.7: 11-13). How could this be? The remarkable thing is that the genealogies given by Matthew and Luke show that both prophecies have indeed been fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Walvoord and Zuck explain that the prophecy of Jeremiah 22: 30

“Had both immediate and long-range significance. No offspring of Jehoiachin followed him to the throne. His uncle, Zedekiah, who replaced Jehoiachin, was Judah’s last king. God ”pruned away“ that portion of the line of David from the kingly line. This prophecy also helps explain the genealogies of Christ in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Matthew presented the legal line of Christ through his stepfather, Joseph. However, Joseph’s line came through Shealtiel who was a son of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Matt. 1:12; cf. 1 Chron. 3:17). Had Christ been a physical descendant of Joseph and not virgin-born, He would have been disqualified as Israel’s King. Luke presented the physical line of Christ through Mary, who was descended from David through the line of his son Nathan (Luke 3:31). In that way Christ was not under the ”curse“ of Jehoiachin.”⁶

The forerunner of the Messiah

The Old Testament prophets foretold that the coming of the Messiah would be preceded and heralded by a messenger of the Lord who would be like a voice in the wilderness who would call people to prepare the way of the Lord (Isaiah 40: 3). The prophet Malachi saw this desert prophet as a messenger who would prepare the way for the Messiah, immediately after this prophet the Messenger of the covenant would come (Mal 3: 1). These prophecies of Isaiah and Malachi were literally fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist. Matthew records: “In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’ ” This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him’ ” (Matt. 3:1–3).⁷

Prophecies concerning aspects of the ministry of the Messiah

In addition the Old Testament prophets described many details of the Messiahs ministry. For example, Isaiah 11:2 describes how the Messiah would be anointed for ministry by the Holy Spirit. “ The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.’ These verses express the thought that when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus that his ministry would be characterised by three sets of spiritual attributes as W.E Vine explains

⁶Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary (1983-c1985) *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. Commentary Jeremiah 22: 30

⁷Geisler, N. L. (1999) *Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics* Baker reference library (Page 610) Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books.

“The first, **“the spirit of wisdom and understanding”**, relates to powers of mind: wisdom discerns the nature of things, understanding discerns their differences. The second, **“the spirit of counsel and might”**, relates to practical activity: counsel is the ability to adopt right conclusions, might is the power exercised in carrying them out. The third pair, **“the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord”**, relates to fellowship with Jehovah; knowledge is here a knowledge of Jehovah (both details of this pair go with “of Jehovah”); Christ Himself said “ye have not known Him (ginōskō, i.e., ye have not begun to know Him), but I know Him (oida, i.e., I know Him intuitively and fully)”, **John 8:55**⁸

Matthew records that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus immediately after His baptism and empowered him for ministry. The work of the Holy Spirit in the Person of Jesus Christ included leading Him (Luke 4:1), inspiring His teaching (Luke 4:14, 15, 18), enabling Him to work miracles (Luke 4:18), and being involved in preparing to offer Himself up as the perfect sacrifice (Heb. 9:14), as well as His subsequent resurrection and exaltation (Rom. 1:4).⁹

Isaiah 61 identifies various ministries that will characterise the ministry of the Messiah. Firstly the Messiah will preach good tidings. The foremost ministry of the Messiah would be to proclaim the gospel and to attend to the priority of evangelism. The proclamation of the gospel centred on the good news that with the coming of the Messiah the kingdom of God had been inaugurated. The second ministry would be to bind up the broken hearted. Those whose hearts had been devastated by sin and guilt, or as well as those who had endured the hardships of the trials of every day life. To such as these the Messiah would “place bandages of healing on broken hearts.”¹⁰ Thirdly the Messiah would proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. This term “proclaim liberty” is the same as that used to describe “the proclamation of freedom at the Year of Jubilee, when all those who were in slavery were set free.”¹¹ Fourthly the Messiah will proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Immediately following His baptism and wilderness experience Jesus entered Nazareth and went to the synagogue where he opened the scrolls to this passage in Isaiah and declared ““Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21). In doing this Jesus was deliberately and openly declaring Himself to be the Messiah. It is important for us to realize that Jesus was careful to cut off his reading in the middle of Isaiah 61:2 thus “failing to add the next phrase, “and the day of vengeance of our God.” Jesus did not fulfill that last aspect of His ministry during the first advent but will fulfill that role as history reaches its climax when He returns a second time.

The synoptic Gospels, summarise Jesus public ministry during his first coming

⁸MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. (1997, c1995) *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (electronic ed.) (Is 11:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson cites Vine, *Isaiah*, p. 49.

⁹*Believers study Bible* 1997, c1995. C1995 by Foundation for Reformation. (electronic ed) (Is 11:1) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁰*KJV Bible commentary* 1997, c1994 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson. Commentary Isaiah 61: 1-2

¹¹*KJV Bible commentary* 1997, c1994 (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“As one of preaching, teaching, and healing (Matt. 4:23; Mark 1:39; Luke 4:44). His message was the good news of the kingdom of God, with its demand that people should repent and believe in the gospel (Matt. 9:35; Mark 1:14–15; Luke 4:43). By this proclamation, Jesus signified that in his ministry the sovereign power of God had invaded history to establish a new reign of righteousness in the salvation of his people. Jesus conceived of his preaching ministry as a divine commission (Mark 1:38), in fulfillment of messianic prophecy (Luke 4:18–21).”¹²

Prophecies concerning the Messiahs death

We now turn our attention to what Old Testament scholar Dr Kyle Yates has referred to as “the Mt. Everest of messianic prophecy” - Isaiah 53. “This passage is at the heart of chapters 49–57, and its message is at the heart of the Gospel. Like Mt. Everest, Isaiah 53 stands out in beauty and grandeur, but only because it reveals Jesus Christ and takes us to Mt. Calvary.”¹³ Up until the twelfth century Jewish Rabbis interpreted this passage as a prophecy of the Messiah, after that time they took the passage as referring to the suffering nation of Israel. However a careful reading of the passage makes it clear that an individual is referred to, not a nation. “The Servant that Isaiah describes is the Messiah; and the New Testament affirms that this Servant-Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God (Matt. 8:17; Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37; John 12:38; Acts 8:27–40; 1 Peter 2:21–24).¹⁴ In fact Isaiah 53 is the most frequently quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament for the passage provides a wonderful portrait of the life and ministry (vv1-4), death (vv5-8), burial (v9) and subsequent resurrection and exaltation (vv 10-12) of the coming Messiah. The fifteen verses starting at Isaiah 52:13 and ending Isaiah 53:12 can be divided naturally into five stanzas each containing three verses and each stanza revealing some important aspect of messianic truth.

1) The exaltation of the suffering servant (Isaiah 52:13-15).

Isaiah prophesies that people will be astonished at the exaltation of the Messiah (v.13), His appearance (v.14) and His message (v.15). In verse thirteen Isaiah foretells that the servant shall “deal prudently”, a phrase that means that the servant shall be successful in his endeavor. But in what way can it be said that Jesus was successful? Jesus was successful because Jesus was able to say that he had finished the work that the Father had assigned to Him (John 17: 4). The Apostle Paul wrote that Jesus upon the cross wiped out the handwriting of requirements that were against us, thus making it possible for us to be alive with Him, on the cross Jesus forgave our trespasses and disarmed the principalities and powers (Col.2: 13-15). After His resurrection Jesus ascended to heaven where He sat down at the right hand of the Father, He has been given all authority (Matt. 28:18) and all things have been put under His feet (Eph. 1:20–23).

¹²Webber, R (1993) *The Biblical foundations of Christian worship* (1st ed.) Nashville, Tenn: Star Song Pub. Group.

¹³Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1992) *Be comforted*. An Old Testament study (Is 52:13) Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books

¹⁴Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1992). *Be comforted* An Old Testament study (Is 52:13) Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books

2) Isaiah 53:1-3 depicts the Messiah as the humiliated suffering servant

In Isaiah 53: 1 the prophet speaks of “the arm of the Lord” a phrase that refers to the fact that the Lord is all-powerful and yet the wonder is that when it comes to delivering his people from their sin, the one who brings salvation grows up before God “as a tender plant and a root out of dry ground”, a symbol not of power and might but of humbleness and meekness. Jesus was “born in poverty in Bethlehem and grew up in a carpenter’s shop in despised Nazareth (John 1:43–46). Because of His words and works, Jesus attracted great crowds; but nothing about His physical appearance made Him different from any other Jewish man.”¹⁵

In Isaiah 53:3 Isaiah tells of how the Messiah would be despised and rejected, a man filled with sorrow and grief, a man from whom people would hide their face and refuse to honor him. The Gospels reveal how the crowds turned from Jesus as they began to recognize that He indeed was who He claimed to be but would not fulfill his mission in the way they expected. As Wiersbe points out “they were ashamed of Him *because He did not represent the things that were important to them*, things like wealth (Luke 16:14), social prestige (14:7–14; 15:1–2), reputation (18:9–14), being served by others (22:24–27), and pampering yourself (Matt. 16:21–28).”¹⁶ Today we have to be careful that we do not turn away from the claims of the gospel for our own self-interest.

3) Isaiah 53: 4-6 presents the central point of the Gospel; that the innocent suffering messiah Himself would die for the sins of people in order to provide salvation.

The emphasis throughout Isaiah 53:4-6 is that the Messiah **bore** our grief’s, carried our sorrows; was **wounded** for our transgressions, and was **bruised** for our iniquities. Isaiah thus makes it clear that the Messiah would not die for anything he had done but for the fact that each of us has strayed and turned to our own ways. In short “the iniquity of us all was laid upon him.” The New Testament Gospel writers speaking of Jesus place the emphasis on “the severity of His physical suffering: the agony in the garden, His battered face, the severe scourging, and the torture of the crucifixion itself.”¹⁷ and point out that Christ’s death was substitutionary.

4) Isaiah 53:7-9 prophecies the events surrounding the Messiah’s death and burial.

Even though the Messiah would be oppressed and afflicted, he would not open His mouth but as a sheep is silent before its slaughter so the messiah would remain silent before those who would seek His death. Peter as he reflected back upon the events of Jesus’ trial recalled that when Jesus was reviled, He did not revile in turn, when

¹⁵Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1992) *Be comforted* An Old Testament study (Is 53:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

¹⁶Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1992) *Be comforted* An Old Testament study (Is 53:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

¹⁷*King James Version study Bible*. 1997, c1988 (electronic ed.) (Is 53:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

experiencing suffering he did not respond with threats but committed Himself into the hands of the one who judges righteously. (1 Pet 2:23). As Walvoord observes “Jesus, as the **Lamb** of God (John 1:29), quietly submitted to His death. He did not try to stop those who opposed Him; He remained **silent** rather than defend Himself (Matt. 26:63a; 27:14; 1 Peter 2:23). He was willingly **led** to death because He knew it would benefit those who would believe.”¹⁸

Isaiah prophesies that after the Messiah had endured oppression and affliction he would be “taken away” from prison and judgement, with the express purpose of putting Him to death. The consequence of this would be that no one would be able to declare his generation, which may mean that He would lose the ability to produce offspring or that those of His own generation would consider His death of no significance. However in His death a far greater accomplishment than those who watched the fulfilment of this prophecy could comprehend was achieved. For the Messiah death had great purpose and significance, for He was stricken not for His own crimes, for indeed he was sinless, but for the transgressions of God’s people.

Even the burial place of the Messiah has great significance. Isaiah prophesies that the Messiah would be put to death among criminals and but Isaiah 53: 9 makes it clear that the Messiah would be buried amongst the rich.

The New Testament treats the burial of Jesus as a vital part of the gospel (1 Cor 15:1-5). The fact that Jesus was buried is indicative of the fact that he actually died. As Wiersbe explains; “The Roman authorities would not have released the body to Joseph and Nicodemus if the victim were not dead (John 19:38–42; Mark 15:42–47). A wealthy man like Joseph would never carve out a tomb for himself so near to a place of execution, particularly when his home was miles away. He prepared it for Jesus and had the spices and grave clothes ready for the burial. How wonderfully God fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy!”¹⁹

5) **Isaiah 53: 10-12 examines the event of the Messiah’s death from God’s perspective.**

Isaiah 53:10 prophesies that the Messiah “shall prolong His days” an expression that in the context of Isaiah 53 can only mean that the Messianic Servant after His death and burial would be raised to life again. The resurrection of Jesus transformed Calvary from the most tragic moment in human history into the glorious base of man’s salvation. Matthew had earlier depicted that during the wilderness temptation Satan had offered a way to Jesus of receiving a glorious kingdom if Jesus would but worship Satan (Matt 4:8-10). Had Jesus done so He would have by passed the cross and condemned mankind forever. Instead Jesus chose the way of the cross, because Jesus chose the way of

¹⁸Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary (1983-c1985) *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. Commentary Isaiah 53: 7

¹⁹Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1992) *Be comforted*. An Old Testament study (Is 53:7). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

humiliation, He became “obedient unto death”. Therefore in His resurrection God the Father has highly exalted Him and has given Him a name above all names (Phil.2: 8-10). Indeed Jesus triumphed over every enemy even death and claimed the spoils of victory (Eph. 1:19–23; 4:8).

Isaiah 53:11 is a prophecy that the Messiah see the labour of his Soul and be satisfied. Wiersbe has identified two aspects of this satisfaction, firstly Jesus lived to please His Father (John 8: 29) and in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus the Father was well pleased. This was because “His Son’s obedience accomplished the redemption that He had planned from eternity (1 Peter 1:20).”²⁰ Acts 2:22-23 makes it clear that even though Jesus was put to death at the hands of Men of Israel, it was God who had delivered by His own predetermined purpose and foreknowledge His only Son into the hands of men. The crucifixion of Jesus was no mere act of man, or an accident but a fulfilment of God’s predetermined purpose and counsel. For Jesus was God’s sacrifice for the sins of men. We should not take this as meaning that the Father enjoyed watching His son being crucified but rather found satisfaction in the end result- the salvation of many. Secondly Jesus death satisfied the law of God; Jesus thus became the propitiation for the sins of the world (Rom 3: 25; 1 John 2: 2). As Wiersbe explains,

“God is angry at sin because it offends His holiness and violates His holy Law. In His holiness, He must judge sinners; but in His love, He desires to forgive them. God cannot ignore sin or compromise with it, for that would be contrary to His own nature and Law.

How did God solve the problem? *The Judge took the place of the criminals and met the just demands of His own holy Law!* “He was numbered with the transgressors” and even prayed for them (Isa.53: 12; Luke 22:37; 23:33–34). The Law has been satisfied, and God can now graciously forgive all who will receive His Son.

Grace is love that has paid a price, and sinners are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8–10). Justice can only condemn the wicked and justify the righteous (1 Kings 8:32), but grace justifies *the ungodly* when they trust Jesus Christ! (Isa. 53:11; Rom. 4:5) To justify means “to declare righteous.” He took our sins that we might receive the gift of His righteousness (2 Cor.5: 21; Rom. 5:17). Justification means that God declares believing sinners righteous in Christ *and never again keeps a record of their sins.* (See Ps. 32:1–2 and Rom. 4:1–8.)²¹

This is the meaning of the cross, that on the cross Jesus suffered and died that all who turn to Him would find in His shed blood the means of having their sins forgiven and a way back into relationship with the living God. Through the cross Jesus made it possible for repentant sinners to receive eternal life. The question may well be asked what is eternal life? Jesus himself

²⁰Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1992) *Be comforted* An Old Testament study (Is 53:10) Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

²¹Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1992) *Be comforted* An Old Testament study (Is 53:10). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

wonderfully answers that question when he declared in prayer – “Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent” (John 17:3, NIV)”²² What is eternal life, simply an eternal relationship with the Father and the Son, that has been procured by the fulfillment of Isaiah 53 by Jesus at Calvary.

Throughout our study of Isaiah 53 I found myself wondering how agonising the events of Calvary must have been to Jesus and to the Father. In a remarkable messianic prophecy Psalm 22 we find these words recorded in the very first verse “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Jesus quoted these words in the final moments before He yielded up His spirit (Matt 27:46. 50). William MacDonald notes; “behind this poignant question lies an awful reality—the suffering Savior actually *was*, literally and completely, **forsaken by God**. The Eternal Son who had always been the object of His Father’s delight was now abandoned. The Perfect Man who unflinchingly did the will of God experienced the terrible desolation of being cut off from God.”²³ Isaiah 53 makes it clear that “Christ was **forsaken by God** so that we might *never* be forsaken.”²⁴

In Psalm 22 the Psalmist expresses the thought that God appears distant, far from helping him and far from hearing his groaning during the daytime and in the night season. There were no doubt times when David could cry these words himself, but they never meant more than when Jesus hung on that cross for you and for me. As the rest of Psalm 22 develops the expression of forsakenness is gradually replaced by glorious praise. It turns out that God the Father has not forsaken His loved one, but has heard His cry for deliverance and acted to restore the Messiah back to life. (Ps 22:22ff) Larry Richards expresses the thought “Out of that death and through a now endless life Christ, once a victim but now victor, satisfies the deepest need of all who seek the Lord (v. 26), and will surely cause all nations to bow down to God in an endless kingdom He will rule (vv. 27–31).”²⁵

²²Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1992) *Be comforted* An Old Testament study (Is 53:10). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

²³MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. (1997, c1995) *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (electronic ed.) (Ps 22:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

²⁴MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. (1997, c1995) *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (electronic ed.) (Ps 22:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

²⁵Richards, L. (1991). *The Bible reader's companion* Includes index. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books. Commentary on Psalm 22