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Sermon Notes

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The Crucifixion of Christ Prophesied

Psalm 22

I. The Miraculous Accuracy of Prophecy

A. Jesus Hanging on the Cross

Matthew 27:46 “About the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’”

1. Cry of total God-forsakenness... suffering under the wrath of God the alienation we deserved
2. Total life covered by prophecy
 - Born in Bethlehem according to Micah 5:2
 - Born of a virgin according to Isaiah 7:14
 - Grew up in Galilee according to Isaiah 9:1
 - Did miracles according to Isaiah 35:4-6
 - Spoke in parables according to Psalm 78:2
 - Rejected by His own people according to Psalm 118:22
 - Betrayed by one of His own friends for thirty pieces of silver according to Psalm 41:9 and Zechariah 11:13

How much more was His death covered by prophecy?

Illus. Franco Zefferelli's *Jesus of Nazareth*

3. Pointing to the right place??

Could it be that Jesus was doing more than just expressing the cry of forsakenness under the wrath of God? Could it be that He was also pointing future generations to the clearest prophecy in the Bible concerning the manner of His death?

B. Justin Martyr & his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* and his *Apology*

1. Written about 100 years after Christ
2. Clearly focused on Psalm 22; said the “Prophetic Spirit” had predicted Jesus’ crucifixion in the words: “They have pierced my hands and my feet.”

Evidently Trypho the Jew totally rejected his interpretation; whereupon Justin Martyr replied:

“You are indeed blind when you deny that the above-mentioned Psalm was spoken of Christ, for you fail to see that no one among your people who was ever called King ever had his hands and feet pierced while alive, and died by this mystery (that is, the cross), except this Jesus only.” (Dial. w. Trypho, 97)

C. Centerpiece of Apostolic Evangelism: Christ Fulfills the Scriptures

1. Jesus’ forty day seminar
2. Peter’s sermon on Pentecost: Joel 2, Psalm 16, Psalm 110 (11 out of 23 vss. OT quotes)

1 Peter 1:11 “The Spirit of Christ inside [the prophets]... predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”

3. Paul’s ministry
 - a. in Damascus, right after conversion

Acts 9:20, 22 “At once he began preaching in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God... Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.”

- b. in Rome, at the end of his life

Acts 28:23 “From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”

- c. many times in between (like Thessalonica)

Acts 17:2-3 “As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.”

- d. Paul’s own summary

1 Corinthians 15:3 “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...”

C. Incredible Detail in the Prophecies: Especially Around the Crucifixion

[to Peter, telling him to put away his sword] *Matthew 26:54 “But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”*

This will become evident today... the Scriptures made it plain exactly HOW Jesus would die

II. A Psalm of David: David Sufferings a Shadow of Christ’s

A. David’s Context: Potential Death by Enemies, Not Sickness

1. The “sickness” argument:

- a. many commentators: David writing about a serious illness
- b. evidence seems to agree

6: “a worm, not a man” 14: “poured out like water”, “bones out of joint” “heart melting like wax” 15: “strength dried up”, “tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth” “lay me in the dust of death”

2. Many enemies: political & personal

Shakespeare: “Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown”... how much more when open rebellion going on!

3. Clearest evidence from Psalm 22

- a. surrounded by enraged violent men (vs. 12-13, 16)

vs. 12-13 Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. ¹³ Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me.

vs. 16 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me

- b. threatened by death with the sword (vs. 20-21)

vs. 19-21 *But you, O LORD, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me. ²⁰ Deliver my life from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs. ²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.*

David was not suffering physical illness... rather he was threatened by death from encircling personal enemies; this also is a perfect picture of the future suffering of Jesus Christ

B. The Psalm Outlined

1. The Cycle of Lament and Trust (vs. 1-21)

Cycle of sufferers: Yet you // But I // Yet you

a. Lament #1: Forsaken by God (vs. 1)

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

b. Confidence in God #1: National Experiences Results in Prayer (vs. 3-5)

vs. 3 *“Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One” [God is sovereign and holy!]*

vs. 4-5 *“In you our fathers put their trust... they cried out to you and were saved...”*

c. Lament #2: A Scorned Worm (vs. 6-8)

vs. 6 *“But I am a worm and not a man... scorned by men and despised by the people”*

d. Confidence in God #2: Personal Experiences Results in Prayer (vs. 9-11)

vs. 9 *“Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother’s breast.”*

e. Lament #3: Encircled by Attackers (vs. 12-18)

f. Confidence in God #3: David’s Prayer for Deliverance (vs. 19-21)

2. Thanksgiving for Deliverance, Present and Future (vs. 22-31)

a. Praise for God’s present deliverance (vs. 22-26)

b. Vision of God’s future reign (vs. 27-31)

III. Christ's Perfect Fulfillment (see Matthew 27:32-50)

A. The Scene Set in the Gospels: Right from Psalm 22!!

1. Dividing garments by casting lots (vs. 35) (Psalm 22:18)

Matt. 27:35 *When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*

2. Wagging heads (vs. 39) (Psalm 22:7)

Matt. 27:39 *Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads*

3. Mocking, staring, hurling insults (vs. 39, 44) (Psalm 22:7, 17)

Matt. 27:44 *In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.*

4. Mocking about His trust in God (vs. 41-43) (Psalm 22:8)

Matt. 27:41-43 *In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.' "*

All of this as if lifted directly from Psalm 22, written 1000 years before it was fulfilled

Psalm 22:7-8 *All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: ⁸ "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."*

B. Crucifixion Itself: Right from Psalm 22!! [Read psalm 22:12-17]

1. Dehydration: Tongue cleaves to jaws (Psalm 22:14-15)
2. Exposure: Bones exposed (Psalm 22:17)
3. Disfigurement: Bones out of joint (Psalm 22:14)
4. Encirclement: Enemies circling, screaming, roaring (Psalm 22:12-13, 16)
5. Piercing: Hands and feet (Psalm 22:16)

C. The Battle Over Piercing

1. Jews doubt the Scriptures (Acts 28:24)
2. Trypho refused to accept Justin's interpretation of Psalm 22
3. Trouble with the manuscripts
4. BUT... Isaiah and Zechariah said He would be pierced!
 - a. Isaiah's prophecy is clear

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

The word is unequivocal: it means to be pierced through, resulting in death

- b. Zechariah's as well... but it refers to a different piercing

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.

John relates this piercing to the thrust of the soldier's lance in Jesus' side, which produced a flow of blood and water

- c. Revelation also cited this verse referring to the second coming of Christ

Revelation 1:7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

D. Amazing Prophecy!! Crucifixion Didn't Exist Yet!

1. Invented by Assyrians four hundred years later
2. David knew nothing of it
3. Yet accurately set the scene for the death of Christ

IV. Applications

A. “Certainty of what you’ve been taught...” (Luke 1:4)

Luke wrote his gospel for one simple reason: that we might know the absolute certainty of the gospel message which is our only salvation from sin and death

Luke 1:4 “...so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.”

1. Gospel worked out before the foundation of the world

Paul does the same thing at the beginning and end of Romans, referring to the prophets:

Rom. 1:2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures

2. Christ’s suffering on the cross the central part
 - a. Christ slain from the foundation of the world

Revelation 13:8 [Jesus is the] Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.

- b. God put it in writing long ahead of time!!

1 Corinthians 15:3 “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...”

NOT just the fact but the very manner of His death!

Why get specific about thirty pieces of silver, gall & vinegar, casting lots for the clothing, numbered with the transgressors, the rich man’s tomb, etc. and neglect the actual mode of death... hanging on a cross? Remember Jesus’ words to Peter:

Matt. 26:54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?

- c. Redeemed from the curse: Jesus hung on a tree to do it

Deuteronomy 21:23 “...anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse.”

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

- d. the cross a purposeful stumbling block set in place by God

1 Corinthians 1:17-18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."

1 Corinthians 2:2, 7 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified... No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

God had worked out the crucifixion of Christ on a piece of wood before the world began... He gave us enough clear prophecies to confirm our faith

B. Christ suffered in our place

1. Hell the ultimate threat... (ultimate rejection by God) Christ tasted it for us
2. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me"... the worst part of hell
 - a. created in God's image to have fellowship with Him
 - b. even unbelievers blessed every day by the activity of God

Matthew 5:45 He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Luke 16:25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things...'"

James 1:17 "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights..."

[to the pagan crowd in Lystra] Acts 14:17 He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

- c. in hell, the damned are utterly forsaken by God... NO GOOD THINGS
2. Reconciliation with God opened!!
 - a. unbelievers now experience this isolation from God

Illus. Martin Luther, "Why did Christ feel this?"

- b. Jesus stood under the wrath and curse of God

c. friendship with God possible through Christ's sufferings

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

If you are justified by faith in God, you will NEVER be forsaken by God

Hebrews 13:5 "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

But this doesn't mean you won't suffer in this world

C. Standing near the cross, drinking from His cup

1. Joining Him outside the gate

Hebrews 13:12-13 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. ¹³ Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.

2. Taking up your cross daily

Luke 9:23-24 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

3. To share in His reward, we must share in His suffering

Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

4. For some followers, this literally means crucifixion!

Matthew 23:34 Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.

Peter was crucified upside-down in Rome

4. Cycle of lament and trust kicks in... we suffer like David, not like Christ!!

When we suffer, we are not drinking the cup of God's wrath, but are sharing in Christ's sufferings... our suffering does not atone for sin, but it is part of Christ's suffering

D. A Worldwide Feast of Celebration (vs. 22-31)

1. Freedom for His brothers (vs. 22-26)

- a. Christ not ashamed to call us brothers!
- b. Christ powerful to defeat a foe we could never defeat... DEATH
- c. Christ took on human mortality to bring us to eternity (Hebrews 2:12-17)

Hebrews 2:10-15 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. ¹² He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." ¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." ¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

2. Universal reign for the joy of all peoples (vs. 27-31)

- a. [Worldwide Scope] "All the ends of the earth", "All the families of the nations"
- b. [Deep Repentance] "Remember and turn to the Lord..."
- c. [Humbling before the King] "Bow down before him for dominion belongs to the Lord"
- d. [Joyful feasting in worship] "All the rich of the earth will feast and worship"
- e. [Total inability any other way] "those who cannot keep themselves alive"
- f. [Through all history] "Posterity," "Future generations," "a people yet unborn"
- g. [A gospel preached] "will be told about the Lord", "will proclaim his righteousness"
- h. [A God-centered gospel] "For he has done it!!!"

A God-centered gospel of the accomplishment of God in destroying death for humbled, repentant believers from every tribe & nation

This results in joyful feasting and celebration for all who will humble themselves and believe the good news... Christ's suffering has freed you from being eternally forsaken by God! Rejoice forever!!