

The flow of Jesus' prayer book reveals sequences that are critical to our understanding of redemption. These royal psalms, Psalms 20, 21, 22, and 23, form an especially significant theological relationship. Psalm 20 is a prayer for answers that only the Lord can give. Psalm 21 celebrates those answers – the Lord's answers – in an extravagant description of eschatological salvation and judgment. This description of eternal security and final judgment takes the first horizon of David's battles as a base of understanding and transposes them into a higher key – the highest key – and gives them a spiritual and typological significance made possible through the Spirit's inspiration.

The first half of Psalm 21 is all about salvation; the second half is all about judgment. Psalm 21:7 is the crucial pivot verse. It highlights *trust in the Lord* and the *Lord's unfailing love*. "For the king trusts in the Lord; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken" (Ps 21:7). What remains to be explored are the specifics of that trust and the costly meaning of that love. There is much more to the story of salvation that makes salvation and judgment possible and forms the bridge between the two halves of Psalm 21. All these salvation psalms are messianic and belong together in a redemptive sequence that inspires worship and deepens faith.

Psalm 22 bears witness to the reason for our trust in Christ and to the meaning of God's costly, mighty love. The Spirit makes a bold move here. Typology jumps the banks and yields a flood of prophecy. The implicit foreshadowing of Christ in the life of David that we have seen in so many psalms is taken to a whole new level. The Spirit correlates the poetry of lament with the actual history of Jesus' suffering and death.<sup>1</sup> Good exegesis requires us to see what the apostles believed and testified to. We cannot pray a verse of this psalm before thinking of Jesus and his crucifixion. Immediately, we are carried back to Golgotha and the Passion of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

A refusal to see Psalm 22 as messianic prophecy is pre-modern as Calvin's concern indicates: "We are extremely slow and backward to believe; and it is not wonderful, that, on account of our dulness of apprehension, a demonstration of the character of Christ, palpable to our senses, has been given us, which might have the effect of arousing the sluggishness of our understandings."<sup>3</sup>

Attempts to correlate the theological and spiritual power of the psalm with anything other than the Passion of Christ are bound to fail. Psalm 22 is not about David and his life-threatening dangers, nor is about the suffering of the people of Israel, nor is it about the persecuted Church,

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<sup>1</sup> Calvin, *Psalms*, 376. Calvin: "To teach us the more certainly that in this psalm Christ is described to us by the Spirit of prophecy, the heavenly Father intended that in the person of his Son those things should be visibly accomplished which were shadowed forth by David."

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther wrote, This is a kind of gem among the Psalms, and is peculiarly excellent and remarkable. It contains those deep, sublime, and heavy sufferings of Christ, when agonizing in the midst of the terrors and pangs of divine wrath and death, which surpass all human thought and comprehension. I know not whether any Psalm throughout the whole book contains matter more weighty, or from which the hearts of the godly can so truly perceive those sighs and groans, inexpressible by man, which their Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, uttered when conflicting for us in the midst of death, and in the midst of the pains and terrors of hell. Wherefore this Psalm ought to be most highly prized by all who have any acquaintance with temptations of faith and spiritual conflicts. Martin Luther. Locate source/cited in Spurgeon

<sup>3</sup> Calvin, *Psalms*, 376.

nor is it about our existential pain, it is about Christ. Any move to evade the powerful meaning of this Spirit-inspired psalm, either by de-spiritualizing its prophecy or secularizing its message requires a state of denial.<sup>4</sup> Those who worship in Spirit and in truth embrace Psalm 22 – the prophetic psalm of Christ’s Passion.<sup>5</sup>

This is no ordinary lament. The psalmist moves “from torment to turmoil to triumph” in a beautifully balanced three stanza, well crafted poetic spiral of complaint and confidence.<sup>6</sup> And then after death has seemingly uttered the last word, the psalmist abruptly ends the lament and breaks into full throated praise, calling everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, to worship Yahweh.

When we read Psalm 22 in the light of the apostolic witness, we see Jesus Christ as the objective correlative. He is the person the psalm is all about. Outside of him, the psalmist’s description of being God-forsaken and being laid low in the dust of death is all hyperbole. But with Jesus it is all reality. No other psalm has shaped the Passion Narratives of the Synoptic Gospels the way Psalm 22 has.<sup>7</sup> When Jesus met the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, he rebuked them for not understanding the prophecies about the Messiah. He chided them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:25-26). What would he say to Christians today who refuse to embrace the apostolic witness and see in Psalm 22 the testimony of Jesus? Would he not say, “How foolish you are and slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!?”

#### *God-Forsaken*

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?  
My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.*

*Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises.  
In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.*

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<sup>4</sup> Goldingay, Psalms, vol 1:341. Goldingay counters this perspective: “The direct reference of the psalm is thus to the suffering of the faithful. One of the faithful who has taken it on his lips is Jesus, which reflects the depths with which it plumbs forsakenness and hope. This does not make him the primary referent of the text. It is not a prophecy. The NT use of the psalm ‘wrenches it out of its setting’ (Sheldon Tostengard, “Psalm 22,” Int 46 (1992): 167-70, see 167). But that did enable it to illumine Jesus for the early church.”

<sup>5</sup> We see here the tension between the historical-grammatical method and the apostolic hermeneutic. Peter Craigie writes, “Though the psalm is not messianic in its original sense or setting. . .it may be interpreted from a NT perspective as a messianic psalm par excellence” (Craigie, Psalms, 202). It is customary to say that Psalm 22 must be read first “in the suffering of the psalmist’s experience as an urgent prayer to be delivered from enemies who are methodically putting him to death; then it may be read on the higher level to see how the psalm was applied to the greater sufferings of Jesus” (Ross, Psalms, vol 1:526). My sense is that apostolic preaching skipped this first step and began with Jesus’ suffering, and only after exploring the meaning of the cross, did they come back to its personal application in our experience of suffering. The apostolic hermeneutic reverses the order and begins with Christ and reads the text backwards, strengthening the application for Christians.

<sup>6</sup> Waltke and Houston, The Psalms as Christian Worship, 397, 415.

<sup>7</sup> Waltke and Houston, The Psalms as Christian Worship, 377.

*To you they cried out and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*

*But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.  
All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.  
“He trusts in the Lord,” they say,  
“let the Lord rescue him.  
Let him deliver him,  
since he delights in him.”*

*Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
you made me trust in you, even at my mother’s breast.  
From birth I was cast on you;  
from my mother’s womb you have been my God.*

Psalm 22:1-10

The juxtaposition of complaint and confidence is emphasized in the lament. The *inclusio*, “My God,” frames the first stanza (Ps 22:1-10) and is repeated four times for emphasis.<sup>8</sup> No matter how God-forsaken the psalmist felt, he clung to his relationship with God. Everything else was against him, but he was still free to address God personally. *My God* “combines God’s transcendence, indicated by ’ēl, with personal intimacy of covenant relationship, indicated by ‘my.’”<sup>9</sup> “When we want the faith of assurance,” wrote Matthew Henry, “we must live by the faith of adherence.”<sup>10</sup> The lament itself is an act of faith prayed in the midst of hopelessness, not only venting the agony of his soul, but confessing the object of his faith – “My God.” The outcry of “Why?” is clearly heart-wrenching, but not suicidal. “The suppliant’s three calls to God demonstrate his persistence in faith, not a deluded defeatist.”<sup>11</sup>

Matthew Henry writes, “This *may be applied* to David, or any other child of God,” who is “overwhelmed with grief and terror,” who is “forsaken of God, unhelped, unheard, yet calling him, again and again, ‘My God,’ and continuing to cry day and night to him. . . . But it *must be applied* to Christ” because “he poured out his soul before God when he was on the cross.”<sup>12</sup>

“From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’).” Matthew 27:45-46

Of all Jesus’ words from the cross this is the hardest one to hear. As Spurgeon said, “it is measureless, unfathomable, inconceivable. The anguish of the Savior on your behalf and mine is

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<sup>8</sup> Waltke, Psalms, 398.

<sup>9</sup> Waltke, Psalms, 399.

<sup>10</sup> Henry, Psalms, 92.

<sup>11</sup> Waltke, Psalms, 400.

<sup>12</sup> Henry, Psalms, 92.

no more to be measured and weighed than the sin which needed it, or the love which endureth it.”<sup>13</sup> The first three sayings from the Cross show Christ's love for others: Jesus prayed for his enemies ("Father, forgive them for they know not what they do"), he promised salvation to the repentant thief ("Today, you will be with me in paradise"), and he showed his affection for Mary ("Woman, behold your son"). Everyone near the cross was prayed for and ministered to. At the cross Jesus declared *forgiveness, salvation* and *affection*. However, in his fourth statement, Jesus cried out to God in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus' ministry has been marked by an absolute oneness with the Father, but in this anguished prayer we count the terrible price Jesus paid to free us from the power of sin and death. The very essence of Jesus' ministry was his fellowship with the Father. Everything he did reflected his immediate and intimate fellowship with the Father. Jesus knew from the outset that he was headed to the cross and he knew why. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

"Our faith fails us, and then we think that God has forsaken us," wrote Spurgeon, "but our Lord's faith did not for a moment falter, for He says twice, 'My God, my God.' Oh, the mighty double grip of His unhesitating faith! He seems to say, 'Even if Thou hast forsaken Me, I have not forsaken Thee.'"<sup>14</sup> Herein lies the greatest paradox of all time. The one in whom fellowship with the Father was his right by virtue of his being, and the one in whom fellowship with the Father was his right by virtue of his faithfulness and obedience, was completely forsaken and totally abandoned by the Father because of us. Instead of being honored, he was condemned; instead of being praised, he was accused. "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him" (Isa 53:10).

Jesus' cry from the cross embraces and comprehends all the lamentations of all God's people throughout all of time. All other cries of anguish, all other "Gethsemanes," all other "Golgothas" look to this moment for resolution. It is as if Jesus literally gathered up all the lamentations of God's people and shouted them from the cross in a loud voice. This includes Abraham's unspoken anguish on Mount Moriah and Job's passionate lament from the ash heap and David's utter feeling of God-forsakenness.

But no one had ever uttered this cry the way Jesus did. For Abraham, Job, and David, the absence of God *seemed* very real, but for Jesus it was absolutely real. No one ever experienced the fellowship of the Father the way Jesus did, and no one experienced the burden and judgment of humanity's depravity the way Jesus did. Jesus' agony of soul was ultimately and most intensely spiritual. "Grief of mind is harder to bear than pain of body. . . Spiritual sorrows are the worst of mental miseries. . . We can bear a bleeding body, and even a wounded spirit, but a soul conscious of desertion by God is beyond conception unendurable"<sup>15</sup>

In the crisis of Gethsemane and in the pain of the cross, Jesus anticipated and experienced the wrath of God. He deliberately identified with our sin and our alienation from God. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"

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<sup>13</sup> Spurgeon, *Christ's Words from the Cross*, 51.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

(2 Cor 5:21). “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (Rom 4:25). “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness, by his wounds you have been healed”(1 Pet 2:24). The intensity of his struggle came not from a fear of death, but from his real experience of God-forsakenness. “This marks the lowest depth of the Savior’s grief. The desertion was real. . . .It was no delirium of mind, caused by weakness of body, the depression of his spirit, or the near approach of death. His mind was clear to the last. He bore up under pain, loss of blood, scorn, thirst, and desolation. . . .All the tortures on His body He endured in silence; but when it came to being forsaken by God, then His great heart burst out. . . . It was a real absence he mourned.”<sup>16</sup> Make no mistake about it, Jesus was truly abandoned by the Father, and having lived in the closest possible fellowship with the Father he knew in the depths of his being the significance of this terrible abandonment.

The weave of complaint and confidence continues with the psalmist’s holy reverence for the one and only Holy One in whom “our ancestors put their trust.” The psalmist remembers the covenant-keeping Holy One – “you are the one Israel praises” (Ps 22:3-4). His faithful testimony to God’s trustworthiness and saving deliverance points to the psalmist’s confidence in God in spite of his dire circumstances. Without a strong sense of hope it is difficult to imagine a person who is in utter agony and with no help in sight inclined to remember God’s faithfulness so vividly. As we turn our attention to the psalmist’s experience of his despicable dehumanization at the hands of his enemies we must not forget the power of his testimony.

His taunting mockers drive their message home leaving him with a very distinct impression: “But I am a worm and not a man.” The psalmist is scorned by everyone and despised by the people. He is sufficiently well-known to become a universally recognized object of hate and free-rein ridicule. Peterson captures the description this way: “And here I am, a nothing – an earthworm, something to step on, to squash. Everyone pokes fun at me; they make faces at me, they shake their heads: ‘Let’s see how God handles this one; since God likes him so much, let him help him!’” (Ps 22:6-8, MSG). No one fits this description of life-at-its-worst better than Jesus on the morning of Good Friday. Matthew echoes the psalm in the description of Jesus’ horrific experience:

“Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!’ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.” Matthew 27:39-44

Allen Ross concludes that some in the crowd who were taunting Jesus mercilessly, consciously drew on Psalm 22 to mock Jesus. Since Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and since “they knew

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 53-54.

that Psalm 22 was in their tradition a Messianic psalm about the suffering Messiah . . .they simply used a line from the psalm to mock him on the cross – not realizing that at that very moment they were fulfilling the psalm. It is an amazing case of spiritual blindness.”<sup>17</sup>

But once again the depth of complaint is contrasted with a picture of Yahweh’s intimacy and love. Instead of saying he wished he had never been born, as Job and Jeremiah did, the psalmist recalls his fellowship with Yahweh from the moment of his birth. He frames his confidence in Yahweh’s active agency: “Yet *you* brought me out of the womb; *you* made me trust in *you*, even at my mother’s breast. From birth I was cast on *you*; from my mother’s womb *you* have been my God” (Ps 22:9-10).<sup>18</sup> The fourth and final “my God” provides a personal note of confidence at the center of this lament.

For Charles Spurgeon this picture of holy nativity recalls the birth of Jesus, begotten by the Holy Spirit and “watched over by the Lord when brought forth by Mary.” Spurgeon sees Joseph and Mary cherishing the hand of God “in the safe delivery of the mother, and the happy birth of the child; that Child now fighting the great battle of his life, uses the mercy of his nativity as an argument with God.” Spurgeon adds, “Faith finds weapons everywhere. He who wills to believe shall never lack reasons for believing.”<sup>19</sup>

#### *Enemy-Encircled*

*Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near and there is no one to help.*

*Many bulls surround me;  
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.  
Roaring lions that tear their prey  
open their mouths wide against me.  
I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.  
My heart has turned to wax;  
it has melted within me.  
My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.  
Dogs surround me,  
a pack of villains encircles me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet.*

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<sup>17</sup> Ross, Psalms, 536.

<sup>18</sup> Calvin, Psalms, 369. Calvin sees this evidence of fatherly love as a spiritual discipline. The Holy Spirit means for us to “collect together. . .the evidences of the goodness of God, in order thereby to sustain and strengthen [our] faith.” Calvin comments that it is “by the operation of natural causes that infants come into the world, and are nourished with their mother’s milk, yet therein the wonderful providence of God brightly shines forth.” Calvin laments that we have taken “this miracle” for granted “because of its ordinary occurrence,” adding, “But if ingratitude did not put upon our eyes the veil of stupidity, we would be ravished with admiration at every childbirth in the world.” It is for good reason that infants are cast upon God, because if God didn’t watch over them “they would be suffocated in an instant.”

<sup>19</sup> Spurgeon, The Treasury of David: Psalm 22, (in ref. v. 9). located on the internet.

*All my bones are on display;  
people stare and gloat over me.  
They divide my clothes among them  
and cast lots for my garments.*

*But you, Lord, do not be far from me.  
You are my strength; come quickly to help me.  
Deliver me from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dogs.  
Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;  
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.*

Psalm 22:11-21

The poetic power of Spirit-driven prophecy is evident in the “nightmarish zoomorphic images of murderers surrounding their helpless victims.”<sup>20</sup> With still no help in sight, the psalmist graphically portrays the grave dangers he is facing. He likens his suffering to being charged by a herd of raging bulls, hunted by a pride of rapacious lions, attacked by a pack of wild dogs, and gored by the horns of wild oxen. And if that were not enough, he paints a picture of excruciating physical suffering, the kind we associate with crucifixion. He is totally drained, completely empty, utterly exhausted, and in excruciating pain. It feels like every bone in his body is out of joint. His weak heart feels like “a blob of melted wax in [his] gut.”<sup>21</sup> His blackened and swollen tongue sticks to the roof of his mouth, causing the Christian to think of Jesus’ fifth word from the cross, “I thirst” (John 19:28).

The psalmist has gone from hints of hope, “from my mother’s womb you have been my God,” to the depths of despair, “you lay me in the dust of death.” This last line may be the most “troubling part of the lamentation, that God seems not only to have abandoned him but is involved in his destruction.”<sup>22</sup> On the Day of Pentecost, Peter set the record straight in history’s first Easter sermon: “This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (Acts 2:23).

The Spirit of prophecy has brought us to the foot of the cross. The smell of blood is in the air from nail spiked hands and feet. In the order and mayhem of a Roman execution, our victim is surrounded by a pack of wild dogs, canine and human, intent on lapping up every drop of blood and every opportunity to scorn. The psalmist is aware of people staring and gloating. His heaving body, gasping for air, displays all his bones. Every bone in his body can be counted but no one recognizes who it is that is dying on the cross. The last indignation is settled by a throw of the dice for his clothes. The apostle John will quote the psalm verbatim. “They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots” (John 19:24). This reference to David’s royal lament psalm forms an “allusive connection” between Jesus’ crucifixion and his Davidic kingship. The experience of the crucifixion fits the royal lament psalms helps reconfigure the

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<sup>20</sup> Waltke, Psalms, 403.

<sup>21</sup> Peterson, Psalm 22:14, The Message

<sup>22</sup> Ross, Psalms, 539.

meaning of Jesus' kingship.<sup>23</sup> The prophet Isaiah elaborates on this Davidic lament in ways that prefigure the crucifixion of Jesus:

He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.  
Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised,  
and we held him in low esteem.  
Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 53:3-5

The second stanza closes by pulling taunt the tension between complaint and confidence. The murder scene appears almost complete, “you lay me in the dust of death,” but then the psalmist repeats his theme of confidence. He prays, “But you, Lord, do not be far from me.” He declares that the Lord is his strength and repeats the many dangers to his precious life from humans wielding swords, vicious attack dogs, hungry lions, and raging wild oxen. Nevertheless, the psalmist’s hopeful emphasis is on deliverance. He cries out, “Rescue me!” “Save me!” It is as Jesus promised, “though he were dead, yet shall he live.”

### *The Fifth Gospel*

*I will declare your name to my people;  
in the assembly I will praise you.  
You who fear the Lord, praise him!  
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!  
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!  
For he has not despised or scorned  
the suffering of the afflicted one;  
he has not hidden his from him  
but has listened to his cry for help.  
From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;  
before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.  
The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek the Lord will praise him –  
may your hearts live forever!*

*All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord,*

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<sup>23</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 326. Hays writes, “There is an implicit suggestion here that Jesus paradoxically fulfills the role of Davidic kingship precisely through his conformity to the extreme suffering portrayed in these Davidic lament psalms.” 327.

*and all the families of the nations will bow down before him,  
for dominion belongs to the Lord  
and he rules over the nations.*

*All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;  
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him –  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.  
Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.  
They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!*

Psalm 22:22-31

The first two stanzas of Psalm 22 describe the sufferings of Jesus. The third stanza describes the redemptive impact of his resurrection.<sup>24</sup> The unexpected and abrupt turn to praise and witness pivots on an answer from God that remains hidden. All we know is that “as suddenly as resurrection” the psalmist “is in the house of God” leading the saints in worship.<sup>25</sup> His desperate cries for help have been heard (Heb 5:7) and he is ready to declare the Name of Yahweh (“I Am”) to my people. He wants everyone to celebrate who God is and what God has done. The author of Hebrews interpreted this redemptive development from lament to praise Christologically. He wrote:

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises.” Hebrews 2:10-12; Ps 22:22

In the third stanza, the Spirit of prophecy describes the *impact* of the resurrection, as opposed to a description of the resurrection itself. The bodily resurrection of Jesus empowers us to worship God in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:23). Delitzsch concludes, “David descends, with his complaint, into a depth that lies beyond the depth of his affliction, and rises, with his hopes, to a height that lies far beyond the height of the reward of his affliction.” He argues that the Spirit

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 84-85. Hays argues that Mark’s explicit use of Psalm 22:1, 18 in Mark 15:24, 34, along with more implicit parallels between Mark 15:29-30 with Psalm 22:7-8, signal the reader “that the whole psalm is to be read as a prefiguration of Jesus’ destiny. . . . Jesus’ dying cry of desperation evokes the full sweep of Psalm 22’s movement from desolate lament and complaint (Ps 22:1-8, 12-19) to passionate petition (Ps 22:9-11, 19-21a) to praise and thanksgiving (Ps 22:21b-31). If we read to the end of the psalm, we find an affirmation of the Lord’s universal dominion over the nations (like the everlasting dominion of the Son of Man in Dan 7:14) and even, for the reader who knows Mark’s full story, an adumbration of the resurrection in the glad affirmation that God ‘did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him’ (Ps 22:24-25).”

<sup>25</sup> Waltke, *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, 408.

changes the hyperbolic element into the prophetic.<sup>26</sup> The typical is elevated into the prophetic.<sup>27</sup>

When the third stanza is read in the light of Jesus' resurrection the words of David take on a significance that are best understood in the historical context of the Lord's Supper, the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), the Ascension, Pentecost, and the mission of God. The global catholic Church is "the great assembly" and "the descendants of Jacob" are the true Jews, both Jews and Gentiles who have by God's grace embraced Jesus as the true Messiah of all people. The poor and rich find their place in the Body of Christ. Everyone, everywhere is invited to receive him and "bow down before him." Echoes of these words are found in Paul's Christ hymn, "that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father" (Phil 2:10-11). Psalm 22 reflects the long-range vision of believers that Jesus spoke about in the upper room when he said, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who believe in me through their message" (John 17:20; see John 10:16). This is why Psalm 22 is known as the Fifth Gospel. Everything reminds us of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even Jesus' shout from the cross, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) recalls the last line of the psalm, "He has done it!" This is the line that the apostle John echoes in The Revelation when a loud voice from the throne, who identifies himself as "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End" says, "It is done!" (Rev 16:17; 21:6).

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<sup>26</sup> Delitzsch, Psalms, 306-307.

<sup>27</sup> Delitzsch, Psalms, 307-8. Delitzsch writes, "For as God the Father molds the history of Jesus Christ in accordance with His own counsel, so His Spirit molds even the utterances of David concerning himself the type of the Future One, with a view to that history. Through this Spirit, who is the Spirit of God and of the future Christ at the same time, David's typical history, as he describes it in the Psalms and more especially in this Psalm, acquires that ideal depth of tone, brilliancy, and power, by virtue of which it (the history) reaches far beyond its typical facts, penetrates to its very root in the divine counsels, and grows to be the word of prophecy: so that, to a certain extent, it may rightly be said that Christ here speaks through David, insofar as the Spirit of Christ speaks through him, and makes the typical suffering of His ancestor the medium for the representation of His own future sufferings. Without recognizing this incontestable relations of the matter Psalm 22 cannot be understood nor can we fully enter into its sentiments."