

In the first lesson of this sermon series we learned how King David, in Psalm 16, spoke about Jesus, according to Peter in his Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:25-28). This was our beginning of understanding that Jesus, usually called “Lord” in David’s psalms, is referenced continually.

Today we will look at three consecutive Psalms of David considered as three of the clearest of the Messianic Psalms. The late Dr. J. Sidlow Baxter, renowned preacher and author, gave these three chapters the title of “The Cross, The Crook and The Crown.” Or to say it another way, they reveal in turn the Lord Jesus as our Savior (on the cross), our Shepherd (in life’s field) and our Sovereign (as King of Glory).

Psalms is the most quoted book in the New Testament, and largely because so much of Jesus is beautifully revealed in its poetry. Today we will look at Jesus on the cross as Savior in Psalm 22, and at Jesus with his shepherd’s crook as the Good Shepherd in Psalm 23, and at Jesus with his royal crown as Sovereign King in Psalm 24.

#### **OUR OUTLINE** (borrowing from J. Sidlow Baxter)

The Cross	-	Jesus as Savior	-	Psalm 22
The Crook	-	Jesus as Shepherd	-	Psalm 23
The Crown	-	Jesus as Sovereign	-	Psalm 24

#### **PSALM 22 - The Cross - Jesus as Savior**

Verse 1 begins with the familiar cry of anguish:

***Psalm 22:1*** *My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?*

Anyone familiar with the New Testament Scripture identifies this as Jesus’ famous words spoken while on the cross. Specifically, they are the fourth of seven utterances Jesus made on the cross. These words of Jesus are only recorded in Matthew and Mark (Luke and John record the other 6 utterances of Jesus while on the cross). And if you read Matthew and Mark’s accounts of the crucifixion they are the only words that these two authors record Jesus as having said on the cross, so they stand out as particularly important.

***Matthew 27:46*** (and Mark 15:34) *About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*

Of course, skeptics say that Jesus was only quoting David’s cry of lament from the Psalm He would have well known. But as we read further in Psalm 22 it becomes obvious that David is describing far more than he himself would have encountered in his trials.

***Psalm 22:7-8a*** *All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, “Commit yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.”*

Compare this with Matthew's account:

**Matthew 27:39** *And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads and saying...*

**Matthew 27:43** *"He trusts in God, let God rescue Him now, if He delights in Him; for He said, "I am the Son of God."*

And the prophetic aspect becomes even more amazing as we read on in the psalm:

**Psalm 22:16-18** *For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me. They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me. They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*

There was no death by crucifixion in David's time. This was a form of death used occasionally by the Greeks and perfected by the Romans during the time of Jesus. One must imagine that David was curious as to the leading of the Spirit as he wrote *"they pierced my hands and my feet"* for this was not something he would have personally experienced. And David's reference to the dividing of garments and casting lots for clothing is chilling as we consider this written some 1000 years before Matthew's account:

**Matthew 27:35** *And when they had crucified Him, they divided up this garments among themselves by casting lots.*

Here I quote J. Sidlow Baxter on this point:

*"He is a strangely blind reader of the psalms who can only see here the human David describing some unheard-of experience in his own life; for David was never reduced to the crucifixion-extremity portrayed in this psalm." Explore the Book, p. 105*

Or hear what Martin Luther said of this Psalm, as cited by Charles Spurgeon:

*"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 encourage you to read Psalm 22 anew, with the voice being the voice of our Savior, Jesus. Think of this Psalm being the thought process of our Savior as he hung on the cross with the weight of the sin of the world upon Him. Not only does He think of the pain of His suffering, but more, He thinks of the purpose of His suffering which will bring ultimate praise to God.

Jesus B.C. indeed! It is Jesus who finishes Psalm 22 with these words about Himself as Savior and about us who are reading this today:

**Psalm 22:31** *They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it.*

Declare His righteousness to your generation and proclaim that Jesus has successfully performed the role of Savior on the cross! He predicted that you would, 3000 years ago!

## **PSALM 23 - The Crook - Jesus as Shepherd**

How beloved is this Psalm and how we love to hear of the kindly provision of our Lord God as Shepherd of our life. But have you ever understood this as speaking specifically of Jesus?

When Jesus, in John 10:11 says *"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep"* you must realize how this appalled many of His listeners, for to them the good shepherd was the Lord of Psalm 23 and thus Jesus was claiming to be Lord God.

**John 10:19-21** *A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words. Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?" Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed."*

Think of how Jesus so perfectly fulfills the role of the shepherd as described in Psalm 23.

√ *"I shall not want"* (Ps. 23:1) = *"In Him you have been made complete"* (Colossians 2:10) and *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:19).

√ Promised green pastures and quiet waters = *"the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life"* (Revelation 7:17). And Jesus is the "bread of life" (John 6:48,51) and "living water" (John 4:10,14).

√ *"He guides me in the paths of righteousness"* = *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you in to all the truth"* (John 16:13).

√ *"I fear no evil, for You are with me"* = *"for He has said 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' so that we confidently say, 'the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid.'"* (Hebrews 13:5-6).

√ *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies"* = *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you... rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great."* (Matthew 5:11-12).

√ *"You have anointed my head with oil"* = the promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17), typically represented in the Scripture as oil

√ *"My cup overflows"* = *"Now unto Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think..."* (Ephesians 3:20)

√ *"Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all of my life"* = *"And He did so [showed patience] to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory."* (Romans 9:23).

Read this beloved Psalm again hearing David speaking specifically of Jesus. Jesus B.C.? – you had better believe it!

## **PSALM 24 - The Crown - Jesus as Sovereign**

The opening verses of this Psalm speak of the earth belonging to the Lord.

**Psalm 24:1-2** *The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains. For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.*

We might be tempted to regard this as a general statement about God, until we remember the words of Paul in Colossians, regarding Jesus:

**Colossians 1:16-17** *For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth... all things have been created through Him and for Him... and in Him all things hold together.*

Here we learn that Jesus is the creator, sustainer and purpose for all that is. So, David, in Psalm 24, is saying that the earth and all it contains belongs to Jesus, who is Lord. It is Jesus who has founded and established it. Jesus B.C. once again!

Verses 3 asks *“Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?”* And v.4-6 answers the question with *“He who has clean hands and a pure heart.”* Well, if we’re honest, that’s none of us apart from God’s intervention! V. 5 hints at this when it says, *“He shall receive a blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of salvation.”* David knew that true righteousness that allows entrance into God’s kingdom can only come from the Lord (Jesus) and the God of salvation. And then v. 6 challenges this generation to seek Him and His gift of righteousness.

**Psalm 24:6** *This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face – even Jacob.*

We know from history that David’s generation never sought the Lord or His face. But prophetically he was speaking of the generations that would follow Jesus’ coming to earth. We must read this verse as being our generation that will seek the Lord, and in doing so find the righteousness and salvation that Jesus offers through His sacrifice on the cross. We are to be the “Jacob” that discovers the way of righteousness through faith in the Messiah.

And then come verses 7-10! Well, David was the king of Israel in his day, but he wasn’t writing about his being the King of glory. He was writing about Jesus entering Jerusalem in triumph as the King of all the earth, which will be fulfilled in the Millennium.

**Psalm 24:7-10** *Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.*

And with eyes of faith to see, we realize David is talking about Jesus, the King of Glory. He is the Sovereign Lord of the earth. He alone is the One who can give the blessing of righteousness and salvation in response to a seeking face and heart. He alone is the One who can allow a humble heart to ascend into the hill of the Lord, enjoying heaven forever.

And once again we find Jesus, B.C.

In these amazing Messianic Psalms of David, we find Jesus as Savior, Shepherd and Sovereign – bearing the Cross, the Crook and the Crown.

Lift up the gates of your heart that the King of Glory may come in!

Who is this King of Glory? I trust you will be able to confidently answer that critical question!