

The Temple Destroyed & The Temple Raised

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[0 : 00] This is from Psalm 22. Psalm 22, and reading from verse 5.

When unto thee they sent their cry, to them deliverance came, because they put their trust in thee, they were not put to shame. But as for me a worm I am, and as no man am prized, reproach of men I am, and by the people am despised. All that me see, laugh me to scorn, shoot out the lip, do they? They nod and shake their heads at me, and mocking, thus do say, this man did trust in God, that he would free him by his might. Let him deliver him, saith he, had in him such delight. But thou art he, out of the womb that didst me safely take.

When I was on my mother's breasts, thou me to hope didst make. I was cast upon thy care, even from the womb till now, and from my mother's belly, Lord, my God and guide art thou.

We shall sing these verses, 5 to 10. Psalm 22, when unto thee they sent their cry, to them deliverance came. When unto thee they sent their cry, to them deliverance came, because they put their trust in me, they were offered to shame.

The task for me, thou art my God, and thou stone on Christ, Christ, own me, my Lord, my God, and thou blasphemy.

[2 : 23] Oh God, teach me, thou forsaken them, O God, teach me, thou collectors, of the land to live.

They are the trees that has found me that all gave us to save.

This man did cross, escrow that he would create by his life.

Let him give strength and save the content and such delight.

But thou art in the earth of the womb that is his heavenly day.

[3 : 57] When I was on my mother's breast, thou me do hopeless way.

And I once cast upon thy killing from the womb thereof.

And thou my Lord's very Lord, my God and thy heart are.

Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. O Lord our God, as we come before you with these words, before us and on our lips we marvel at the accuracy of the prophecies of the scripture, where the psalmist and the prophets of old were able to speak truth as if they were the truth of the moment.

In many respects that was what was true of them. But in other ways there are truths expressed by them that could not be spoken of any other, but the one of whom they spoke.

[5 : 45] And that was not themselves. There were circumstances and situations in the experience of David of old that may correspond to the son of David.

But there are other experiences that David knew nothing of experientially. And we marvel at words such as the words of this psalm that go on to speak of the sufferings of Jesus Christ on the cross.

We marvel at the cross. Where he speaks there of one who was saying, We are like water and poured out, my bones are all out of joint.

My strength like a pot shard dried, my tongue cleaving fast to the roof of my mouth. We give thanks that that was his experience.

Not because we delight in the sufferings of the Saviour. They are grievous to us. But because we understand the meaning of them.

[7 : 00] And we appreciate to a degree the nature of them. That he was on the cross, not for his own sin, but for the sins of others.

That he went to that place as one that was to enter into the griefs and the sorrows that pertain to the sinner suffering for his sin.

And we see how the psalmist recognises the nature of the suffering of which it speaks. That there he was found the innocent, the holy one, the harmless one.

The lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. And yet he was hated without a cause. And his enemies were more numerous than the hairs of his head.

We give thanks that even the passage that we will look at today will find words expressed by the psalmist that correspond to it.

[8 : 10] The seal that ate him up. The seal of one who was prepared to take the reproaches of his people.

In order that they might be delivered from the griefs associated with them. We pray that you would bless us today as we worship.

As we worship as a congregation. Mindful of the fact that we are worshipping in a way that is not what we would wish.

However much it has become our custom to meet as we do. Displaced and disassociated in the sense in which we are denied gathering together in public.

But we are still united as a worshipping people who are able to come to our throne of grace. And at this time we are coming together as a congregation who would ordinarily be remembering the death of Jesus Christ until he'd come.

[9 : 23] And a season of communion. And now we are not able to do that. But we give thanks that you are aware of our situation and you are able to bless us accordingly.

So we pray your blessing on your people. According to the need that they may have. Whether it is longing. Whether it is the desire of a people who feel themselves as if their souls are like parched ground.

That you would liberally pour out your blessing upon them. Even as the dew came down on Hermon's Mount. We give thanks that you can do for us what no other can.

To you we look and to no other. So we pray that you would magnify your presence amongst us. That even as we are found together this time.

That we would be aware of those who are with us in this place of worship. Remember every home and family within the congregation. Even outwith the congregation and the community.

[10 : 32] Visit every man, woman and child with blessing from on high. That they may be stirred up within their own souls. To seek the Lord while he may be found.

To call upon you while you are near. We pray that you would magnify your presence. And magnify your name to us. That we may not be content with what we have as we are.

But that we would pour out our petitions to you. That you may pour out your spirit upon us. So hear our prayers.

Remembering the needs that are before you. We pray for the sick and the suffering. Those who are unwell in their homes, in hospital, in care homes.

We pray that you would remember each one. That you would bless the grieving, the sorrowful. When the voice of death is speaking to us. In neighbouring congregations and also within our own community.

[11 : 33] We pray that you would remember all who are sorrowful at the time. We ask that you would remember the proclamation of the gospel.

Even in such context. The reading of your word. The singing of your praises. The prayers of your people. That are offered in secret and public. We pray for the preaching of the gospel.

Throughout our presbytery and beyond. Remembering this sin-signation of ours. That are clearly under your hand in displeasure. And yet are oblivious to it.

We pray that you would turn us in as one. To seek your face and favour. That we would be sorrowful for sin.

Grieved because of the offence that we cause our God. Remember the Queen at this time. We pray that you would encourage her to put her trust in God.

[12 : 33] We pray that that would be a genuine resting upon you. The God who is able to do for her no other can. We remember in your presence.

The family that you gave to them. The extended family. We pray for our nation. That we would know that there is a King of kings.

Who is Lord over all. And that his reign will never come to an end. That his rule is a scepter of righteousness.

And that there is no way in which he will not be displaced from the throne that he occupies. It is his by right. And it will not pass to another.

We pray for the nations of the earth. Especially at this time of pandemic. We pray for those who are in hospital. Those who are caring for them.

[13 : 26] Those who are preparing vaccines to alleviate the sufferings associated with COVID. Remember the nations of the earth that may be suffering and struggling.

To bring about reversal in the progress of COVID. We pray that you would endow these nations with a wherewithal to look beyond themselves.

To one who is able to be a strength and a state to them. We commit all the affairs of the day to you. Remembering war-torn nations.

Remembering nations that are struggling with famine. And with want. With poverty. Those that are suffering because of natural disasters. All these things are with us at all times.

May the wisdom that is divine be imparted to those who are in authority. That they may yield to you and be guided and led by you.

[14 : 30] So watch over as we pray. Continue to bless your word as it goes out. We give thanks that it will not return unto you void. It will accomplish that which you have purposed for it.

May the purposes that are eternal be found. Giving expression to the turning from sin of many into righteousness.

Hear us and pardon us. In Jesus' precious name we ask all things. Amen. I'm going to read from the scriptures of the New Testament.

We're reading from the Gospel of John. Chapter 2. And we're going to take up the reading at verse 12. John chapter 2.

Reading at verse 12. After this he went down to Capernaum. He and his mother and his brothers. And his disciples. And they continued there not many days.

[15 : 30] And the Jews' Passover was at hand. And Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves.

And the changers of money sitting. And when he had made a scourge of small cords. He drove them all out of the temple. And the sheep and the oxen.

And poured out the changers money. And overthrew the tables. And he said unto them that sold doves. Take these things hence. Make not my father's house a house of merchandise.

And his disciples remembered that it was written. The seal of thine house hath eaten me up. Then he answered the Jews. And said unto him.

What sign showest thou unto us. Seeing that thou doest these things. Jesus answered and said unto them. Destroy this temple. And in thee three days I will raise it up.

[16 : 33] Then said the Jews. Forty and six years was this temple in building. And wilt thou rear it up in three days. But he spoke of the temple of his body.

When therefore he was risen from the dead. His disciples remembered. That he had said this unto them. And they believed the scripture. And the word which Jesus had said.

Now when he was in Jerusalem. At the Passover. In the feast day. Many believed in his name. When they saw the miracles which he did.

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them. Because he knew all men. And needed not that any should testify of man.

For he knew what was in man. Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word.

[17 : 31] And to his name. Be the praise. I would like us to turn now for a short while. To the passage that we have read. And we can focus our attention.

Very briefly. On the words that we have in verse 19 onwards. Destroy this temple. And in three days.

I will raise it up. Destroy this temple. And in three days. I will raise it up. As many of you.

No doubt. Will be aware today. If you would be following. The prescribed. Calendar of services. As arranged by our presbytery.

We would. Celebrate the sacrament. Of the Lord's Supper. In the congregation. There we would be remembering. The Lord's death.

[18 : 29] Until he comes. Although there is a temporary. Ban on our. Observing the sacrament. Because of COVID-19.

We are still to remember. The Lord. In his death. And I believe. That we are to do that often. If for no other reason.

Than that. We have an avid interest. In Christ. In his death. And resurrection. While the sacrament. Is important.

And there can be no question. That it is. Christ himself. Has given it that importance. This do. In remembrance of me. It also has to be remembered.

That Christ has appointed. The sacrament. In order to show forth. His death. In Roderick Lawson's notes. To the shorter catechism.

[19 : 23] He states. The broken bread. Tells us. Of the broken body. The poured out wine. Tells us. Of the shed blood.

In itself. It is of no value. Whatsoever. But when received in faith. It quickens our love to God.

Deepens our faith in Christ. And promotes. The welfare of our souls. While we are denied the elements. We are not denied the world.

Which must accompany. And elaborate upon the truth. That they convey. In a strange way. The passage we are looking at today. Has by way of context.

A group of people. Who are caught up. With the symbolism. Of the worship of God. But have lost sight of the truth. That they convey.

[20 : 24] The Passover was a major Jewish. Religious feast. Christ. We know that hundreds. Made their way to Jerusalem. And to the temple. Jesus.

On this occasion. Is amongst them. And he finds. In the words of one writer. The holy place. Having become polluted.

By activities. That revolved around. Human interest. And earthly gain. It should have been set apart. To be the heart.

Of Old Testament. Worship. It should have been a feast. Designated. To celebrate. The heart of God's. Deliverance. Of his people.

But. Sadly. It was not. And Jesus. Was rightly angry. He was seen to be angry. And those who saw the anchor.

[21 : 20] Knew why he was angry. And get it. It is as if they are saying. What's his problem. We are told his disciples. Remembered.

What scripture said. But all the Jews. Have to. To. Say. Speaks of their unbelief. Show us a sign.

We hear your words. But prove that you. Live up to them. So what response. Do we have from the Lord. That's the first thing. We need to.

Assess. We need to. Try and understand. Why Jesus. Responds. To the Jews. Question. Or the Jews.

Request. In the way that he did. The second thing. Is. What do the Jews. Make of his. Answer. And thirdly.

[22 : 17] At what point. Are these words. Understood. By the disciples. So how does the Lord.

Respond. Does he give them. Their sign. Well clearly he doesn't. His answer is. Destroy this temple.

And in three days. I will raise it up. Jesus knows. That even if he were to. Give them. What they asked for. It would not suffice.

They had made it. A test. To satisfy. Them by all. Accounts. Paul for example. Says. Of the Jews.

That they require a sign. Whereas the Greeks. Seek after wisdom. It seems as if. This has become proverbial. Something we hear often.

[23 : 14] Said by the Lord. When he encounters them. He meets them. And they are looking. For a sign from him. The experience. That he has.

Is clearly one. That shows. That he understands. That attitude. Leon Morris. The commentator. Writes. The Jews. Demand.

That. That. That. That. That. That. That. That. That. That. Jesus. Present. Evidence. This was what they wanted. They wanted evidence.

They thought of God. As manifesting himself. In history. In signs. And mighty works. They thought of the Messiah. As one attested to.

By striking manifestations. Of power. And majesty. And yet Jesus. Says to them. Elsewhere. A wicked and adulterous.

- [24 : 14] Generation. Seek it after a sign. And this. There shall no sign. Be given. To it. But the sign. Of the prophet. Jonas.
- John. The gospel writer. Tells the reader. What these words mean. Even if the Jews. Do not understand them. Or even the disciples. He spoke.
- Of the temple. Of his body. As Calvin says. They ask for a sign. But Jesus. Gives them an allegory. What Ronald Wallace.
- Calls. An enigmatic utterance. Why did Jesus. Speak in this way. The answer is. Because. Christ did not.
- Want to expose. The power of God. To their mockery. Says Calvin. Some say. Jesus did not. Want them to understand. Quoting the words.
- [25 : 10] Of the Lord. Therefore. Speak I to them. In parables. Because. They see not. See. See. See not. And hearing. They hear not.
- Neither. Do they understand. Something. Which in turn. He says. Is the fulfillment. Of Isaiah's prophecy. Concerning such. Whatever they believe.
- Or choose not to believe. As John rightly points out. Jesus was speaking. Prophetically. Regarding his own death. And resurrection.
- He is not. He is not. He is in the first instance. Speaking of the temple. Of his body. He is not telling them. To destroy it.
- Or inviting them to do it. If it's not a question. Of doubt. He is simply. Stating a fact.
- [26 : 07] Concerning it. If it is destroyed. It will be. Raised up. In three days. John Calvin. Goes on to say.
- Such. Such a. Statement. Reminds us. That each of our bodies. Is called a. Tabernacle. As Paul states.
- In 2 Corinthians 5. For we know. That if our. Earthly house. Of this. Tabernacle. Were dissolved. We have a building. Of God. A house. Not made with hands.
- Eternal. In the heavens. However. Calvin says. The body of Christ. Was the abode. Of his divinity. For we know.
- That the son of God. So clothed himself. With our nature. That in the flesh. Which he assumed. The eternal majesty. Of God. Dwelt. As in his sanctuary.
- [27 : 05] And the second thing. Is possible. Because. He is divine. I will raise it up. He says. The scripture. More often than not. Ascribes.
- The resurrection. To God. Namely. God the father. But we must remember. That the holy trinity. Are identified. As being active.
- Although here. Christ says. Pointedly. I will raise it up. In a sermon. By Ebenezer. And by Ebenezer Erskine. He says.
- The following. Christ's body. Was like the temple. The habitation. Of God's glory. Here. The eternal world.
- That dwells. The true Shekinah. He is Emmanuel. God with us. In whom. Dwelleth the fullness. Of the Godhead. Bodily.
- [28 : 00] But it was raised up. On the third day. Even. Though destroyed. His soul. Was not left. In Sheol. Nor was his flesh.
- Allowed. To see corruption. Not only. Would. He rise. So too. Will all. Who by faith. Are united. To him.
- That is. What is. Clear. From what Jesus says. In these words. That. Are a puzzle. Too many. Who do not believe. But for the believer.

They make perfect sense. Destroy. This. Temple. And in three days. I will raise it up. But what do the Jews.

Make of his answer. As you would expect. With nothing to go on. But their own limited understanding. They think of the literal temple.

[28 : 56] We read in verse 20. Then said the Jews. Forty and six years. Was this temple in building. And would thou rear it up.

In three days. All they had to. To go on. Was this. Perhaps some of you. Are like them. Many today.

See death. And dying. On television. And film. Screens. And they see it often. In that realm.

But very few. Are exposed. To the reality. Of death. And its awfulness. And those who do. Are at that moment. Convinced.

Of its finality. Even if they knew. The person. That. Is speaking here. Is speaking.

[29 : 53] Of his death. Or the death. Of anyone. I suppose. They would find it. Easier. To believe. That the temple. Could be raised up. From ruins.

If destroyed. It would be wrong. However. To think. That all. Were blindly. Ignorant. Of what Jesus. Had. Just said.

They certainly. Remembered. What he said. When he was on the cross. There were those. Present. At the foot. Of the cross. Who were mockers.

Countless. Numbers. Of them. And one of the things. They threw. In his face. Was this. Though. That destroys. The temple. And buidest it.

In three days. Save yourself. If you be the son of God. Come down. From the cross. They remembered. The words.

[30 : 47] Of the Lord. They remembered. That he was able. To. Speak. Words. That. That. Were memorable. And unforgettable.

Whether they understood him or not. Bishop Ryle says. The false witnesses. Twisted his word. And I suppose. As inevitably. Is the case.

Of Chinese whispers. Every time it was reported. There was a danger. Of it being. Distorted. Very often. We discover. In life. People's. Believe.

What they want. To believe. The preacher. Hugh Martin states. The secret of the Lord. May belong. To those. Who fear him. But not.

Into such hearts. That this announcement. Fall. Was uttered. To those. That feared. Not the Lord. And it only. Enlisted. Elicited.

[31 : 44] And demonstrated. More fully. Their displeasure. At the reformation. Of God's house. And worship. Which they had witnessed. They are not.

Decirous. To believe. And anxious. For a sign. To strengthen. And confirm. Their faith. But they are determined. To withhold. Their faith. And anxious.

To justify. Their refusal. To believe. And it is ever the same. Men and women. Will always find reasons. Not to believe.

What Christ says. The third thing. And the final thing. We have here. Is this. The point. At which the disciples.

Understood. What he said. When he was risen. They remembered. It is not just. They called it to mind. Jesus said it.

[32 : 37] But so too. To the scripture. They believed both. We must not overlook. The importance. Of both. These things. We must always remember.

The difficult place. The disciples were in. Jesus had taught. The disciples. Yet repeatedly. Forewarned them. About what was going. To happen. To them.

And to him. And it was. As if. It was news to them. Human nature. Being what it is. It would rather. Not believe. The things. That are unpleasant.

In the current. Pandemic. For example. There have been. Countless survivors. Who testified. To the fact. That despite. Being forewarned. Of the severity.

Of the virus. They did not believe. It to be as bad. As that. But some. In the light. Of that. Unbelief. Through caution. To the wind.

[33 : 33] And ended up. With. The illness. And very near. At death's door. They then testified. To others. Of the extreme nature.

Of the illness. Perhaps their denial. Was misguided. Despite being warned. And forewarned. But is that not the case. With the gospel.

As we try. And fulfil. A Christian duty. Today. Even without. The aid. Of the symbols. That Lord. The Lord. Mishlyfully. Left us. To encourage. Our weak faith.

May we be thankful. That we have. His word. To us. Regarding his death. And resurrection. That we have. A testimony. Of his church. Regarding his life.

Outside of the grave. On the other side. Of death. And that we have. The experience. Of his intercession. On our behalf. Each day. As we go on. There are some.

[34 : 30] In this world. Who have entered. Into the experience. Of death. Believing that for them. This is the end. But for the Christian. As one has stated. It without reserve.

The Christian church. Is helpless. And hopeless. If it is stripped. Of the reality. And the historicity. Of the bodily resurrection.

Of Jesus Christ. But they are not. Without hope. And their help. Comes from the Lord. Are you amongst them today. Of whom this.

Can be said. That you know. What the Lord. Prophesied there. So openly. And unashamedly. That.

The temple. Of his body. Would be destroyed. And that in three days. Hence. That. He would raise it up again.

[35 : 26] We give thanks for the power. That the Lord Jesus. Spoke of. That it was his. It's amazing that they. That his enemies. Who saw what he was saying.

And what he was doing. And they. They. They looked at him. At that point. Having. Cast out the money changers.

From the animals. That were there. To be sold. They looked at one. Who. They recognized. From the word of God.

And despite that recognition. They wanted more from him. To. By way of. Evidence. To prove. The further who he was.

They had the evidence of God's word. They had the evidence of his mouth. They had the evidence of. Of what their eyes were seeing.

[36 : 24] And yet. They choose not to believe. The son. Of man. Came into this world. To seek. And to save the lost. Do you believe that?

Is that what you. Have put your trust in. That those who have believed in him. Should not perish. But have. Life everlasting. May God encourage you.

To continue in that belief. No matter. How much. Tested it is. In this world. May Christ. In his mercy. Bless his word to us.

Let us pray. Lord God. We give thanks. That you are. A risen. Saviour. That you are. At the right hand. Of God. That you are. Pleading our cause.

There is the great intercessor. Of. Your people. You are the great. High priest. You came. And you. Brought an offering. With you. Which you sacrificed.

[37 : 21] And God received. At your hand. You applied. The blood. Liberally. And wherever it has been. Sprinkled. It covers the sin. And removes it.

Obliterates it. From sight. We give thanks. For all. Who by faith. Have laid their hand. Upon that sacrifice. And who have discovered. The sure mercy.

That is in God. Hear our prayers. Pardon our sins. And now. May grace. Mercy and peace. From God. The Father. The Son. And the Holy Spirit. Be with you all.

Now and always. Amen.