**THE CHARACTER OF GOD IN SELECTED PSALMS**

I. The God Who Suffers for and with His People

Psalms 22-23

The central confession of Judaism and Christianity is found in the words of Deut 6: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one! But who is this God? What distinguishes the nature and character of this God from others who claim to be God? In the center of Book One, we encounter two psalms that declare that God who suffers for us and with us.

**I. God Suffers for Us & With Us (Psalm 22)**

A. Cry of Agony (22:1-8)

B. Cry for Help (22:9-11)

C. Cry of Enemy Siege (22:12-18)

D. Cry for Help (22:19-21)

E. Declaration of Praise for Deliverance (22:22-31)

Do you hear the cry of Jesus from the cross in 22:1? How does a psalm point to Christ is a critical question to ask of any psalm. The answer is self-evident here. Psalm 22 is correctly known as the fifth gospel account of Jesus' crucifixion.

* The words of Ps 22:1 are recorded in both Matt 27:46 & Mark 15:34.
* The enemies hurling insults and shaking their heads (Ps 22:7//Matt 27:39)
* "Let God rescue him" (Ps 22:8//Matt 27:43)
* "I am poured out like water" (Ps 22:14//Jn 19:34)
* Extreme thirst (Ps 22:15//Jn 19:28)
* "They pierced my hands and feet (Ps 22:16//Luke 24:38-40; Jn 20:27)
* Dividing his garments and casting lots for them (Ps 22:18//Matt 27:35)
* "It is done," one word in Hebrew (Ps 22:31) and "it is finished," one word in Greek (Jn 19:30)

It is immediately evident that the entire psalm applies to Jesus' crucifixion, not simply 22:1. That is why some have referred to Psalm 22 as the Fifth Gospel account of Jesus' crucifixion.

As we seek to interpret Jesus' cry (1) we must beware of committing trinitarian heresy. Whatever we say about this moment, we must affirm the unity and oneness of the Godhead. The popular image of the Father turning his back on the Son is nowhere to be found in the text, nor is it a conclusion that should be drawn from Jesus' citation of Ps 22:1. (2) know that the Son of God does not take Scripture out of context. Read all of Psalm 22, particularly Ps 22:24. Jesus certainly did!

**II. The Goodness of God in The Shadow of Darkness (Psalm 23)**

The 23rd Psalm is the most well known and most loved of all the psalms. The Psalmist employs two metaphors to describe Yahweh: He is a caring shepherd and a gracious host. Both images speak of God's character as one who provides for and protects his people. God as shepherd had great meaning in an agrarian culture. They knew the ways of sheep and the responsibility of shepherds to provide provision and protection. The most important trait of a good shepherd was presence with the sheep (Ezek 34:11-24; Jn 10:11).

A. The Lord Is a Shepherd Who Cares for His Sheep (23:1-4)

B. The Lord is a Host Who Prepares a Banquet for His People (23:5-6)