



Why Have You Forsaken Me?

Summary and Goal

Derided and scorned by passers-by and religious leaders alike, these last words of Jesus are the only ones recorded by both Matthew and Mark. Jesus knows what it feels like to feel abandoned by God. In His suffering, Jesus modeled prayer and worship amidst His despair. May the times in our lives when we utter “Why, Lord?!” always be undergirded by the hope that we have in the promises of God.

Main Passages

Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 (Hebrews 4:12-16; Psalm 22)

Session Outline

1. The Prayer of Desperation (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; Psalm 22:1)
2. Jesus Knows . . . (Hebrews 4:12-13)
3. Jesus’ Suffering is the Pathway to Hope (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Theological Theme

The suffering of Jesus offers hope to Christians.

Christ Connection

Jesus’ “cry of dereliction” modeled the prayer of the truly desperate. Just as Jesus’ desperate prayer was answered by God through His resurrection, those who follow Christ have reason to hope in their most desperate of prayers.

Missional Application

The church has the opportunity to extend hope that is available only through Jesus to those who are in desperate need of rescue.

Historical Context of Matthew

Purpose

Matthew probably wrote his Gospel in order to preserve written eyewitness testimony about the ministry of Jesus. Matthew's Gospel emphasizes certain theological truths. First, Jesus is the Messiah, the long-awaited King of God's people. Second, Jesus is the new Abraham, the founder of a new spiritual Israel consisting of all people who choose to follow him. This new Israel will consist of both Jews and Gentiles. Third, Jesus is the new Moses, the deliverer and instructor of God's people. Fourth, Jesus is the Immanuel, the virgin-born Son of God who fulfills the promises of the OT.

Author

The author did not identify himself in the text. However, the title that ascribes this Gospel to Matthew appears in the earliest manuscripts and is possibly original. Titles became necessary to distinguish one Gospel from another when the four Gospels began to circulate as a single collection. Many early church fathers (Papias, Irenaeus, Pantaeus, and Origen) acknowledged Matthew as the author. Papias also contended that Matthew first wrote in Hebrew, implying that this Gospel was later translated into Greek.

Setting

Determining the date of composition of Matthew's Gospel depends largely on the relationship of the Gospels to one another. Most scholars believe that Matthew utilized Mark's Gospel in writing his own gospel. If this is correct, Matthew's Gospel must postdate Mark's. However, the date of Mark's Gospel is also shrouded in mystery. Irenaeus (ca AD 180) seems to claim that Mark wrote his Gospel after Peter's death in the mid-60s. However, Clement of Alexandria, who wrote only twenty years after Irenaeus, claimed that Mark wrote his Gospel while Peter was still alive. Given the ambiguity of the historical evidence, a decision must be based on other factors.

Special Features

This Gospel was written from a strong Jewish perspective to show that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

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Session Plan

Why Have You Forsaken Me?

Introduction

- ❓ Have you ever experienced a season when you wondered where God was in the midst of hardship? If so, describe what that experience was like.
- ❓ Who in your life do you most quickly turn to for support during seasons of distress? What do they base their advice or guidance on? Why do you seek them out, rather than other people?

In this week's session, Jesus' fourth saying from the cross was what has come to be known as the "cry of dereliction." This desperate prayer from Jesus came as His earthly life was drawing to an end. He was in anguish, enduring the excruciating pain of the cross and the unspeakable burden of the sin of the world, which He took upon Himself. Because He did so, however, hope was extended to all who would follow after Jesus, even in their most desperate moments.

1. The Prayer of Desperation (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; Psalm 22:1)

Mark's Gospel, though normally much more concise than Matthew's, recorded the fourth saying almost exactly as Matthew did. The substance of Mark's Gospel, as it was the earliest one written, was borrowed in part by Matthew and Luke in their Gospel writings. The practice of borrowing involved one author borrowing ideas and concepts from another reputable source. However, the similarities between Mark's and Matthew's accounts of the prayer of dereliction went far beyond borrowed concepts. They are virtually identical, testifying to the centrality and gravity of this event in the life and ministry of Jesus.

- ❓ How have seasons of desperation impacted your understanding of God's presence with you?
- ❓ Application: Who do you know that needs the hope Jesus alone offers to confront difficulties and trials? How are you praying for Jesus to make Himself real to that person?

2. Jesus Knows . . . (Hebrews 4:12-13)

The Word of God, which was the same introductory title John gave to Jesus at the opening of his Gospel, is living and effective. That means that it accomplishes its purpose and is perpetually at work. The nature of that work was described as “penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow.” The divine precision of God’s Word knows nothing of limitation or spaces so tight and private that they cannot be laid open with its blade.

- ❓ How does it make you feel when you consider the depth of what God knows about you? What impact does that have on the way you view others?
- ❓ Application: With whom are you in regular, transparent conversation about how God’s Word is changing and challenging you? How does that community help you in living out what God is calling you to next?

3. Jesus’ Suffering is the Pathway to Hope (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Jesus’ knowledge of and identification with His creation was precisely what made Him the perfect High Priest. Just like the High Priests found in the Old Testament, Jesus represented and intervened for a people with whom He identified. That identification meant that He was like them. The writer of Hebrews explained that the identification included facing all manner of temptations. He experienced every weakness common to man, every frailty that plagued the flesh, and every enticement that sought to lure humanity from God’s ultimate design. The singular divergent aspect of Jesus’ humanity, though, was that He did all of this yet was without sin.

- ❓ Why is it important to understand that Jesus faced the same temptations and frailty that all humanity does? How does this reinforce the fact that Jesus knows what His creation experiences when they suffer or struggle?
- ❓ Application: How do the suffering of Jesus on the cross and His experience of abandonment offer hope to you?

Conclusion

- ❓ Describe a time when you were encouraged by the words of a friend in the midst of great stress or difficulty? What did he or she say to change your point of view? What hope did his or her words give you?
- ❓ How honest would you say you are with God about the condition of your life? How does realizing that He already knows what you are hesitant to admit change things?

❓ For Further Discussion

How honest would you say you are with God about the condition of your life? How does realizing that He already knows what you are hesitant to admit change things?



Expanded Session Content

Why Have You Forsaken Me?

Introduction

The famous question Jesus asked from the cross, “My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?” is one of the most discussed parts of Scripture. That discussion is had frequently by people of all sorts of religious background, or no religious background at all. The question resonates with so many because pain, difficulty, and desperation are common human experiences. Professor J. Budziszewski grappled with the feeling of God’s silence or absence in a 2002 Focus on the Family article:

Trouble suffocates me. Worry entangles me. By night I can't sleep, by day I can't rest. The burden of suffering is intolerable. Where is God? Does He know, or are my prayers heard only by the wall? Is He near, or somewhere distant, only watching?

If you hurt enough to ask such questions, you deserve an answer.

Some people think that you don't. You're sick, you're dying, you've been deserted, you've lost a child, you're innocent but accused of wrongdoing — and they try to shush you. Their intentions may be good, but they are hard to bear. “Don't question God's ways; He might hear you.” In my cry of anguish, don't I want Him to hear me? “It's probably for your own good.” If I'm to be tormented for my own good, don't I get a say in the matter? “I'm sure there's a good reason.” No doubt there is, but did I ask for a philosophical explanation? What I asked is “Where is God?”¹

Such haunting questions typically appear in the face of insurmountable opposition or great stress. For those who have experienced such seasons, merely reading the questions can bring shivers of anguished seasons and the agony of uncertainty. Yet, in the face of such seasons, Jesus offers hope that can only come from Him. He also suffered. He also wondered. Because He did, there is hope for the world.



Have you ever experienced a season when you wondered where God was in the midst of hardship? If so, describe what that experience was like.



Who in your life do you most quickly turn to for support during seasons of distress? What do they base their advice or guidance on? Why do you seek them out, rather than other people?

Session Summary

In this week's session, Jesus' fourth saying from the cross was what has come to be known as the "cry of dereliction." This desperate prayer from Jesus came as His earthly life was drawing to an end. He was in anguish, enduring the excruciating pain of the cross and the unspeakable burden of the sin of the world, which He took upon Himself. Because He did so, however, hope was extended to all who would follow after Jesus, even in their most desperate moments.

1. The Prayer of Desperation (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; Psalm 22:1)

In Matthew's Gospel, the account of Jesus' fourth saying from the cross appears immediately after Matthew described the insults hurled at Jesus from the two criminals who flanked Him on crosses of their own. This was evidently before one of the criminals experienced a penitent heart and came to Jesus' defense, as noted in Luke's Gospel. According to Craig Blomberg, "Matthew, however, does not wish to detract from Jesus' agony. Verse 43 is unique to his [Matthew's] Gospel and reflects his emphasis on the Son of God, also alluding to Ps. 22:9. Jesus' opponents unwittingly testify to his identity. Precisely because Jesus is the Son of God, He consciously decides not to come down off the cross. . . . It was the power of love, not nails, that kept Him there."²

Mark's Gospel, though normally much more concise than Matthew's, recorded the fourth saying almost exactly as Matthew did. The substance of Mark's Gospel, as it was the earliest one written, was borrowed in part by Matthew and Luke in their Gospel writings. The practice of borrowing involved one author borrowing ideas and concepts from another reputable source. However, the similarities between Mark's and Matthew's accounts of the prayer of dereliction went far beyond borrowed concepts. They are virtually identical, testifying to the centrality and gravity of this event in the life and ministry of Jesus.

Jesus experienced pain of every sort from every direction. His disciples had long since deserted Him, with the exception of John. He witnessed the impact of the brutality of His execution on His mother. His enemies tortured Him, mocked Him, and nailed His body to a tree. The criminals, who were deserving of their own crosses according to Roman law, hurled insult after insult at Jesus. Those who could stand the sight of crucifixion

gathered at the foot of Jesus' cross to mock Him regarding His claims of being the Son of God. Mark's Gospel emphasizes the growing isolation and loneliness of Jesus from the Gethsemane event throughout His Passion (Mark 14:32-41). Finally, as His physical life drew to a close and He fulfilled the long-prophesied role as the perfect sacrifice for the sin of all humanity, the filth of that sin severed the communion with the Father.



How have seasons of desperation impacted your understanding of God's presence with you?



Application: Who do you know that needs the hope Jesus alone offers to confront difficulties and trials? How are you praying for Jesus to make Himself real to that person?

Psalm 22 in the New Testament

In commenting on Psalm 22 and the New Testament writers' awareness of it, Paul House notes, "The writers knew that David was a prophet and did speak of the Messiah, whether he understood it all or not. The following list includes citations of or allusions to Psalm 22 in the New Testament:

- Matthew 27:46 // Ps. 22:1
- Matthew 27:39 // Ps. 22:7
- Matthew 27:43 // Ps. 22:8
- John 19:28 // Ps. 22:15
- John 19:23-24 //Ps. 22:18
- Hebrews 5:7 // Ps. 22:24,31
- Hebrews 2:12 // Ps. 22:22⁴

In the midst of His desperation on the cross, as He had done so many times in His earthly ministry, Jesus quoted Scripture. In His utter anguish, Jesus quoted the first verse of Psalm 22, which King David had written centuries earlier. David's life was in danger many times, but the agony he described in Psalm 22 exceeded his normal expression in severity. Cornered by his enemies, even to the point of impending death, David felt as though even God had abandoned him.

Many scholars, including James Brooks, point to the practice "to sometimes cite only one verse but to do so as a means of referring to a larger passage. If that were the purpose in the present instance, the reference would be to all of Ps. 22. Taken as a whole it is not so much a complaint of abandonment in time of trouble as it is an expression of confidence that God will deliver from trouble."³ Being careful not to lessen or move too quickly past the agony of Christ for the sake of humanity, reading all of Psalm 22 paints a picture of a servant of God suffering to the point of death and hopelessness, but standing on the hope of God's imminent deliverance.

2. Jesus Knows . . . (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Most of us can recall a scenario in which a well-intentioned person attempted to comfort us with the platitude, "I know how you feel." Such platitudes ring hollow and cold, and they frequently do more harm than good. Conversely, when legitimate empathy exists, the balm of seasoned words can offer great comfort. In the ultimate fulfillment of such empathy, the writer of Hebrews repeatedly returned to the experiential understanding Jesus has for those for whom He died. Jesus did not walk the earth transcendent above its difficulties, challenges, and temptations. Rather, He experienced life as all humanity does. He felt tired and hungry. His heart broke over the death of loved ones like Lazarus. He encountered temptation. Jesus knows what it is like to be human (Hebrews 4:14-16).

For that reason, the writer of Hebrews explained the depth of His holy knowledge of His creation. The Word of God, which was the same introductory title John gave to Jesus at the opening of his Gospel, is living and effective. That means that it accomplishes its purpose and is perpetually at work. The nature of that work was described as “penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow.” The divine precision of God’s Word knows nothing of limitation or spaces so tight and private that they cannot be laid open with its blade.

Bringing the dividing ability of the Word of God to sharpest focus, the author explained that the Word of God “is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” Nothing is hidden from the divine omniscience of God.

- ❓ How does it make you feel when you consider the depth of what God knows about you? What impact does that have on the way you view others?
- ❓ Application: With whom are you in regular, transparent conversation about how God’s Word is changing and challenging you? How does that community help you in living out what God is calling you to next?

To drive home the point of how thoroughly God knows His people, the writer of Hebrews explained it in the most vulnerable way possible. All creatures, which was to say everything that had been created, or everything other than God, were exposed by the Word of God. Any attempts to cover up sinfulness or brokenness with a polished exterior were foolish and futile. Compounding the terms “naked” and “exposed” in such close proximity heightened the sense of vulnerability. Even more significant was the identity of the One to whom all of creation was exposed—the very One to whom an account must be given. God, who judges righteously, had uninhibited access and knowledge to even the tiniest, most subconscious detail of every created thing. Jesus knows.



3. Jesus’ Suffering is the Pathway to Hope (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Jesus’ knowledge of and identification with His creation was precisely what made Him the perfect High Priest. Just like the High Priests found in the Old Testament, Jesus represented and intervened for a people with whom He identified. That identification meant that He was like them. The writer of Hebrews explained that the identification included facing all manner of temptations. He experienced every weakness common to man, every frailty that plagued the flesh, and every enticement that sought to lure humanity from God’s ultimate design. The singular divergent aspect of Jesus’ humanity, though, was that He did all of this yet was without sin.

He Knows Us at Our Worst

In explaining the depths to which Jesus knows His creation, even as He died for humanity, the apostle Paul wrote: “But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). Read Romans 5. What insight is God giving you as you consider salvation in light of Jesus’ suffering on the cross? How does it fuel your desire to pray for and search out the lost?

The particular temptation that the writer to the Hebrews confronted was the temptation to fall away from following Christ and return to one’s former life in hopes of avoiding the persecution that came with being a Christian. Remembering His cry from the cross, Jesus experienced more pain and persecution than was humanly comprehensible. In addition to the excruciating physical suffering, Jesus endured the momentary separation from the Father as He took the sin of the world upon Himself.

-  Why is it important to understand that Jesus faced the same temptations and frailty that all humanity does? How does this reinforce the fact that Jesus knows what His creation experiences when they suffer or struggle?
-  Application: How do the suffering of Jesus on the cross and His experience of abandonment offer hope to you?

The result of Jesus’ perfect sacrifice, serving as both the High Priest who offered the sacrifice and as the sacrifice itself, was the removal of the barrier of sin that kept humanity from God. To that end, the writer of Hebrews encouraged his readers to not just come into God’s presence or sneak into God’s presence as though they were there by the skin of their teeth. Rather, he prompted his readers to approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that they “may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need” (v.16). In other words, Christians, because of their relationship with Jesus through His sacrifice on the cross, can seek help and find mercy in their moments of desperation. Jesus modeled that in His fourth saying. Just as He sought God the Father in the midst of His abandonment, the Father raised Him from the dead.

Conclusion

The fourth saying from the cross can be extremely difficult to understand. The idea that the relationship between God the Father and God the Son could be separated is hard to process. The reality is that the separation was the consequence of Jesus taking the sin of the world on Himself so that He could gift His righteousness to those who accepted Him as Savior. There are several things to consider in prayerfully applying these passages.

First, God is limitlessly and completely aware of every single detail of every single person’s life. That is an extremely inclusive statement for a reason. Many times, people can feel like they are not worthy of praying to God or feel the need to be less than completely honest with God about their need for Him. People can experience great shame when confessing their sin to God. The truth of the matter is that God already knows about all of it. In fact, He is more aware than even the person who is confessing the sin so reluctantly. Remembering Romans 5:8, though; “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us,” Jesus knows the struggle, brokenness, frailty, and sin common to men . . . and He gave His life to free humanity from it.

Second, everyone needs to know that Jesus is the hope in their season of desperation. This statement is also the fuel for the mission of the church. As the church exists in a community filled with people who do not know Jesus as Savior, the opportunity to be the extenders of real hope is a daily occurrence. Praying for those who are lost, asking God to present opportunities for gospel conversations, faithfully engaging others with the truth of Scripture when those gospel conversations happen, and being an active, missional force in the community are critical strategies for being hope bearers in a desperate world.

Third, Jesus offers strength, grace, and mercy in our moments of desperation. Part of the blessing of Jesus always being with Christians is that Christians can experience grace and strength beyond their own power in seasons of great distress. In fact, there are aspects of following Christ that one can only learn in sharing in His sufferings. While that doesn't mean that one should anxiously look forward to suffering, it does mean that, even in the midst of one's most dire season, there is intimacy to be experienced in a Savior that never leaves or forsakes His own.

- ❓ Describe a time when you were encouraged by the words of a friend in the midst of great stress or difficulty? What did he or she say to change your point of view? What hope did his or her words give you?
- ❓ How honest would you say you are with God about the condition of your life? How does realizing that He already knows what you are hesitant to admit change things?
- ❓ Have you interacted with anyone lately who needs a word of hope? How can you initiate a conversation with that person to share the hope you have in Christ?

Prayer of Response

Close with a time of prayer thanking God that because Jesus was forsaken, those who trust in Him never will be.

Additional Resources

- *In My Place Condemned He Stood* by J. I. Packer and Mark Dever
- *The Cross of Christ* by John Stott
- *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* by John Owen

For Next Week

Session Title

- I Thirst

Main Passages

- John 19:28-30; John 4:7-15; John 7:37-39

Session Outline

1. The Thirst that Fulfilled Prophecy (John 19:28-30)
2. Thirst: An Invitation to Living Water (John 4:7-15)
3. Streams of Living Water (John 7:37-39)

Memorize

⁴⁶ *About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lemá sabachtháni?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”*

- Matthew 27:46

Daily Readings

- Monday - Romans 10:10-17
- Tuesday - Matthew 9:37-38
- Wednesday - 1 Peter 3:15
- Thursday - 1 Corinthians 9:22
- Friday - Matthew 5:13-16
- Saturday - Romans 1:16

Extended Commentary

Matthew 27:46

27:46-49 Jesus's lament quotes Ps 22:1. The psalm reads as if it were written by someone standing near the cross (see esp. Ps 22:7-8,14-18). Jesus's cry expressed the alienation from God that he endured as he bore the Father's wrath against sin. Although Jesus elsewhere addressed God as "Father," he addressed him merely as my God in this verse.

Mark 15:34

15:34 At 3:00 p.m. Jesus cried out with a loud voice the Aramaic phrase, Eloi, Eloi, lemá sabachtháni. As usual, Mark provided a translation. Even when Jesus felt most abandoned by God, he affirmed his relationship with his Father—my God, my God, quoting the opening words of Ps 22:1. Jesus endured God's wrath as the sin-bearer.

Hebrews 4:12-16

4:1-16 The author now drew the readers into examining their own personal faith as the Word of God shines its penetrating light upon the heart. Faithfulness begins with a proper internal disposition. The living and effective Word of God probes into the deepest part of a person like a surgeon's knife to discern his innermost thoughts and intentions. God's Word reveals to him both his ingrained wickedness and the saving way of faith. At that critical point, when the divine judge reveals himself through his Word, the hearer must make every effort to enter the divine rest by believing.

Psalms 22

22:1 This psalm opens with a question about God's rejection, similar to other lament psalms (10:1; 13:1-2). This rejection is represented by the term abandoned. The same idea appears elsewhere in the psalm with God being "far away" (v. 19). In his suffering, the psalmist foreshadowed the Messiah; in his suffering, Jesus identified with the psalmist (Mt 27:46). When Jesus quoted this first line, he was probably calling attention to the whole psalm, including the theme of victory at the end.

22:2 The psalmist prayed for help but God seemed not to hear. This psalm can apply to anyone who has had this experience.

22:3-5 These verses identify the psalmist with the nation of Israel and more specifically with Yahweh's covenant faithfulness to his people as shown by his deliverance of them time and time again (78:53; 107:6). Enthroned on the praises is unusual, picturing the Lord's dwelling above the cherubim on the ark of the covenant (80:1; 99:1). However, in this

instance it is the praise of God's people that is the focus because the Lord is the praise of Israel (Dt 10:21).

22:6-8 Worm expresses humiliation (Jb 25:6; Is 41:14), an idea that is further developed with the scorn of the enemies. Shaking their heads was a physical gesture often associated with sneering and mocking (see textual footnote on 44:14; cp. 64:8). This disgrace was in direct contrast to the fact that the Lord had kept Israel from disgrace (22:5). The thought that the Lord would not rescue one of his own was a common assumption by Israel's enemies (3:2; 71:11).

22:9-10 The phrase over to you is in the emphatic position in the Hebrew text, emphasizing that the Lord is the one in whom the psalmist has trusted since birth.

22:11 These sound like the last words of a dying man. The words Don't be far from me are found in other psalms too. See 35:22; 38:21; 71:12.

22:12-13 The connection between one's enemies and wild animals, especially lions, is found in other psalms (see note at 7:1-2). With bulls the point seems to be strength rather than fierceness.

22:14-15 The terminology in these verses conveys the notion of being drained of strength. A heart like melting wax is similar to the image of "melting hearts" in other contexts where the emotion of fear is so intense that all courage disappears (Dt 20:8; Jos 2:11; 7:5). Dust of death implies the nearness and inevitability of death (Jb 7:21; 10:9) and is sometimes linked with Sheol (Jb 17:16).

22:16 The Hebrew text is difficult, reading literally "like a lion my hands and my feet" for pierced my hands and my feet. Other manuscript traditions, including the LXX, read the Hebrew *ka'ari* ("like the lion") as a verb from the Hebrew root *krh*, meaning either "to bind" or "to dig." Digging could be synonymous with piercing. Christians have often adopted this reading and seen it as a prophetic allusion to Christ's crucifixion since NT authors quote so much of this psalm in relation to that event (e.g., Mt 27:46).

22:17-18 Counting bones seems to be related to imagery where a person was so emaciated from suffering or brutality that his bones were visible (102:5; Jb 19:20; 33:21). Dividing garments is an attested practice in Middle Assyrian laws where a criminal's clothes could be given to the prosecutor or to those carrying out the sentence. It was apparently practiced in other cultures, including Rome in the first century, as evident at the crucifixion of Jesus (Mt 27:35; Jn 19:23).

22:19 Verses 19-21 express David's petition. He refers to God as my strength.

22:20-21 The psalmist uses imagery from animals to represent enemies. All are repeated with the exception of the wild oxen instead of bulls. Their horns that gored in an attack are the main focus in that image (see note at 18:1-2). Dogs might not seem like a negative image because of their role as pets in modern Western society, but in much of the ancient Near East they were never domesticated and were always wild and ravenous animals.

22:22-24 Verse 22 begins a new major section in this psalm, shifting the focus from petition to thanksgiving. The shift might indicate that the prayer of vv. 1-21 had been answered or that such an answer was anticipated. Thanksgiving was to be offered in the assembly to evoke praise from the people of God. This was the responsibility of anyone whom the Lord rescued, so that the entire community could rejoice in God's acts of deliverance (66:16). Whereas the psalmist praised God for being delivered from death, Jesus the Messiah brought glory to God through his death and resurrection.

22:25-26 The vows were those made during the time of prayer (50:14; 61:8; 66:13). Their fulfillment also took place in the great assembly as a further testimony of God's goodness to the psalmist. Any ceremonially clean person witnessing someone's praise offering was permitted to eat from it (Lv 7:11-21).

22:27-31 The psalm ends by broadening to the most universal purpose of God's kingdom over the earth. Israel's purpose was to be a testimony to other nations so they would bow down before the Lord and serve him (67:2; 72:11,17; 86:9). The growth of the kingdom throughout time is demonstrated in the phrase a people yet to be born (future generations). The inclusion of those who go down to the dust who would pay homage to the Lord (v. 29) is unusual, since in other psalms it is clear that the dead cannot praise him (6:5; 88:10-12). This is more likely a reference to the final stage of God's kingdom when even the dead are brought back to life to recognize the Lord's authority over all things (Dn 12:2).⁵

References

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Author Bio

J. Budziszewski (Where is God in the Midst of My Troubles?)

Professor J. Budziszewski is the author of more than a dozen books, including *How to Stay Christian in College*, *Ask Me Anything*, *Ask Me Anything 2*, *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*, and *The Line Through the Heart*. He teaches government and philosophy at the University of Texas, Austin.

Craig Blomberg (Matthew)

Craig Blomberg is distinguished professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary.

James Brooks (Mark)

James A. Brooks is Professor of New Testament at Bethel Theological Seminary. He previously taught at both New Orleans Seminary and Southwestern Seminary.

Paul House (Old Testament Theology)

Paul R. House teaches at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University (Birmingham, Alabama). An Old Testament scholar, he has taught previously at Taylor University, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Wheaton College.

J.I. Packer (In My Place Condemned He Stood)

J. I. Packer is Board of Governors Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He serves as contributing editor to *Christianity Today*, and his many books include *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* and *Praying*.

Mark Dever (In My Place Condemned He Stood)

Mark Dever (PhD, Cambridge University) is the senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC, and president of 9Marks (9Marks.org). Dever has authored over a dozen books and speaks at conferences nationwide.

John Stott (The Cross of Christ)

John R. W. Stott is known worldwide as a preacher, evangelist and communicator of Scripture. For many years he served as rector of All Souls Church in London, where he carried out an effective urban pastoral ministry. A leader among evangelicals in Britain, the United States and around the world, Stott was a principal framer of the landmark Lausanne Covenant (1974). His many books, including *Why I Am a Christian* and *The Cross of Christ*, have sold millions of copies around the world and in dozens of languages. Whether in the West or in the Two-Thirds World, a hallmark of Stott's ministry has been expository preaching that addresses the hearts and minds of contemporary men and women. Stott was honored by Time magazine in 2005 as one of the "100 Most Influential People in the World."

John Owen (The Death of Death in the Death of Christ)

Dr. John Owen (1616-1683), theologian, was born of Puritan parents at Stadham in Oxfordshire in 1616. At twelve years of age he was admitted at Queen's College, Oxford, where he took his B.A. degree in 1632 and M.A. in 1635. During these years he worked with such diligence that he allowed himself but four hours sleep a night, and damaged his health by this excessive labour. In 1637 he was driven from Oxford by his refusal to comply with the requirements of Laud's new statutes. Having taken orders shortly before, he became chaplain and tutor in the family of Sir Robert Dormer of Ascot in Oxfordshire. At the outbreak of the civil troubles he adopted Parliamentary principles, and thus lost both his place and the prospects of succeeding to his uncle's fortune. For a while he lived in Charterhouse Yard, in great unsettlement of mind on religious questions, which was removed at length by a sermon which he accidentally heard at St Michael's in Wood Street.