

Title: **WHY WAS HE FORSAKEN?**
Text: Psalm 22:1-3
Subject: *Christ's Being Made Sin*
Date: Sunday Evening — August 14, 2005
Tape # Y-76a

Introduction:

Turn with me to Psalm 22. Everything recorded in this Psalm, if I understand it correctly, was written prophetically, penned by divine inspiration, as the very words spoken by our blessed Savior when he hung upon the cursed tree, bearing our sins as our Substitute. Spurgeon wrote...

“Before us we have a description both of the darkness and of the glory of the cross, the sufferings of Christ and the glory which shall follow. Oh for grace to draw near and see this great sight! We should read reverently, putting off our shoes from off our feet, as Moses did at the burning bush, for if there be holy ground anywhere in Scripture it is in this psalm.”

CHRIST FORSAKEN

Read verses 1-3. These are the words of our blessed Savior when he hung upon the cursed tree as our Substitute, when he who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. At the apex of his obedience, at the time of his greatest sorrow, in the hour of his greatest need, the Lord Jesus cried out to his Father, — “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” That is the question I want to address. I said, “address,” not “answer,” “address.” Answer it I cannot. Declare it I must. So that is the question I want to address in this message — **Why was he forsaken?**

Then our all-glorious Redeemer tells us how utterly forsaken he was, so utterly forsaken that the Father refused to hear the cries of his own darling Son in the hour of his greatest need. — “*Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*” I read those words with utter astonishment. I will not attempt to explain what I cannot imagine. But these things are written here for our learning, that we might through patience and consolation of the Scriptures, have hope. And I hang all the hope of my immortal soul upon this fact...

Proposition: When the Lord Jesus Christ was made sin for me, he was utterly forsaken of God and put to death as my Substitute; and by his one great, sin-atonement Sacrifice, he has forever put away my sins. — He not only bore our sins in his body on the tree, he bore them away!

THE REASON

Yet, when we read verse 3, our holy Savior, when he was made sin for us, answers the cry of his own soul's agony. He cried, "*My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?*" — "*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" Why was the Lord Jesus forsaken by his Father when he was made sin for us? Because the holy Lord God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Our Savior was forsaken by the Father when he was made sin for us because justice demanded it. — "*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity*" (Hab. 1:13).

Here, in verse 3, our Savior, when he was dying under the wrath of God, justified God in his own condemnation, because he was made sin for us. He proclaims the holiness of God in the midst of his agony. He is so pure, so holy, so righteous, so just, that he will by no means clear the guilty (Ex. 34:7), even when the guilty One is his own darling Son! Rather than that his holy character be slighted, our Surety must suffer and die, because he was made sin for us.

Our Savior had no sin of his own. He was born without original sin, being even from birth "*that Holy One*" (Luke 1:35). Throughout his life he "*knew no sin*" (2 Corinthians 5:21), "*did no sin*" (1 Peter 2:22), "*and in him is no sin*" (1 John 3:5). But on Calvary the holy Lord God "*made him who knew no sin sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Just as in the incarnation "*the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*" (John 1:14), in substitution he who was made flesh "*was made sin for us.*"

- I do not know how God could be made flesh and never cease to be God; but he was.
- I do not know how God could die and yet never die; but he did (Acts 20:28).
- And I do not know how Christ who knew no sin could be made sin and yet never have sinned; but he was.

These things are mysteries beyond the reach of human comprehension.

But they are facts of divine revelation to which we bow with adoration. Hard as it is for many to realize, our God is “slightly” bigger than our puny brains!

PSALM 40

Turn to Psalm 40. Here we are again allowed to hear the agony of our blessed Redeemer’s soul, when he was made sin for us. Here his language is even more specific in declaring that our sins were made his. Here, again, the Lord Jesus Christ calls our sins his own, because “*He hath made him sin for us.*”

The One speaking in this Psalm is beyond all doubt, our Savior. We know that because the Holy Spirit tells us that it is Christ who is speaking here in Hebrews chapter 10. He knew that being made sin for us, he would be brought into an horrible pit and filled with distress. Yet, his love for us was and is so great that in verse 7 he declares his readiness to assume a body, and to accomplish his Father’s will in the salvation of his chosen, agreeably to the ancient settlements written in the Volume of the Book, saying, — “*Lo! I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God.*” Then in verses 11 and 12, he prays for deliverance from his deep distresses, saying...

“Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me. For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.”¹

This is exactly the same thing we read in John 12:27-28. — “*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*”

¹ **John Trapp**, commenting on this verse, wrote, “If this be taken of Christ, he is Maximus peccatorum, the greatest of sinners by imputation (2 Co 5:20 Isa 53:6), for our sins (which here he calleth his) he suffered; and here his bitter agony in the garden is graphically described. Neither is it absurd to say, that as he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, he was first redeemed by himself, and afterwards we.”

Why was the Son of God brought to such sorrow and grief? Here is the answer. — *“He made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him!”* **Indeed he could never have suffered the painful, shameful, ignominious death of the cross as our Substitute, had he not been made sin for us.** Justice would never have allowed it The Lord God declares, *“He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.”* (Pro. 17:15; Ex. 23:7).

Hear the Savior’s words in Psalm 40:12, and worship him. — *“For innumerable evils have compassed me about.”* He was beset on every side with evil. Countless woes compassed our great Substitute and Sin-bearer. **Spurgeon** said, “Our sins were innumerable, and so were his griefs.” From every quarter, all the accumulated sins of all his people, for all time, in all parts of the world were made his! The Blessed One of God, who knew no sin and did no sin, was made sin! Read on. —

“Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.” — He had no sin, but sins were laid on him, and he took them as his own. *“He was made sin for us.”* “The transfer of sin to the Savior was real,” Spurgeon wrote, “and produced in him as man the horror which forbade him to look into the face of God, bowing him down with crushing anguish and woe intolerable.”

My soul, what would our sins have done to us eternally if the Friend of sinners had not condescended to take them all upon himself? Oh, blessed Scripture! *“He hath made him sin for us!”* Oh, marvellous depth of love, that made the perfectly immaculate Lamb of God to stand in the sinner’s place, and bear the horror of great trembling which sin must bring upon those who are forever keenly conscious of it in hell!

“They are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.” — In dark Gethsemane, as he anticipated being made sin, our Savior’s holy soul shook within him; and his holy heart broke. Anticipating the pains of God’s holy fury against sin, his unbending justice and unmitigated wrath were beyond calculation, and the Savior’s soul was so crushed within him that he was sore amazed, and very heavy even unto a sweat of blood. His strength was gone, his spirit sank, he was in an agony.

Then, as he hung upon the cursed tree, bearing our sins in his on body, he cried, as we read in Psalm 22:6, 14-15, — *“I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people...I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.”*

It was the thought and anticipation of being made sin for us, not of simply paying the debt due unto our sins, but of being made sin, that caused his bloody sweat in Gethsemane. It was this fact, the fact that he was made sin for us, that caused him to be forsaken of his Father as he hung upon the cursed tree on Golgotha’s hill (Ps. 22:1-3).

“Came at length the dreadful night.
Vengeance with its iron rod
Stood, and with collected might
Bruised the harmless Lamb of God,
See, my soul, thy Saviour see,
Prostrate in Gethsemane!”

“Yes, my God bore all my guilt,
This through grace can be believed;
But the horrors which he felt
Are too vast to be conceived.
None can penetrate through thee,
Doleful, dark Gethsemane.”

“Sins against a holy God;
Sins against his righteous laws;
Sins against his love, his blood;
Sins against his name and cause;
Sins immense as is the sea—
Hide me, O Gethsemane!”

David understood what he wrote in this Psalm and was utterly overwhelmed by it. *“Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered”* (Ps. 40:5). Read the words of our sin-atonng Mediator again.

(Psalms 40:11-12) “Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me. (12) For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.”

Many tell us that these words cannot be the Words of God’s darling Son. Indeed, some, in their foolish arrogance, assert that it is blasphemy and heresy to declare that these words are the words of our blessed Savior. In doing so, they dare to defy God himself, for it is God the Holy Spirit who, in Hebrews 10, tells us that these are our Savior’s words.

“These things, so far from being unsuitable to the holy Jesus, are the very things we might reasonably suppose he would speak of, and consequently his holy soul would feel so painful. And when we consider that as our Surety he bore our sins and carried our sorrows, how very reasonable it is to expect that these cries of the Son of God should be at the very time in which he is set forth as a Sacrifice for them.”

Robert Hawker

PSALM 69

Now, turn to Psalm 69. Again, there can be no question that the One speaking throughout this entire Psalm is our blessed Savior. Throughout the New Testament, the words of this Psalm are attributed to him (v. 4 - John 15:25; v. 9 - John 2:17, Rom. 15:3; v. 21 - Matt. 27:34, 48, Mark. 15:36, Luke 23:36, John 19:28-29; vv. 22-23 - Rom. 11:9-10; v. 25 - Acts 1:16, 20). The opening verses of this Psalm are clearly the words of our Redeemer.

(Psalms 69:1-4) “Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto *my* soul. (2) I sink in deep mire, where *there is* no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. (3) I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. (4) They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away.”

And the 5th verse cannot, with any honesty, be attributed to someone else. Here the cry of him, who was made sin for us. — “*O God, thou knowest my*

foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.”

- The word “*foolishness*” means “perversity.”
- The word “*sins*” means, as it is translated in the marginal reference, “guiltiness.”

Our Savior owns our perversity as his perversity and our guiltiness as his guiltiness, because it was made his. The first Adam hid his perversity and guilt. The last Adam owns ours as his own and does it before God. It is as though he were saying, “Here, lifted up upon the cross I suffer without the gate for my people, as their Substitute, in such a way, that I desire that my sins be conspicuous to every creature in heaven, earth, and hell, — my sins, the sins of my people, all now and forever blotted out and washed away by my blood.”

What condescension this is! What grace is here revealed! What unparalleled love! What mystery there is here! The Son of God takes to himself our shame! Yes! When the Lamb of God, was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, it behoved him thus to suffer and thus to cry! — “*O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.”*

INTERCESSION

Read on, beginning at verse 6, and rejoice and give thanks for this. — In his soul’s utmost agony, the Son of God remembered and interceded for us, as our great High Priest.

(Psalms 69:6) “Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.”

Then, he again claims our sins, our reproaches as his own, as if to tell us that our sins were not merely pasted on him, that he was not simply treated as though our sins were his, but that when he made his soul an offering for sin, he was made sin for us.

(Psalms 69:7) “Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.”

(Psalms 69:19-20) “Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries *are* all before thee. (20) Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I

looked *for some* to take pity, but *there was* none; and for comforters, but I found none.”

ISAIAH 63

In the light of this confession, read Isaiah 63:1-5.

(Isaiah 63:1-5) “Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (2) Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? (3) I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. (5) And I looked, and *there was* none to help; and I wondered that *there was* none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.”

“*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!*” — Do you understand what we have read? Do you here see Christ as your Surety, your sin-bearer, taking all your guilt and sin, assuming total responsibility for all that you are? — Made a curse for you? Do you see him as your Substitute, your Surety, your Savior? Do you trust him as such? If so, let your soul be ravished by his great love for you. Adore him! Praise him!

(Psalms 22:23-24) “Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. (24) For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.”

(Psalms 22:26) “The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.”

(Psalms 22:30-31) “A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. (31) They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.”

O blessed Lord Jesus! How I thank you for bearing my sin! And how I thank you for allowing me to hear your soul's agony as you bear them in your body upon the cursed tree that I might go free! This is exactly what this poor sinner needs — A Complete Substitute! — A Real Substitute! — An Effectual Substitute!

Never, my Savior have I had such a sweet, such a glorious, such a comforting, such an encouraging, such a humbling, such precious view of you as my Redeemer as this. — Bearing my sin in your body upon the cursed tree, made sin for me, suffering all the hell of God's holy fury against sin for me, to the full satisfaction of justice, that I might be made the righteousness of God in you! Born down with the weight of my sins and guilt, made your own, by a transfer that no mortal shall ever comprehend, you gave your life for me; and by your precious blood put my sins away! Truly, your name is as ointment poured forth to my soul!

Because of his infinite, immeasurable love for us, our blessed Savior became everything we were in such a real way that he owns as his own our sins before his Father and our Father! — *“Thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.”* Either he was made sin for us, or that which he confessed in these three Psalms is not true. There is no in-between ground. Either our Savior here spoke the truth or he did not. Blessed be his name, his word is truth! He made our foolishness his foolishness! He made our sin his sin! He made our perversity his perversity! He made our guiltiness his guiltiness!

This is not a slander against our holy Savior; but the magnifying of his mercy, love and grace. Christ's love for us is so infinitely great that he made our sins his very own very own. And by the same wondrous, amazing mercy, love and grace, he makes his perfect righteousness our very own.

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene
And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner, condemned, unclean

Oh, how marvelous! oh, how wonderful!
And my song shall ever be
Oh, how marvelous! oh how wonderful!
Is my Savior's love for me!

For me it was in the garden
 He prayed: “Not My will, but Thine”
 He had no tears for His own griefs
 But sweat drops of blood for mine

He took my sins and my sorrows
 He made them His very own
 He bore the burden to Calvary
 And suffered, and died alone

Yes, my brother, my sister, yes, every poor sinner who trusts the Son of God, we are the very righteousness of God in Christ. With Jacob of old, we say, with confidence, as he did to Laban, to every accuser, “*So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come*” (Gen. 30:33). With Job, we say, “*My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live*” (Job 27:6). Because Christ is the Lord our Righteousness, because he is made of God unto us both redemption and righteousness, we have assurance of everlasting salvation (Rom. 8:1-4, 33-39).

(Romans 8:1-4) “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*”

(Romans 8:33-39) “*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. (34) Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor*

principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
(39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to
separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Amen.