

# Christ Made To Be Sin For Us

By Don Fortner

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 22:1-5  
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**Grace Baptist Church of Danville**  
2734 Old Stanford Road  
Danville, KY 40422

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While you're turning to Psalm 22 again, I'll tell you a cute story. Most of you know that Spurgeon had the preacher's college in the Metropolitan Church in London for many years, and Spurgeon lectured regularly to the young preachers, and they knew when Mr. Spurgeon was to lecture that he might call on them at any time to stand up and be prepared to preach. And he would call the roll and he would get to a name and he would say, "All right, John, you come and preach to us," and they were to be prepared all the time. There was a Scotsman, a small Scottish fellow with flaming red hair. Spurgeon gave him the nickname Flame and he got to this fellow's name on the roll and he said, "Flame, you come up here and preach to us." And Flame wasn't ready and he turned to Luke 19, talking about Zacchaeus, and he said, "I've got three things to say about Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a wee little man and so am I. And Zacchaeus was up a tree and so am I. And Zacchaeus made haste and came down and so shall I." Spurgeon said that was the best sermon that was ever preached there.

Well, I'm not a wee little man but I am up a tree and I'm going to make haste and come down when I get done. We've got a flight out of Sacramento at 2:30 and there is not another one until tomorrow so we're going to leave just as quickly as I get done preaching. Please forgive Mrs. Fortner for not lingering and talking for a long time as she is wont to do and as you want her to do. When I walk by her, she's going to follow me out to the car and we'll be ready for Brother Gene and Judy whenever they are finished saying goodbye to you. And Lord willing, we will see you in July or in glory and it will be all right either way.

All right, Psalm 22. Everything recorded in these verses, if I understand the Psalm we've read correctly, was written prophetically, penned by divine inspiration as the very words of the Lamb of God, our Savior, when he hung upon the accursed tree bearing our sins in his own body. If there is any portion of Scripture that we might look upon more so than another as holy ground before which we should pull off our shoes in reverence, it is this portion of Scripture. Here God the Son in his agony speaks to the Father as our substitute as he is suffering the wrath of God in our room and in our stead.

We will begin with verse 1. Verses 1, 2 and 3, are the words of our Savior when he hung upon the accursed tree, when he who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Now, understand this is at the apex of his

obedience. This is at his greatest time of sorrow, his greatest time of need. The Lord Jesus says to his father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" You remember the sun was turned into darkness for three hours and the Lord Jesus broke the silence of that day of darkness with this cry that all around him heard, this cry of one in horrid agony, in horrid sorrow of soul, with a broken heart, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That's the question I want to address in this message. It is a message from three Psalms: we'll look at Psalm 22, Psalm 40 and Psalm 69.

I said this is a question I want to address, not answer. Answer it cannot. I cannot explain what I don't understand but address this question I must: why was he forsaken? When our Lord Jesus was made sin for us, he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And then our all glorious Redeemer tells us how utterly completely forsaken he was, so utterly forsaken that the Father refused to hear his cry in his greatest time of need. "Why art thou so far from helping me?" I've never been there. I've never been there. There has never been a time when God wouldn't hear my cry, when God wouldn't help me. Never a time. But here is a man, here is a man, the God-man, who cries, "Why hast thou forsaken me? Why are you 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 can't imagine what our Lord Jesus was experiencing.

They seem to have astonished him as well. He seems to say in verses 4 and 5, "God, you hear the prayers of others, you forsake not others but me you won't hear. Me you have forsaken." Look at verse 4, "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I cry unto you all the day and through the night you brought upon the earth, I cry and you hear me not. Why hast thou forsaken me?" These things are written in the book of God for our learning, that we might through patience and comfort of the Scriptures have hope. When our Lord Jesus 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. Now, this is the one thing I want you to see in this message, the one thing that I have to declare. I hope you can enter into it or may God give you grace now to behold him who died in our stead. I hang all the hopes of my soul upon this one fact: 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 didn't merely bear my sins in his own body on the tree, bless God, he bore them away.

When you read this third verse, our holy Savior when he was made sin for us answers his own question. He said, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" And he answers himself, "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? Why did God forsake his Son when he was made sin for us? Because God is holy, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. This is what he says in Habakkuk 1, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon sin." Our Savior was forsaken by the Father when he was made sin for us

because justice demanded it. Justice demanded it. Understand that first and foremost. When the Lord Jesus was made sin for us, he must be abandoned by God because God is just, he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. God did not punish his Son who did not deserve to be punished. God did not punish his Son who did not deserve to be punished. God punished our substitute, his Son, who fully deserved to be punished for he was made sin for us.

Do you understand that? The first thing: God is just. God is just. To punish one for those things of which he is not guilty is unjust in any court anywhere. There is no possibility of an innocent man, one who is demonstrated innocent to be punished for the crimes of another, not in a court of law. It can't be done. You cannot transfer guilt. It cannot be done. Only the guilty can be punished and Jesus Christ when he was made sin for us fully deserved to die and the same God in his justice when he takes us to glory, doesn't take us to glory as though we were righteous, as though he pretended us to be righteous, because we are now just sort of winked at by God and he says, "Well, come on in. I know you sinned but I'll forget about it." But because by the sacrifice and the righteousness of Christ being made ours, we are made righteous before God so that his name is Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness, and he calls us by that same time, Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness, and when God takes us to glory, it will be right because God is just. He won't behave in any other way. Here in verse 3, our Savior when he was dying under the wrath of God justifies God in his own condemnation because he was made sin. 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 even when the guilty one is his own darling Son.

Our Savior had no sin of his own, understand that. He was born without original sin, being from birth that holy one who is spoken of in Luke 1. The Holy Spirit by his marvelous, wondrous work in the womb of the virgin, conceived in the virgin's womb without the aid of a man a body for the Lord Jesus, a body, a holy thing that would come into this world and live in perfect holiness before God so that all the days of his life our Savior walked on this earth having no sin. No original sin. No propensity for sin. No iniquity. No evil thought. No evil passion. No coldness running through his heart. No malice. No evil in him and no evil done by him. He knew no sin and did no sin and in him is no sin, that's the language of Scripture. But on Calvary, the holy Lord God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

That passage I just quoted to you, 2 Corinthians 5:21, the Apostle Paul writing by divine inspiration is giving us God's explanation of Isaiah 53:10 where it says, "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." What Paul meant to say that he made him who knew no sin to be a sin offering. That's not correct. Paul meant to say what he said. When it pleased God, that one who knew no sin was made sin for us because, you see, the word "sin offering," everywhere it is used in all the Old Testament, if you want to get a concordance, look it up, it will verify what Mr. Fortner is telling you, everywhere you look it up, the word "sin offering" is not "sin offering," the word is "sin." Everywhere you look it up, everywhere in the Old Testament. And the Apostle Paul writing by inspiration

gives us the explanation of the prophets and the law with regard to the sin offering, the sin offering, that is, the offering made for sin was looked upon in the law as sin and now Christ Jesus comes, the holy one, and he is made sin as he makes himself an offering for sin. On Calvary, our Savior was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

"Brother Don, how can we explain that?" Well, you've asked me to do something I can't do. I can't do it. Just as the Lord Jesus in the Incarnation is described for us in John 1:14 with these words, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," that means God became a man. He never ceased to be God but he became a man. All that God is, he is in humanity. The Word, God the Son was made flesh. We like to use terms, the Word Christ assumed our nature, he took on himself our humanity because we are uncomfortable saying God became a man because people have the idea, well, somehow that means that God limited himself; God became limited to humanity; God took on him the weakness of humanity. God became flesh so that in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. I don't know how God could be made flesh and never cease to be God but he did. I don't know how God could die and yet never die, but he did. We are told in Acts 20:28 that he purchased the church with his own blood. I don't know how Christ who knew no sin and did no sin could be made sin and yet have never sinned, but he was.

Compare 2 Corinthians 5:21. Turn over there, if you will, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and then turn back to the Gospel of John 2. Hold your hands in both places. In John 2, the Lord Jesus was invited to a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee and his first miracle was performed here: he turned water into wine. He turned water into wine and we are told in verse 11 of chapter 2, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." Now, back up to verse 9, "When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom." The water that was made wine. Did the Lord Jesus, you reckon, had some Post-it notes and stuck them on those six barrels of water and say "wine." No. He made the water wine. Did he pretend the water was wine? No. He made the water wine. Did he treat the water as though it were wine? No. He made the water wine. "Well, Brother Don, of course that's what happened. He made it the best wine there was."

Look at 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin," "to be," you'll notice, is in italics. The word is really stronger than that. "He hath made him to be sin for us." He didn't write out a piece of paper and say, "This is sin," and stick it on his forehead. He didn't treat the Lord Jesus as though he were sin. He did not pretend that the Lord Jesus was sin. Not even did he here declare that he imputed sin to Christ. In fact, read through the word of God. Yes, sin was imputed to our Savior but it was more than an imputation. Sin cannot be imputed unless guilt is there. It cannot be done. Justice will not allow it. Nowhere in the word of God, nowhere in Scripture, is any legal term ever used with reference to Christ being made sin. Not one place, Pastor. I've looked every one of them up. Not one place. Adam's sin was imputed to us. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. And yes, sin was imputed to our Lord Jesus. It was imputed to him because he was made sin. He was made sin.

These 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 folks to realize, and I know this takes a stretch for some folks, God is bigger than you and you are not going to stick him in your little bowl and say, "This is what God is." You're not going to cram him into your brain and understand all that God is. God is infinite. Infinite. Incomprehensible. We know him only by revelation and we bow to the revelation he gives.

All right, turn to Psalm 40. Here, again, we are allowed to hear the agony of our blessed Redeemer, his soul as he cries out to God when he was made sin for us. His language in this 40<sup>th</sup> Psalm is even more specific in declaring that our sins were made his. Here again, the Lord Jesus calls our sins his own because he hath made him to be sin for us. Now, the one speaking in this Psalm is beyond all doubt the Lord Jesus, our Savior. How do you know that? Because the Holy Spirit tells us so in the tenth chapter of Hebrews. He knew that being made sin for us, he would be brought into the horrible pit and filled with distress. And yet his love for us is so great that he is ready to assume our nature, ready to become one of us and in verse 7, he declares his readiness to do so saying, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." In the volume of the book, according to the ancient settlements of the Triune God in covenant mercy in eternity he says now, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God."

And in verse 11 and 12, he prays for deliverance. Prays for deliverance. The Savior prays for deliverance. "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," mine iniquities, mine iniquities, mine iniquities, mine iniquities. Is that what he said? God the Holy Spirit says that's what he said in Hebrews 10. "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." This is exactly the same thing we read in John 12. Our Lord Jesus as he anticipated being made sin for us, he says, "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." Why was the Son of God brought to such a low sorrowful state of agony and grief? He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Turn to Proverbs 17. Our Savior could never have suffered the painful, shameful, ignominious death of the cross as our substitute, he could never have suffered the wrath of God, he could never have his blood spilled by the sword of justice had he not been made sin for us. Listen to what the book of God says here in Proverbs 17 and verse 15, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD." What did he say? "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just." But wait, God has justified Gene Harmon. He's a wicked man. Well, God can't do that, not unless he makes you righteous. And now God looks at Gene Harmon in his Son, not just robed with the righteousness of Christ, made the righteousness of God in him and God declares Gene Harmon just. Somebody said

justified means as just as if I had never sinned. No, that don't get it. Justified means never sinned. Never sinned. Never sinned.

Well, did you hear on TV but I've never seen it, there seems to be some advertisement in regard to one of these TV police shows and a fellow had a shooting and they said it was a justified shooting. It was a justified shooting. What does that mean, justified shooting? It was right. It was right, not he murdered a man but we are going to declare it is right. Not he pulled out his gun and shot a man in cold blood but we're going to pretend that he didn't do that. No, no, according to the law he did what was right. That's what it is to be justified. When the court declares you justified, it means you've done everything right and when God declares his people justified in Christ Jesus, he is declaring them right. Justified. Righteous. They have done everything exactly right because that's what Christ did for us. He obeyed God's law in the totality of his being, not for himself but for us, and when he lived in obedience to God, we lived in obedience to God. So when it says, "He that justifies the wicked is an abomination to God," it can't be talking about God justifying me. No, God didn't justify me as a wicked man, God justifies the ungodly, making them to be godly in the totality of their being.

Read on, "and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD." When God drew out his sword of justice and cried, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow and smite and slay the shepherd," did God slay his Son, the just, or did he slay his Son, the guilty? You decide. You decide. If he slew his Son, the just, God declares himself to be an abomination. Oh no, oh no, when he made his Son sin for us God Almighty turned his back on his Son and his Son cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And God refusing to look on his Son says, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow. Smite and slay the shepherd," and justice slaughtered the Son of God because he was made sin for us.

Look at verse 12. The Savior is speaking, remember, "for innumerable evils have compassed me about." He was beset on every side with evil, countless woes compassed our great substitute, our sin bearer. God made all the sins of all his people in all the ages of time through all the world and laid them upon his Son in such a way that his Son was made something worse than one who has committed sin, a sinner. His Son was made sin. The horrid thing that he loathes in his holy being, he is made to be. "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me," he cries, "so that I am not able to look up." He had no sin but our sins were laid on him and he took our sins as his own. He was made sin for us and the transfer wasn't a pretend transfer, it was real. It was real. "Brother Don, how do you explain that?" I would not for the life of me attempt to explain that and I sure won't try to explain it away.

Oh no, he was made sin for us. 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? O blessed Scripture, he hath made him sin for us. O marvelous depth of love that made the perfectly immaculate Lamb of God to stand in the sinner's place and bear all the horror of great trembling and woe which sin must cause in the souls of the damned in hell forever so that Christ Jesus suffered all the fury of God's wrath, all the hell of infinite justice with one

tremendous draft of love and drank damnation dry. "They are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me. They are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me." Oh, what a word.

We have a lady in our congregation who a few years ago suddenly had a heart attack. She was a picture of health. She was a picture of health. She fell over the steering wheel right in front of the place where the ambulances are, if she hadn't been right in front of where they send the ambulances to dispatch them out, she would have died right there. They started asking questions because they couldn't find out what was wrong. They asked her husband if she had lost a son or a daughter or a mother or father recently. No. And I learned something, people actually do die of a broken heart. The heart just ruptures and they thought this was what had happened to Regina. But there is no thought about this: God's darling Son died of a broken heart.

"The reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen on me. Reproach has broken mine heart." It was the thought of this in Gethsemane's garden that caused our Savior to sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. Read the words of our sin-atoning Mediator again, Psalm 40:11, "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."

Now look at Psalm 69. Again, everything in this Psalm, it is repeatedly referred to in the New Testament as being the very words of our Savior, the Lord Jesus. The opening verses of the Psalm are clearly our Redeemer's words, "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. 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." No question, is it, that is our Savior speaking. That's who it is, isn't it?

All right, look at verse 5, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee." The word "foolishness" means "perversity." The word "sins" if you have a marginal translation would be better translated "guiltiness." Our Savior, our glorious substitute when he was made sin for us, owns our perversity as his perversity and our guiltiness as his guiltiness because it was made his. The first Adam hid his perversity and his guilt, the last Adam owns ours as his own and does so before God. It is as though he were saying here lifted up upon the cross, "I suffer outside 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 are blotted out with my blood for I being made sin for my people have put away sin by the sacrifice of myself." And all the while he intercedes for us.

Look at verse 6, "Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts," let not them that wait on thee. You are waiting on him right now if you believe him. To wait on him is to believe him. It is to trust him. He that believeth on the Son of God shall not be ashamed. He that believeth on the Son shall not be confounded. He that believeth on the Son shall not be confused. He that believeth on the Son shall not make haste. Those are all translations of the same word.

Now, watch how he prays, he says, "Lord, I made a reproach. I am brought to shame because I have made sin so, 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." Verse 7, "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face."

Oh, what a Savior. Oh, what a Savior. He who knew no sin was made sin for me. He who never had a reason to have shame died with shame, shame which became his glory with which he began to manifest forth his glory when he was made sin for us that we might never have shame before God.

Read on, verse 19 of Psalm 69, "Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee. 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." Why was our Lord Jesus made sin for us? It was that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

John Newton wrote many great great hymns, among those hymns none is sweeter and more blessed than this,

"In evil long I took delight,  
Unawed by shame or fear,  
Till a new object struck my sight,  
And stopped my wild career.

"I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agony and blood,  
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near His cross I stood.

"Sure, never to my latest breath,  
Can I forget that look;  
It seemed to charge me with His death,  
Though not a word He spoke.

"My conscience felt and owned the guilt,  
And plunged me in despair,  
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,  
And helped to nail Him there.



"A second look He gave, which said,  
'I freely all forgive;  
This blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I die that thou mayst live."

Amen. Amen.