

# OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

## ADDITIONAL DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS



### PSALMS

#### “WHY? BUT!” – *Psalm 22:1-6*

Psalm 22 was written by David a thousand years before the birth of Christ. It contains no less than thirty-three distinct prophecies that were all literally fulfilled at Calvary. Who, but God, could so foretell the future? This psalm, for instance, records Emmanuel’s orphan cry, that great cry of desolation that rang during the midday-midnight darkness that wrapped around Him in His agony on the cross.

We know that David was the human author of this psalm; but that only deepens the mystery because, though David knew what it was to suffer, his suffering never approximated the sufferings described here. The Holy Spirit simply took what could only have been hyperbole in David’s case and transformed it into prophecy when David wrote it down.

The suffering Saviour felt Himself abandoned by both God and man. We note the great gulf that separated Him from an all-holy God (vv. 1-3). “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” He asked. “Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?” The Hebrew word for “roaring” is used for the roar of a lion and also for the cry of an animal in pain.

“Why? Why?” He cried, but there was no answer. Then the suffering Saviour changed the word “why” to the word “but.” He said, “But thou art holy!” That was it! The amazing and awesome mystery is that He was made sin for us. He did not become sinful, perish the thought! He became sin and “tasted death.” A whole eternity was sandwiched into that dreadful period of time on the cross that began with the sixth hour and ended with the ninth hour. During that period total darkness held the whole land in its grip and Jesus experienced the ultimate terror of the lost, the horror of being left, in the dark, abandoned by God.

There was also the great gulf that separated Him from all holy people (vv. 4-6). Others cried and were heard. Abraham cried! Moses cried! David cried! God heard them. Jesus cried, and there was no reply.

Again the suffering Saviour found a use for that little word but. “But,” He said, “I am a worm, and no man.” Who can plumb the depths of that? We could have understood it had He said He was a lion or a lamb. But a worm? We count a worm as being very low indeed in our scale of things. We forget that in God’s sovereign dealings with Jonah, the worm was as necessary as the wind and the great fish. Just the same, we don’t think much of worms! That is why we are so startled to hear the Saviour say, “I am a worm.”

The Lord, however, did not use the word for an ordinary worm. On the contrary, He made reference to the crimson crocus, which, when crushed, yielded the scarlet dye. It was a fitting type of the stricken Christ we see on Calvary, “dying, crushed beneath the lead of the wrath and curse of God.” Well might the hymn writer say:

O make me understand it  
Help me to take it in;  
What it meant for Thee, the Holy One  
To take away my sin.