

Tower of Strength

**“The name of the Lord is a strong tower
The righteous runs into it and is safe.”**

—Proverbs 18:10



A Study of the Messiah - The Victorious One -

Last week, we looked at Isaiah 53, a passage describing the Messiah as a suffering servant. Other places provide additional details of His humiliation.

Psalm 118:22 describes Jesus as “the stone which the builders rejected” (see Matt. 21:42, etc). His rejection by the Jewish scribes and priests led to the horrible treatment He received.

Psalm 41:9 predicts that He would be betrayed by a close friend who ate His bread (see John 13:18–19); Zech. 11:12–13 suggests the betrayal would come with a price of thirty pieces of silver (see Matt. 26:14–16).

Zech. 13:7 predicts that all His followers would scatter and abandon Him in His darkest hour (see Mark 14:27).

Psalm 22:11–18 predicts that He would be assaulted by a band of evildoers who would pierce His hands and His feet and cast lots for His clothing (see Matt. 27:35).

Psalm 22:1 foreshadows His fateful cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (see Matt. 27:46).

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Zech. 12:10 predicts that the mob will look upon Him whom they have pierced, as Jesus' lifeless body hung from the cross, and was probed by the Roman spear (see John 19:37).

With all of these horrible things predicted for the life of the Messiah among His people, we might get to thinking that He is a weak and helpless victim, doomed to failure. This is far, far from the actual result. While Jesus had to suffer and die as a sacrifice for our sins, in order to secure our salvation, He remained in control of the circumstances to the smallest degree, and He emerged from the cross victorious over His enemies and over Satan. This victory is also predicted.

David says in Psalm 110:1, concerning the Messiah,

The LORD says to my Lord:

“Sit at My right hand

Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

This passage caused all sorts of confusion in religious discussions. The scribes and Pharisees were puzzled how David's son could also be called his Lord (Matt. 22:41)!

David also says, in Psalm 16:8–11,

I have set the LORD continually before me;

Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices;

My flesh also will dwell securely.

For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay

You will make known to me the path of life;

In Your presence is fullness of joy;

In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Peter made these two psalms the heart of the first gospel sermon ever preached, on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. To the Jewish mind, the idea of a dead Messiah was an oxymoron, an impossibility, a stumbling block (1 Cor. 1:23), especially a Messiah who died hanging on an accursed tree (Gal. 3:13). But Peter shows that these psalms prove that

the Messiah's sacrificial death was never meant to be the end of His work. Thus, when David spoke the above words, he looked forward to the **resurrection** and **ascension** of Jesus.

I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified (Acts 2:29–36).

Yes, God turned away for those dark hours as Jesus bore our sins and gave His life on Calvary. But, on the third day, God raised up Jesus to newness of life. The tomb was found empty (Luke 24:1–9)! God granted that He make several appearances to the disciples and others in His resurrected form, to prove that these promises had come to pass (1 Cor. 15:3–8).

And then, Jesus was lifted up into heaven (Acts 1:9–11) in order to take His seat at the right hand of God, serving "as head over all things to the church which is His body" (Eph. 1:20–23), and serving in the presence of God as our high priest and mediator (1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 9:11–15, 24–28, 10:19–22). He poured out the Holy Spirit, as "another Comforter," not only as proof of His safe arrival in the heavenly places, but also to provide direction in His absence, and inspire full remembrance of the truth in the minds of the disciples (John 14:15–17, 15:26–27). Jesus continues in this ruling, interceding role until His

glorious return, “For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death” (1 Cor. 15:25–26). At that triumphant moment, we are all promised to participate in a bodily resurrection (John 5:28–29) and an unending heavenly reunion.

The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16–17).

That’s why a discussion of “who killed Jesus?” is always fruitless. It wasn’t the Jews and it wasn’t the Romans. It wasn’t the nails and it wasn’t the stripes. It was Jesus Himself, motivated by a love more powerful than any of us are capable of understanding, who gave His life to redeem our sins, each and every one of us personally. Jesus told the disciples, “I lay down My life, so that I may take it up again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative” (John 10:17–18). He told them, “do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 26:53). Jesus gave Himself to die, in submission to His Father’s will, but hoping and trusting in the promise of His Father, that He would come forth from the grave a conqueror over death, and crushing the head of the Serpent (Heb. 2:9–14).

Jesus humbled Himself for a little while, and all the promises of the Old Testament came to pass (Luke 24:44–49). Now, through the miracle of the resurrection, the central miracle of the Bible, God has crowned Him Lord and King. We must serve Him if we expect to reign with Him!

—*John Guzzetta*

Quote of the Week:

“Never does the human soul appear so strong and noble as when it forgoes revenge and dares to forgive.”

—*E. H. Chapin*