

Jesus the Creator

“This will be written for the generation to come,” penned an unknown psalmist, “that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord” (Psalm 102:18). The hand of the Lord was surely upon him; no one really envisioned God’s taking out from the Gentiles a people for His name. “For He looked down from His holy height; from heaven the Lord gazed upon the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to set free those who were doomed to death...” As Jehovah God said during the days of His flesh, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18,19). As we shall see, Jesus is the *Lord* referred to in Psalm 102, the *God* of the psalmist. “For the Lord,” he says, “has built up Zion; He has appeared in His glory” (Psalm 102:16).

- **Psalmist’s prayer** - “O my God,” he appeals, “do not take me away in the midst of my days” (Psalm 102:24). This comes following his awareness of his own aging body; “He has weakened my strength in the way; He has shortened my days” (Psalm 102:23). By contrast, of God he says, “Your years are throughout all generations.”
- **Praise to the Creator** - “Of old,” he praises, “You founded the earth; and the heavens are the work of Your hands” (Psalm 102:25). The writer of Hebrews, wishing to quote only a small section of Psalm 102, interpolates. “You, Lord,” he states, “in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands” (Hebrews 1:10). The interpolation comes as the psalmist, quoting the Greek Old Testament, uses the word “Lord” — the God to whom the writer is praying — to refer to Jesus. Referring to the Son in Hebrews 1:8, his thought continues to the words of verse 10, designating Jesus as the Lord who created the heavens and the earth. “Even they will perish,” notes the psalmist, “but You will endure. All of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing You will change them, and they will be changed.” Of Jesus Christ, the writer of Hebrews quotes, “But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end” (Psalm 102:26,27; Hebrews 1:12). “Jesus Christ,” is the One, according to the Holy Spirit, who is “the same yesterday and today, yes and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).
- **The everlasting God** - “Your throne, O God,” wrote the sons of Korah, “is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows” (Psalm 45:6,7). The One whose throne is forever and ever, reasoned the author of Hebrews, is the Son! “Be lifted up, O ancient doors,” cries David, “that the King of glory may come in!” And, he asks and answers, “Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory!” (Psalm 24:7,10). This a prophetic reference to Jesus’ entering into the spiritual temple in glory. This is the Lord, of whom it is written, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers” (Psalm 24:12). “Before the mountains were born,” says the psalmist Moses, “or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God” (Psalm 90:2).

The apostle John summarizes the Psalms in referring to Jesus the Creator: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (John 1:1-3). The apostle Thomas, speaking of Jesus, said it well, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28).

Jesus in the Flesh

“What is man,” asked David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, “that you take thought of him ...” (Psalm 8:4). Good question. Man as a physical being is pretty puny, infinitely dwarfed by the Creation. “When I consider Your heavens,” David had written, “the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man?” (Psalm 8:3). With a ready pen, he continued, “And [what is] the son of man, that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty” (Psalm 8:4,5). This interesting passage is quoted by the writer of Hebrews from the Old Testament Greek text (called the LXX from the seventy or so translators who worked on it), and the application contains some depth that is worth examining.

- **Christ’s superiority to angels** — The Law of Moses, said Paul, was “ordained through angels” (Galatians 3:19). Hebrews’ author, to establish the superiority of the covenant which came through Christ, makes it clear that Jesus is elevated above the angels. “But to which of the angels has He ever said,” was the rhetorical question, “‘Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet?’ ” (Hebrews 1:13). Picking up the thought a little further in his discourse, the writer notes, “For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking” (Hebrews 2:5). The subjection referred to was the world to come under the feet of Christ!
- **Psalm 8 quotation** — The writer buttresses his point with an inspired look at Psalm 8: “What is man, that You remember him? Or the Son of Man, that You are concerned about Him? You have made Him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned Him with glory and honor, and have appointed Him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things in subjection under His feet” (Hebrews 2:6-8). The attentive reader will note that we took the liberty to capitalize “Son of Man” and the attendant pronouns — doing so because to reduce the attention of Psalm 8 to mere man is to rob it of its significance in being quoted by the writer. The world to come is not going to be subjected even to angels; the subjection is in reference to the Son of Man’s dominion as the One superior to angels.
- **The time lag** — “For in subjecting all things to Him, He left nothing that is not subject to Him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him” (Hebrews 2:8). The Son of Man is waiting until all His enemies be placed under His feet.
- **What we see** — All things are not yet under the dominion of Christ; we wait to see that. “But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor ...” (Hebrews 2:9). Jesus is the Son of Man who tasted death for everyone in order to be the fulfillment of Psalm 8 — crowned with glory and honor!
- **Lower than angels** — To be made lower than angels, Jesus took on flesh; He became human, even experiencing death in the flesh. This is why Jesus, born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, is called the Son of Man. “Let Your hand be upon the Man of Your right hand,” sings Asaph the seer, “upon the Son of Man whom You made strong for Yourself” (Psalm 80:17).

Of Jesus’ taking on a body, it is written, “He had to be made like His brethren in all things” (Hebrews 2:17). Thus, in the quoted psalm, there are vestiges of His days of sojourn in earthen clay: “I will tell of Your name to My brethren” (Psalm 22:22). Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us as the Son of Man, pre-written in the gospel according to Psalms.

The Immersion of Christ

“How great are Your works, O Lord!” exclaimed an anonymous psalmist. “Your thoughts are very deep” (Psalm 92:5). The Lord has written His word to reveal His thoughts, but a Christian has to reason very cautiously and honestly. The All Wise uses prophecies, recorded visions, parables, and foreshadows or types to communicate His message — often using plain statements of fact in the New Testament writings to open the doorways of understanding. “Blessed be the God of Israel,” praised and prophesied Zacharias, “for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a *horn of salvation* for us in the house of David His servant — as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old” (Luke 1:68-70). “For the Lord has chosen Zion,” He said. “There I will cause the *horn of David* to spring forth; I have prepared a lamp for *My Anointed*” (Psalm 132:13,17). The Psalms predict the coming of the Anointed One, descendant of David according to the flesh.

“The kings of the earth,” prophesied David himself, “take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed” (Psalm 2:2). “For truly in this city,” noted the early saints in their prayer to God, “there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, *whom You anointed*, both Herod and Pontius Pilate ...” (Acts 4:27). Jesus, manifested to Israel at His immersion, was thus anointed with the Holy Spirit. “You know of Jesus of Nazareth,” bespoke Peter to the first Gentiles to don Christ, “how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). Psalms looks to the visible anointing of Christ, as well as His eventual accession to the throne in heaven.

- **The covenant with David** — “I have made a covenant with My chosen,” stated the Lord through Ethan the Ezrahite; “I have sworn to David My servant, I will establish Your seed forever and build up your throne to all generations” (Psalm 89:3,4). Prophetically, the psalmist looks past David to David’s seed, saying, “I have exalted one from the people. I have found David My servant; with My holy oil I have anointed him” (Psalm 89:19,20). David was anointed by Samuel; Jesus, the “son of Abraham, the son of David,” was anointed by God while He was in the waters of the Jordan.
- **“You are My Son”** — The Anointed One, the horn of salvation, was to come. “My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with Him,” stated the Almighty, “and in My name His horn will be exalted.” “He will cry to Me, ‘You are My Father, My God, and the rock of My salvation!’ I will also make Him My first born, the highest of the kings of the earth” (Psalm 89:24,26,27). Sure enough, while Jesus was praying, calling upon His Father during His immersion, “heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him bodily like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, ‘You are My beloved son, in You I am well-pleased.’” (Luke 3:21,22).
- **Importance of the visible anointing** — The anointing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit — “the oil of gladness” — was an extremely important visible event. All of the original apostles were present in the crowd that day, although mostly unknown to each other at the time, as Peter delineates in his describing the qualifications of the one who was to take Judas’ place: “It is necessary,” said he, “that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us — beginning with the immersion of John ...” (Acts 1:21,22).

The anointing of Jesus and the declaration that He was God’s Son took place at His immersion, and the prophecies in the gospel according to Psalms were fulfilled.

A Man of Praise

Jesus, in the midst of His sorrow for the lot of man, was always in praise when He looked to God. “For the Father loves the Son,” He had stated, “and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel” (John 5:20). The Son was able to press on in praise to the Father, knowing that His own resurrection from the dead was the greatest work of all, to be experienced and to be exhibited. In constant communication with the Father and with His knowledge of the Psalms, Jesus undoubtedly prayed the words of Psalm 145 at one time or another during the years of His earthly sojourn.

- **General praise to God** — “I will extol You, My God, O King,” were words which easily would have come from the mouth of Jesus. “And I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable” (Psalm 145:1-3).
- **Looking at how many would come to praise God through Jesus** — The psalmist, in prophecy, continued. “One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. On the glorious splendor of Your majesty and on Your wonderful works I will meditate.” Listen to the following words, and note that they fit something Jesus would say better than anyone else: “Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts, and I will tell of Your greatness. They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness and will shout joyfully of Your righteousness” (Psalm 145:4-7).
- **Praising God for His mercies** — “The Lord is gracious and merciful,” Jesus would have extolled the Father, “slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, and Your godly ones shall bless You” (Psalm 145:8-10).
- **The coming kingdom** — Jesus knew what God’s kingdom was, of its coming with great power on the Day of Pentecost, 30 AD, and that eventually the Gentiles would be able to stream into the church, seeking to learn of the God of Israel. “They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom,” were the prophetic words of the psalmist for the mouth of Jesus, “and talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts and the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations” (Psalm 145:11-13).
- **The bounties of God** — Jesus Himself, in taking on the form of a bond-servant, placed Himself in a position of dependence upon the heavenly Father for daily sustenance, and was the means by which the fallen could be rescued. “The Lord sustains all who fall,” were words of understanding, “and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due time. You open Your hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing” (Psalm 145:14-16).
- **The welcome of the Gentiles** — “The Lord is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds,” continue the accolades. “The Lord is near to *all* who call upon Him, to *all* who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and save them. The Lord loves *all* who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.” Jesus’ own words were that “God so loved the world,” not that He so loved the Jewish nation. “My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and *all flesh* will bless His holy name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:17-21).

Jesus walked in praise of His Father, lauding God’s desire to save all men. Psalm 145 comports well with the record of Jesus in the gospel accounts, and could easily have been prophetic of words He actually said during the years of His sojourn, during the time when the Word became flesh.

A Man of Trust

The Lord Jesus walked this lonesome valley as an example for us. We would not have known to call the Great God “Father” except that Jesus set the stage for us to do so. We would not have known to pray before we break bread but for His example. The saints now know how to die in dignity, and be confident of their own resurrections because the Christ plowed through those barriers first. Hear the words of one of the old hymns: “He the great example is, and pattern for me.”

“For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things,” were the words written to the Hebrew Christians, “in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the Author of their salvation through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10). Jesus was victorious in His battles with suffering and rejection because He prayed His way through the difficulties. It is easy to see this suffering, trusting Jesus in the 23rd Psalm.

- **Jesus’ Shepherd** — The Savior often commented on the fact that He did nothing without having the Father’s approval. “For I did not speak on My own initiative,” He stated, “but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak” (John 12:49). He could truly say, then, “The Lord is My Shepherd” (Psalm 23:1).
- **What the Shepherd supplied** — “I shall not want,” was one of the lines. Jesus’ needs were always met, even when some women had to supply the necessities for the Lord and His train from their own purses. “He makes Me lie down in green pastures; He leads Me beside quiet waters,” was a reflection from the quiet pool of Jesus’ own soul, while about Him swirled the winds of controversy and conspiracy. Through it all, the Christ could comment, “He restores My soul; He guides Me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” (Psalm 23:1-3).
- **Through the shadow of death** — All who died before Christ — Abraham, Moses, David — were swallowed up in Hades. Although they were in the better of the two compartments, they were captive, ensnared by its bonds. Jesus knew, in His case, that the plan was for Him to die, and for the Father to raise Him from the dead, so that in triumph He could shout that He had the keys of death and Hades. “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” were the prescient words of the psalmist, “I fear no evil, for You are with Me.”
- **Divine direction and protection** — “Your rod,” would be one of the substances of Jesus’ prayers, “and Your staff, they comfort Me” (Psalm 23:4). The rod and the shepherd’s crook direct the sheep down the correct paths, as well as protect them from marauding predators; a great comfort to Jesus as He worked through a spiritual realm encrusted with demonic slime.
- **The table of the Lord** — Fellowship with the Father was the continuing ultimate promise, even though the Christ was going to have to bear the separation caused by the sins of mankind. “You prepare a table before Me in the presence of My enemies,” was His hope, looking to what we now call the Lord’s Supper.
- **No stopping the coronation** — The forces of evil could not stop the long-term plan of God; “You have anointed My head with oil; My cup overflows,” were expressive of His thoughts of joy at taking His seat on the throne as King and Savior (Psalm 23:5).
- **All’s well that ends well** — The victory, through faith in God, was going to be there for Jesus. “Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow Me all the days of My life,” were words of confidence, “and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:6).

Jesus, having been raised from the dead through the blood of the eternal covenant, trusting in the God of peace, thus now becomes “the great Shepherd of the sheep” (Hebrews 13:20).

A Man of Parables

The Old Testament must be viewed through the eyes of the New Testament authors. “All these things Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables,” were the inspired words of Matthew, as he prepared to open a doorway of understanding into a comment in Psalms, “and He did not speak to them without a parable, so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, ‘I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.’” (Matthew 13:34,35). The words were taken from Asaph the seer: “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old” (Psalm 78:2).

- **Asaph and contemporaries** — While David penned many of the psalms, he was not by any means the sole author; Solomon is listed as one of the contributors, as well as Moses. In anticipation of the completion of the temple in Jerusalem and the consequent elimination of the tabernacle of Moses, David began to appoint various Levitical families to tasks in the temple, since they would no longer have a function in terms of tearing down or carrying the tabernacle. “Moreover,” recorded Ezra the scribe, “David and the commanders of the army set apart for service some of the sons of Asaph and of Heman and of Jeduthun, who were to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals” (I Chronicles 25:1). Thus Matthew calls Asaph a prophet, and psalms written by these men also have the force of prophecy. Asaph himself was a descendant of the Levite, Korah, so some of the psalms are written by “the sons of Korah.”
- **“I will open My mouth”** — The Jews knew, for example, that when “the mouth of Jeremiah” spoke, that was a message from “the mouth of the Lord” (Jeremiah 9:12). So Asaph is speaking of a great Prophet, delivering the message of God to a people who needed to be stirred to action.
- **“In parables”** — Some of the Old Testament prophets would occasionally use a parable in their expressions, but this Prophet — different from all the rest — would deliver the message of God in parables. Stories of common, every day things, events, and people would be constructed to communicate the spiritual message this Prophet would need to deliver.
- **“Things hidden”** — Many prophets and righteous men and kings, Jesus would say to His disciples, desired to see what they saw and to hear what they heard. What Jesus was bringing to the world was a spiritual kingdom, “things which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of men” (I Corinthians 2:9). Referring to the “great salvation” which comes in connection with the kingdom, the writer of Hebrews observed that “it was at the first spoken through the Lord” (Hebrews 2:3). Speaking in parables, then, the Lord Jesus, during the years of His earthly sojourn, began to bring to light the things concealed in the Old Testament.
- **“From the foundation of the world”** — In one of His parables Jesus described the scene at the judgment bar wherein He was speaking to the “sheep”, His faithful ones: “Come, you who are blessed of My Father,” He said, “inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). Clearly the spiritual kingdom was in God’s mind before He started the process of creation. But it was hidden from those in earlier times, so that the Lord Himself would be the One to begin bringing those things to light in the form of the parables.

The “gospel according to Psalms” only gives a couple of lines to the speaking of parables by Jesus. But what powerful lines they are, establishing the credibility of the Great Teacher, giving Him due honor in the privilege of bringing the hidden message of God to light.

The Betrayal of Jesus

How awesome indeed is our God! To produce faith and allegiance in us, He became one of us. To generate respect and admiration, He was willing to die like we. But to show His empathy and compassion, He entered the realm of human passion and relations, allowing Himself to be betrayed and destroyed by someone close to Him. He was, verily, “tempted in all things as we” (Hebrews 4:15). Fitting it was, then, that His betrayal should be marked out in prophetic utterance in “the gospel according to Psalms.”

- **The close friend** — Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, was the treasurer of the entourage. The group of the twelve apostles, Jesus, and others who were hanging around had to eat on a regular basis; consequently there were women such as “Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means” (Luke 8:3). Judas, privileged man that he was, was in charge of the “money box,” but his greed got control of him. When 300 days’ wages worth of perfume was dumped on Jesus’ body by Mary, sister of Lazarus, Judas became upset at the thought of all that money slipping by without his being able to get his “share” surreptitiously from the money box. The Lord put Judas in his place; Judas responded like a man of the flesh, became angry with Jesus, and went out and cut a deal with the chief priests to betray the Savior. It had been written in the Psalms of this “close friend in whom I trusted, who ate My bread, [who] has lifted up his heel against Me” (Psalm 41:9).
- **One of sweet fellowship** — Before Jesus selected the twelve apostles, He spent the night in prayer. Each of those selected was someone whom Jesus felt He could trust, and with whom He could have the spiritual companionship so necessary to Him who would face great tests on behalf of mankind. The anguish of Jesus over Judas’ betrayal is forenoted in the Psalms: “For it is not an enemy who reproaches Me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates Me who has exalted himself against Me, then I could hide Myself from him. But it is you, a man My equal, My companion and familiar friend; we who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God in the throng” (Psalm 55:12).
- **The ultimate consequences** — While Jesus and the twelve were participating in the Passover meal, Jesus stated that the one who dipped the morsel with Him would betray Him. “The Son of Man is to go,” He said, “just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born” (Matthew 26:24). Squeezing a general reference in Psalm 69:25 to the Jews’ rejection of the Lord, the apostle Peter specifically applied it to Judas: “Let his homestead be made desolate, and let no one dwell in it” (Acts 1:20). “Let another take his office,” David had prophesied (Psalm 109:8). Judas, son of perdition, was to end up in the ultimate empty homestead, and someone else would have the honor of sitting on one of the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The words of the psalmist certainly point to Jesus’ anguish in dealing with the kiss of Judas: “Help Me, O Lord My God; save Me according to Your lovingkindness. And let them know that this is Your hand; You, Lord, have done it. Let them curse, but You bless; when they arise, they shall be ashamed, but Your Servant shall be glad. Let My accusers be clothed with dishonor, and let them cover themselves with their own shame as with a robe” (Psalm 109:26-29). Woe indeed to Judas, but praise to the highest for the Lamb that was betrayed to be slain!

The Crucifixion of Christ

“For zeal for Your house,” it was written of the coming Christ, “has consumed Me” (Psalm 69:9). The Lord Jesus was not interested in playing games. Aware that the only purpose of mankind’s existence was to show the righteousness of God, the Master was fired up about the things of God. In connection with His first Passover following His immersion, He ran the oxen, sheep, doves, and men out of the temple, in holy zeal driving them with a whip of cords. In connection with His last Passover, He cleansed the temple again, saying, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a robbers’ den” (Mark 11:17). His zeal was pleasing to the Father, but therefore offensive to man. “And the chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for all the multitude was astonished at His teaching” (Mark 11:18).

Thus the progression toward Calvary intensified, the love of God painted in graphic colors on the canvass of the folly of man. Forces larger than what Pontius Pilate could handle were in motion, and the Lamb of God was like a sheep for slaughter, mute and still in the condemning kangaroo court. All the rebellion of God’s children, the sons of men, was poured out on the Son of God: “The reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on Me” (Psalm 69:9).

- **Trouble in ex-paradise** - The anguish of Jesus as He approached His expiration on the cross is foretold in the Psalms. “Be not far from Me,” He prayed to the Father, “for trouble is near; for there is none to help” (Psalm 22:11). Describing the crew who conspired to put Him to death, He cried out, “Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They open wide their mouth at Me, as a ravening and roaring lion” (Psalm 22:12,13). “For dogs have surrounded Me,” He said, “a band of evildoers has encompassed Me” (Psalm 22:16).
- **His body’s ebbing strength** - Dragged before illegitimate courts, smashed in the face, plaited with a crown of thorns, and scourged for good measure, the Son of Man was already in a weakened condition before the nails began to penetrate His body. “I am poured out like water,” were the words of His travail, “and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaves to My jaws.” The inevitable was before Him: “And you lay Me in the dust of death” (Psalm 22:14,15).
- **Death by crucifixion** - Three centuries before Rome was founded, it was prophesied that the Messiah would die a Roman death. The Jewish way was death by stoning, as Stephen was to die, but that the curse of sin might be lifted from mankind, the Son of God was to be hanged on a tree. “They pierced My hands and My feet,” said He, prophetically (Psalm 22:16).
- **The soldiers’ lots** - Someone had to have the hands that physically drove the spikes into Jesus’ wrists and ankles. The soldiers who crucified the prisoners and raised the crosses into the sky were therefore privileged to divide the regular clothing among themselves, and ended up casting lots for the seamless tunic, Jesus’ outer garment. “They look, they stare at Me,” were the words of God in the flesh, “they divide My garments among them, and for My clothing, they cast lots” (Psalm 22”17,18).
- **No bones broken** - To fulfill other prophecy, it was necessary that no bones of Jesus be broken. “I can count all My bones,” He said, and thus Christ our Passover was sacrificed.

Nearing the time of His final breath, the Savior of the world cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Psalm 22:1). In being separated from the Father, the humble Servant of God was paying the penalty of eternal separation which the rest of us deserve. In poverty and weakness He paid the price; God help us to respond to such love and compassion with power, love, and discipline.

Events at the Crucifixion

When the weakness of God was displayed before the sons of man, representatives of the race responded by demonstrating utter contempt for the crucified Son of Man. The overflow of their hearts was evidenced in the words of their mouths as they passed by our Immanuel, cursing Him in the broad daylight of nine till noon. "Because of Your sake," were His words to the Father, "I have borne reproach; dishonor has covered My face. I have become estranged from My brothers and an alien to My mother's sons" (Psalm 69:7,8). Christ the great example uttered in return no threats; instead He took time to forgive the soldiers for their act of crucifying Him, and to grant Paradise to the one thief who knew the Jesus Himself would come into His kingdom. He gave and forgave to the end.

- **His cup** - "They also gave Me gall for My food," was the Lord's utterance through David (Psalm 69:21). The bitter substance was also a painkiller, the morphine of the day. When it came time for Jesus to be crucified, "they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink" (Matthew 27:34). Our Lord was going to drink the full cup of the pain of the cross for us, that we might know that His was not an easy ride, that He indeed can sympathize with our weaknesses and suffering and still show us the way to victory.
- **His humility** - Christ really did, in the words of the apostle Paul, empty Himself. The Origin of the universe and the Master of men was to hang naked before the minions who mustered at the Passover, innocent but dying a brutal death no different from the convicted thieves who flanked Him. "But I am a worm and not a man," were His feelings, "a reproach of men and despised by the people" (Psalm 22:6). "He humbled Himself," states the scripture, "by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8).
- **His focus** - Satan's shadowy form hovered amidst the crowds and their rulers, moving them to mock Him, saying, "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40). His anguish at their unbelief during His most trying moments was noted in the gospel according to Psalms: "All who see Me sneer at Me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, 'Commit Yourself to the Lord; let Him deliver Him; let Him rescue Him, because He delights in Him.' " (Psalm 22:7,8). But, praise be to God, Jesus was able to maintain His focus on the purpose of His sacrifice, and not let the short-sightedness of the crowd or the mocking of His adversaries cause Him to swerve from His course.
- **His fulfillment** - Jesus' responsibility was to make sure that all Old Testament prophecies about His time on earth were fulfilled. But there was one prophecy left that was under His control that yet needed to be made to happen. The apostle John records: "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine [vinegar] was standing there; so they put a sponge full of sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth" (John 19:28,29). The scripture to be fulfilled was this: "And for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Psalm 69:21).
- **His finish** - In the midst of the darkness of Golgotha, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus uttered His last words, expressing His prayer to the Father, "Into Your hand I commit My spirit" (Psalm 31:5).

The Savior was able to move through the tense moments of the cross with all its endemic temptations and to set the stage for victory because of His faith in the Father. "You will pull Me out of the net which they have secretly laid for Me, for You are My strength." And, "You have ransomed Me, O Lord, God of truth" (Psalm 31:5,6).

Jesus' Resurrection

Healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, or even raising the dead did not contain the greatest of miracles to be performed. Those sick still became ill again; those blind eventually lost their sight; and those resurrected died once more. But these miracles done by the Father through Jesus were great, and tangible; and they set the stage for what was to come. "For the Father loves the Son," said our Lord, "and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel" (John 5:20). Jesus' victory over the grip of the grave was what was to be demonstrated and proclaimed to the world. "I was dead," stated He in the Apocalypse, "and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades" (Revelation 1:18). Believable? Yes, because of the gospel according to Psalms.

- **The subject of Psalm 16** - "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol," is the way the New American Standard Version translates the verse, "nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay" (Psalm 16:10). What is interesting here is that the translators do not capitalize the word "my" before "soul" either in Psalm 16 or when it is quoted in Acts chapter two, indicating that *David's soul* is the one under discussion. But a careful examination will show that *Jesus' soul* is actually that which the prophet had in mind.
- **Peter's reasoning** - Chosen to have the keys of the kingdom, the apostle Peter is quoted in the second chapter of Acts referring to Psalm 16. "Brethren," said he to his fellow Jews on Pentecost, 30 AD, "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" (Acts 2:29). Since Peter had quoted Psalm 16 to prove Jesus' resurrection from the dead, he had to answer the legitimate question, "Wasn't David talking about himself?" The answer is that David could not have been talking about himself, since David was still in the tomb and David's soul had been left in Hades [Sheol]. This is the way the apostle phrased the continuing proposition: "And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon 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" (Acts 2:30,31). David's tomb was full of bones; the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth was empty. Jesus' soul was the one not abandoned to Sheol, and Psalm 16:10 should read, "For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."
- **The permanent resurrection from the dead** - The section of the Psalm quoted by Peter, then, is about Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. "I have set the Lord continually before Me," says the Christ, prophetically, "because He is at My right hand I will not be shaken. Therefore My heart is glad and My glory rejoices; My flesh will also 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*" (Psalm 16:8-11). All other resurrections were temporary; this resurrection was *forever*.

There are three things God uses to prove Jesus being raised from the dead: 1) Eyewitness accounts; 2) Attesting miracles; and 3) Old Testament prophecies. The *clearest prophecy* of the Lord's resurrection is Psalm 16, quoted by both Peter and Paul to establish that point to Jewish audiences! The Holy One of God is risen indeed.

The Ascension of Jesus

For some reason, many of the brethren have it locked in their heads that the gospel is the death, burial, and bodily resurrection of Jesus, and that the ascension of the Lord is a true and nice afterthought. But it is the ascension of the Christ which makes Him who He is, the Christ in glory rather than Christ in the flesh. As the apostle Paul noted, “even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer” (II Corinthians 5:16).

The clearest prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus is Psalm 16:8-11, quoted by both Peter and Paul. But what is especially interesting about both their quotes is that when they speak of the resurrection of Jesus, they use the term *resurrection* or *raised up* to refer, not only to Jesus’ bodily resurrection, but His being seated on the heavenly throne!

- **Peter’s quotation** - When the apostle Peter quoted David in regard to the resurrection, he used resurrection in regard to Jesus taking His seat on David’s throne. Pay attention to these words: Because David as a prophet “knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ” (Acts 2:30,31). “This Jesus God raised up again,” he would note. “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God” was how he interpreted the raising of up of Jesus.
- **Paul’s quotation** - When the apostle Paul delivered his message to the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia, he also had to prove that Jesus was risen from the dead. “God has fulfilled this promise to our children,” he averred, “in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You.’ ” (Acts 13:33; Psalm 2:7). “That He raised Him up from the dead,” the apostle further noted, “no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘I will give You the holy and sure blessings of David.’ ” (Acts 13:34). This quotation from Isaiah 55:3 is a clear reference to Jesus’ taking the throne of David, who was promised that his throne would last forever. Then the apostle stated, “Therefore He also says in another Psalm, ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.’ ” (Acts 13:35). Paul used the term raised up to refer not only to Jesus’ bodily resurrection, but His ascension to His exalted position on high.
- **Jesus declared LORD or Jehovah [Yahweh]** - Isaiah saw the LORD in glory as recorded in Isaiah 6:1-11. Lofty and exalted, He was in this prophetic vision seated on His throne, attended by seraphim. Interpreting this passage, the apostle John recorded, “These things [Isaiah 6:1-11 and 53:1] Isaiah said because He saw [Jesus’] glory, and he spoke of Him” (John 12:41). By virtue of His accession to the heavenly throne of glory, Jesus is declared both LORD and Messiah.
- **The ascension in Psalms** - The gospel according to Psalms does not let us down. “God has ascended with a shout,” declare the sons of Korah, prophetically, “the LORD, with the sound of a trumpet” (Psalm 47:5). And the apostle Paul quotes from David in reference to Jesus’ taking the throne to receive and distribute favors: “You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives” (Psalm 68:18).

“Sing praises to God,” are the words of praise to Jesus, the ascended God, “sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is King of all the earth; sing praises with a skillful psalm. God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne. The princes of the people have assembled themselves as the people of the God of Abraham” (Psalm 47:6-9). Jesus is indeed the God of our salvation, and rightly called God our Savior.

The Throne of David

The word of the Lord has sounded throughout the millennia. From Adam and Seth on down to Abraham, the history of the Almighty God and His dealings with man were passed from generation to generation. The rumblings were there in the prophecies of Enoch and the promises to Isaac. “The scepter shall not depart from Judah,” was the foretelling of Jacob, “nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to Him shall be the obedience of the peoples” (Genesis 49:10). Even Balaam was not able to curse the nation brought out of Egypt, saying of Israel, “The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them” (Numbers 23:21). “Behold, we have heard it in Ephrathah,” sang the twelve tribes as they wound their way up the temple mount, “we have found it in the field of Jaar” (Psalm 132:6). And what did they hear? “The Lord has sworn to David, a truth from which He will not turn back: ‘Of the fruit of your body I will sit upon your throne.’ ” (Psalm 132:1).

- **David’s lord** - “What do you think about the Christ,” Jesus queried the Pharisees, “whose son is He?” Their answer was on target: “The son of David.” Jesus’ next question was eye-opening for anyone who would consider the implications of the answer. “Then how,” He probed, “does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord?’” In Israel, there was no sense in which a man’s descendant would be that man’s lord. The question, for those who claimed to uphold the inspiration of the Old Testament scriptures, was a fair one, pointing to Psalm 110: “The LORD,” stated David, “says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’ ” (Psalm 110:1). The only way that David’s descendant was going to be David’s Lord was for David’s descendant to be God in the flesh. And not only this; the throne on which He was to sit would not be in Jerusalem, but at the “right hand” of the Majesty on high.
- **The King installed** - “The nations,” the prophet noted, were “in an uproar.” The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers counseled together to frustrate the plan of God and of His Christ. But, the scripture records, prophetically, “He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord scoffs at them” (Psalm 2:1,4). In spite of their efforts, the result was announced aforetime by the Determiner of destiny: “But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain” (Psalm 2:6). And Mark inscribed in his gospel account: “So when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God” (Mark 16:19). Jesus is King far beyond the reach of the politics and mad scrambling of man, “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion” (Ephesians 1:21).
- **The eternal throne** - Of the Son it is written, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever” (Psalm 45:6). “God,” said the psalmist, “Your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy above Your companions” (Psalm 45:7). Jesus, risen from the dead, taken up in glory, was anointed with the Holy Spirit in heaven to assume His position on the throne. “The Lord is in His holy temple,” was another of David’s prophecies, “the Lord’s throne is in heaven” (Psalm 11:4). “For the Lord has chosen Zion,” was another reference. “There I will cause the horn of David to spring forth; I have prepared a lamp for My anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame; but upon Himself His crown shall shine” (Psalm 132:17,18).

No, “it was not David who ascended,” explained the Holy Spirit by the mouth of the apostle Peter. It was Jesus who ascended to sit at the right hand of power. “Therefore,” concluded the apostle, “let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus who you crucified” (Acts 2:36). “He who overcomes,” said the Christ Himself, “I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Revelation 3:21).

Savior of the World

“The Lord lives,” sang David, “and blessed be my Rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation” (Psalm 18:46). In working with Israel, the Father allowed the people to think of salvation in terms of deliverance from a physical enemy. “He delivers me from my enemies,” affirmed the first king to sit on the throne in Jerusalem (Psalm 18:48). But Dave, a man after God’s own heart, knew that sin was a bigger barrier than a city wall, and that Satan was a far worse enemy than the Philistines. “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, God of my salvation,” was his appeal, “then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness” (Psalm 51:14).

- **The crushing weight of sin** - After David’s affair with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of her husband Uriah the Hittite (one of David’s own mighty men!), the king’s conscience bothered him greatly. “For I know my transgression,” were his anguished words to God, “and my sin is ever before me” (Psalm 51:3). “For I confess my anxiety,” stated he in another place, “I am full of anxiety because of my sin” (Psalm 38:18). The honest man, like David, recognizes the full weight of his sin, and recognizes likewise that forgiveness is going to have to be provided by the God of salvation. “Make haste to help me,” he called, “O Lord, my salvation” (Psalm 38:22).
- **Ineffectiveness of animal sacrifices** - Blood sacrifices and grain offerings really could not appease the wrath of God; rather, in the words of Hebrews’ writer, “in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year” (Hebrews 10:3). Christ, prophetically speaking through David, asseverated, “Sacrifice and meal offering you have not desired... Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. Then I [the Christ] said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of Me; I delight to do Your will, O My God’” (Psalm 40:6-8). Jesus, symbolically having the awl driven through His ear to show that He was a bond-slave, “emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant” (Philippians 2:7). As the writer of Hebrews redescribed Jesus’ delight in doing the Father’s will, “a body You have prepared for Me” (Hebrews 10:5). In this body the Lord Jesus would do what none of the Old Testament offerings could do - pay the price for mankind’s sins.
- **Salvation from His position of power** - While Jesus on the cross was the sacrifice, it is Jesus in glory who has the power to save. “Who has believed our message?” queried Isaiah prophetically. “And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (Isaiah 53:1). The apostle John quoted the passage from Isaiah as referring to a vision of Jesus in glory (John 12:38,41). “Now the Lord saw,” said Isaiah again, “...that there was no one to intercede; then His own arm brought salvation to Him” (Isaiah 59:15,16). “You have a strong arm,” averred Ethan the Ezrahite, “Your right hand is exalted” (Psalm 89:13). “O sing to the Lord a new song,” shouted the seer to the church, “for He has done wonderful things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained victory for Him. The Lord has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations” (Psalm 98:12). Peter and the apostles emphasized this point in their early preaching of the gospel: Jesus is “the One whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior” (Acts 5:30).
- **Salvation to the Gentiles** - “God be gracious to us and bless us,” prayed and praised the psalmist, “and cause His face to shine upon us - that Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations” (Psalm 67:1,2). “Save us, O Lord our God,” were the words of another prophetic psalm, “and gather us from among the nations” (Psalm 106:47).

Jesus is indeed the Savior of the world. “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity” (Psalm 32:1,2). This blessing is for the uncircumcised as well as the circumcised, and Jesus is the sacrifice and Savior of all!

Jesus is LORD

In the Old Testament writings, the name of God was listed as the tetragrammeton YHWH, commonly rendered in English as “Yahweh” or “Jehovah.” Many of the versions, such as the New American Standard Bible or the New King James Version, will write the name of Yahweh as “LORD” in small capitals in contrast to “Lord,” from the Hebrew “Adonai,” meaning “master.” The Greek New Testament makes no distinction in the names for God, rendering both “Yahweh” and “Adonai” as the Greek “Kurios,” translated into English as “Lord.” So, while many professing Christians are comfortable with the idea that “Jesus is Lord,” not so many are comfortable with the idea that “Jesus is Yahweh.” Yet that is the thrust of the New Testament writings, and the thrust of the gospel according to Psalms.

- **“Jesus is Yahweh” from Isaiah** - Two specific references to Jesus from visions of Isaiah are quoted in John chapter twelve. In Isaiah six, the prophet saw a vision of the King seated on His throne. “Woe is me,” was the seer’s outcry, “for my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts” (Isaiah 6:5). In another outburst the prophet asked a couple of haunting questions: “Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed?” (Isaiah 53:1). Of these two visions the apostle John and the Holy Spirit descried, “These things Isaiah said, because he saw [Jesus’] glory, and he spoke of Him” (John 12:41). The point is clear; Jesus as King of glory is Yahweh of hosts!
- **The King of glory** - “Lift up your heads, O gates,” was David’s prophetic view of the spiritual temple, “and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in!” (Psalm 24:7). All heaven waited in anxious anticipation for the ascension of Jesus. Of Him Zechariah prophesied, “He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices” (Zechariah 6:12,13). When Jesus became High Priest of the order of Melchizedek by the power of an indestructible life, He also was crowned Messiah as He took His seat on the heavenly throne. In the true or spiritual temple which He built, the Lord Jesus is both High Priest and King, and the counsel of peace is between the two offices because they are now merged in one Personage. The gates of this temple were to be “lifted up,” that the King of glory might come in. “Who is this King of glory?” asked David. “The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle,” is part of the answer. “The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory,” comes the completion (Psalm 24:8,10).
- **The strong right arm** - “To whom has the Arm of the LORD been revealed?” was Isaiah’s question in regard to Jesus’ ascension to glory. “Sing to the LORD a new song,” is the psalmist’s look at the church, “for He has done wonderful things; His Right Hand and His holy Arm have gained the victory for Him” (Psalm 98:1). The One mighty in battle, the strong Right Arm, is clearly Yahweh of hosts, Jesus Christ, Lord of all. “The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations” (Psalm 98:2). It is a great question: “To whom has the Arm of the LORD been revealed?” “You have a strong Arm,” was the prophetic utterance of Ethan the Ezrahite, “Your Hand is mighty; Your Right Hand is exalted” (Psalm 89:13).

Jesus is LORD! That is the confessed truth upon which the church is built and which must be believed upon in order for the individual to be saved. “O LORD God of hosts, restore us; cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved?” (Psalm 80:19).

Mediator of the New Covenant

A will or testament, commented the writer of Hebrews, is of no force until the death of the testator. But a will is equally forceless unless there is someone to execute the terms of the will. Thus of Jesus it is written, "He is also the mediator of a better covenant" (Hebrews 8:6). In His death on the cross, He functioned as the Testator; in His ascension to glory, from the position of power, He serves as the Executor of the covenant. "My covenant I will not violate," says He who lives forever and ever, "nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever, and His throne as the sun before Me" (Psalm 89:34-36).

- **Making the covenant with Abraham** - Antedating the Law of Moses by hundreds of years, God entered into agreement with Abraham, that Abraham's descendants were to be numberless: "a father of many nations" was the promise to the patriarch. Renewed with Isaac and passed on to Israel, the covenant was with Abraham and Abraham's seed - Christ! (Galatians 3:16). "He has remembered His covenant forever," were the notations of the psalmist, "the word which He commanded to the thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham and His oath to Isaac" (Psalm 105:8,9).
- **The Law of Moses** - Having laid the foundation for the everlasting covenant through Abraham, God instituted the Law through Moses, an inferior covenant. This Law was added to the covenant with Abraham as a temporary codicil, said the apostle Paul, until the "seed" should come to whom the covenant with Abraham had really been made. This Law was an inferior covenant, a stop-gap measure instituted in the nation Israel to set the stage for Christianity to come. But, "they did not keep the covenant of God, and refused to walk in His law" (Psalm 78:10).
- **Covenant with David** - For the first 400 years of its history, "there was no king in Israel." When God yielded to the people's clamoring for a king, He in stages installed David on the throne. "I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, I will establish Your seed forever, and build up Your throne to all generations" (Psalm 89:34). These matters were in motion for the eventual enthroning of the Messiah.
- **Ascended covenant-maker** - Of Jesus it was prophesied, "You have ascended on high, You have led captive Your captives" (Psalm 68:18). The great King could now institute His covenant, having died as Testator, but risen to position of power as Mediator. "And this is My covenant with them," He said, "when I take away their sins" (Romans 11:27). "He has sent redemption to His people," was good news from Psalms, "He has ordained His covenant forever; holy and awesome is His name" (Psalm 111:9). Really looking to the new covenant, the psalmist wrote of those who would be redeemed by the sprinkled blood of the risen Savior: "Nevertheless He looked upon their distress, when He heard their cry; and He remembered His covenant for their sake, and relented according to the greatness of His lovingkindness. He also made them objects of compassion in the presence of all their captors" (Psalm 106:44-46). Indeed, then, scattered Israel is being brought into the fold, in accordance with this prayer: "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, to give thanks to Your holy name, and glory in Your praise" (Psalm 106:47).

The covenant of redemption promised to Abraham has been accomplished for all people through Christ in glory. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so," exhorts the psalmist, "whom He has redeemed from the hand of the adversary, and gathered from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south" (Psalm 107:2,3). Yes, let the redeemed say so!

The Chief Cornerstone

The great, the mighty, the awesome God is building a house for Himself. Only the best materials will suffice in its construction, but, like all buildings, its foundation must be especially secure. As the great Architect, He has drawn His blueprint. As the great Provider, He has developed the network to collect the building materials. As the great Builder, He has put together the tools and team for erecting His structure. And as the great God, He has the capacity for filling it. And as the great Engineer, He has laid in place the foundation, aligned and riveted by the Chief Cornerstone.

- **The Rock of salvation** — “O come,” sang the psalmist, “let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation” (Psalm 95:1). Israel had this lesson impressed upon them: “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain” (Psalm 127:1). Their strength was not in their horseman, but only in the God who delivers — saves — with His mighty hand.
- **The Rock in the wilderness** — “Ascribe greatness to our God!” exclaimed Moses, “the Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just” (Deuteronomy 32:3,4). This is the One who led Israel out of Egypt and sustained them forty years in the wilderness. The first generation, who through Joshua conquered the promised land, were faithful to God in most respects. But the generations which followed forgot God and turned aside to their own ways and idols. When their enemies took control of Israel, they cried out to the Father, and He raised up judges to deliver them from the Gentiles’ hands. “And they remembered,” stated Asaph the singer, “that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer” (Psalm 78:35). “They were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them,” observed the apostle Paul in an obvious reference to Deuteronomy and Psalms, “and the rock was Christ” (I Corinthians 10:4).
- **The Cornerstone** — So when the time came to lay the cornerstone for the spiritual temple of God, He was not going to use just any stone from the field; only the Rock of salvation would do. “I will give thanks to You,” were the prophetic words of the psalmist, “for You have answered me, and You have become my salvation.” Then this statement was appended: “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes” (Psalm 118:21-23). Jesus Christ, the Rock of salvation, risen from the dead, was set in place as the cornerstone at His ascension to glory! “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,” prophesied the Almighty, “a tested stone, a costly cornerstone, for the foundation, firmly placed” (Isaiah 28:6).
- **The Lord lives!** — The apostle Peter, in reference to Psalm 118 and Isaiah 28, described the risen Christ as “a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God” (I Peter 2:4). This is the thrust of David, who, being a prophet, looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ: “The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of my salvation” (Psalm 18:46). Truly any sincere Gentile on the face of the earth can join this prayer: “From the end of the earth I call to You, when my heart is faint; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I” (Psalm 61:2).

What awesome words we find in the gospel according to Psalms! The ascension of Jesus Christ to His proper position, after being rejected by men, as the chief cornerstone in God’s spiritual house is carefully set forth. Only the best materials will suffice, and the cornerstone was costly! The foundation must be secure, and only the Rock of salvation was solid enough! And by His grace and mercy, we “also as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house” (I Peter 2:5). Build on, Lord, build on!

Speaking from Heaven

Jesus speaks from heaven. His *modus operandi* is not to walk into people's living rooms and have a chat with them, nor is it to whisper sweet somethings into the ears of those whom He loves. He speaks as the great Prophet of God, the final voice to be heard on things eternal. "In these last days," wrote Hebrews' author, God "has spoken to us in His Son" (Hebrews 1:2). "And it shall be," pointed out Peter, "that every soul that does not heed that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23). We indeed shall not escape if we "turn away from Him who warns from heaven" (Hebrews 12:25). "To Him who rides upon the highest heavens, which are from ancient times; behold, He speaks with His voice, a mighty voice" (Psalm 68:33). His written word is His voice!

- **He speaks of His sacrifice** — Prophetically, the words of Jesus through David are in the past tense: "Then I said." What did He say? "Behold, I come." And the reason He came was that sacrifices, meal offerings, and burnt offerings were not adequate to remit the sins of those to be declared righteous. So, He said, "A body You have prepared for Me" (Hebrews 10:5 from Psalm 40:6). "I delight to do Your will, O My God," He averred, demonstrating His desire to serve the Father by bearing in His body the sins of all mankind.
- **He speaks of His being begotten from the dead** — "I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord," stated the Son. And what would be the decree of the Almighty that Jesus would certainly announce over and over again: "He said to Me, 'You are My Son; today I have begotten You!'" (Psalm 2:7). Jesus' snapping the bonds of Hades and being raised to the heavenly throne was the greatest victory of all. "I am alive forevermore," stated He to John the revelator, "and I have the keys of death and Hades" (Revelation 1:18).
- **He speaks to the wicked** — "But to the wicked God says," stated the inspired Asaph, "What right have you to tell of My statutes, and to take My covenant in your mouth?" Again, Jesus speaks through the prophet, "Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Psalm 50:16,22).
- **He speaks peace** — The welcome is extended to the Gentile as well as the Jew. "Peace," said Jesus, "to him who is far and to him who is near" (Isaiah 57:19). "I will hear what God the Lord will say," chorused the sons of Korah, "For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones" (Psalm 85:8). Thus in the reconciled saints of God, "Lovingkindness and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:10).
- **He speaks of the need to press on** — The followers of Jesus need to continue to listen to His instructions. "Today, if you would hear His voice," were the prophetic words of David, "do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness" (Psalm 95:7,8). "I swore in My anger," He said, "Truly they shall not enter into My rest" (Psalm 95:11). "Therefore, let us fear," was the conclusion of the writer of Hebrews, "while a promise remains of entering His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Hebrews 4:1).

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters," prophesied the sweet psalmist of Israel, "the God of glory thunders. The Lord is over many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is majestic" (Psalm 29:3,4). "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace" (Psalm 29:11). "And in His temple everything says, 'Glory!' " (Psalm 29:9).

Blessed Are the Forgiven

“No man can by any means redeem his brother,” wrote the sons of Korah, “or give to God a ransom for him. For the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever” (Psalm 49:7,8). The commission of sin separates a man from his God and casts him into the ranks of the wicked. The wicked, stated the psalmist, “are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish” (Psalm 1:4-6). A man’s soul is indeed costly, and the redemption is going to have to come through God’s Son.

- **Animal sacrifices ineffective** — “For You do not delight in sacrifice,” affirmed David, after his affair with Bathsheba, “otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering” (Psalm 51:16). “Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required,” stated he in another place (Psalm 40:6). All those sacrifices pointed to the Redeemer of Israel, the One who would be pierced through for their transgressions.
- **Only God can save** — “Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness,” cried David, “according to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight” (Psalm 51:1-4). All sin is ultimately committed against God, and therefore God is the only One who can forgive or save.
- **Light and salvation** — “The Lord is God,” are words of one of the great Psalms, “and He has given us light.” To do that, instructions were given: “Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar” (Psalm 118:27). Jesus the Lamb of God and light of the world, was offered on Calvary’s cross as foreshadowed by the sacrifices on Jerusalem’s altar. “The Lord,” then, said David, “is my light and my salvation” (Psalm 27:1). “The Lord,” said David again, “is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Psalm 18:2).
- **Blessed are the forgiven** — For those who have come under the blood of the Sacrifice, their sins are forgiven and their souls are redeemed. “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,” exulted David the king, “whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity” (Psalm 32:1,2). “Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death” (Psalm 33:18).
- **Calling on Jesus’ name** — “As for me,” stated David, “I shall call upon God, and the Lord will save me ... He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me” (Psalm 55:16,18). In the Old Testament it was unclear as to how this call upon the name of the Lord would be made. But the New Testament, which clarifies those things which are in the gospel according to Psalms, establishes that the call is made in immersion. “Arise, and be immersed,” Saul of Tarsus was told, who was knowledgeable in the words of the Psalms, “and wash away your sins, calling on His name” (Acts 22:16). It is in the name of Jesus that remission of debts against God is granted.

Blessed are those who have thus obeyed the gospel and have continued to walk faithfully before the Lord. Their cry, from all parts of the earth, has been granted: “Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your power.” Then, in fellowship with the Father, their petitions are heard: “Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth” (Psalm 54:1,2).

The Outstretched Arm

One of the purposes of the Psalms was to impress the history of Israel upon her people. “O God,” sang the sons of Korah, “we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, the work that You did in their days, in the days of old.” Then the recounting of the history begins: “You with Your *own hand* drove out the nations; then You planted them; You afflicted the peoples, then You spread them abroad.” Israel did not conquer the promised land by their own strength. “For by their own sword they did not possess the land; and their own arm did not save them; but *Your right hand*, and *Your arm*, and the light of Your presence, for You favored them” (Psalm 44:1-3).

- **Jesus in glory is the outstretched arm** — So ingrained in the history of Israel’s exodus from Egypt was *the arm of the Lord* that the apostle Paul used that expression in his recounting to the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia: “The God of this people Israel chose our fathers,” he affirmed, “and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with *an uplifted arm* He led them out from it” (Acts 13:17). Paul knew the same thing that the apostle John knew: *the arm of the Lord* is Jesus in glory! “To whom,” asked Isaiah as quoted by John, “has the *arm of the Lord* been revealed?” This “Isaiah said, because He saw [Jesus’] glory, and he spoke of Him” (John 12:38,41). The Rock which followed Israel through the wilderness, and the Arm which delivered them safely to the promised land was indeed the Christ.
- **The Arm revealed through the gospel** — The Psalms spoke of the revealing of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles of the world. “O sing to the Lord a new song,” are words looking to the new covenant, “For He has done wonderful things, His *right hand* and His *holy arm* have gained the victory for Him” (Psalm 98:1). When asked if He were the Christ by the high priest, Jesus answered, “I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the *right hand* of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:62). This right hand not only has the power to deliver Israel from Egypt, but, more importantly, has the power to save from sins! “The Lord has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations” (Psalm 98:2). “For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world,” Peter informed us, “but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God” (I Peter 1:20,21).
- **Power to save** — “The Lord is my strength and my song,” is the watchword for the all the Gentiles who have believed the report and to whom the arm of the Lord has been revealed, “and He has become my salvation.” The dancing of Israel at the sight of Egypt’s demise in the Red Sea is small compared the rejoicing of those whose sins have been forgiven. “The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; the *right hand of the Lord* does valiantly.” Yes, the right Hand receives the praise and glory, for He has been placed in the position of power in unapproachable light. “The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly” (Psalm 118:14-16).

“O Lord God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord?” asked Ethan the Erahite. “And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones” (Psalm 89:8,5). Be sure to be in the assembly of the holy ones to offer praises through the mighty outstretched Arm!

Salvation to the Jew

“Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?” the apostle Paul asked. “Great in every respect,” came the answer. But the benefits were not particularly in the physical realm. “First of all,” spoke the apostle in regard to the physical descendants of Abraham, “that they were entrusted with the oracles of God” (Romans 3:1,2). Timothy, raised by a Jewish mom and influenced by a faithful grandmother, was a good example. Remember, Paul told him, “that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 3:15). Yes, those sacred writings and oracles of God were what would lead the honest Jew into salvation by the forgiveness of his sins.

- **Salvation from enemies** — One of the great benefits of circumcision was that God was able to teach them physical lessons to set the stage for the spiritual blessings to come. Concerning Israel’s exodus from Egypt, the psalmist wrote: “Then He brought them out with silver and gold; and among His tribes there was not one who stumbled” (Psalm 105:37). “I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,” said David, “and I am saved from my enemies” (Psalm 18:3).
- **Focus on a more pernicious enemy** — As oppressive as Egyptian slavery was, it faded into nothing compared to the slavery of sin. The man after God’s own heart was conscious of this and petitioned: “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, God of my salvation” (Psalm 51:14). Having committed adultery and murder, David knew that only God could save him from the guilt of his own sin. “He has not dealt with us according to our sins,” David would say in another place, “nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:10-12).
- **Ineffectiveness of Old Testament offerings** — “May He send you help from the sanctuary,” prayed David for the troubled in Israel, “and support you from Zion! May He remember all your meal offerings, and find your burnt offering acceptable” (Psalm 20:2,3). Knowing that burnt offerings and sacrifices did not really appease the wrath of the Almighty, the prayer continued, “Save, O Lord; may the King answer us in the day we call” (Psalm 20:9).
- **The God of salvation** — “Help us, O God of our salvation,” was the addition to the chorus by Asaph the seer, “for the glory of Your name; and deliver us, and forgive our sins, for Your name’s sake” (Psalm 79:9). “O give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who leads Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth! ... come to save us! O God, restore us, and cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved” (Psalm 80:1-3). Jesus Christ, crucified, risen from the dead, shining in glory, saved the obedient from the remnant of Judaism, as they beheld the glory of the Lord in the face of Christ.
- **Praises from Israel** — The saved from the ranks of the Jews fulfill the statement from the psalm, praising the Shepherd of Israel: “So we the sheep of Your pasture will give thanks to You forever; to all generations we will tell of Your praise” (Psalm 79:13).

“A partial hardening has happened to Israel,” explained the apostle Paul to those who suffered at the hands of the Jews in the first century, “until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” In that 40 years following Christ’s death, the Jew slowly faded out and the Gentile was phased in, and the promise of God was fulfilled: “And thus all Israel will be saved, just as it is written,” noted Paul. Then he quoted from the prophet: “The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins” (Romans 11:25-27).

Salvation to the Gentile

“The Lord is near to all who call upon Him,” exclaimed David, “to all who call upon Him in truth” (Psalm 145:18). It is shocking to find such a statement in the midst of a Jewish tome; surely the Israelites would not have written that *all* could call upon the Lord! It had not entered their minds, but it was clearly the plan and prophecy of God from the beginning. The Gentiles would come to Zion!

- **Descent of the Gentiles** — From the tower of Babel the nations were scattered throughout their coastlands and interiors. Refusing to have God in their knowledge any longer, they became fools spiritually and descended into the darkness. “The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made; in the net which they hid, their own foot has been caught” (Psalm 9:15). Separated from God by their foolishness, they wandered far from the knowledge of Him. “For, behold,” strummed Asaph, “those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You” (Psalm 73:27).
- **God was not without witness** — The power of the great God was always evidenced among the Gentiles. “Come, behold the works of the Lord,” sang the sons of Korah, “who has wrought desolations in the earth.” Not only did He desolate, but He could bring peace also. “He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.” The message to all the world from the Almighty is this: “Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psalm 46:8-10).
- **Bring them in** — The Father was emphatic; the Gentiles were coming into the fold! “God has spoken in His holiness: ‘I will exult, I will portion out Shechem, and measure out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet of My head; Judah is My scepter. Moab is My washbowl; over Edom I shall throw My shoe; over Philistia I will shout aloud’ ” (Psalm 108:7-9). “I shall mention Rahab and Babylon among those who know Me,” stated the Lord, “behold, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia: ‘This one was born there.’ ” (Psalm 87:4). God is the God of the Gentiles as well as the God of the Jews. “He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and save them” (Psalm 145:19).
- **God’s purpose** — “God be gracious to us and bless us,” implored the psalmist, “and cause His face to shine upon us — that Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among the nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God, let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy ...” (Psalm 69:1-4). The great God desires to be praised from people of all nations, and it is His purpose through Jesus Christ to bring salvation to the Gentiles.

The time has come when the ark of the covenant is not missed nor remembered particularly any more. The great deeds of God are not His creation nor His deliverance of Israel from Egypt, although those were great and mighty deeds. The God who is and who was and who is to come is glorified in that He raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at His right hand, bringing salvation and hope to all mankind. “Sing to the Lord a new song,” are words looking to the new covenant, “sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised ...” (Psalm 96:1-4).

The Presence of Jesus

In talking about one of the toughest jobs the local church has to do — discipline a wayward member — Jesus laid down a powerful and encouraging principle: “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst” (Matthew 18:20). The expression “in the name of Jesus” means by His authority. Mere mumbling the name of Jesus over any imagined ceremony does not declare the deed done by His authority; it is only if the work accomplished is directed by scripture that it may be said to be done in Jesus’ name. But how exciting it is to realize that when three saints huddle together in secret for the Lord’s Supper in some dilapidated building on the edge of a Viet-Nameese city, for example, that the presence of the King of the universe is there!

- **In the midst of the assembly** — Psalm 22 not only speaks of the endurance of Jesus in facing and dying on the cross but also of the joy set before Him. “They pierced My hand and my feet,” was the prophetic outcry. But, in looking to His resurrection and the formation of the bride of Christ, the joy is announced: “I will tell of Your name to My brethren,” says He to the Father, “In the midst of the assembly I will praise You” (Psalm 22:16,22). The writer of Hebrews explains that Jesus’ willingness to sing praises in the midst of the congregation of the saints shows that He is “not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11). He enjoys the fellowship, and is pleased to be out there “rubbing shoulders” with the rest of God’s people. “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed,” Jesus told the amazed and puzzled Pharisees, “nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For behold, the kingdom of God is within your midst” (Luke 17:20,21).
- **Jesus speaks to the assembly** — “I have come to do Your will, O God,” the psalmist prophetically noted of Jesus’ coming in the flesh. Through the death of Jesus, the Old Will was taken away and the New Will was established for the church. “I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation,” the Messiah prophetically continued. “Behold, I will not restrain My lips, O Lord, You know. I have not hidden Your righteousness within My heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation” (Psalm 40:8-10). Through the faithful proclamation of the word Jesus indeed preaches peace to those who are afar off and those who are near, announcing the light of His presence.
- **He walks about the ramparts of Zion** — “You have come to Mount Zion,” the writer of Hebrews explained to the saints, “and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12:22). “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,” sang the sons of Korah, “in the city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation,” they chorused, “the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King.” But who is there? “God, in her palaces, has made Himself known as a stronghold!” (Psalm 48:1-3). Jesus, the God who is amongst the saints, goes with the brethren to “walk about Zion, and go around her” and “consider her ramparts” (Psalm 48:12).

Certainly the appeal of Asaph the seer has great spiritual insight for those upon whom the ends of the ages have come: “Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old, which You have redeemed to be the tribe of Your inheritance, and Mount Zion, where You have dwelt” (Psalm 74:2). And David adds, “I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the poor. Surely the righteous will give thanks to Your name; the upright will dwell in Your presence” (Psalm 140:12,13). Praise God for the powerful and comforting presence of Jesus in the midst of His brethren in Zion.

The Indwelling Spirit

“He who believes in Me,” affirmed Jesus, “as the scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’” The apostle John went on to explain: “But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:38,39). The “rivers of living water” flowing from the “innermost being” of a Christian is a reference to what the apostle Paul called “His Spirit who indwells you” (Romans 8:11). This indwelling was available only after the beginning of the church as recorded in Acts 2 because, prior to this, Jesus had not been glorified. No one in the Old Testament, not even Abraham, Moses, or David, was blessed by the indwelling Spirit, although the Spirit of God rested upon some of these and prophesied through them. It remained for the people to come to have the presence of God with them at all times.

- **Prophecies of Ezekiel** — “Then you will know that I am the Lord,” said God’s spokesman in the midst of Babylon, “when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. And I will put My Spirit within you ...” (Ezekiel 37:13,14). The person who submits to burial in the watery grave of immersion into Christ under the terms of the new covenant receives the indwelling Spirit, as prophesied. “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you ...” he stated in another place. “And I will put My Spirit within you ...” (Ezekiel 36:26,27). Under what he prophetically called the “covenant of peace,” Ezekiel prophesied, “And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing” (Ezekiel 34:25,26). *Showers of blessing, rivers of living water, well of water springing up to eternal life* — these are all descriptions of the great blessing of the presence of the Spirit of God in those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
- **Blessing of Abraham to the Gentiles** — God promised that the Gentiles would be able to come into the fold by being born of water and the Spirit. Rahab, Babylon, Philistia, and Tyre were prophesied as “among those who know Me.” Regarding that spiritual birth, the sons of Korah prophesied, “The Lord shall count when He registers the peoples, ‘This one was born there.’” True citizens of Zion, blessed of all nations (Genesis 22:18), fulfill the prophesy: “Then those who sing as well as those who play the flutes shall say, ‘All my springs of joy are in you.’” (Psalm 87:5-7). *Springs of joy, rivers of living water.*
- **River for the city of God** — The sons of Korah, prophetic minstrels, strike paydirt again: “There is a river,” they sang, “whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling places of the Most High” (Psalm 46:4). “Or do you not know,” queried the apostle Paul of the Corinthians, “that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (I Corinthians 6:19,20). Christians are the dwelling places of the Most High in the Spirit. “God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved,” was the prophecy concerning the church. *Well of water springing up to eternal life, streams making glad the city of God.*

How blessed indeed are those who are indwelt by God’s Spirit! Bought by the price of Jesus’ blood, they are now fit vessels for the Spirit of God. “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold” (Psalm 45:11). “Cease striving,” He said, “and know that I am God”(Psalm 45:10).

Light to the Gentiles

The purpose of the scriptures is to reveal God to the human race. But “clouds and thick darkness surround Him,” says the psalmist, and the light of His glory is hidden from sinful man (Psalm 97:2). “Show me Your glory,” pleaded Moses. But the Yahweh responded, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” (Exodus 33:18,20). The light of His countenance will vaporize the material universe, so the brilliance of the Almighty is going first to appear to His faithful, but seen only by the eye of faith. “No man has seen God at any time,” the apostle John reminds us, “the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him” (John 1:18).

- **The condition of the Gentile** — Excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world are the Gentiles. “There were those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in misery and chains,” (Psalm 107:10). The condition of the Jew was really no better, except that he had a tradition of reading the scriptures. The Jew, according to Zacharias, father of John the Immerser, needed “the Sunrise from on high to visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death” (Luke 1:78,79).
- **Light shining in the darkness** — Praise be to God, for He has not left those once formed in His image without possibility. “Light arises in darkness for the upright,” says the psalmist (Psalm 112:4). “The unfolding of Your words gives light,” says another (Psalm 119:130). And the unfolded word of God is going to reveal Jesus Christ — crucified, buried, risen from the dead, appearing to faithful witnesses, and ascending to glory. Thus clothed in brilliance, Jesus is the radiance of the Father’s glory, and in that position “the exact representation of His nature” (Hebrews 1:3). “O Lord my God, You are very great,” was the exclamation, “You are clothed with splendor and majesty, covering Yourself with light as a cloak” (Psalm 104:1,2). This life, then, is the light that “shines in the darkness” (John 1:5).
- **Revelation of the light** — “Send out Your light and truth,” cried the seer (Psalm 43:3). “I have come as light into the world,” said Jesus, in answer to that appeal, “that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness” (John 12:46). *Everyone! Gentile as well as Jew!* “We all,” said the apostle Paul, behold “as in a mirror the glory of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:18). This glory, however, the eye of sinful man may not see. Only “in Christ” is the veil removed. “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6). “For with You is the fountain of life,” prophesied David. “In Your light we see light” (Psalm 36:9).

Jesus told Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road that he was to preach to the Jews and to the Gentiles, “to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light” (Acts 26:18). So important is the message that “God is light” as revealed only through Jesus in glory that the testimony of Paul was this: “... that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the *first to proclaim light* both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:23). Those who are truly able to bless God from the house of the Lord (the spiritual house, the church of the living God) can say, “The Lord is God, and He has given us light” (Psalm 118:27).

The Kingdom of Christ

Jesus is not only King, but He also has a kingdom. “For He has delivered us from the domain of darkness,” the apostle Paul praised God, “and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins” (Colossians 1:13,14). This redemption in Christ took place when “we were all immersed into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:13). It is clear, then that this body of Christ, “the church,” is also the kingdom of Christ (Ephesians 1:22,23).

- **Jesus installed as King** — “As for Me,” said the Almighty, “I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain” (Psalm 2:6). At the coronation of King Jesus, which took place at His ascension, it was noted that Gentiles were to be brought under the King’s dominion. “Ask of Me,” stated the Father, “and I will surely give the Gentiles as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession” (Psalm 2:8). “Do homage to the Son,” the kings and judges of the earth are warned, “lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled.” By contrast, though, for those who willingly come under His government, “How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” (Psalm 2:12).
- **Created in Christ Jesus** — “You were dead in your trespasses and sins,” affirmed the apostle Paul (Ephesians 2:1). “The Lord is gracious and merciful,” David noted of the Father’s character, “slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works” (Psalm 145:8,9). So “God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:4). This He accomplished for us in our immersions, wherein as repentant sinners, we were buried with Christ in immersion, and raised up to walk in newness of life. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). The “works” for which He particularly has mercy are those “created in Christ Jesus.”
- **Speaking of the kingdom** — “All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord,” David continues to prophesy, “and Your godly ones shall bless You” (Psalm 145:10). The praises to God come from the lips of the redeemed, the spiritual Israel of God. “Yet You are holy,” are the words of one of the Messianic Psalms, “O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel” (Psalm 22:3). These godly ones “shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts, and the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom” (Psalm 145:11,12). The redemption found in Jesus and the glory of the church are continually upon the lips of the saints of God!
- **The church is everlasting** — The church, unlike the tabernacle of Moses or even the temple of Solomon, is forever. “Your kingdom,” spoke David, “is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations” (Psalm 145:13). It will indeed crush and put an end to all earthly kingdoms!

“The Lord will reign forever,” shouted another psalmist, “Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!” (Psalm 146:10). All the godly ones rejoice! “Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the sons of Zion rejoice in their King” (Psalm 149:2). “But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about *the kingdom of God* and *the name of Jesus Christ*, they were being immersed, men and women alike” (Acts 8:12). May it continue to be so today.

Upholding the Righteous

The righteous need sustained by strength from God. Man on his own, the record over the millennia shows, is not capable of standing up against the wiles of the devil, and finds himself overcome by the forces of evil. Consequently, righteousness does not dwell in this present material heavens and earth.

But God has been calling to Himself a people who are no longer of this world, but who will hunger and thirst for righteousness. These He is willing to justify, and these He is willing to sustain.

- **The scepter of righteousness** — The issue of righteousness is not a small thing in the eyes of the Lord. Speaking of the throne of Jesus, the sons of Korah sang, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom” (Psalm 45:6). The very thing that is the symbol of King Jesus’ authority is the *scepter of righteousness*. “You have loved righteousness,” the singers continue, “and hated wickedness. Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows” (Psalm 45:7).
- **The need for the righteousness of God** — David cries out to his God, “Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no man living is righteous” (Psalm 143:2). Knowing full well his short-comings, David pleaded for mercy rather than justice, and in so doing described the condition of all mankind. But the man who will be honest with God has hope. The psalmist who wrote the awesome Psalm 118 spoke of the coming of righteousness in Christ, the cornerstone: “Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous will enter through it. I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me; and You have become My salvation” (Psalm 118:19-21). This one “shall receive a blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation” (Psalm 24:5). When a person enters the gates of righteousness by being immersed into Christ, he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ and thus declared innocent in the sight of God!
- **The offering of righteous priests** — Having been declared righteous, what sort of offering shall these new covenant priest offer to God? The appeal is made in the strongest possible terms: “I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Romans 12:1). These “priests clothed in righteousness” do not go on presenting the members of their bodies to sin, but they present them to God as instruments of righteousness, as those risen from the dead (Psalm 132:9; Romans 6:13).
- **Sustaining the righteous** — God is willing to work as the major partner with those who have faith. Interested in their success, He has provided the indwelling Spirit to strengthen the saint in his inner man, and offered His providential care for the external circumstances. “Better,” says David, “is the little of the righteous than the abundance of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked will be broken; but the Lord sustains the righteous” (Psalm 37:16,17). “Cast your burden upon the Lord,” says he in another place, “and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken” (Psalm 55:22).

The warning is there for the saints to press on in honesty, rather than to try to take advantage of God’s mercy. “Today, if you would hear His voice,” says the psalmist, “do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah” (Psalm 95:7,8). “Hate evil, you who love the Lord, who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked. Light is sown like seed for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Be glad in the Lord, you righteous ones; and give thanks to His holy name!” (Psalm 97:10-12).

The True Queen of Heaven

“My heart,” sang the sons of Korah, “overflows with a good theme” (Psalm 45:1). The theme just happens to be the most inspiring romance ever written, the story of a froggy orphan girl rescued and kissed by a handsome and powerful Prince. “You are fairer than the sons of men,” says the writer of the Prince. “Grace is poured through Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever” (Psalm 45:2).

And powerful! “Gird Your sword on Your thigh, O Mighty One,” the musicians sing on, “in Your splendor and Your majesty! And in Your majesty ride on victoriously, for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; let Your right hand teach You awesome things. Your arrows are sharp; the peoples fall under You; Your arrows are in the heart of the King’s enemies” (Psalm 45:3-5). Every force must fall before this Prince’s army; every retinue must step aside as this Prince’s entourage moves through.

And the orphan girl? She has been rescued from her dreadful condition, given a new set of clothes, and has learned the manners and conversation of the King’s Court. “Let us rejoice and be glad,” are words from the Revelation of John, “and give glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb [the Prince] has come and His bride has made herself ready.” This is one bride that is actually ready on time! “And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (Revelation 19:7,8).

Everything about the City of God — Zion — produces beauty. “Out of Zion,” says Asaph the seer, “the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth” (Psalm 50:2). “Beautiful in elevation,” the sons of Korah chime in, “the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion in the far north, the city of the great King” (Psalm 48:2). The orphan girl, then, has been changed to a beautiful princess, ready now for her marriage to the Prince on the throne. The final picture is clear, regarding the Prince and His queen: “All Your garments are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; out of ivory palaces stringed instruments make You glad. King’s daughters,” the writer paints of the final picture of the Court, “are among Your noble ladies; at Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir” (Psalm 45:8,9).

The procession to the wedding feast is presented: “The King’s daughter [the orphan girl] is all glorious within; her clothing is interwoven with gold. She will be led to the King [the handsome Prince] in embroidered work; the virgins, her companions who follow her, will be brought to You. They will be led forth with gladness and rejoicing; they will enter the King’s palace” (Psalm 45:13-15).

Some final instructions for the bride: “Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear; forget your people and your father’s house; then the King will desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, bow down to Him. And the daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; the rich among the people will entreat your favor” (Psalm 45:10-12).

The future of her “offspring”: “In the place of your fathers will be your sons; you shall make them princes in all the earth” (Psalm 45:16). In the inspired heading for this psalm, the text reads: “A Maskil of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love.” This love for the orphan girl and her offspring (both pictures of the church) is evidenced in the opening words of greeting in the Revelation of John: “To Him [the Prince] who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood, and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father” (Revelation 1:5,6). This royal priesthood consists of the “kings” or “princes” of the eternal city: “And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of earth shall bring their glory into it” (Revelation 21:24).

The great God says to the handsome Prince who sacrificed all to save the stranded orphan girl: “I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the peoples will give thanks to You forever and ever” (Psalm 45:17).

Coming in Judgment

The time will come for the angel to stand with one foot on the land and one foot on the sea and declare that time is no more. The last trumpet will sound, the sky will split open, and the Lord Jesus will be revealed with the mighty heavenly host. Jude quotes the ancient prophecy of Enoch, handed down from before the Flood: “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 14,15). Enoch was not the only Old Testament prophet to speak of Jesus’ coming in judgment; the gospel according to Psalms also contains prophetic references to His rewards for the righteous and condemnation of the wicked at the close of the Christian dispensation.

- **The judgment throne** — The prophetic throne of David was not only a place where the Messiah would reign over His subjects, dispensing grace and gifts, but it was also the seat of judgment: “But the Lord abides forever,” affirms David; “He has established His throne for judgment” (Psalm 9:7).
- **Judging righteously** — Jesus regards Himself as the God who will judge. “For not even the Father judges anyone,” He said, “but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father” (John 5:22,23). “He summons the heavens above, and the earth, to judge His people: ‘Gather My godly ones to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.’ And the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge,” were the words of Asaph (Psalm 50:6). “And He will judge the world in righteousness,” adds David, “He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity” (Psalm 9:8). “God is a righteous judge,” was another notation of David, “and a God who has indignation every day” (Psalm 7:11).
- **A fixed time** — Speaking through Asaph, Jesus prophetically informed the world, “When I select an appointed time, it is I who judge with equity. The earth and all who dwell within it melt” (Psalm 75:2,3). “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance,” was the raised voice pronouncement of the apostle Paul, “God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has *fixed a day* in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30,31).
- **Compassion for the saints** — “Your name, O Lord,” said the psalmist, “is everlasting, Your remembrance, O Lord, throughout all generations. For the Lord will judge His people, and have compassion on His servants” (Psalm 135:13,14). Those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life will reign with Him forever! “You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save the humble of the earth. For the wrath of man shall praise You; with a remnant of wrath You shall gird Yourself” (Psalm 76:8-10).
- **Coming in judgment** — The Psalms affirm that the final event of planet earth is the coming of Jesus in judgment: “Let the sea roar,” cries an unknown psalmist, “and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands; let the mountains sing together for joy before the Lord; for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity” (Psalm 98:7-9).

The words of the apostle Paul draw from the Psalms, and encourage the brethren to press on: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, *the righteous judge*, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (II Timothy 4:7,8).