

# MENTOR



# FOR LIFE

## THE REST OF THE STORY

*“The human mind, no matter how highly trained, cannot grasp the universe. We are in the position of a little child, entering a huge library whose walls are covered to the ceiling with books in many different tongues. The child knows that someone must have written those books. It does not know who or how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child notes a definite plan in the arrangement of the books, a mysterious order, which it does not comprehend, but only dimly suspects. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of the human mind, even the greatest and most cultured, toward God.”*

This quote by Albert Einstein reflects what humanity can know about God without God revealing himself. God is so far beyond our ability to understand him and his ways. In fact, God weaves a scarlet thread through the whole Bible, but so many people miss it. From the very beginning, we read about humanity’s need for deliverance. Then, God provides that Savior, just like he said (and has proven) he would.

Last Week, we finished *Esther*. However, we can’t fully appreciate *that* story without knowing the *rest* of the story. Over the centuries, numerous Jewish holy days have woven Scripture readings into their celebration. For Purim each year, Jewish families gather and read the entire book of *Esther* out loud along with reading Psalm 22.

For many Jews, this Psalm represents the corporate cry of Persian Jews both anticipating their slaughter and celebrating God’s deliverance. Yet, for Christians today, it means much more for two reasons. *First*, when Jesus hung on the cross, he quoted its opening verse, drawing attention to it. *Second*, crucifixion, the specific form of suffering and execution described here, was not practiced until hundreds of years *after* David composed Psalm 22. So, we can prophetically connect it to Christ’s suffering on the cross.

### PSALM 22:1–5

<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. <sup>3</sup> Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. <sup>4</sup> In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. <sup>5</sup> To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you’ve grown up around church, you’ve probably heard many Bible stories. However, they can sometimes feel like a patchwork quilt of disconnected events. The Gospel writers often weren’t as concerned with keeping things as chronological as us modern post-Enlightenment people. It can be helpful to find a resource that unpacks the timeline so we can see how these events fit together. Scan the QR code to see a timeline of Jesus’ final 24 hours that we briefly discuss in the Study Notes.



## DISCUSSION

Considering the Einstein quote in the introduction, what evidence for God might people see in nature?

1. What does this psalmist question? (1)

2. What efforts has the psalmist made? (2)

3. What does he know to be true? (3-5)

4. In your own words...what does the psalmist feel? (1-2)

5. What comfort does God’s past faithfulness bring? (3-5)

6. Is there any area of your life not surrendered to Christ? What do you need to start or stop doing to be obedient?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Reading of God’s peace offered through Jesus, are you absolutely, 100%, sure that you have a relationship with him? If you have doubts, don’t wait, talk to your Coach today!

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## STUDY NOTES

### THE NINTH HOUR

Jesus rode into Jerusalem to shouts and cheers of “Hosanna!” as people laid cloaks and palm branches before him. Less than a week after the Triumphal Entry, Jesus celebrated his Last Supper with the disciples. Following the Last Supper, he walked them outside the city to the garden of Gethsemane to pray.

In the middle of the night, Judas betrayed Jesus to the Sanhedrin, the religious authority. Jesus faced three *religious* trials where they convicted him and sentenced him to death. Around dawn, that *religious* authority brought Jesus to the *civil* authority, Pontius Pilate, to convict and sentence him to crucifixion—which they could not do on their own.

Pilate had him scourged. Jesus was whipped and beaten. His skin flayed from his body. Finally, Pilate bent to the will of the mob who traded Jesus’ life for the murderous Barabbas all the while shouting, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”

Jesus was made to carry his own cross to Golgotha where he was nailed through his wrists and ankles. He hung naked supported only by the nails and a small wooden block placed just under the reach of his feet so that the nails didn’t rip through. Each breath required pulling up against the nails as his diaphragm was so stretched out he could not gasp without lifting up. Typically, death came because of asphyxiation when a victim was too tired to continue lifting themselves. In most cases, this took days of agony and shame.

In the ninth hour, Jesus cried out “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” that is, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” (Matthew 27:46). Moments later, he died.

Psalms 22 opens, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* Was Jesus just reciting a well-known verse—Scripture that he and all of Israel had read every year of their lives during the Feast of Purim? Or did his final cry mean something more?

### MENTEES MUST FIND PEACE IN CHRIST’S DEATH

Now knowing the story of *Esther*, we can see how the two months and 10 days between Haman’s edict and Mordecai’s edict must have seemed like an eternity. Every moment the people must have felt forsaken as they looked to their future. Burdened they asked, “*Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?*” They had no relief from their distress, “*O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.*”



Even in fear and uncertainty, the Jews of Esther’s day reminded themselves who God is, “*you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.*” They also reminded themselves of God’s past faithfulness, “*In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*”

Here’s the important thing—God’s past faithfulness is a pattern and a promise for future faithfulness. In other words, he delivered us then, and he can do it again. The Jews in Esther’s day trusted God and were not put to shame. Every year, the Jews read this Psalm as a reminder that God would continue to deliver them. More than physical deliverance, however, what they needed was spiritual deliverance.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, people believed that God’s Messiah was coming in power and glory to take his rightful place as King David’s heir. They believed he would establish the eternal throne (2 Samuel 7), which also meant delivering Israel from their Roman oppressors. The one thing the Messiah *wasn’t* supposed to do was get captured by the Romans. And, the very fact that Jesus *was* captured meant that he *wasn’t* the Messiah. The people’s rejoicing turned to fury as their great hope was dashed. One week after shouting “Hosanna!” they shouted, “Crucify Him!”

What they misunderstood was that if Jesus had come then in power and glory humanity would have been lost eternally in their sin. Jesus’ quote of Psalm 22 wasn’t just about his experience of physical and spiritual agony—which he did suffer—it was also about delivering humanity from a fate far worse than the Persians had in store for the Jews of Esther’s time.

### GOD’S PEACE BRINGS OUR PRAISE

Romans 12:1 says, “*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*” What does Christ deserve from us considering the price he paid? The simple answer is “everything.” He deserves our complete surrender because we would be hopeless without him.

In him, we have peace for eternity unlike anything we can experience in this life. Any peace we experience here is temporary at best. Like a dog returning to its vomit, we often return to the sin for which Christ died. As a mentee, we need accountability. Christ has set us free from sin, we need the reminder to live like it. The Old Testament had dead sacrifices. In Christ, we are a living sacrifice. That is our spiritual worship.