



## Messiah Betrayed!

### Psalm 41

Dr. Deane J. Woods

ONE of the toughest tests anyone can face – and perhaps more so for Christian workers – is that of being betrayed. Today, we colloquially call it “back stabbing”! Author David C. Egner told the story of a beloved pastor who experienced betrayal in a most unexpected way:

“(The pastor) encouraged a gifted teenager in his congregation to go to Bible school. He arranged for financial support. He continued to mentor the young man after graduation, letting him preach on occasion. But then the graduate began to undermine the pastor with innuendo and criticism. Finally the heartbroken minister left. Then the young man announced himself as a candidate for pastor of the church.”

In another of David’s Psalms (the last in Book 1 of the “5 Book” Psalter), Israel’s second King described his being betrayed in these terms: “*Even my familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*” (Psalm 41:9). In so doing, David recorded for us “a psalm with messianic overtones” (so Warren W. Wiersbe) for this verse was quoted by Jesus at the Last Supper in the Upper Room as he humbly washed His disciples’ feet on the eve of His crucifixion (Jn 13:18). The reference, of course, was to Judas, into whose heart Satan entered and who later went out into the night and sold Israel’s Messiah and eternal King for a slave’s price – “thirty pieces of silver” (Cf. Mt 26:14-16, as prophesied in Zech 11:12).

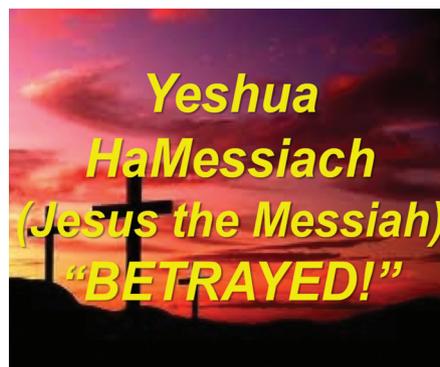
It is important to also note that when Jesus quoted Psalm 41:9 in the account of Judas’ betrayal in John 13:18-19, He purposely omitted the phrase “in whom I trusted”. Being omniscient, the Messiah knew Judas’ treacherous heart from the beginning!

What spiritual and practical truths can we learn from Psalm 41 – especially verse 9?

#### 1. Messiah Betrayed!

Our key verse for this study is set in a context where David gave amplification of Jesus’ later beatitude recorded in the “Sermon on the Mount” (Mt 5-7): “Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy” (Mt 5:7).

As he instructed his people by citing his own experiences, David gave three fundamental spiritual principles: (1) The merciful will receive mercy (Ps 41: 1-3); (2) He recalled how those who did not show him mercy could even include his “own familiar friend” (in Hebrew, literally “the friend of my peace” – verses 4-9, esp. verse 9); and (3) his praising the LORD for those who did show him mercy (vv. 10-12). The psalm ends with a “Doxology” (v. 13), as indeed all the other 4 “Books” do as



well. (See Pss 72:18-20; 89:52; 106:48 and 150:6b). Significantly, Psalm 41 is the third psalm in Book 1 of the Psalms to begin with a “doxology” (41:1), the others being Psalm 1 and Psalm 32. It should also be noted that all three psalms include references to “the ungodly” (or ungodly acts/ways), “sin and forgiveness” and God’s merciful ways in dealing with His people!

The messianic aspect of Psalm 41 is therefore seen to sparkle “jewel-like”, set against the black backdrop of David’s personal experiences. Sickness (vv. 8, 10) and sin (v. 4) combine to show the King’s deep

distress and personal danger. The setting is generally agreed to be that of Absalom’s rebellion. David’s beloved third son was lifted up with pride, and taking advantage of the consequences of his father’s sin with Bathsheba and his later ill-health, he promoted himself as king (2 Sam 16:15ff). Others loyal to Absalom, but sworn enemies of the true King, plotted against him and waited for him to die. In his weak physical (and probably weak spiritual condition as well), David could not lead his people as he would have liked. (Cf. 2 Sam 15:1-6).

If David’s own “close friend” (v. 9, NASB) was, in fact, Ahithophel (the grandfather of Bathsheba) his trusted adviser but who later betrayed him in turn-pike manner (2 Sam 16:15-23), then the historical setting cited above cannot be disputed.

Psalms 41 and 38 reflected identical scenarios in King David’s experiences at that time. While Psalm 38 focused on the aspect of his “sickness”, Psalm 41 concentrated initially on his decided attitude of *integrity* towards “the poor” (Literally, (one who) longs for (those in need)) – see verses 1-4, versus the *treachery* of his enemies (including his “familiar [or “close”] friend, v. 9 – so NASB) who betrayed him – see verses 5-9!

These two characteristics of *integrity* and *treachery* – integrity’s counterpart – foreshadow the character and ministry of King David’s greater Son, Jesus, and the rebellion and ultimate betrayal of those He (as their Messiah) came to save (Mt 1:21; Lk 19:10; Jn 3:16; Acts 4:12). God’s love, manifest in the flesh in Immanuel, the eternal Son of the eternal loving God, was despised and rejected by men – spurned by “His own” (Jn 1:11; Is 53:3ff) and by us all (Rom 5:12-21; cf. 3:23).

Sadly, “betrayal” is so often in evidence today – even in Christian ministry! The writer has personally witnessed such ▶

reprehensible situations on *five occasions* over the course of his four-plus decades of ministry and personal experience! Thank God, the injustices perpetrated on innocent, unsuspecting, sometime absent-from-the-scene “victims” will be reviewed and recompensed at the Bema Judgement Seat when all believers’ “words, works and ways” will finally be taken into account (1 Cor 3:10-16; 2 Cor 5:9-10)!

Yet by God’s grace, those so “betrayed” in the course of their earthly ministries can follow the example of their LORD and Saviour and appropriate biblical principles that exhibit a genuine testimony to all men.

It was said of M R DeHaan, the former Christian Radio speaker on “Radio Bible Class”, that he was on one occasion belittled and betrayed by an unprincipled detractor who spread untrue stories about the godly preacher in an effort to “bring him down”. When told of the lewd allegations, DeHaan was reported to have shouted a victorious, “Rejoice! Praise God!”. Non-plussed, the one bearing the “painful reports” asked the godly, veteran minister why he had reacted in such a way. The answer came back as quick as a flash: “Did not our Lord tell us to do so?”. He then went on to quote Matthew 5:11-12:

*Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Is this a “word in season” for someone reading this present article?

## 2. Messiah Bruised!

Psalm 41:9 not only spoke of the Messiah being “betrayed”; it also revealed His being “bruised”. Notice the verse stated: “*Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*” (Emphasis added).

These emphasized words graphically pictured the depth of David’s personal sorrow in being betrayed by his erstwhile friend, Ahithophel. In fulfilling the messianic prophecy, Jesus’ personal pain at being betrayed by Judas, is at once, telling! Like the striking kick of a renegade horse to “take out” a devoted, loving Handler, so the Son of God was “bruised” beyond recognition, just as Isaiah 53 verse 5 extrapolated prophetically over 300 years later!

Just think of it: First, the primary mention of the “gospel” in Scripture is found in Genesis 3:15. There the identical term is used as God

responds to Satan’s nefarious trickery that resulted in the “Fall” of Adam and Eve:

*I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel!*. [NKJV, emphases added].

Secondly, this “*proto evangelium*” statement in Genesis 3:15 is further elaborated upon, prophetically, by the prophet Isaiah, 700 years before Messiah was born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. Speaking of “The Suffering Servant” in the first of his four “Servant Songs” in his prophecy, he wrote in chapter 42, verse 3:

*A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, He will bring forth justice for truth.* (Emphasis added)



This depicted the Messiah, prophetically, (Jesus, according to Matthew 12:18-20), who, in His own individual way, would have an unassuming, self-less ministry following His Incarnation, and who (at His Second Advent) will bring justice to the whole world! David, in Psalm 41:9, also prophesied Him as being the One “bruised” by a traitor whose flying heels (metaphorically speaking), would resemble those of an uncontrolled bronco! What a description!

Well does this present writer remember days of his youth spent on weekends and holidays with his beloved grandfather on his farm where there were various kinds of horses – working Clydesdales, spritely harness ponies for the Buggy or Sulky, Hacks for droving sheep and cattle, and a heady, spirited black colt called “Major”! Often Pop would take me aside in the stables and seriously warn this young would-be “Cowboy” with these solemn words: “Watch him! He’s unpredictable! If you don’t ‘tight rein’ him as you mount, he’ll always swing round and bite you – just to tell you he considers that he’s the ‘Boss’!”! When we’d finished riding, and returned to the stables, the process of unsaddling “Major”

took place. The procedure was always to be the same: Dismount; lead him to the corral to take off saddle and bridle; Always lead him round *anticlockwise* before unbridling him. Again I was warned: “Never, ever get behind his hind legs. He’ll lash out and kick unexpectedly, and you could be killed with his hooves!” I always took Pop’s advice as well as seeing “Major” buck and “let fly” with his heels on almost every occasion I let him loose. Though I never did rival Roy Rogers or The Lone Ranger for horsemanship skills, I did like those memorable times – and what is more, by God’s grace (even more so than my elementary riding abilities), I’m still here to tell the tale – Praise God!

Maybe you are a “bruised and wounded soldier” right now – the recipient of a traitor’s stunning, horse-like “kick”. What should you do, even amidst your unending sorrow and pain? May we lovingly suggest you apply the spiritual “balm (of Gilead)” (Cf. Jer 8:22; 46:11) taught us in the heavenly “Prescription” of 1 Peter 4:19:

*Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*

After all, that’s exactly what Jesus did in being betrayed and bruised in going to the Cross in order to save us, whether we are Jewish or Gentile!

## 3. Messiah Buried!

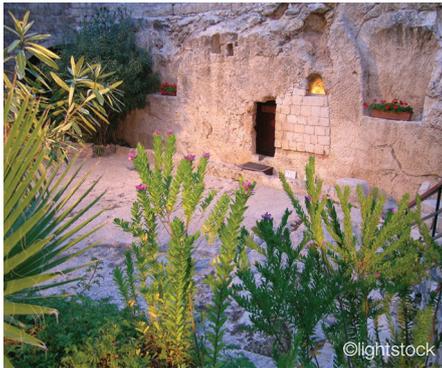
In the third section of Psalm 41, there is a further implied truth. David was confident of the LORD’s mercies and that He “would raise (him) up” (verse 12). In context, this referred to the LORD raising him up physically out of his sickness and spiritual malaise. Events in his past had had their consequences, as sin always does. But now, having been “down into death” (cf. Pss 32 and 51, esp. verse 17), he looked forward with expectation to deliverance and a “new life”.

Though Jesus the Messiah had no sin of His own, nor did He sin (Heb 4:16), He “became sin for us” (2 Cor 5:21), went down into death, literally, as our Substitute (cf. Jn 12:24; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 2:14; 1 Jn 3:8), and rose again for our justification (Rom 4:25). In other words, His “betrayal” led to His “bruising” at Calvary, which in turn led to His burial in Joseph of Arimathea’s unused tomb (Jn 19:41) from which He was raised three days later (Jn 20:1ff; Rom 1:4).

It’s all because of Jesus’ coming “from the Cradle to the Cross” – Christmas being indissolubly linked to Easter – and it’s resultant “victory” (even when we’ve been betrayed,

bruised and battered!) that believers are enabled to sing such selected words as:

*The grave now is empty,  
The stone is rolled away,  
And Christ is alive in my heart.  
My sins which were many  
Are now washed away,  
For Christ is alive in my heart!*



Isn't it true that, in biblical terms, "life always comes out of death" and the whole transformation process highlights praise that rightfully belongs to the LORD who is the ultimate "Source" of "Life" with a capital "L" (Jn 11:25; Rom 5:10; Gal 2:20; 1 Cor 15, especially verses 57 and 58; 1 Pt 1:1-5; Rev 20:22)? Truly, God is to be "blessed" and that was exactly how David ended Psalm 41 in verse 13.

#### 4. Messiah Blessed!

David's psalm here, with its "messianic overtones" ends on a high note, and in so doing concludes the whole of "Book 1". He concludes with a "doxological beatitude". "What's that?", you may well ask. In a word: "praise to God reflecting the unbounding joy His mercies have imparted to His thankful recipient!"

*Blessed be the LORD God of Israel  
From everlasting to everlasting.  
Amen and Amen.*

Thus the son of Jesse, now the King of Israel, lifts his heart to the LORD and blesses Him for His tender heart of compassion and unrivalled mercies. David exhibited a "praiseful" heart of gratitude, joy and thanksgiving! As Jesus would later speak to those who would follow Him in the "ways of His Kingdom" in the "Sermon on the Mount" (Mt 5-7), His kingly rule would be (and certainly *will* be when that Kingdom is realized at His Second Advent), associated with rapturous joy in His redeemed. This is strongly connoted in the Greek term Jesus used, as recorded in Matthew's gospel. The word is "*mikarios*" and is best understood as an exclamatory expression, "O, the

blessedness of ... (the ones who trust Me, Jesus, the Messiah – and who are "poor in spirit" etc, etc – Mt 5:3ff)". It has to do with the state of well being, blessing and joy resulting from a unique relationship with God. Those who do not have this relationship with God are devoid of this divinely initiated experience. So the Amplified Bible puts it this way: "The one to be envied is ...".

No wonder they are often called the "Be Attitudes"!

Hallelujah! In Messiah, all believers – Jews and Gentiles – possess the unbounding riches of His glory (Eph 1:3; 2:7; 3:8) and the joy of His everlasting life (Jn 17:3; Rom 5:10; Gal 2:20; Heb 7:16, 25; Rev 21-22).



Do you know Him? If not, Jewish or Gentile friend, receive Him by faith, today!

#### Conclusion

As prolific author of 150 books and faithful pastor-teacher, Warren W. Wiersbe has indicated, Psalm 41 provides the opportunity for us to ask four significant questions when we have been "betrayed":

- How have I treated others? (See vss. 1-4) – That's a matter of "*Integrity*"!
- How have others treated me? (See vss. 5-9) – That's a matter of "*Treachery*"!
- How has God treated me? (See vss. 10-12) – That's a matter of His being "*Merciful*"!
- How do I thank God for all His mercies? (See verse 13) – That's a matter of "*Praise*"!

May you be encouraged in the LORD and in His work, even if (and when) you've been betrayed. Remember, your work is "(never) in vain" in Him (1 Cor 15:58)!

Enjoy the blessings of "A Blessed Easter", or, if you are Jewish, "A Blessed Pesach (Passover)"! In this, another "Blood Moon" year, these two celebrations coincide and we are also reminded that "Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah) our Passover was sacrificed for us" (1 Cor 5:7).

## God's Visitation

### A devotional Hebrew word study

by Kevin Vigus  
W.A. Representative

"Someone is coming to visit!" What is the first question that comes to mind when you hear these words? For me, it is: "**WHO** is coming to visit?" We immediately want to know who the visitor is, so that we can make preparations in context for a specific person. Our desire as a good host is to accommodate them well – considering their likes, their dislikes, their stature. Their stature, you might ask? Surely we should treat everyone equally! Well ... what if the visitor was ... God?! And what if it isn't what you would call a "normal" visit?!

I want to turn to an important phrase in our Hebrew Bible. It is first declared through the main (human) character of the story - Joseph - who has proved to be a prophet (Gen 37:9-11), saviour of Israel (47:25), and saviour of the world (47:25) at that time. Joseph declares these amazing words in the closing verses of Genesis: "God will surely visit you." (Gen 50:24 and repeated in v. 25).

These words became a common Hebrew saying, "pakod yifkod Elohim etchem." For many of us they probably have more meaning in English! However to follow this Hebrew phrase through our Bible helps us trace this significant prophetic "**visitation**" and its significance. One other thing to note from the very start – the last word ('etchem') notes a specific people. It is as strong as it can be. It is not "a people" generally but "these specific ones I am pointing out now." It speaks of the sons of Jacob – the 12 tribes who become the nation of Israel!

So this is where the "Book of Beginnings" ends, and the story of redemption (Exodus) begins.

Genesis literally means "the head". In Hebrew it is "bereishit" – where you can see the root is "rosh" which means "head". Think of it as the "head" of a spring – out of which flows everything else. This is what we see through the book – ie, what flows from the headship of Adam and Eve; what flows from Noah, what flows from Abraham and the covenant, etc. At the end of the book we find a prophecy by the man who became the saviour of his people (actually God's people!!) and also the world and had a proven track record that his prophecies come true (just ask his brothers, or the baker and cupbearer, or Pharaoh himself!). Thus at the end of the book of beginnings comes a prophecy of headship from which will flow an amazing redemption for a specific

people. And through this people will come salvation for the world.

God will surely visit you – ie you specifically, ('etchem').

## A Visit in Egypt

So what should we look for as we turn the page into Exodus? What will become of Joseph's prophecy? By the way Joseph is so sure of this prophecy he "bets his bones" on it! He basically says, "I am so unshakably confident of the LORD's covenants to us as a specific people, that when I die I want you to keep my bones transportable – they will only rest when they can rest in the place promised by the LORD. True to Jewish culture, belief is not just of the mind, but of the whole person – bones included! Joseph places his life – and death – entirely in the reality of the Jewish people returning to the land promised to them by God.

So how far do we have to read to find this prophecy in action? Not far! Exodus 3:16 says, "Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever and this is my memorial to all generations.'" So the LORD gathers all the leaders of this about-to-be nation and says, "I have surely **visited** you, and seen what is done to you in Egypt." There's the prophetic phrase – highlighted by God himself by gathering all the leaders together. It's a pretty clear announcement isn't it! Ex 2:24 states that God heard the groaning of a specific people – the people of Israel and looked upon them – He is about to act!

And what does this phrase "surely visit you" mean? Read Exodus chapters 3-20 and you will get a pretty clear picture! This is far more than a simple expression of God's omnipresence, or a "visit with his children" as we may use the term. This is God acting in history to bring to reality His promises and redemption for His people. "Visit" is not a metaphor, it's a euphemism. The true God did not metaphorically judge those who claimed to be gods in Egypt – He completely exposed the nakedness of their claims to sovereignty. He did not metaphorically "save" these people as merely a parable for the church – He literally "brought them out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." He literally "rescued them from their bondage", He "redeemed them with an outstretched arm and with great judgements" in order that He should literally "take them as My people and I will be your God." – Precisely in accord with the four verbs celebrated by the Jewish

people every Passover to this day from Exodus 6:6-7.

This year Passover coincides with the celebration of Easter – a perfect time to be pondering the grand significance of the promise of God's sure visitation to His specific people. It is a time to ponder both the "sure visitation" of Exodus and the "sure visitation" of complete, everlasting salvation yet to come. Like the Jewish people, it is good to celebrate not only in *remembrance* of what God has done, but also in *rehearsal* of what God has yet promised to do. Consider the words of Jesus who declared at Passover with His disciples, "I will no longer drink of this fruit of the vine until I drink new with you in My Father's kingdom." (Mt 26:29) There is a "sure visitation" to come.

## A Visit in Babylon

So where else is this "sure visitation to His specific people" mentioned in the Bible? In Jeremiah 27:22 when God assures Israel of their judgement of banishment from the Promised Land by the Babylonians, He makes this promise, "They shall be carried to Babylon and there they shall be until the day that I **visit** them," says the LORD. "Then I will bring them up and restore them to this place." Note the parallel – a "visitation" that brings a specific people to the specific land He promised them with a great sign of sovereignty. We can now look back and see how once again God kept this promise literally and miraculously. Israel is the only nation to have been conquered and dispersed to return to their ancient homeland and become a nation again. What a testimony to the true God!

## A Missed Visit

What about the New Covenant? What does it say of God's sure visitation to His people? Two key passages should come to mind. In Luke 19:44, the One who revealed Himself as Messiah spoke specifically to his people (note he is specifically weeping over Jerusalem, vs. 41). He says "they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your **visitation**." The tragedy of this reality is poignantly portrayed in the language of this passage. Again, note it is a literal visitation including clear signs and miracles with the intention of returning a specific people to their specific land of promise. If only...

## The Future Visit

One more: 1 Peter 2:12, "... that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good works which they observe, and glorify God in the day of **visitation**." Wow!

The Great Day of Visitation is yet to come! Our loyalty to the One whose visitation was rejected will cause even those who refuse to place their faith in Him to unequivocally glorify God when He returns. Even the declared enemies of God will acknowledge His worthiness when He "surely *visits* His people" and rightly judges those who have rejected His plan of redemption through history.

Take time to ponder these riches of Passover and Easter. It will place your worship in the incredible context of the grand purposes of God that includes YOU specifically, when you choose to trust His work on your behalf by faith. See Deane's article on Psalm 41 to understand God's salvation by faith in Messiah's work for us.

So we are going to have a Visitor! Not just any visitor – the LORD of the universe! He will surely visit His people as clearly as He did in Exodus. Ezekiel 37 reveals how this will be a final, permanent visitation, "I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore" (v26) and all nations will know it's specific application to the nation of Israel even as we by grace share in the blessings, "The nations will also know that I, the LORD sanctify Israel when My sanctuary is in their midst forever more." (v28)

So make sure you are prepared and ready! Apply the blood of the perfect Lamb to your hearts, and live your life expectant of this most important of Visitors.

May our prayer be genuine with the Psalmist of old, "Remember me, O LORD, with the favour you have toward Your people. Oh, **visit** me with Your salvation, That I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones, That I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation, That I may glory with Your inheritance." (Ps 106:4,5)

This is God's blessing and my wish for you as we approach the special time of Easter and Passover. Maranatha!

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