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September 2010

Psalm 22

R. “*They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*” - Psalm 22:18

יָתָּ לְקוֹ בְּגָדַי לָהֶם; וְעַל לְבוּשִׁי יִפְּיְלוּ גוֹרָל

1. “*They part my garments among them*” - יָתָּ לְקוֹ בְּגָדַי לָהֶם

“*And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*” Matthew 27:35 “*And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.*” Mark 15:24 “*Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*” Luke 23:34 “*They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.*” John 19:24

The word for *part* in the Hebrew is the piel future of *chalaq*. It is translated as to part, to divide, to apportion. It had the idea of the dividing up, or the separating, of things into equal portions so that all parties got an equal share of what was there. It was used of the division of the spoils of wars by soldiers where equal participation in the battle meant equal participation in the spoils.

It was the Roman soldiers, who had actually crucified the Lord, who were doing this. It was customary for the soldiers involved to share in whatever the victims had, for they considered that they wouldn't need their garments any more. The casting of lots prevented any bickering or fighting over who got what, when something couldn't be divided.

The word for my garments here is the masculine plural, 1 person singular suffix of *beqed*. *Beqed* was the normal word used for one's clothing, or garments. The Greek has it as *himatia* the accusative plural of *himation*. This would include the inner garments, the outer garments, a robe, belt and sandals.

Now this matter of dividing up the Lord's clothes may seem cruel and insensitive, but remember, these are hardened soldiers who did this all the time. They had nothing personal against the Lord, to them he was just another prisoner who was to be executed. And the military custom was to divide up the individual's personal effects among themselves. It was concerning the men who performed the act of nailing Christ on the cross that he said, “*Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*” Luke 23:34

But the chief priests, elders and scribes knew what they were doing when they handed him over to the Roman authorities for execution. The people of Israel, who demanded that Barabbas be released and the Lord crucified, knew what they were doing. As they said, “*Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.*” Matthew 27:25 That frenzied, demon driven mob, that was circling around the Lord and mocking him trying to evoke more suffering out of him, while he was hanging there on the cross, they knew what they were doing.

2. “*And cast lots upon my vesture.*” - יַעֲלֵךְ בִּזְזֵי יָפֵי לְוֵן גִּזְרָה לְ

It begins in the Hebrew with *al, upon my vesture*, and the Greek has it as *epi*, or upon as well. The word for *vesture* is *lebush* in the Hebrew, while the Greek uses the word *himastos*. They divided his **garments**, *himatia* in the accusative plural in the Greek, and cast lots upon his **vesture**, the accusative singular of *himastos*.

The word to *cast* is the hiphil of *naphal*. Now *naphal* meant to fall, or fall down, (the word from which we get *nephilim*), but when found in the hiphil stem it meant that it had been caused to fall, or as we would say, to be cast, or to be cast down.

The practice of casting lots was commonplace throughout the ancient world. The reason why they resorted to casting lots was to aid them in making decisions, especially if there was, or could be, a disagreement between parties. They considered the casting of lots as just about as impartial as one could get, and there was also the added bonus that the deities of their cultures would so act upon the outcome of the lots that they would line up with their will.

Men cast lots to divide up the booty of war, to determine who would get what captives they had taken, the order of service in the temple, the division of property, for gambling, etc.. If there was anything that men could think of to determine who did what, or who got what, you can be sure that the practice of casting lots for it was involved.

We don't know what the lots were that they used. Sticks of different length were used, so were flat coins, stones, arrow heads without the point. But the word in the Hebrew is *goral*, which is the word for stones, indicating that they could have been stones of some color, while others think that they could have been the forerunner to the dice we use today.

One thing that was used was a container in which one placed the stones, or carved pieces of wood, the container was shaken and the stones cast out on the ground. It would be the same idea today of shaking dice in a bar for drinks.

Now when it says they “*cast lots upon my vesture*”, some interpret this as casting lots to determine who got the Lord's cloak, which could be true. Obviously a cloak of great value would be important and one certainly would not want to tear it in pieces so everyone got a part of it. So it would only make sense to them to keep it intact and let the lots determine who got it.

But there's another way of looking at this and that's they used the cloak as a covering on the ground to provide as clean an area as they could so they would have a “fair roll of the dice”. The Hebrew and Greek both use the word upon, which tells us that they cast the lots upon the cloak of the Lord. So they would cast the lots upon the Lord's cloak to determine who got the sandals, then the next piece of clothing, and so on until they came to the cloak itself.

We need to remember that the Lord was still alive as he watching all this. He's looking down from his position on the cross watching the men cast lots for his clothes. And even his statement talking about this scene unfolding concerning his garments was in itself a fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 22:18. And, once again, there was no bitterness on the part of the Lord, no anger, no self pity, no grief; he's simply looking down watching men gamble over his clothes.

S. “*But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.*” Psalm 22:19 - וְאַתָּה יְיָהוָה, אֱלֹ-הֵינוּ; לֵאמֹר לֵבִי לֹא יִשְׁכַּח לְעֶזְרְתִּי חַיִּים הֵם

Before we get into this verse, we need to go over what was really going on in the temple system back then. There is the assumption, by some, that even though the priests, elders and scribes were the ones behind getting Christ to be crucified by the Roman authorities, they were somehow misguided. Their actions were wrong, but perhaps not that sinister. But is that true?

Has anyone considered the idea that the temple system had been taken over by Satan? This is not to say that everyone involved in it were Satanists, but that those who had control over the system were. One *prima facie* proof is the diabolical hatred they had for Christ demonstrated in the lengths they went to torment him while he was hanging on the cross. But there is something else.

In Luke 4:1-13 the devil took the Lord up and set him on one of the high mountains. From there he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and told him that if he worshiped him, then he would give him dominion over all the nations and kingdoms of the world. “*And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.*” Luke 4:5-7

He also took him to Jerusalem and set him on a pinnacle of the temple trying to get him to test the Father. “*And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*” Luke 4:10-12

The question is, why the temple? Out of all the buildings in Jerusalem and the middle east, why did the devil choose the temple in Jerusalem to set Christ on? Now mountains are used as a figure of speech to represent earthly government, but the concept of **standing is also a figure of speech!** The idea of “*standing on*” conveys the concepts of **conquering, possession and control over something.**

When the devil was standing on a very high mountain showing the Lord the kingdoms (mountains) of the world, he was saying that his mountain, which was higher than the others, was **his** government or dominion, and that it ruled over all earthly dominions or governments. Which tells us that Satan had taken control over all the world's governments, he possessed them and controlled them.

Now we come to the temple in Jerusalem. By the fact that he took the Lord up and stood on a pinnacle of the temple, he was saying that he had taken control of the temple system at the very highest levels. Just like he has taken control over all the nations of the world at the highest levels of their governments and that includes the U.S. as well!

You say, that can't be! The temple of God was where the worship of *Yahweh* was to take place. Well churches are to be the place where the worship of God and the teaching of his Word takes place, but there are many churches who glorify the devil and not God! **If the worship of *Yahweh* was actually taking place in the temple, you can be sure they would not be murdering his Son he sent to them!!** **The fact that they did, showed they were Satan's representatives, not God's!**

The temple of God in the OT was to be for the worship of *Yahweh*, but we see that instead of conducting worship of *Yahweh*, they were worshiping Tammuz/Nimrod/Satan, referred to as the image of jealousy! “*Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.*” Ezekiel 8:5

Inside God showed Ezekiel more of the idols Israel was worshiping, with seventy elders at the shrine of his own idol. “*So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.*” Ezekiel 8:10,11

He then showed him the women of Israel observing the Babylonian ritual of weeping for Tammuz, the son of Nimrod. “*Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.*” Ezekiel 8:14 And men worshiping the sun in the east. “*And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.*” Ezekiel 8:16

This practice of worshiping Satan, through the rituals of the Babylonian system, could not have taken place unless the religious leadership of the temple in Ezekiel's day were not involved in the practice themselves! They were initiated satanists then and they were in the Lord's time, but operating under the cover of being devotees to the Lord.

Now if the Israelites had given themselves over to the things of Satan for forty years in the wilderness through their idolatry, and if their entire history had been one of idolatry, except for a relatively few individuals, and if the temple dedicated to *Yahweh* had idols placed in it by the tacit permission, or direction of, the religious leaders of Israel, then why is it so hard to believe that Satan had control or influence over the temple system during the time of Christ?

And why is it that they did not recognize the Son of the God they were supposed to be worshiping? Why did they not recognize the One who was leading them in the wilderness? And why did they murder the Son of the Holy One they were supposed to be worshiping? Why did Christ tell them that their father was the devil? “*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*” John 8:44 And why did Christ call them the synagogue of Satan? “*I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*” Revelation 2:9 If not for the fact that they were satanists!

The temple advertised itself as the place of worship of the one true God. But was it? If it was, then why did the religious leaders of the temple call for the death of the one true God walking around outside of it in human form? Why did they cruelly mock him on the cross? Why did they take great delight in his suffering? Why did they surround him to block every avenue of escape or possible help getting to him? Why did they not alert the public that the veil of the Holy of Holies had been torn into and that the *shekinah* glory of God was gone?

1. “But be not thou far from me, O LORD:” - אֵל-תִּרְחֹק , וְאַתָּה יְהוָה

In the original it's, “But you, Yahweh, be not far from me.”

There is the idea of that which is **near by** and that which is **afar off**. *Rachaq* denotes the idea of distance, to be far from, to stand at a distance. One cannot be helped, delivered, etc., if that which is needed is far away and not near by. If the threat is near and present, then it won't do any good if one's deliverance is afar. Therefore the help needs to be near and not far away. So the Son is asking the Father to be close by him to help. Remember, they had never been separated.

2. “O my strength,” - אֵילֹתַי י

We must remember that when the second member of the trinity became a man, then he entered into the mainstream of humanity having to live as the people of God have to live and that is in total dependence upon the Father to provide all that he would need here on earth. This would include his protection, providing for him and depending upon the Father's strength.

This is the only place in the Bible that this word is used and it is rooted in the idea of power or strength. So the Lord is looking to his Father to provide him with the strength to go through what he had to go through as he was hanging there on the cross.

3. “Haste thee to help me.” - לְעֶזְרָתִי חִישׁ ה

The word to *hasten* is the qal imperative of *chush*. *Chush* meant to hasten to do a thing and could be accompanied by a disturbing necessity. In some cases it had the idea of an inward agitation due to the pressure put on a person. Being put in a stressful situation, with no apparent way out, could result in a person wanting quick release from it. But in the qal imperative here it meant to hasten.

The prefix le is used as to denote a turning to, direction to and motion to, which has the idea of hurrying to come to me for the purpose of helping me.

Azar is to be thought of as helping here, but in the context here of being a covenant helper. As we have developed before, whenever we see the use of *azar* in the Hebrew, or *boethos* in the Greek, we need to remember that the idea of helping here is not one of just helping somebody out in life, but refers to the help that one expects from someone they are in covenant with.

We must remember that everything that God does is on a legal basis and the legal vehicle that *Yahweh* has chosen is the **covenant**. When he created the earth and placed Adam on it as the ruler over the earth, he did so based upon a covenant, which we call the Adamic covenant. When God promised Noah never to destroy the earth again by water, he did so by a covenant, which we call the Noahic covenant. When God promised Abraham to give him land to possess, seed and blessing, he did so by a covenant, which we call the Abrahamic covenant. When God gave the sons of Israel the land to live on, as tenant farmers, he did so with a covenant, which had conditions, which we call the Sinaitic covenant. When God promised to give David the throne over Israel and a descendant to rule over that throne forever, who would be Jesus Christ, he did so by a covenant, which we call the Davidic covenant. When God promised to take away all our sins and give us eternity, he did so by a covenant, through the blood of his Son, which we call the New Covenant.

We could talk about how our salvation is a legal one, how our sins were legally removed from us, how we were legally declared righteous in heaven, how our eternal inheritance is a legal one, how we are kings and priests is legally based because the Father had made his Son both king of kings, and high priest of priests, how our position and function in the celestial hierarchy is by legal appointment. And when the second member of the trinity became a man, all that the Father had promised Him in eternity past was based upon a covenant. *“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,”* Hebrews 13:20

Now sometimes a covenant is based upon obedience to certain stipulated conditions, as it was with Adam and the nation of Israel, and sometimes it isn't as with Abraham, Noah and David. In the case of the New Covenant that God has with us, his Son fulfilled all the conditions on our behalf. The Son obeyed every aspect of the Father's will thereby securing our salvation. *“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:”* Philippians 2:8,9

Now when we come down to the concept of a covenant, when two parties come together and form a bi-lateral covenant with each other, then both parties are bound to abide by the terms of the covenant. Both parties have made, or negotiated, certain stipulations and conditions and adjusted their covenant to a finished product. In a uni-lateral covenant, which is what God has with us, we have no say whatsoever concerning the covenant. We are only free to accept it or reject it.

One of the concepts found in a bi-lateral covenant is that both parties, being on equal footing because they have a negotiated, mutual agreement with each other, is that they are bound to help each other when one of them calls out to the other for help. But in a uni-lateral covenant, help only comes from one party, the party who originated the covenant. And in the case of believers in Christ, the help only comes from God to us and not us to God.

So when Christ uses the word *azar*, when he is crying out to the Father for help, he's saying that a covenant exists between the two and he's asking the Father for help because of their covenant relation. We need to remember that Christ is speaking out of his humanity to the Father. He is in great pain and distress; his nation has rejected him; his inheritance has been stolen; he is surrounded by a pack of animals who take great delight in his suffering. And, as a man, he wants his Father to hasten to him for the purpose of helping him.

But there was no help for him as he was hanging on the cross, for he had to bear the full brunt of the wrath of God in punishment for our sins. The only help that was provided for him was the spiritual life dynamic that was found in the faith. Which centers around faith in the Father, faith in his promises, faith in the doctrines of the Word of God, faith in his plan, faith in his omnipotent power and faith in the process that the Father chose to bring his plan to fulfillment.

The *help* the Father had planned for his Son was found in sustaining his soul by living in the spiritual life dynamic of the faith, faith in the Father's promises, and in raising him from the dead after three days and nights. The prospect of his resurrection from the dead with an eternal body and his faith in it caused Christ to rejoice in hope while on the cross. To rejoice, *euphraino*, spoke of being in a good state of mind, of cheerfulness. *“Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”* Acts 2:26,27

T. “*Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.*” - Psalm 22:20 - הַצִּילָהּ מִתְּרֹב נֶפֶשׁ יְיָ; מִיַּד-כְּלָב, יְחַיֶּדְתָּ יְיָ

1. “*Deliver my soul from the sword;*” - הַצִּילָהּ מִתְּרֹב נֶפֶשׁ יְיָ

To *deliver* is the gal imperative of *natsal*, which can be translated as to deliver, to rescue, to save. It denotes an act of separation and when constructed with *min*, it takes on the sense of rescue, taking away, or separating from something posing harm or threat.

It was used in verse 8, “*Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*”, where the haters of Christ were saying to the Lord let *Yahweh* deliver you seeing that he so delighted in him. In that context *natsal*, or to deliver, would have the idea of removing him from the cross so as to escape death. But here he's not asking the Father to deliver him from the cross but to deliver his soul from the sword.

The word for soul in the Hebrew is *nephesh*. It is uniformly translated as *psuche* in the Greek, but trying to understand all the concepts found in *nephesh* in the Hebrew is much more complicated than one might imagine and using the Greek *psuche* becomes too restrictive.

The noun occurs 754 times in the OT and is used in a variety of ways in them. Man has a *nephesh*, God has a *nephesh*, but so do all animals! Context will determine what its particular meaning is in that situation. It can refer to breath, life, the seat of desire, the seat of emotions, intention of the will, the center of religious expression, the throat, gullet, appetite, soul, it can have melancholy, depression, sadness, grief, bitterness, desperation, feelings of joy, praise, call on itself, have a relationship with oneself, be frightened, despair, be weak and despondent, exhausted, feel vulnerable, be afflicted, suffer misery, love, hate, abhor, loathe, be disgusted, and much more. It is considered to be very dear and precious and so it requires attention. It can become strengthened through the Word and it can be poured out unto death. It is also referred to as the inner child. Psalm 131:2

It has the main idea of life, not life in general, or life chronologically, but life given by God to the individual. So it takes on the idea of life as a vital force in all individuals. We could say individuated life, in that it speaks of the life force in all humans personalized as in such a way that makes each one of us different than the other. It can refer to the life force, or vital energy, of an individual without any reference to the characteristic personality, or it can refer to the unseen personality called the soul.

Perhaps the Egyptian's conception of the *nephesh*, although complex and perhaps not totally accurate, will give us some insight. It takes three different terms into account when speaking of the *nephesh* in addition to the idea of a vital force: the **ka**, the **ba** and the **akh**. The **ka** is the person's hidden, unseen double. The **ba** refers to its capacity to assume a form and can therefore mean embodiment or manifestation. The **akh** represents the dead individual transfigured through Egyptian burial rites.

The Lord is asking the Father here to deliver his *nephesh* from the sword and we see in Isaiah 53:12 that he poured his *nephesh* out unto death. “*Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul (nephesh) unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*” The idea here could be one of the *nephesh* as being the individuated unseen person inside the flesh, who was being poured out, or offered, in the sense of a sacrifice. Or the spiritual life force being poured out.

The Lord has been talking about his relationship with the Father; the men surrounding him on the cross who were directing all their hate toward him; he's been talking about his personal, physical suffering he was experiencing while on the cross, and now he shifts over to talk about his *nephesh*. And he's asking the Father to deliver his *nephesh* from the sword.

The word for sword is *chereb* and could refer to the two-edged dagger, or short sword, and the single-edged scimitar, or long sword. It could be used in a literal sense and a metaphorical sense. Literally the sword was used for personal protection, by the military, for butchering of animals, or as the sword of justice, or the judgments of God.

Metaphorically the sword could be used for rash, hateful, or cruel words. “*Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.*” Proverbs 12:18 (NIV) “*There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*” Proverbs 12:18 (KJV) Words that cut to the quick designed to inflict suffering of the soul or *nephesh*. “*Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:*” Psalm 64:3 Once again we have the same idea of people using words to hurt us.

We also see the tongue, which is a vehicle of delivering words, put as a fire because of its great destructive power in people's lives when used the wrong way. “*Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a **fire**, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*” James 3:5,6

This context deals with the tongue set in motion by the emotion of bitterness and anger. Burning is often associated with fire, such as in Ephesians 6:16, “*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*” But the fiery darts of Satan should really be thought of in the idea of Satan's burning anger. Satan is full of rage, driven by his pride, and he directs his rage toward believers in Christ. “*Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having **great wrath**, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*” Revelation 12:12

What it tells us is that Christians can and do become bitter and angry in life over a variety of things and they inject their bitter anger into others by the use of hateful, cutting words. The OT Israelites were destroying each other with their bitter words, so the Lord let them be bit by the burning venom (fire) of serpents to let them know what it felt like.

Here the *sword* is put for the tongue spewing out its venomous hateful garbage at the Lord. These men were using words propelled out by their diabolical hatred for him; words that were intended to slash the Lord's soul to pieces, to go to its very core until it was totally destroyed. But all that failed because of the Lord's faith, his personal integrity, his sinlessness and all the doctrines of God's Word that he had metabolized by faith over his lifetime.

He was handling the verbal and demonic energy attack against his soul by faith in the Father and his Word, but in his humanity, like all of us would do, he is praying to the Father for him to deliver him from their attack so his *nephesh* would be preserved. To deliver, *natsal*, used with the preposition *min*, has the idea of deliverance from something in the sense that there is a separation from that which would do you harm. So he's asking the Father that their verbal attacks against his *nephesh* will not touch his *nephesh*. And his soul, his *nephesh*, was protected from their attacks.

