

On the Road to Emmaus

(Chapter 3)

Psalm 22

We were not long on the road before the teacher began to share with us once more. Gesturing before him with his hand, he began; “We are on this road, and it leads us to a destination, does it not?”

“Naturally it does teacher,” I answered, “What would be the point of a road that went nowhere?”

“Indeed, you are correct” he replied, “So it is with the scriptures, there is a road within them that leads to a destination, you simply need to follow the signs.”

“What is the destination you are referring to”, Cleopas asked?

“Not so much what, but who,” the teacher countered.

“The Messiah,” I asked?

“Yes, the Messiah, but if you want a what, one stop would be the cross, but that is not the final destination.”

“Many have claimed to be the Messiah, but how do we know for certain who is the one,” Cleopas asked?

“This is why you need to follow the signs,” he answered. “I have already shared some of these signs with you. What are some of the other signs that you know?”

It was Cleopas who first answered. “We know the Messiah will be a descendant of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Issac and Jacob. He will also be a descendant of King David and will come from the tribe of Judah.”

“He will come from Bethlehem and be a king who rules over all of Israel”, as I finished this addition, my face saddened.”Teacher,” I said, “Jesus couldn’t be the Messiah, he was killed before he could rule over Israel.. Then a thought struck me. I looked up momentarily and then back at the teacher, “That is unless he lived again.”

The teacher smiled in approval as father would his child and said, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times” the teacher said quoting the prophet Micah, the source of my answer. He continued; “Yes, Messiah will rule over Israel, that is a sign, but there are many other signs which must come first.”

“What are these signs,” Cleopas asked?

“You have stated some of them, but there are many more. You were at the crucifixion?”

“We were, and it sickened my stomach” Cleopas answered.

I nodded in agreement, before adding, “I had never seen anything like it. Not only was a good man crucified, but they mocked him as he was dying. They were celebrating his suffering as if he were some horrible monster instead of a man. I watched as they cast lots over who was to get his garments. I have never been more disgusted by my fellow man than I was then.”

The teacher then began to speak; “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning.” My ears perked up as he spoke, Jesus had uttered these words on the cross, but it suddenly dawned on me; they were spoken long before Jesus was put to death on the cross.

The teacher continued; “O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are

the praise of Israel. In you are fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. They cried to you and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.”

“But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. ‘He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him since he delights in him.’”

I felt a shiver go up my spine as he spoke these words; He was quoting a psalm, but more than this, three days earlier, I had watched as this scene played out. Jesus had called out asking why God had forsaken him. He was brought low like the worm and not treated as a man. They scorned and mocked him. They fulfilled the scripture in their mocking as some shouted out, ‘He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him.’ I could sense a similar feeling coming from Cleopas as I looked at his face. He knew it too. The teacher paused, no doubt sensing what had come over Cleopas and me. “Go on teacher” I said, my voice slightly quaking as the words came out.

He continued; “Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.”

I stopped walking; my vision was beginning to blur. The teacher was quoting the psalm, but the words he was speaking were leaping past the pages of antiquity to a moment I witnessed just three days ago. “Is this how Jesus felt while on the cross” I asked myself? He must have thought all the world was against him as his life was being poured out like water from a cistern. His heart was melting away inside of him as his tormentors mocked

his torture in merry delight. “Three days ago, humanity was never more ugly” I thought. The teacher had paused momentarily as he looked upon my face with tender compassion that I could barely see through my now clouded vision of tears that were forming but not yet released. He then continued the psalm.

“Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me; they have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.”

The teacher stopped once more as I began to weep uncontrollably. The tears I had tried to hold back, I found myself unable to do so any longer. Amongst the metaphorical illustration of Scripture, I remembered the bones exposed from the whipping Jesus had received. He had been pierced just as the Scriptures described. His face had been bloodied and beaten beyond recognition. The mocking, the casting of lots over his garments. It all happened just as described by David in the Psalms.

Cleopas reached out, first putting his hand on my shoulder, and then fully embraced me like a brother. I could tell by the look on his face he was close to tears himself. We were both reliving the death of Jesus, not only recalling the recent memory, but also through the Word of God written over a thousand years ago. It had been fulfilled by Jesus.

The teacher looked at us with compassion in his eyes, saying nothing at first; but finally deciding it was time. “Cheer up, for it all happened just as it was supposed to happen. This is not the end for the Messiah, but only the beginning. The road for Messiah does not end in death, but instead victory!”

Cleopas released me, and I wiped the tears from my face with the sleeve of

my robe. “I pray you are right teacher; I pray you are right. Please go on, I am sorry for my outburst.”

“Do not be sorry; your love for Jesus is evident. No! Do not be sorry for that; Indeed, it should cause you to celebrate, because you are of his flock.

He then continued; “But you, O Lord, be not far off; O my strength, come quickly to help me. Deliver my life from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs. Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you will I fulfill my vows. The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the Lord will praise him – may your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.”

“All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him – those who cannot keep themselves alive. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn – for he has done it”

“As you can see, the road of the Messiah does not end in death. The Messiah will continue to bring glory to the father. The Messiah will fulfill his vows; “the poor will eat and be satisfied”. They who seek him shall be found by him, and every knee will bow before him. He will rule not only Israel, but all the nations.”

“Are you speaking about the Messiah now, or the Lord;” I asked?

The journey continues in the next chapter.

Quoted Scripture verses

Micah 5:2

Psalm 22.

Author: Herb Dombrowski

Date: 10/06/25

