

## “ORPHANS IN THEIR TROUBLE”

Bryan Matthew Dockens

**“A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation”** (Psalm 68:5). Throughout Scripture, the heavenly Father has always communicated particular compassion for the downtrodden, especially orphans, and, thus, He demands no less concern for them from His people. *“Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked”* (Psalm 82:3-4).

The New Testament presents Christians with an obligation regarding orphans, *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world”* (James 1:27).

The responsibility concerning orphans is personal, not collective. The same verse speaks of keeping *“oneself unspotted from the world.”* This isn’t the business of the State, of the church, or of some philanthropic organization. It is the duty of the individual.

To *“visit”* is much more than to merely drop in and inquire as to the orphan’s welfare. When Christ was observed raising the dead, the people proclaimed, *“God has visited His people!”* (Luke 7:16). To visit is to attend directly to the need. The best example of an orphan being visited is the adoption of Esther by her cousin Mordecai. *“Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother... When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter”* (Esther 2:7).

Defiled religion would have the church beg for donations, build an orphanage, and hire personnel to work with the fatherless children, if there even are any orphans in the orphanage – sometimes they’re empty. However, what God wants is Christians, individually, adopting orphans into their own homes and establishing parental bonds. That religion is pure.

The situation is not for childless couples in their trouble to go in search of orphans who can satisfy their longings for parenthood, but for fatherless children in their trouble to be visited. Accordingly, Christians, with or without children, must prepare themselves mentally aforetime, so that when needs occur, they are ready to step in and help.

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Jesus experienced two distinct “piercings” on the occasion of the crucifixion. First, His hands and feet were pierced by the nails driven into His hands and feet and into the wooden cross by the Roman soldiers. Second, we are informed that shortly after He expired, a Roman soldier pierced His side, as if to ascertain for certain that He was deceased. None of the Gospel writers refer explicitly to Psalm 22:16 in connection with the crucifixion. Yet, the connection is all too obvious, not only because His hands and feet were, in fact, pierced by nails, but from the fact that Psalm 22 is riddled with several other Messianic predictions, including the ridicule heaped upon Him, the wagging of His enemies’ heads, and the dividing of His garments, as well as the graphic description of His depleted physical condition that characterized a crucifixion (i.e., the stretching of the skeletal framework, the extreme thirst, and the impact on the heart and chest cavity).

The question to consider is how could the Psalmist (circa 1000 B.C.) and Zechariah (circa 500 B.C.) anticipate that hundreds of years into the future the Messiah would be executed, and that that execution would include piercing? Stoning was the prevailing form of execution that typified Jewish society (Exodus 19:13; Leviticus 20:27; 24:14,23; Numbers 15:36; Deuteronomy 17:5; Joshua 7:25; 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 12:18; et al.). They certainly did not use crucifixion as a form of execution, and the Roman Empire did not exist. Even if the Psalmist and Zechariah were familiar with crucifixion, how could they possibly predict with minute precision the piercing that Jesus endured? With so many forms of execution possible, what are the odds that both prophets would select piercing? Such specificity discourages guesswork. The charlatan remains vague and ambiguous rather than risk detection due to particularity. Since the Old Testament canon was complete two and a half centuries before Christ came to Earth, how could the Psalmist and Zechariah make such an exact prediction hundreds of years in advance? The only rational conclusion is that, as they claimed, they were supernaturally guided in their pronouncements.

**"WHAT MUST I DO  
TO BE SAVED?"**

**ACTS 16:30**

**LEARN THE GOSPEL**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

**BELIEVE IN CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

**CONFESS CHRIST**

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 3:19; 17:30

**BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF  
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

**HEBREWS 10:24-25**

**SUNDAY**

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard  
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**Seekers Welcome.  
Members Expected.**

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN  
ANY TRESPASS...  
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

**GALATIANS 6:1**

**CONFESS TRESPASSES**

James 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 8:22

**PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS**

Acts 8:22

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS  
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN  
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

**PROVERBS 25:11**

"Many a man thinks he is buying  
pleasure when he is really selling  
himself to it."

– Benjamin Franklin

# "WHOLE COUNSEL"

**ACTS 20:27**

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## THE PIERCING OF JESUS

Dave Miller, Apologetics Press

Two fascinating Messianic contexts are found in Psalm 22 and Zechariah 12-13 where a flurry of several very specific anticipations is presented. One of these anticipations predicts that the Messiah would be "pierced." Compare the Psalmist's allusion with Zechariah's:

*"For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet" (Psalm 22:16).*

*"Then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).*

The first prediction obviously has as its setting the scene of the cross. The timeframe of the second is less certain, but undoubtedly refers back to the same crucifixion event. In any case, the allusion to being "pierced" is confirmed by the first century apostle John. Describing the crucifixion scene, specifically, the incident pertaining to the breaking of the legs of the two thieves, John reports concerning Jesus, who was already dead: "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:34). John immediately identifies the incident as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah (vs. 37). He later alludes to this same piercing in connection with the coming of Jesus (Revelation 1:7).

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## RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

505-864-0282

rgvcoc@gmail.com

Box 989, Belén, NM 87002

www.RGVChurchOfChrist.org

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Facebook.com/RGVChurchOfChrist