



Psalm 22

All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him: The LORD God is so highly exalted that all honor.

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Deer of the Dawn." A Psalm of David. We can say that this is a Psalm sung to the Greatest Musician, to an unknown tune, by the Sweet Psalmist of Israel (2 Samuel 23:1). Here, David sings as more than an artist, but also as one of the greatest prophets ever to speak, pointing more to his Greater Son, Jesus the Messiah, than even to himself.

This is a kind of gem among the Psalms and is peculiarly excellent and remarkable. It contains those deep, sublime, and heavy sufferings of Christ, when agonizing amid the terrors and pangs of divine wrath and death which surpass all human thought and comprehension.

A. The agony of the Forsaken One.

1. The cry of the forsaken. This psalm begins abruptly, with a disturbing scene: someone who knows, and trusts God is forsaken, and cries out on to God in agony.
2. Jesus deliberately chose these words to describe His agony on the cross (Matthew 27:46).
3. He saw his crucifixion as a fulfillment of Psalm 22 particularly.
4. Spirit of prophecy beyond himself, and unto Christ, to whom alone it truly and fully agrees.

B. He was a victim of the cruelty of men, but the cry and the complaint is to God—even My God—and not to or against man. Second, the repetition of the plea shows the intensity of the agony.

1. There is a note of surprise in this cry and in the following lines. The forsaken One seems bewildered: Why would My God forsake Me?

Others may deserve such, but I cannot figure out why He would forsake Me.

2. Many times, King David found himself in seemingly impossible circumstances and wondered why God did not rescue him immediately.
3. Yet beyond David and his life this agonized cry and the intentional identification of Jesus with these words are some of the most intense and mysterious descriptions of what Jesus experienced on the cross. Jesus had known great pain and suffering (both physical and emotional) during His life. Yet He had never known separation or alienation from God His Father. At this moment He experienced what He had not yet experienced. There was a significant sense in which Jesus rightly felt forsaken by God the Father on the cross.
4. On the cross, a holy transaction took place. God the Father regarded God the Son as if He were a sinner. As the Apostle Paul would later write, God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21).
5. Yet Jesus not only endured the withdrawal of the Father's fellowship, but also the actual outpouring of the Father's wrath upon Him as a substitute for sinful humanity. This was the blackness and darkness of his horror; then it was that he penetrated the depths of the caverns of suffering,
6. To be forsaken means to have the light of God's countenance and the sense of the presence eclipsed, which is what happened to Jesus as he bore the wrath of God against sin for us.
7. It was necessary that he should feel the loss of his Father's smile, for the condemned in hell must have tasted of that bitterness—and therefore the Father closed the eye of his love, put the hand of justice before the smile of his face, and left his Son to cry, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
8. Horrible as this was, it fulfilled God's good and loving plan of redemption. Therefore, Isaiah could say
9. At the same time, we cannot say that the separation between the Father and the Son at the cross was complete. Paul made this clear in 2 Corinthians 5:19: God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself at the cross. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him (Isaiah 53:20).

What Jesus endured on the cross was so complex, so dark, and so mysterious that it was, at the moment, beyond emotional comprehension.

1. **You-** Thou I can understand why traitorous Judas and timid Peter should be gone, but thou, my God, my faithful friend, how canst thou leave me?
2. **Why?** Because, My Son, You have chosen to stand in the place of guilty sinners. You, who have never known sin, have made the infinite sacrifice to become sin and receive My just wrath upon sin and sinners. You do this because of Your great love, and because of My great love.
3. **Then the Father might give the Son a glimpse of His reward** – the righteously-robed multitude of His people on heaven’s golden streets, all of them singing their redeemer’s praise, all of them chanting the name of Jehovah and the Lamb; and this was a part of the answer to his question.
4. **Why are You so far from helping Me?** David knew what it was like to feel the presence and the deliverance of God and had experienced such many times before. Every prior time of help made this dramatic absence of God’s help more devastating. Worse yet, there seemed to be no explanation for the lack of God’s help; thus the question, “Why?”
5. **No doubt David experienced this, but only as a shadow compared to how Jesus experienced this.** Prior to the cross, Jesus lived every moment in conscious fellowship with God the Father, combined with a continual dependence upon the help of both the Father and the Spirit. At the cross, Jesus felt helpless, as it seemed that the Father was so far from helping Him.
6. O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear: A further dimension of David’s agony was the fact that he made repeated, constant appeals to God and yet felt utterly unheard. His groaning was unanswered, his cry ignored. David certainly experienced this; the greater Son of David experienced it in a far greater degree. On the cross Jesus felt abandoned by the Father, and felt that His groaning and cries went unanswered.
7. Remembrance of God’s nature and prior help.
But You are holy.
Enthroned in the praises of Israel.
Our fathers trusted in You;
They trusted, and You delivered them.

They cried to You and were delivered.

They trusted in You and were not ashamed.

- A. But You are holy: The Forsaken One remembered God and His greatness, even when immersed in suffering. He did not curse or blaspheme God, and he knew that his present agony did not change God's holiness (You are holy) or greatness (Enthroned in the praises of Israel).
- B. We have the sense that the present crisis filled David (and the greater Son of David) with doubt and confusion, yet he would not allow doubts as to the holiness or greatness of God. Whatever he did not know in his present situation, he did know that God was holy.
- C. Here is the triumph of faith – the Savior stood like a rock in the wide ocean of temptation. High as the billows rose, so did his faith, like the coral rock, wax greater and stronger till it became an island of salvation to our shipwrecked souls. It is as if he had said, "It matters not what I endure. Storms may howl upon me; men despise; devils tempt; circumstances overpower; and God himself forsake me, still God is holy; there is no unrighteousness in him."
- D. We may not question the holiness of God, but we may argue from it, and use it as a plea in our petitions.
- E. David also remembered how God had answered and delivered many times before. Strangely, this would add measures of both comfort and despair: comfort, knowing that he cried to the same God who had delivered before and who could deliver again; despair, knowing that the God who had delivered before now seemed so distant and silent.

3. Mocking the forsaken.

But I am a worm, and no man: The intensity of the conflict made David feel not only ignored, but insignificant give no help to worms. The low standing of others simply added to his agony the eyes of others simply added to his agony the eyes of others simply added to his agony.

It was dramatically fulfilled in the greater Son of David, that on the cross He was a reproach of men and despised by the people. Cruel men mocked Jesus in His greatest agony (Matthew 27:39-44).

This verse is a miracle in language. How could the Lord of glory be brought to such abasement as to be not only lower than the angels, but even lower than men. What a contrast between “I am” and “I am a worm!”

He felt himself to be comparable to a helpless, powerless, down-trodden worm, passive while crushed, and unnoticed and despised by those who trod upon him. He selects the weakest of creatures, which is all flesh; and becomes, when trodden upon, writhing, quivering flesh, utterly devoid of any might except strength to suffer. This was a true likeness of himself when his body and soul had become a mass of misery – the very essence of agony - in the dying pangs of crucifixion.

They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, “He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him”: David’s misery multiplied at those who mocked and misunderstood his agony. They used it as an excuse to call into question his relationship with God, even as the friends of Job did ~~with him in~~ his suffering.

1. It was as if they said, “It seemed that he trusted in the LORD, but we all know that the LORD rescues those who trust in Him. It seemed that he delighted in God, but that must be false because he is not delivered.
2. He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him: If Jesus identified with the opening words of Psalm 22 with His great cry from the cross (Matt. 27:46), then His enemies unwittingly identified with the scornful enemies of God and His Anointed in their mockery of Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27:43: He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now).

Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him: This statement reveals the frequent ignorance and cruelty of those who oppose God and His people. It claimed to see no deliverance, when it would indeed come soon. It also questioned the delight of God in the Forsaken One, when God did and does truly delight in that one.

A Plea: “You are my God since the earliest days.”

David understood – both for himself and, prophetically speaking, for the later-to-come Messiah – that in the depth of agony and the sense of abandonment, one could still appeal to God in remembrance of better times.

Out of the womb...while on My mother’s breast...from birth...You have been My God: The Forsaken One argued on good, logical grounds. He reminded God of the

care given since His very earliest days. That prior grace might seem to be wasted if the sufferer was not rescued in His present crisis.

Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help: The plea for help is again eloquently and persuasively stated. God seems far away; but trouble is near – and there is none to help, so You must help me, God!

The agony of the forsaken.

The Forsaken One again describes HISS CRISIS. HE DESCRIBED THE PEOPLE TORMENTING Him as strong bulls of Bashan, large animals proverbial for their strength. They surround Him and threaten Him.

The bull is the emblem of brutal strength, that gores and tramples down all before it.

The priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, rulers, and captains bellowed round the cross like wild cattle, fed in the fat, and solitary pastures of Bashan, full of strength and fury, they stamped and foamed around the innocent One, and longed to gore him to death with their cruelties.

I am poured out like water: The Forsaken One felt completely empty. He perceived no resource in Himself able to meet the crisis at hand. Whatever strength or resistance He had was poured out like water upon the ground.

My heart faileth, my spirits are spent and gone like water, which once spilt can never be recovered, my very flesh is melted within me, and I am become as weak as water.

This described the physical extremity of David at the time, but it also is an amazingly specific prophecy of the future suffering of the Son of David on the cross.

Perhaps here David referred to wounds he received in struggling against these determined enemies; perhaps he wrote purely prophetically. In any regard, hundreds of years before the Romans adopted the Persian practice of crucifixion, the prophet David described the wounds of crucifixion that his Greater Son would bear.

I can count all My bones. David examined his wounds and understood that he had no broken bones. The Son of David also, despite his great suffering on the cross, suffered no broken bones. John carefully noted this (John 19:31-37). This fact fulfilled this prophecy, as well as Psalms 34:20 and the pattern of the Passover lamb as described in Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12.

They looked and stare at Me: In his crisis, David was the focus of unwanted attention His tormentors did not allow him the dignity of private suffering but exposed all things to their stare. David's Great Son also found no place to hide from the unwanted stares of cruel, mocking men at the cross.

On the cross Jesus was the focus not only of mocking and humiliation but also of simple astonishment, as when the centurion said, truly this was the Son of God!

They look and stare upon me. When faith lifts her ye to him who agonized, and bled, and died, for the guilty.

They divide My garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. David was so humbled before his adversaries, so powerless against them, that they took even his clothing and used it for themselves.

Unholy eyes gazed insultingly upon the Savior's nakedness and shocked the sacred delicacy of his holy soul. The sight of the agonizing body ought to have ensured sympathy from the throng, but it only increased their savage mirth, as they gloated their cruel eyes upon his miseries.

The request of Psalm 22:11 is here repeated. David seemed to believe that he could endure anything if he enjoyed the conscious presence of God. His plea is not focused on the change of his situation, but on the presence of God in the crisis.

The answer of God to the Forsaken One instantly meant that He no longer felt forsaken. The deliverance from the crisis itself may be yet to come, but the deliverance from the sense of being forsaken by God in the midst of the crisis was His. There is immense relief, joy, and peace in the words, "You have answered Me."

Psalm 22:22- Hebrews 2:12- John 17:36

Our great High Priest is there to offer our petitions with his own.

Some of God's people automatically associate all affliction with the disfavor of God. It is true that sometimes affliction may come as punishment (for the unbeliever) or as discipline (for the believer). Yet sometimes affliction is something God does not despise and uses to good effect in the lives of His people.

It is in this sense that the words of Isaiah 53:10 WERE FULFILLED: Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. The affliction was not despised.

There are souls now weeping for sin and longing for a Savior who will soon find them, and then will become most hearty singers of the new song. They are coming, coming in their thousands even now. The music of praise shall be continued if the sun, and the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. From generation to generation shall the name of the Lord be praised.