

## PSALM 22

### *A Cry of Anguish and a Song of Praise*

#### INTRODUCTION.

- A. To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Deer of the Dawn." A Psalm of David.
- B. From Roy Enoch (1-12-94).
- C. The Great OT Prophecy of the Crucifixion of Christ.
- D. Coffman's title for this psalm is most appropriate. He also quotes from Halley's Bible Handbook (p. 237),

"This sounds like a cry of anguish from David, but though written thousand years before Jesus, it is so vivid a description of the crucifixion of Jesus that one would think of the writer as being personally present at the Cross. Jesus' dying words (22:1), the sneers of His enemies (22:7,8), the piercing of his hands and feet (22:16), and the casting of lots for His garments (22:18) are some of the events here described. None of these statements are applicable to David, or to any other known event or person in the history of mankind, except the crucifixion of the Son of God."
- E. Coffman says that there are four different ways of interpreting this psalm:
  1. It is a description of the sorrows and sufferings of David.
  2. It is a description of the sorrows and sufferings of some unknown righteous person of antiquity, possible, Jeremiah.
  3. It is a description of the nation of Israel during their captivity or at some other crisis.
  4. It is a predictive prophecy of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, written by King David, but having little or no reference whatever to David himself.
- F. Those who deny predictive prophecy are forced to claim that they cannot find any reference whatever to the Lord. In Coffman's commentary on Matthew (p. 509), he sums up the statements of this psalm that describes the crucifixion of Christ:
  1. 22:1 "My God, My God, why has thou forsaken Me?"
  2. 22:6 "A reproach of men, and despised of the people."
  3. 22:7 "They...laugh me to scorn." "They shake the head."
  4. 22:8 "Let Him rescue Him." "Seeing He delights in Him."
  5. 22:11 "For there is none to help."
  6. 22:12 "Many bulls have compassed Me."
  7. 22:14 "I am poured out like water." "My bones are out of joint"
  8. 22:14 "My strength is dried up."
  9. 22:15 "My tongue cleaves to My jaws." "Into the dust of death."
  10. 22:16 "Dogs have compassed Me." "A company of evil doers have enclosed Me."
  11. 22:16 "They pierced My hands." "And My feet."
  12. 22:17 "I may count all My bones." "They look and stare upon Me."
  13. 22:18 "They part My garments among them." "and upon My vesture do they cast lots."
- G. Only in v16 of this psalm do we learn that Jesus' feet were pierced.
- H. The structure of this psalm is two major parts:
  1. Part I describes the suffering of the Christ (22:1-21).
  2. Part II, the glory that would be revealed afterward (22:22-31).

#### TEXT.

- 22:1** My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?  
Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.
- 2** O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer;  
And by night, but I have no rest.
- 3** Yet You are holy,  
O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
- 4** In You our fathers trusted;

They trusted and You delivered them.  
**5** To You they cried out and were delivered;  
 In You they trusted and were not disappointed.  
**6** But I am a worm and not a man,  
 A reproach of men and despised by the people.  
**7** All who see me sneer at me;  
 They separate with the lip, they wag the head, *saying*,  
**8** “Commit *yourself* to the LORD; let Him deliver him;  
 Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.”  
**9** Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb;  
 You made me trust *when* upon my mother’s breasts.  
**10** Upon You I was cast from birth;  
 You have been my God from my mother’s womb.  
**11** Be not far from me, for trouble is near;  
 For there is none to help.  
**12** Many bulls have surrounded me;  
 Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled me.  
**13** They open wide their mouth at me,  
 As a ravening and a roaring lion.  
**14** I am poured out like water,  
 And all my bones are out of joint;  
 My heart is like wax;  
 It is melted within me.  
**15** My strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
 And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;  
 And You lay me in the dust of death.  
**16** For dogs have surrounded me;  
 A band of evildoers has encompassed me;  
 They pierced my hands and my feet.  
**17** I can count all my bones.  
 They look, they stare at me;  
**18** They divide my garments among them,  
 And for my clothing they cast lots.  
**19** But You, O LORD, be not far off;  
 O You my help, hasten to my assistance.  
**20** Deliver my soul from the sword,  
 My only *life* from the power of the dog.  
**21** Save me from the lion’s mouth;  
 From the horns of the wild oxen You answer me.  
**22** I will tell of Your name to my brethren;  
 In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.  
**23** You who fear the LORD, praise Him;  
 All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,  
 And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel.  
**24** For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;  
 Nor has He hidden His face from him;  
 But when he cried to Him for help, He heard.  
**25** From You *comes* my praise in the great assembly;  
 I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him.  
**26** The afflicted will eat and be satisfied;  
 Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.  
 Let your heart live forever!  
**27** All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD,  
 And all the families of the nations will worship before You.  
**28** For the kingdom is the LORD’S  
 And He rules over the nations.  
**29** All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship,  
 All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him,  
 Even he who cannot keep his soul alive.  
**30** Posterity will serve Him;

It will be told of the Lord to the *coming* generation.  
31 They will come and will declare His righteousness  
To a people who will be born, that He has performed *it*.

## COMMENTS.

### A. The Suffering of the Christ (22:1-21).

**[v1,2]** To what do these pleas refer? Some have suggested that Jesus quoted them to call attention to the words of the psalm generally as they describe His crucifixion.

It may be more likely that He did feel isolated from God when the sins of the world were “laid upon Him” (Isa. 53:3), and when He “tasted death for every man” (Heb. 2:9). “Christ died for our sins” (1Cor. 15:3) and “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2Cor. 5:21). Since the consequence of sin is being separated from God, when Jesus was made sin for us, He may also have tasted the terrible consequences of sin in feeling that He was separated from the Father.

**[v3-5]** We need this blessed assurance that God has indeed heard and answered the prayers of “the fathers” or religious people in the past, to encourage us to have the faith and hope to pray in times of need.

**[v6-8]** “But I am a worm...” seems to be reflecting the opinion of men as shown by the way they were treating Him, and is synonymous to the second line of the couplet, “a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”

**[v7]** Predicted exactly the behavior described in: Mt. 27:39, “And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads.”

**[v8]** Describes the railing that Matthew gives in: Mt. 27:43 “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” Albert Barnes gives this description of the mockery by the Jewish leaders as: “One of the most remarkable instances of blindness and infatuation that has ever occurred in the world, that the Jews should have even used this language to taunt the dying Redeemer, without even suspecting that they were fulfilling the prophecies, and demonstrating at the very time when they were reviling him that he was indeed the true Messiah.”

**[v9-11]** In some ways this could be David’s claim to have been instructed from his early youth to depend on God, but it seems much more appropriate for Jesus in the agony of the cross as He feels that God has forsaken Him to suggest that “there is none to help.”

**[v12-14]** Animals that are fierce and dangerous are often used to describe evil men who are savage and violent. “Bulls of Bashan” were exceptional in size, strength and fierceness. V. 13, “They gape at Me with their mouths,” does not describe the behavior of real bulls, but it does describe bullish evil men.

**[22:14]** “Poured out like water” may refer to the blood of Christ being shed by rebellious men, or that in extreme weakness and exhaustion His strength seemed to have drained away. “My bones are out of joint” was a source of some of the pain of crucifixion.

**[v15,16]** Verse 15 has three lines that graphically describe the agony of acute thirst. The third line, “you have brought Me to the dust of death,” indicates that it is describing affliction to death, rather than a sickness. The first two lines of 22:16 illustrates how vicious animals describe wicked men. It is pitiful how liberal scholars try to render the word “pierced” to make it refer to something besides the crucifixion.

**[v17,18]** “I can count all My bones.” Some have suggested that this refers to how the bones are visible when the body is extended, but it may refer to the fact that none of His bones were broken as “I can account for all of my bones.” Verse 18 is an exact description of the soldiers gambling for His clothes (Mt. 27:35). Two distinct actions are described: first, they divided parts of His clothing, and second, they cast lots for the outer robe which was without seam, but woven of a single piece of cloth. John 19:23-24 (John specifically says that the psalm was prophecy that they fulfilled.)

**[v19-21]** It seems that these statements may be poetic variations of the last words of Jesus on the cross, "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit" (Luke 23:46). The final statement confirms his faith: "You have answered Me."

B. The Glory to be Revealed (22:22-31).

This part seems to be David's inspired description to God's glory and blessings that came through the church purchased by His blood on the cross, and God's continual care of those who love Him.

**[v22-24]** "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You." Genuine faith wants to praise and glorify God. Genuine love wants to do what pleases Him. This may be the reason Paul urged the Corinthians, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves" (2Cor. 13:5). Many who are confident about their salvation do not show the devotion and faithfulness that true faith and love shows. That this psalm in this place refers to the Christ, is forever settled for one who trusts God's word by the Hebrew writer who quotes verse 22 and applies it to Christ (Heb. 2:11-12).

**[v24]** "For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted." This is an assurance that God did accept Christ when He was despised and rejected of men. When Jesus cried unto Him, God heard.

**[v25,26]** Verse 25 seems to parallel verse 22 as both speak of praising God in the assembly. The assembly in the time of David referred to fleshly Israel, and this prophecy concerning the Christ would refer to the church.

Verse 26 "those who seek Him will praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever." Those who seek the Lord can have eternal life.

**[v27-31]** "All the ends of the world...all the families of the nations shall worship before You." The remaining verses of this psalm focus on the kingdom of the Lord that would include all nations (Gentiles) as well as fleshly Israel. The blessings of the kingdom would be declared from generation to generation.