

The Psalm Of The Cross Psalm 22

- Introduction:** 1) In 1 Peter 1:10-11 the apostle predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (NIV). Psalm 22, James Montgomery Boice called, “the best description in all the Bible of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion.”
- 2) Luther called it a “gem among the Psalms” (Spurgeon, 335). Spurgeon said, “This is beyond all others the psalm of the cross... We should read reverently, putting off our shoes from off our feet, as Moses did at the burning bush, for if there be holy ground anywhere in Scripture it is in this Psalm”
- 3) Calvin said, “in this psalm the heavenly Father intended that in the person of His Son those things should be visibly accomplished which were shadowed forth in David”
- 4) Psalm 22 are the words of a man enduring execution.
- 5) Many have observed how Psalms 22-24 constitute a magnificent trio, each emphasizing a particular aspect of the Lord’s Anointed, the Messiah-King. In Psalm 22 we have a portrait of our suffering king. In Psalm 23 we have a portrait of our shepherd king. In Psalm 24 we have a portrait of our sovereign king.
- 6) It is also instructive to read Psalm 22 in light of what precedes it in Psalm 20 and 21.

I. Meditate On The Passion Of Our Lord. 22:1-18

A psalm of lament containing both prayers of petition and praise, we are confronted immediately with the cry of the Righteous Sufferer. In the psalm there is no confession of personal sin for He has none.

- 1) Our Lord suffered spiritually. 22:1-5
- The psalm begins with a three-fold cry to *El*, a cry that is recorded as the 4th saying of Jesus on the cross in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34.
 - To emphasize the isolation and separation He is experiencing he brings to God’s attention the fervency of His prayer life (v. 2).
 - Then in vs 3-5, the Righteous Sufferer turns in confidence as he recalls the character of God and the faithfulness of God. Note the phrases “But You, in You, to You and in You.”
 - The fathers knew this and trusted (3X) in you. They trusted and were delivered (2X).
 - But this was not the experience of our Lord Jesus. He was shamed more than any man. He was not delivered, He was forsaken. “He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:21).
- 2) Our Lord suffered personally. 22:6-13
- There is now a connection made with the great Suffering Servant song of Isaiah 53.
 - What does our Suffering King say of Himself as he hangs on the Cross?

- (v.6) “I am a worm (emphatic), and no man.” The great I AM who was made a little lower than the angels now is made lower than man.
- (v.7) All who see ridicule (mock, laugh me to scorn) Me. They shoot out the lip, make faces at me, and shake their heads in derision (Matt 27:39-43).
- (v.8) He trusted (cf vs. 4-5!) in the Lord (*Yahweh*), so let Him rescue, deliver (cf vs 4-5!) Him, since He delights in Him. Interestingly the word trust is *gol* from the verb *galal*. A related word to it is *gulgoleth* or *Golgotha*.
- This suffering King did trust in Jehovah. In vs 9-11 He notes 4 times the sovereign and providential activity of His God in His life from its beginning.
- Thus He cries again to the one who is His God (4X)!
- Indeed there is no one to help this innocent victim now at the mercy of evil, wicked humanity. With 2 striking metaphors the greater David describes the enemies who have surrounded Him.
 - Many bulls
 - Raging and roaring lions

3) Our Lord suffered physically. 22:14-18

- Through crucifixion would not even come into existence as a form of execution for several hundred years, these words are an accurate description of this type of death.
- vr 14 - “I am poured out like water,” drained, emptied of strength, energy and vitality.
 - “All my bones are out of joint,” His body is racked with pain.
 - “My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me.” The fight in Me is gone. Life is ebbing away.
- vr 15 - “My strength is dried up like a potsherd,” I am dehydrated, no vitality, no moisture, my life-juices are gone.
 - “My tongue clings to my mouth,” I thirst, dryness engulfs my mouth. A state of shock has overtaken me.
 - “You have brought me to the dust of death.” (cf. Gen. 3:19).
What? Death. Who? You! The Lord! As Isaiah 53:10 affirms.
- vr 16 - “Dogs” (ancient scavengers who ran in packs living off the garbage and refuse dumps of the land) surrounded me... a band or company of evil men has enclosed Me (there is no escape).
 - “They pierce my hands and my feet (cf Isa. 53:5; Zech 12:10; John 20:24-27).
- vr 17 – “I can count all my bones,” I am so emaciated, thin, like a tragic victim of a holocaust concentration camp.
- vr 18 – “They divide my garments and cast lots for my clothing (cf Matt 27:35; John 19:24). They count me as good as dead.

II. Meditate On The Salvation Of Our Lord. 22:19-21

The psalmist now makes his petition proper. It is clear and simple, and it is voiced in confidence and faith. This faith and confidence in Jehovah is not in vain.

1) God helped His Righteous Sufferer. 22:19

This prayer of faith begins with a strong and emphatic adversative. "But You... He addresses God as "Lord" (*Jehovah*) and "My strength."

2) God delivered His Righteous Sufferer. 22:20-21

- Having addressed the Lord in faith, the psalmist now gives one final glance to His enemies. In essence David repeats in reverse order the enemies noted in verses 12-13 and 16. Once again the pattern of Psalm 2 comes into play as the nations rage...and the kings of the earth and its ruler take counsel against Yahweh and His Messiah (2:2). The wild men are not just enemies of Messiah. They are the enemies of God
 - There is some debate as to proper understanding of the end of v. 21. Verse 21 ends the petition not with a 4th imperative for help as we might expect. Rather the Hebrew perfect is used with a single powerful word of salvation: (Heb.) *anitani*, "you have answered!"

III. Meditate On The Mission Of Our Lord. 22:22-31

In my Bible between vs 21 and 22 I have written the word: resurrection. God in sovereign power and glory saved this righteous one not from death but out of death. He did not rescue the Suffering King, He resurrected Him. God came through and answered His prayer and because of that, the psalmist must honor Him and praise Him.

1) The people of God will worship the Lord. 22:22-26

- Messiah now declares the name of Jehovah to His brothers and sisters; in the midst of the assembly (the congregation) He praises Him. Hebrews 2:12 puts these very words in the mouth of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus.
- Previously surrounded by a congregation of evil doers (v.16), He is now surrounded by those who fear the Lord and praise Him (vs. 23).
- The rationale for fearing Him, praising Him, glorifying Him and revering Him is given in vs. 24.
- A new day has dawned with the Lord's vindication of King Jesus. The poor will not hunger. They shall eat and be satisfied. Indeed their Shephard-King will "prepare a table for us in the presence of our enemies" (23:5) and "our cup will run over" (23:5).
- Seeking Him, we will praise Him for all that He is and all that He has done. Our hearts will live forever through the one who James Boice says, "was thinking of you and me just before he committed his spirit to the Father" (vol 1, 202).

2) The nations of the world will worship the Lord. 22:27-31

- Of verse 27 Spurgeon said, “In reading this verse one is struck with the Messiah’s missionary spirit.” “What does v.27 tell us about the prospects of an end-time revival?” It is coming! The seed for the grand fulfillment of Rev. 7:9-17 is here before us.
- (vs 27)- All (4X) the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord. All the families of the nations shall worship (“bow down”) before You.
- Not only will it be people from everywhere worshipping the God of Messiah-King-Jesus, people of every sort and from age to age will worship this great God as well. (vs 29)
- (vs 30) – Indeed a posterity shall serve the Lord because the old, old story of Jesus and His love will be recounted generation after generation.
- (vs 31) Oh how the Psalm’s ending in v. 31 contrasts with its cry of abandonment in v. 1! When people hear that the one true God Jehovah, answered the prayer of His Righteous One, delivered Him out of death in resurrection power that sinners might be saved, the nations will turn to Him, they will worship Him, they will submit to Him, they will enjoy Him and they will tell all the ends of the world, “He has done it!” “It is finished” (John 19:30).

Con. Derek Kinder says of Psalm 22, “No Christian can read this without being vividly confronted with the crucifixion. It is not only a matter of prophecy minutely fulfilled, but of the sufferer’s humility...and his vision of a world-wide ingathering of the Gentiles.” This is His heart. This is His vision. Let us not consider, let us not be satisfied, with anything less.