

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School
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Messianic Trilogy: Part One Psalm 22 — The Suffering Messiah

1.0 Introducing Psalm 22

- Gospel accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ cite Psalm 22 (see chart on page 5, below):
 - ◆ Psalm 22:1 = Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. Jesus personally applied the psalm to Himself in order to fulfill Scripture (cf. John 19:28).
 - ◆ Psalm 22:18 = John 19:24. The New Testament writers cited the psalm when speaking about New Testament persons, events, and words (cf. Matthew 27:35, 43; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34).
 - ◆ Psalm 22:22 = Hebrews 2:12. New Testament writers demonstrate a messianic interpretation of the psalm (cf. Matthew 27:39//Mark 15:29; Luke 23:35-36).
 - ◆ New Testament writers may have used the imagery of Psalm 22 in situations concerning non-Messianic mortals: Philippians 3:2 (“dogs,” Psalm 22:16, 20); 2 Timothy 4:17 (“I was rescued out of the lion’s mouth,” cf. Psalm 22:21).
- Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Appendix IX: “List of Old Testament Passages Messianically Applied in Ancient Rabbinic Writings”:
 - ◆ *Yalkut* on Isaiah 40 applies Psalm 22:7 to the Messiah.
 - ◆ *Yalkut* applies Psalm 22:16 to the Messiah.
 - ◆ The ancient rabbis clearly taught the rejection of Messiah from Psalm 22.

- Some interpreters deny any intent of the psalmist to speak of the Messiah:
 - ◆ “The ‘messianic’ interpretation, last represented by Delitzsch, has conclusively been dropped since it was recognized that the psalm actually contains no prophecy and, what is more, that the idea of a suffering Messiah is foreign to the Old Testament.” — Hermann Gunkel, according to Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, trans. by Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1993), 301.
- Other interpreters believe that the Messianic representation is intentional and undeniable:
 - ◆ “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—there is no plea for vengeance—and his vision of a world-wide ingathering of the Gentiles. ... No incident recorded of David can begin to account for this.” — Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 105.
 - ◆ “The only individual *through whose person* God deals with the nations is the Davidic king, the messiah, the son of God ... Psalm 22 cannot be the prayer and praise of just any afflicted Israelite” — James Luther Mays, *Psalms, Interpretation* (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1994), 113.
 - ◆ “Psalm 22 is not a description of an illness. It is a description of an execution, particularly a crucifixion. Crucifixion was not practiced in the time of David or for many centuries afterward.” — James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1994), 1:191.

2.0 Reading Psalm 22 (NAU)

22:1 A Psalm of David.

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?
Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

22:2 O **my God**, I cry by day, but You do not answer;
And by night, but I have no rest.

22:3 Yet **You** are holy,
O **You** who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

22:4 In **You** our fathers **trusted**;
They **trusted** and You delivered them.

22:5 To **You** they cried out and were delivered;
In **You** they **trusted** and were not disappointed.

22:6 **But I** am a worm and not a man,
A reproach of men and despised by the people.

22:7 All who see me sneer at me;



- They separate with the lip,
they wag the head, *saying*,
- 22:8** “Commit *yourself* to the LORD;
let Him deliver him;
Let Him rescue him,
because He delights in him.”
- 22:9** **Yet You** are He who brought me forth from the womb;
You made me trust *when* upon my mother’s breasts.
- 22:10** Upon **You** I was cast from birth;
You have been **my God** from my mother’s womb.
- 22:11** Be not far from me, for trouble is near;
For there is none to help.
- 22:12** Many bulls have surrounded me;
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled me.
- 22:13** They open wide their mouth at me,
As a ravening and a roaring lion.
- 22:14** I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
- 22:15** My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
And You lay me in the dust of death.
- 22:16** For dogs have surrounded me;
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
- 22:17** I can count all my bones.
They look, they stare at me;
- 22:18** They divide my garments among them,
And for my clothing they cast lots.
- 22:19** But You, O LORD, be not far off;
O You my help, hasten to my assistance.
- 22:20** Deliver my soul from the sword,
My only *life* from the power of the dog.
- 22:21** Save me
from the lion’s mouth;
From the horns of the wild oxen
You answer me.
- A
B
B’
A’
- A
B
B’
A’



- 22:22** I will tell of Your name A
to my brethren; B
In the midst of the assembly B'
I will praise You. A'
- 22:23** You who fear the LORD, praise Him;
All you descendants of Jacob, A
glorify Him, B
And stand in awe of Him, B'
all you descendants of Israel. A'
- 22:24** 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.
- 22:25** From You *comes* my praise in the great assembly;
I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him.
- 22:26** The afflicted will eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.
Let your heart live forever!
- 22:27** **All the ends of the earth** will remember and turn to the LORD,
And **all the families of the nations** will worship before You.
- 22:28** For the kingdom is the LORD's
And He rules over the nations.
- 22:29** 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.
- 22:30** Posterity will serve Him;
It will be told of the Lord to the *coming* generation.
- 22:31** They will come and will declare His righteousness
To a people who will be born, that He has performed it.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 22

3.1 Outline

- I. Messiah's Aloneness (vv. 1-5)
- II. Messiah's Abuse (vv. 6-11)
- III. Messiah's Affliction (vv. 12-18)
- IV. Messiah's Assistance (vv. 19-21)
- V. Messiah's Attestation (vv. 22-24)
- VI. Messiah's Adoration (vv. 25-31)



CHRONOLOGY OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

TIME	SCRIPTURE	EVENT	PSALM 22
9 am	Luke 23:26 Luke 23:33	Led to Calvary. Crucified.	16
10 am	Luke 23:34a Luke 23:34b Matt 27:39-43 Luke 23:35 Luke 23:39	<i>"Father, forgive them ..."</i> Soldiers divide up clothes. People "hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads ..." Chief priests and rulers mocked, "He saved others ..." One criminal mocked, "Save Yourself and us!"	18 6-8 12-13
11 am	Luke 23:40, 42 Luke 23:43 John 19:26-27	Other criminal: "Jesus, remember me ..." <i>"Today you shall be with Me in Paradise."</i> <i>"Woman, behold, your son!"</i>	
Noon	Luke 23:44	Darkness came over the whole land for 3 hours.	
1 pm	Matthew 27:46 John 19:28	<i>"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"</i> <i>"I am thirsty."</i>	1 14-15
2 pm	John 19:30 Luke 23:46	<i>"It is finished!"</i> <i>"Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."</i>	31 19-21
3 pm	Matthew 27:51 Matthew 27:52 Matthew 27:54 Luke 23:48 John 19:31-32 John 19:34 Matt 27:57-60	Earthquake and tearing of the Temple curtain. Tombs break open. Centurion exclaims, "Truly this was the Son of God." Crowd witnesses Jesus' suffering, beats their breasts. Soldiers break the two criminals' legs. Soldier pierces Jesus' side with a spear. The burial of Jesus.	15
6 pm		Sabbath begins.	

3.2 Notes

- v. 3 "You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel"
 - The picture: Israel's praise surrounds God and He sits on a throne made up of their praises.
 - Israel's praise confesses that the LORD rules the world.
 - See Psalm 99:1-3.

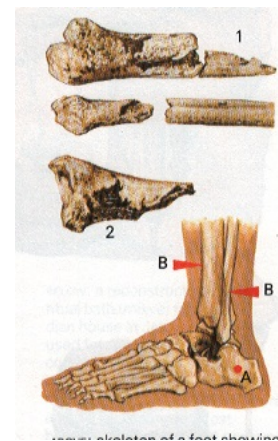
- v. 7 "separate with the lip ... wag the head"
 - Gestures of contempt and ridicule.
 - They shoot out their lips in an insulting facial expression and shake their heads in derision.

- v. 10 "You have been my God from my mother's womb"

- The individual's suffering and rejection is the exact opposite of his lifetime experience from the time of his birth.
- A helpless, newborn infant is totally dependent.
- See Isaiah 49:1, 5, 14-15.

- **v. 14** "all my bones are out of joint"
 - The individual's limbs are dislocated. He is incapable of defending himself.
 - "While verses 14, 15, taken alone, could describe merely a desperate illness, the context is of collective animosity and the symptoms could be those of Christ's scourging and crucifixion; in fact verses 16-18 had to wait for that event to unfold their meaning with any clarity." — Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, 107.
 - Verses 14-16 are extended verses with more than the normal two parallel lines of text. The weight of the psalmist's focus is on the physical suffering of the individual described in these verses.

- **v. 16** "They pierced my hands and my feet"
(NAU, KJV, NKJV, ESV, NIV)
 - The Greek Septuagint supports this translation nearly 200 years before Christ.
 - See Luke 24:39.
 - Alternate reading, "Like a lion, my hands and my feet."



- **vv. 21-23**
 - A cluster of chiasms (vv. 8 and 12 are also chiasms in this psalm).
 - Verse 21 concludes the fourth section of the psalm. Verses 22-23 commence the fifth section of the psalm.
 - "You answer me" (v. 21) is the turning point of the psalm.
 - The focus is on public praise because the Lord has heard the individual's prayer and will deliver him.

- **v. 27** "all the families of the nations will worship before You"
 - Such description transcends anything that could be attributed to the suffering of a mortal Israelite king.
 - The context erupts in a declaration of eschatological hope.

- **v. 29** "Even he who cannot keep his soul alive"
 - Perhaps a reference to the poor in contrast to the "prosperous."
 - Or, this statement might belong with v. 30 indicating a posterity to serve the Lord.

- v. 31 “He has performed *it*”
 - This announcement is very similar to “It is finished” (John 19:30).

4.0 Singing Psalm 22 (Tune: “Children of the Heavenly Father”)

- 1 My God, my God, I cry to Thee;
O why hast Thou forsaken me?
Afar from me, Thou dost not heed,
Though day and night for help I plead.
- 2 But Thou art holy in Thy ways,
Enthroned upon Thy people’s praise;
Our fathers put their trust in Thee,
Believed, and Thou didst set them free.
- 3 They cried, and, trusting in Thy Name,
Were saved, and were not put to shame;
But in the dust mine honor lies,
While all reproach and all despise.
- 4 My words a cause for scorn they make,
The lip they curl, the head they shake,
And, mocking, bid me trust the Lord
Till He salvation shall afford.
- 5 My trust on Thee I learned to rest
When I was on my mother’s breast;
From birth Thou art my God alone,
Thy care my life has ever known.
- 6 O let Thy strength and presence cheer,
For trouble and distress are near;
Be Thou not far away from Me,
I have no source of help but Thee.
- 7 Unnumbered foes would do me wrong,
They press about me, fierce and strong,
Like beasts of prey, their rage they vent,
My courage fails, my strength is spent.
- 8 Down unto death Thou leadest me,
Consumed by thirst and agony;
With cruel hate and anger fierce
My helpless hands and feet they pierce.
- 9 While on my wasted form they stare,
The garments torn from me they share,
My shame and sorrow heeding not,



And for my robe they cast the lot.

10 O Lord, afar no longer stay;
O Thou my Helper, haste, I pray;
From death and evil set me free;
I live, for Thou didst answer me.

11 I live and will declare Thy fame
Where brethren gather in Thy Name;
Where all Thy faithful people meet,
I will Thy worthy praise repeat.

— Author unknown

5.0 Praying Psalm 22

- Father, You are holy and I trust You. [vv. 3-4]
- Lord, I do not deserve Your mercy. You alone are my Savior. [v. 6]
- Oh God, You are my God. [v. 10]
- Be near me in my times of trouble—You alone are my help. [v. 11]
- Help me to tell others about You and the salvation You provide. [v. 22]
- May my children serve You, Lord. [vv. 30-31]
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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.

— C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David* (reprinted; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 1:324

6.0 Applying Psalm 22

- Messianic psalms are prophetic revelation confirmed by the New Testament.
- The Messiah's trust in the Father is to be mirrored in the lives of His followers.
- We are responsible for passing the message of the Messiah to the next generation.