

Psalms 22

Psalms 22:1,2 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of my groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent.

Psalms 22 is Messianic. The first phrase, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" are the words Jesus spoke from the cross as He expressed His complete isolation as He bore our sins. The cross experience is recounted throughout the first 21 verses. In verse 1, Jesus' cry from the cross, in verses 7 and 8, Jesus is taunted while on the cross by the mockers. Verses 12 and 13 use the metaphor of a raging bulls to describe the anger that was directed at Jesus. Verses 14 -17 are an account of Jesus' self-awareness during His suffering, "I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me..." Verse 16 describes the piercing of Jesus' hands and feet. Verse 18 observes the dividing of Jesus' garments and then the casting of lots for the clothes. The effect is that Psalms 22 is the most personal account of the crucifixion to be found in the Bible.

The Psalm is predictive. It is prophecy. Notice the number of elements in the Psalm that are repeated in the gospels and that describe the actions of Jesus' enemies rather than that of His friends. These include the fact and content of the taunting, Jesus' bones being out of joint but not broken, The piercing of Jesus' hands and feet, and the casting of lots for His clothing. It would not have been in the interest of His enemies to fulfill prophecy but they did while not knowing it.

The Psalm is also testimony to the veracity of our Christology. Hebrews 2:17,18 "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." Then, in Hebrews 4:15 "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." The point of Hebrews is that it is Jesus' full humanity that enables Him to function as a High Priest (One who represents us to God) who can identify with our weaknesses and also help us to overcome the temptations that would cause us to fall.

Notice the explicit expressions of suffering in the Psalm. The emotional feeling of being abandoned by God when he seems distance and deaf to our cry for help while we are well aware of others who have received the very help that we desire. The sense of worthlessness and insignificance so that others seem to despise you. The sensation of being helpless before a raging mob. The sense of betrayal in that the one who has trusted God now finds himself in a place where God is needed and yet cannot be found. The sense of being completely empty so that one has no means of facing problems or meeting challenges that arise. The sense of being de-humanized so that you are treated as if you are not a person at all. Many have encountered these sufferings in the course of life. Many of them "go together" so that one might cause another. In none of these situation can we claim to be alone since Jesus was there first and He knows what we are going through.

Verses 22-31 celebrate the reign of the great king. The king is great because He knows and understands, "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, He heard."