

**Psa. 22:0 To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David.**

This preface is the author's signature on this song. According to some of the different translations, it is also providing the chief Musician instructions as to the melody to be used for the song.

I've had this Psalm and the following two Psalms on my heart for a while. From the outset I know this one is going to be difficult for me in that David is expressing his heart, yet there are obvious prophetic connections to the heart of the Savior at the time of His crucifixion. I think it is an amazing evidence of the Holy Spirit's inspiration to give David words that would connect to the heart of Jesus in His anguish, and some that would connect to the response of the people to this Man of God as he endured suffering.

**Psa. 22:1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?***

David is obviously at a time of despair in his life. He feels that God has left him on his own and is refusing to respond to his pleas for help.

Frankly, the first thoughts that come to mind when reading this verse are the words of Jesus from the cross.

Matt. 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

We know that Jesus was a son of David, the rightful heir to the throne of Israel. We also know that Jesus knew the scripture well. At the time of the utmost despair for our Lord, He used the words of the psalmist to express the feelings in His own heart. It was at that moment that He was separated from the Father—the one and only time that He has ever been out of fellowship with His Father. In that noble moment, He was experiencing the worst in His humanity. His heart immediately connected to the heart of His forefather David as expressed in this verse.

**Psa. 22:2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.**

This verse tells us that David was persistent in his pleas to the Lord; he was praying day and night. He felt like he was talking to a void—to emptiness.

**Psa. 22:3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.**

This is one of those verses that make me think of the Lord's declaration that David was a man after His own heart.

1Sam. 13:14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

1Sam. 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

In spite of the Lord's apparent rejection, David chooses to praise God. He affirms that God is holy—totally pure and righteous. David knows that God is still faithful to Israel and worthy of praise.

**Psa. 22:4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.**

**Psa. 22:5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.**

In these verses David reminds himself of God's faithfulness to his ancestors. Their trust was rewarded with deliverance. When they prayed, God answered accordingly.

Every believer should take note of David's example. In life we are going to experience tough times. During those times we should remember how God has worked in our lives and the lives of those we love. This will provide encouragement to keep trusting and waiting for God to work according to His will and in His time.

**Psa. 22:6 But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.**

**Psa. 22:7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,**

**Psa. 22:8 He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.**

David is so transparent. Just like us, his emotions go up and down. He takes a step forward only to take two backwards. He just reminded himself of God's faithfulness, so now he turns to another excuse to wallow in his misery. He is basically saying, "but I'm not as worthy as they." He compares himself to a *worm*; the Hebrew defines this as a maggot. He feels like everyone has judged him to be a fool. He has been bold about his trust that God would deliver him, and now everyone can see that God hasn't. They are making fun of David who had taken such delight in his close relationship to God.

I couldn't help but think of the words in Isaiah 53 that spoke of the coming Messiah.

Is. 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

I also thought of the words of those who mocked Jesus on the cross.

Matt. 27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

Matt. 27:42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

Matt. 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.

It's so important for every believer to understand that God's ways are not our ways.

Is. 55:8 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Is. 55:9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

What we determine to be rejection may actually be the hand of God at work in our lives. His loving hand will shape and mold us into beautiful vessels of honor if we will but faithfully trust Him. God had already affirmed Jesus as His Son by many miracles. They had rejected those signs, yet were asking for another. Had God given them the

proof they asked for, we would be damned forever. In the greatest act of love possible, He abandoned His Son to death on the cross for my sin.

Those who determine to be faithful to the Lord must be prepared to face ridicule and even judgment from others. The prosperity gospel is in vogue today. This would relegate those who are “poor” (I speak in relative terms) or who suffer illness or other types of trouble to the position of Job before His friends. They just assumed that he was being punished rather than refined. They assumed he was in disfavor with God when he was actually being singled out by God for his faithfulness as a testimony to that faith.

**Psa. 22:9 But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts.**

**Psa. 22:10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou *art* my God from my mother’s belly.**

David recognized God as the Creator of mankind, even from the mother’s womb. I think the last half of the verse is a statement as to how David felt he had learned about trust/faith from infancy. He was dependent upon his mother for nourishment. Her faithfulness to feed him was a powerful lesson about love and faithfulness to the baby David.

I think verse ten is a statement about David’s family. He was brought up in a family of faith. In David’s mind, he couldn’t remember a time that he didn’t know God as his God.

This is another important truth for Christian parents. We should begin laying a foundation of faith for our children from infancy. We should strive to example faithfulness and love with the intent to teach them how to understand God’s faithfulness and love. We should respond to the hard times that come our way with a faith that our children can see. It reminds me of the old saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” We are constantly painting pictures of reference for our children by how we choose to live our lives, by how we respond to all the good times and the bad times.

**Psa. 22:11 Be not far from me; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help.**

David is pleading with the Lord to make His presence known to him. It’s like David knows that God is there, but he is so distraught he needs a sign of assurance. He feels hemmed in by trouble and is in anguish that there is no one to help.

I can’t help but think of friends that I know who are going through some tough times. These friends have families and friends that love them. I know that as I try to give words of encouragement, I feel so helpless sometimes. As a time of testing seems to go on and on, I can imagine that even though surrounded by people that love them, they can feel that there is no one to help—because God seems to be “far from them.” They know that deliverance comes from Him, but there is no deliverance. That is how I picture David, though I don’t know the time in his life during which this psalm was written.

**Psa. 22:12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round.**

**Psa. 22:13 They gaped upon me *with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.***

The psalmist seems to be using poetic language to describe his enemies. He compares them to strong bulls and feels like he has been surrounded. He pictures them as hungry lions ready to devour their prey. The Hebrew defines Bashan as an area east of Jordan, so maybe David feels his life is in jeopardy from some enemies in that area.

I can also make a connection in my mind to the way the chief priest and his cohorts surrounded the Lord with determination to get Him sentenced to death. They never let up, no matter how Pilate tried to appease them and spare the life of Jesus. They were like of group of hungry lions in the intent of their pursuit and roaring loudly as they moved in for the kill.

Matt. 27:20 But **the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude** that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

Matt. 27:21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

Matt. 27:22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

Matt. 27:23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? **But they cried out the more**, saying, Let him be crucified.

I was listening to Joe Focht and he noted that Bashan was the land of the giants, e.g., Og. This makes a reference to evil spiritual forces, the fallen angels, who were responsible for the giants through their sin with women of earth.

**Psa. 22:14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.**

**Psa. 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.**

“bones” = “a bone (as strong); by extension, the body; figuratively, the substance.”

“out of joint” = “to break through, i.e. spread or separate (oneself)... be out of joint, part...stretch”

“potsherd” = “a piece of broken pottery”

These are hard verses to understand pertaining to the psalmist, especially verse 14. I think the second phrase in verse 14 would better read, “my substance is spread thin” or “stretched to its limit.” David is painting a picture of a man who feels like he is facing death.

Again, one can't help but be reminded of the crucifixion of Jesus. I've often heard it taught that Jesus died of a broken heart. I found this explanation by Dr. C. Truman Davis at <http://www.konnections.com/kcundick/crucifix.html> regarding what happened when the soldier pierced His side to affirm He was dead.

“The 34th verse of the 19th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John reports: ‘And immediately there came out blood and water.’ That is, there was an escape of water fluid from the sac surrounding the heart, giving postmortem evidence that Our Lord died not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure (a broken heart) due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.”

Other verses in John's account of the crucifixion tell us how Jesus experienced dehydration and thirst as expressed in verse 15.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

John 19:29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.

**Psa. 22:16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.**

David continues painting the picture of a man facing death at the hand of a group of his enemies. The CJB had an interesting translation that would seem to apply better to David.

"Dogs are all around me, a pack of villains closes in on me like a lion [at] my hands and feet."

Eerdman's Dictionary has this to say about the use of "dogs" in the scripture:

"In the Bible the dog (Heb. *keleb*) carries a very negative image, representing the despised, the unclean, or the enemy waiting to devour."

Again, one can make vivid connection to the crucifixion. Jesus was mocked by His enemies as He hung on the cross. He was surrounded by His enemies; only a few of His followers accompanied His sorrowing mother at the foot of the cross. The piercing of the hands and feet are so descriptive of the crucifixion. I found this note on the history of crucifixion at <http://www.bible.ca/d-history-archeology-crucifixion-cross.htm>.

"Britannica reports that the first historical record of Crucifixion was about 519 BC when "Darius I, king of Persia, crucified 3,000 political opponents in Babylon" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, crucifixion)

Some further detail is given in "The Eerdman's Bible Dictionary", Rev. Ed., 1975: **CROSS** ... Crucifixion is first attested among the Persians (cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* i.128.2; iii.132.2, 159.1), perhaps derived from the Assyrian impalement. It was later employed by the Greeks, especially Alexander the Great, and by the Carthaginians, from whom the Romans adapted the practice as a punishment for slaves and non-citizens, and occasionally for citizens guilty of treason."

This would have been at least 500 years after the time of David.

**Psa. 22:17 I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me.**

**Psa. 22:18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.**

It continues to get harder to make application to David with these verses. Maybe it's a poetic way of expressing his hunger. The Hebrew for *look* is interesting, "to scan, i.e. look intently at; by implication, to regard with pleasure...." David knows that his enemies enjoy the fact that he is suffering. As for his clothing, maybe David is thinking how they will enjoy the spoil they will take at his death.

Application to Jesus at the cross, however, is straight from scripture, and that scripture specifically states that the act was a fulfillment of prophecy.

Matt. 27:35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

Did David know he was prophesying? I think not, or I believe he would have declared it "in the name of the Lord." It's just another signature of the Holy Spirit regarding the unity of the whole of scripture under His authorship though he used 40 writers in the process. I enjoy listening to Chuck Missler, and he loves to make the following statement (taken from

[http://www.khouse.org/pages/the\\_joy\\_of\\_teaching\\_gods\\_word/chapter\\_1/](http://www.khouse.org/pages/the_joy_of_teaching_gods_word/chapter_1/)).

"That the Bible, although composed of 66 books, penned by 40 different authors, over thousands of years, is an *integrated pre-designed message system*; and that the origin of this message system is from *outside our time domain*. It is truly *extraterrestrial* in its origin."

**Psa. 22:19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.**

This verse is very similar to verse 11. David is again asking God to be with Him and strengthen him; he doesn't think he can hold on much longer on his own. The Hebrew for *strengthen* actually speaks of power and protection. David is telling God that he is depending on His power to protect him.

**Psa. 22:20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.**

**Psa. 22:21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.**

I am reminded of learning in my study of Isaiah that a form of Jewish poetry is repetition. That helps one understand verse 20. The Hebrew for *darling* is a reference to life. So, again, David is praying for God to deliver him from his enemies.

It's interesting that in the last part of verse 21 David states that the Lord has heard him. At the beginning of the psalm he feels like the Lord is not listening to him; all of a sudden he expresses confidence that the Lord has heard him. My first thought was that the phrase "horns of the unicorns" made reference to the altar in the temple, but I couldn't find any support for that though I searched many resources. The altar had a horn at each corner, which could represent the horns of four unicorns or one-horned beasts. Although I can't support it, I still feel that David has found strength in prayer at the altar—be it the real one or the one pictured in his heart.

**Psa. 22:22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.**

David boldly promises to praise the name of the Lord to his people. No longer is he wallowing in his fear. He has been given a sense of the nearness of the Lord just as he had asked.

I personally believe that God will always bless us with the sense of His presence if we will but diligently seek and ask.

Matt. 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Matt. 7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

I liked the comments of JFB at these verses in Matthew.

*"We ask for what we wish; we seek for what we miss; we knock for that from which we feel ourselves shut out. Answering to this threefold representation is the triple assurance of success to our believing efforts. "But ah!" might some humble disciple say, "I cannot persuade myself that I have any interest with God." To meet this, our Lord repeats the triple assurance He had just given, but in such a form as to silence every such complaint."*

**Psa. 22:23 Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.**

David now sends words of encouragement to all that "fear the Lord." The Hebrew for *fear* refers to reverence. Obviously, this message is directed to the people of Israel, the seed of Jacob. David encourages the people to honor the Lord and stand in awe of Him.

**Psa. 22:24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.**

David continues to express confidence that the Lord hears the cries of His people; He doesn't refuse to listen to their cries. He hears with understanding and discernment.

**Psa. 22:25 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.**

David declares that he will praise God publicly before the people as he promised he would previously (cf verse 22).

**Psa. 22:26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.**

"meek" = "depressed (figuratively), in mind (gentle) or circumstances (needy, especially saintly):—humble, lowly, meek, poor."

Most of the translations use poor for the word *meek*, but I think it applies more to the humble. It's talking about those who recognize their need before the Lord and are trusting in Him to provide for them. Their trust will never be disappointed. Granted, as David is learning, the provision may not come when and how they would like—but it will come in God's timing according to His purpose.

Those who trust the Lord will praise the Lord. It's an expression of their confidence in Him. This reminds me of the definition of faith in Hebrews.

Heb. 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (NIV)

David is using the heart to represent the person in this verse. Men and women of faith can look forward to living forever with the Lord.

**Psa. 22:27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.**

**Psa. 22:28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations.**

David is looking forward to the future; he seems to be prophesying of the Messianic Kingdom in these verses. I don't think he was expecting "all" the people of the nations to worship the Lord in his day. David is aware that the Lord is on the throne whether

the people of the world recognize Him or not. The day is coming when the people of earth will recognize the working of God throughout history according to His word and will turn back to Him in faith and worship. David knew that the Lord would one day establish His kingdom on earth. Just as I wonder how things are going to come down based on the revelation given me, I'm sure David wondered the same. Just as I have ideas about the possibilities, I'm sure David did also. It doesn't matter whether we understand all the whys and wherefores; like David, I know that day is coming.

**Psa. 22:29 All *they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.***

The first part of this verse has reference to those who are rich in light of their presence in the kingdom; they will be part of the Lord's earthly kingdom and will enjoy fellowship with and worship of the Lord. The next phrase references those that have died—believers and unbelievers. Scripture tells us that every knee shall bow before the Lord. The prophet Isaiah confirmed this truth.

Is. 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

Is. 45:23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

The apostle Paul also stated this truth.

Phil. 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

Phil. 2:11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The last phrase is a statement of the truth that life is only found in the Lord. Man has no hope for the future outside of faith in Jesus. There is nothing one can do to earn eternal life.

Eph. 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

Eph. 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

**Psa. 22:30 A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.**

**Psa. 22:31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.**

I think the NLT gets closest to expressing the intent of these verses.

Future generations will also serve him. Our children will hear about the wonders of the Lord. His righteous acts will be told to those yet unborn. They will hear about everything he has done.

What has to be noted is that these future generations will not know unless they are taught. David was confident that they would know because he, for one, was going to teach his children. Our lives lay a foundation for the future of our children and their children etc.

“that he hath done this” – Done what?

- Been faithful to the faithful.
- Shown Himself able to deliver from the most hopeless of circumstances.
- Embraces the praise of His people.
- Responds to the prayer and worship of His people.
- Rewards the meek.