

Psalms: The Songs of the People of God

A Psalm of Suffering

Psalm 22:1-21

Sunday, March 25, 2018

Introduction

Psalm 22 is a Psalm of David. It was written by him, and is about him and his suffering, but it is not only about him. Psalm 22 is also a Psalm of Jesus.

About a thousand years before Jesus came to earth and before crucifixion was even invented as a form of execution David foretold the sufferings of Jesus. As we hear of the suffering of Jesus, we have a picture of length that God went to in order to save us from our sin and to end suffering once and for all.

Structure: Ps. 22 can be divided into two parts: The first half is about suffering, the second half is about the response to deliverance. This week we will consider the suffering and next week (Easter) we will rejoice in the hope of deliverance.

A Psalm of the Suffering of David

- **David's Cry – Abandoned by God (22:1-2)** As the Psalm begins David is at his lowest. He is in the midst of suffering and feels as though God has abandoned Him. But even still, he calls out to God as His God.
 - **David's Confidence – You Have Been Faithful in the Past (22:3-5)** The first half of the Psalm goes back and forth between cries of complaint and prayers of confidence. While David feels forsaken, he also still believes that God can be trusted. God is the King of Israel who has always been faithful in the past.
- Application:** David is conflicted; he feels forsaken, but he still believes God is trustworthy. This is an important reminder for us: Even in our suffering we must work hard to remember how God has shown Himself faithful.
- **David's Cry – Abandoned by Men (22:6-8)** While David's first cry was that God had abandoned him, now he says that men have also abandoned him. They mock him and shame him because of God's apparent abandonment.
 - **David's Confidence – You Have Been the Trust of My Life (22:9-11)** In verses 4-5 David mentioned God's historic faithfulness, but now he gets more personal. His trust in God is something that has always been there. From the time he was born he was taught that God could be trusted (Psalm 139:13-17).

Application: Maybe you're like David and you have been taught about God your entire life, you have always trusted Him, but now it seems like He has forgotten you. This was David's experience, but even when he was tempted to unbelief, he continued to ask God for help.

- **David's Cry – Surrounded by Trouble (22:12-18)** As David's situation becomes more severe he begins to describe his suffering in terms of physical suffering. It is possible that he is speaking metaphorically for spiritual suffering, but nevertheless it is clear he is at his lowest.

- **David's Confidence – A Request for Deliverance (22:19-21)** Out of his despair David makes a final plea for God to deliver Him. Though he feels forsaken and his life is overwhelmed with suffering he continues to cry out in confidence to God.

A Psalm of the Suffering of Jesus

While David wrote of his own suffering, God used David to foretell the sufferings of Christ. In Psalm 22 we hear the voice of Jesus and see a portrait of His suffering.

- **Jesus' Cry of Being Forsaken – Abandoned by God (22:1)** As Jesus reached his final minutes of life he quoted Psalm 22. As He took on our sins and bore the wrath of God on our behalf he experienced the greatest suffering in all of history, and in this moment He felt forsaken by God the Father in a way we can never fully understand (Matthew 27:45-50; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- **Jesus is Mocked and Scorned - Abandoned by Men (22:6-8)** In just the way Psalm 22 describes, Jesus is mocked and scorned. The God of all the earth was abandoned by His followers and despised by those who cried for His death.
- **The Details of the Crucifixion as Predicted in Psalm 22**
 - **Hands Pierced and Clothes Divided** (22:16; John 19:23-24)
 - **His Thirst** (22:14-15; John 19:28-29) – Ps. 22 has several references to Jesus being dried out, emptied and thirsty. John tells us that Jesus' physical thirst was a fulfillment of prophecy.
 - **His Disjointed Bones** (22:14) – It was very common for those being crucified to experience their arms and legs being pulled out of joint.
- **Jesus' Trust in the Deliverance of God.** It is clear that Jesus knew Ps. 22, and it is important for us to consider that he remembered it all. While He experienced the suffering of Ps. 22, He also believed the prayers of confidence. He willingly trusted His life to the hands of the Father (22:3-5; 11; 19-21).

A Psalm about God's Victory over Suffering

- As we consider Psalm 22 we should be overwhelmed at what Jesus endured on our behalf. But we should also recognize how through His suffering He accomplished our salvation. He died for us.
- Jesus suffered a brutal death on the cross so that we can be saved – He tasted death for us (Hebrews 2:9-10).
- The greatest suffering of Jesus on the cross was not the physical pain, but that He took our sins and bore the wrath of God on our behalf (Hebrews 2:14-18).
- The suffering of Jesus reminds us that He can understand our suffering (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16).

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