

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this study guide is to facilitate the study of Psalm 22 as a supplement to the sermon. It is based on my (Michael's) study and meditation on the psalm. This handout can be used for personal study or community group conversation. (I hope you join a group!)

## PSALM 22:1-31 ESV

*1 To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. 3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. 4 In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. 5 To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. 6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. 7 All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; 8 "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" 9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. 10 On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God. 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. 12 Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; 13 they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— 17 I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. 19 But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog! 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen! 22 I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! 24 For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. 25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him. 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live forever! 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. 28 For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. 29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. 30 Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; 31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.*

## STRUCTURE

- I. Lament and Petition (1-21a)
  - a. Trusting God despite the distance (1-10)
    - i. Lament to "my God" (1-2)
    - ii. The fathers trusted You (3-5)
    - iii. Enemies mock trust in You (6-8)
    - iv. From the womb, I've trusted "my God" (9-10)
  - b. Asking God to "be not far" (11-21)
    - i. Prayer for God to "be not far" (11)
    - ii. Enemies—beasts—threaten execution (12-18)
    - iii. Prayer for God to "be not far" (19-21a)
- II. Thanksgiving and praise (21b-31)
  - a. Calling on all Israel to celebrate God's nearness (21b-26)
    - i. A word of "praise" (21b-24)
    - ii. A sacrifice of "praise" (25-26)
  - b. Calling on all nations to celebrate God's nearness (27-31)

- i. Throughout the earth (27-29)
- ii. Throughout all ages (30-31)

## GENERAL COMMENTARY:

As a Psalm of David, no commentator knows what season of life it addressed. Some suggest that David writes about running from Saul for his life, but the physical descriptions of 22:14-18 far exceed anything we know of David's life. For this reason, some have suggested that the entire Psalm is a prophecy about Jesus, and that it had nothing to do with David's actual experience. But if 22:1-21 are entirely about the cross, and 22:22-31 are entirely about the resurrection, then it would seem strange indeed for Jesus to be making sacrifices after the resurrection (22:25-26). A better alternative is to suggest that David spoke of his own experience (from an unknown period), but he used language that transcended his life to prophesy about that suffering and glory of Christ.

The structure of this Psalm can be broken down into two major sections: the lament and petition (1-21a), followed by thanksgiving and praise (21b-31). That these are the two major sections can be discerned in a number of ways. First, the theme of lament and petition fits entirely within 1-21a, while the theme of thanksgiving and praise fits into 21b-31, with an exceedingly sharp break between them. Second, David stitches together section 1 with the theme of God's distance: "Why are you so far..." (22:1); "Be not far" (22:11); "Do not be far off" (22:19). Third, moving to Section 2 (21b-31), the happy theme divides nicely into the effect of God's answer on Israel (21b-26) and on the nations (27-31). Finally, David contrasts section 1 (1-21a) and section 2 (21b-31) by inverting the language: in section 1, he complains that God has forsaken him by not answering prayer (22:1-2), but in section 2, he rejoices that God has not hidden his face and has indeed answered prayer (22:24); in section 1, he complains that he is "despised by the people" (22:6), but in section 2, God "has not despised" him (22:24); in section 1, he remembers God being "enthroned on the praises of Israel" (22:3), and in section 2, Israel is called upon once again to "praise" God (22:23); in section 1, he is laid in the "dust of death" (22:15), but in section 2, those who "go down to the dust" will worship God (22:27).

One takeaway from these contrasts is that no matter how bad it gets, God never forsakes us. When His face seems turned away, and when prayers hit the ceiling, and when enemies surround and hound us—even then—"He has not hidden his face" (22:24). As a Psalm that points prophetically to the story of Jesus, we learn the reason why God does not hide His face from us: because Jesus suffered abandonment on our behalf. In other words, Jesus was forsaken so that we might never be forsaken.

A chart of the prophecies fulfilled by Christ in Psalm 22 is below:

| Psalm 22                                                                                                                                                                                            | NT Fulfillment                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| [Psa 22:1 ESV] 1 To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning | [Mat 27:46 ESV] 46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" |
| [Psa 22:7 ESV] 7 All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads                                                                                                               | [Mat 27:39 ESV] 39 And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads                                                                                               |
| [Psa 22:8 ESV] 8 "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"                                                                                          | [Mat 27:43 ESV] 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'                                                      |
| [Psa 22:15 ESV] 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.                                                                       | [Jhn 19:28 ESV] 28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst."                                                     |
| [Psa 22:16 ESV] 16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—                                                                                 | Matt. 27; Mk. 15; Lk. 23; Jn. 19                                                                                                                                          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| [Psa 22:18 ESV] 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots                                                                                                                                                                                    | [Jhn 19:23-24 ESV] 23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, 24 so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things, |
| [Psa 22:24, 31 ESV] 24 For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. ... 31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it. | [Heb 5:7 ESV] 7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| [Psa 22:2 ESV] 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.                                                                                                                                                                            | [Heb 2:12 ESV] 12 saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY:

**22:1** *To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.*

—"To the choirmaster" provides a note to the worship leader for how this is to be sung. While we cannot know what "Doe of the Dawn" means, they are pleasant and hopeful images. Even as the song begins darkly, the tune probably communicated hope all the way through. This would subtly us that no matter how dark it gets—and this song gets dark!—there is always light.

—"My God, my God":

- This verse provides a bookend with verse 1 ("from my mother's womb you have been my God") because the whole section is about trust in God, despite the darkness.
- That he says this twice emphasizes the intimacy David has historically felt with God, which contrasts sharply with what he says next.
- Notably, when Jesus prays this, it is the only time in Scripture where He prays to God as "God" and not "Father." Jesus felt a genuine distance from the Father on the Cross.

—"why have you forsaken me":

- David is not actually forsaken. Hebrew laments typically contain a sharp complaint in the form of a question, which is resolved by the end. That is the case here. After complaining of God's absence in 22:1-2, David says at the end that God "has not hidden his face" (22:24).
- The purpose of the question is to express pain and move God to action. David aims to be answered not by information, but intervention.
- What David meant by "forsaken" is spelled out in 22:1b-2: God is "far from saving" him, from answering his "groaning" prayer, and from giving him peace.
- "groaning":
  - When David says God is far from the words of his "groaning" (1b), this is the same Hebrew word translated as "roaring" in 22:13—which is the more common translation. Since this is a relatively rare Hebrew word, appearing twice in the same Psalm, David is making a point: He roars toward God in desperation, even as his enemies roar at him in domination.
  - Rather than roaring back in retaliation, David takes his pain to God, and he doesn't hold back. The full severity of "roaring" which he might have reserved for his enemies, exchanging tit-for-tat, he instead directed toward God. In this, David models how we are to respond to severe injustice. We bring it to God.

- Jesus, as our Greater David, models this lesson even more perfectly.
- This Psalm is quoted by Jesus in Matt. 27:46 and Mark 15:34. It happens at the sixth hour (noon), after he has hung for three hours, and as the land turns dark (Matt. 27:45). What is intended by Jesus' quotation of Psalm 22?
  - First, Jesus is essentially shouting, "Psalm 22!" Since Psalms did not have chapters and verse labels, they were often recognized by their opening line. Jesus was claiming that this entire Psalm describes His own experience.
  - Second, the darkness surrounding Jesus' cry communicates that God's wrath was visiting unrepentant Israel, which Jesus had just proclaimed by cleansing the temple and cursing the fig tree. Here, we are reminded of Amos 8:9-10: 9 *"And on that day," declares the Lord GOD, "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. 10 I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist and baldness on every head; I will make it like the mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day.*
  - Third, and most importantly, the darkness surrounding Jesus' cry communicates that God the Father's wrath had come upon God the Son for us who believe. Darkness symbolized the "the day of the Lord," throughout the Old Testament. This was the day of God's decisive intervention, which included wrath upon evildoers and salvation for God's people. Because our sin was imputed upon Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21), Jesus bore the just sentence for our crimes against God. He suffered "the day of the Lord" so that we could spend eternity with the Lord.

—What does it mean that Jesus was "forsaken" on the Cross?

- Some say that Jesus was not actually forsaken on the Cross; He just felt that way. Justification for this is found for this in the fact that David prayed the same thing, yet was not actually forsaken (22:24). Typologically fulfilled prophecy, however, means there is an escalation from type to antitype. Even if David wasn't forsaken, that does not mean Jesus wasn't either. Jesus experienced an "escalation" of what David did.
- We know that Jesus was truly forsaken on the Cross, not only because the sky turned dark, but because Jesus became "sin" for us (2 Cor. 5:21), He became a "curse" for us (Gal. 3:13), and because He became a "propitiation" (Rom. 3:25) for us. The latter word means, "a sacrifice that turns away wrath, and brings favor." It is impossible to experience wrath without being in some way forsaken. If wrath is God's passionate opposition of evil and refusal to compromise with it, then Jesus was passionately opposed on the Cross by God the Father.
- Before plunging deeper into this mystery, it is worth asking another question....

—What does it *not* mean that Jesus was "forsaken" on the Cross?

- It does not mean that the Father stopped loving Jesus. Jesus says in John 10:17, "For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again." Far from ceasing to love the Son on the Cross, the Father even inspires love, as if the Father's heart is moved by the Son's willingness.
- It does not mean that the Father is the bad cop and Jesus is the good cop. This would disrupt the unity of the Father and Son, who cooperated in redemption (along with the Holy Spirit, see Heb. 9:14). 2 Corinthians 5:18: "in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself..." The Father and Son acted as one, for they have eternally been one, not only in operation, but in heart. Both the Father and the Son, *uniquely* as Persons though *together* as the Godhead, sought the reconciliation of mankind.
- It does not mean that the Trinity was severed. If Jesus is God, yet was 100% separated from God the Father on the Cross, then for some space of time, the world had two distinct gods. This would violate not only monotheism, but also immutability—God cannot change (Mal. 3:6). Worse, since "triunity" is part of the definition of God's nature, then God would have ceased to be God for a few hours, which means He was never God at all. Whatever it meant for God the Father to forsake God the Son, it did not sever the Trinity; Jesus remains consubstantial (of the same divine "substance"—see Nicene Creed). In one way or another, the Father remained with Jesus on the Cross (Jhn. 16:32)—even while directing His wrath toward Jesus as our substitute.

—What else must we consider to answer this well?

- Whatever Jesus suffered, it was according to His human nature: “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things... so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted” (Heb. 2:14-17-18).
- Notably, these verses come right out of Heb. 2:12, which quotes Psalm 22, where Jesus calls us “brothers” in the resurrection. Hebrews is thus driving home that Jesus bore our sins in His humanity, first, so that He could help His fellow humans. Second, Jesus became human to “make propitiation”. This means that He could not have borne wrath as God alone; He had to become the God-man.
- We might also say that since God is “impassible”—the doctrine that God is without suffering—that Jesus, in His deity, could not have suffered.

—Putting these pieces together, what did it mean?

- It means that Jesus felt, in full force, God’s passionate opposition to evil. The pain of His suffering was felt (like thirst and fatigue) *from* His humanity, but *as* a whole Person, the God-Man. The nature of this suffering was not existential, but experiential—that is, without ceasing to exist as God the Son in union with the Father and Spirit, Jesus nevertheless suffered the total withdrawal of divine comfort, joy, and felt intimacy as He paid for our sins, bearing in His flesh the just sentence of God’s wrath.

***3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. 4 In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. 5 To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.***

—“Yet”:

- David/Jesus displays how we process our pain. Not only do we bring it to God, but also we remind both God and ourselves of His past faithfulness.
- Even if we are so desperate that we forget His faithfulness to us, we can at least remember His faithfulness to others. Rather than making us jealous, this should inspire faith, for God loves us all the same; He loves us all infinitely.

—“holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel”:

- These “praises” are specifically the glad responses of “our fathers” who “trusted” God, and it paid off—they were “delivered”, “rescued” and “not put to shame.”
- Israel normally pictured God as “enthroned above the cherubim” in the holy of holies. David borrows this temple language to speak of the way God displays His reign through answers to prayer. Through imagery, then, he communicates: despite what it looks like, my God reigns, and He displays that reign by answering the prayers of His people.

***6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. 7 All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; 8 “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”***

—“But”:

- The back-and-forth of each stanza reflects the confusion of forsakenness.
- Having just reminded himself of God’s faithfulness in the past, he sinks again, as the words of his persecutors penetrate his armor.

—“I am a worm”:

- This speaks not of self-hatred, but hatred from others, for it is qualified in the last half of the verse: “scorned by mankind and despised by the people...”
- Poetically, David’s/Jesus’ enemies are lions, bulls, dogs, and oxen, but David / Jesus is a worm. Hatred turns haters into beasts while pressing victims into dirt like worms.

—“trusts”:

- The theme of this section (1-10). See vv. 3-5, 8-10.
- Despite the “forsakenness,” David/Jesus never ceased trusting in God.

—These verses are quoted in Matt. 27:43. See chart above.

**9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. 10 On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.**

—"Yet":

- The back-and-forth continues. First he complains (1-2), then he remembers (3-5), then he complains (6-8), and now he remembers (9-10).
- Grief comes in waves. We must respond in waves. As each emotion crests over us, we "roar/groan" to God our complaints (1-2), catch our breath, and then remind ourselves of God's faithfulness, both to others (3-5) and ourselves (9-10).

—"womb... mother's breasts... birth... womb":

- In the parallel strophe, David/Jesus remembers God's faithfulness to the fathers who trusted; now, David/Jesus remembers his own trust in God.
- The faith/trust dates back to the womb/breasts. Taken literally, this would mean that faith began before conscious thought. This is feasible, for John the Baptist prophesied of Jesus' identity, even from the womb (Lk. 1). God can awaken faith even before consciousness, although it is hard to probe this mystery further.
- Since this is a Psalm, this is probably figurative language. In this case, it would have one of the following meanings:
  - David was elected by God before ever being born.
  - David was a believer for his entire life.
  - While both of these were true of David, since the theme of the section is "trust," I take this as figurative language for, "I've been a believer for my entire life." This would have been true for both David and Jesus.

—"my God": This bookends 22:1, concluding the section about "trust," which in practice bobs up and down on waves of pain and despair.

**11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.**

—This launches a new stanza (11-21a) but is still part of Section 1: Lament and petition (1-21a).

—This new stanza shifts in theme from "trust" in God's invisible nearness to petition for God to "be not far off"—a prayer he repeats twice in this stanza (22:11, 19).

—These two petitions also match the complaint of verse 1 ("Why are you so far..."), which is why I include them as part of the same section, albeit in different stanzas.

—God's distance in this stanza manifests as "trouble" that "is near" and as "help" that is absent. In the next verses, he will detail that trouble.

—There is irony in this verse. God is "far" but "trouble is near." David/Jesus would like to see this reversed. Ultimately it is, beginning in 21b and following, when God inverts and redeems all the suffering that came before.

**12 Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; 13 they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— 17 I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.**

—"bulls... lion... dogs":

- The enemies of David/Jesus have become beasts. God made us in His image, but when we behave like animals, we war against our design.
- As "bulls" there is a supernatural component to their persecution, due to the association with "Bashan" (see below). The word is often translated as "mighty", which indicates tremendous strength associated with them.
- As a "lion", they open their mouths to roar at him (22:13). As I have noted, this matches 22:1, where the same Hebrew word describes David's "groaning/roaring" prayers. They roar at Christ with taunts; Christ roars to God in desperation.

- As “dogs” they are involved in piercing his hands and feet. We will explore this below, but the image is of scavenger coyotes nipping at our Lord’s failing extremities in a way that pierces them with their sharp teeth.

—“Bashan”:

- There is a supernatural component to this. Bashan borders Mount Hermon, which in the biblical worldview, is the place where celestial beings transgressed their nature and abode and somehow slept with human women, creating the Nephilim, who were giants (Gen. 6:1-4). This is why Bashan is so commonly associated with the “Rephaim,” (Gen. 14:5), who were considered giants (“rephaim” is translated as “giants” in 1 Chron. 20:4). Bashan is also the dominion of “Og,” who was one of the giants/Rephaim (Num. 21:32-35; Deut. 3:8-14; Josh. 12:4). Finally, it is also related to “Gog,” whom I consider to be a satanically energized Antichrist figure (Ezek. 38:18; Rev. 20:8).
- Heiser, commenting on the association of Bashan with Ashtaroth and Edei, under the dominion of king Og (In, Unseen Realm): “These terms—Ashtaroth, Edrei, and Bashan—were theologically loaded terms for an Israelite, and even for their neighbors who worshiped other gods.” He goes on to describe the region of Bashan as “the place of the serpent” (due to linguistic connections with ancient near eastern texts), and then: “In effect, Bashan was considered the location of (to borrow a New Testament phrase) ‘the gates of hell.’”
- Heiser, again (In Reversing Hermon): “For the Canaanites of Ugarit, the Bashan region, or part of it, clearly represented ‘hell’, the celestial and infernal abode of their deified dead kings.”
- This has incredible ramifications for understanding what Jesus suffered on the Cross. In one sense, all the powers of hell were released against Him. In another sense, Jesus suffered our hell on the Cross as a just punishment for the sins of the world.

—“poured out like water... bones are out of joint... heart is like wax... melted within my breast... strength is dried up... tongue sticks...”

- This section depicts the suffering of both body and soul. I am reminded of the Heidelberg confession Q 37: “What do you understand by the words, “He suffered”? Answer: That he, all the time that he lived on earth, but especially at the end of his life, *sustained in body and soul*, the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind...”
- Jesus’ suffering was “body and soul,” which means—humanity. Jesus had to be a human to experience suffering and judgment. Just as humans alone can be thirsty and hungry and tired and tempted, Jesus experienced all of these *from* His human nature, but as a whole Person—the God-Man.
- David/Jesus feels “poured out” in the same way that we might say, “I am drained.” Energy flees like water from a spewing faucet.
- “bones are out of joint”: what a picture of one who hangs by crucifixion!
- “heart is like wax... melted within my breast”: In Joshua 2:11, Rahab describes the emotional state of Jericho: their “hearts melted” for fear of Yahweh’s judgment. This common Hebrew idiom suggests to me that “heart” is intended here not as an organ, but as one’s internal state. In this case, it depicts how Jesus felt while being crucified. This should not be understood as fear, as if Jesus lost faith, which would contradict the first stanza. Rather, it should be understood in conjunction with our Lord’s own statement in Gethsemane: “My soul is very sorrowful, even unto death” (Mk. 4:34).
- “tongue sticks to my jaws” indicates extreme dehydration, which would have been the case for any crucified person.

—“you lay me in the dust of death”:

- For the first time since the original complaint (22:1-2), David attributes his suffering to God. Everywhere surrounding, it is the “bulls of Bashan” and other creaturely enemies who attack him. This is David’s way of saying that God is sovereign, even behind this suffering. It is an act of faith to say this.
- In light of the crucifixion, God the Father laid Jesus “in the dust of death.” Like Abraham sacrificing Isaac, the Father proactively “gave” His one and only Son for our sins (Jhn. 3:16). Jesus bore our sins, and the Father punished them (cf. Isa. 53:10; Acts 2:23).

—“they have pierced my hands and feet”:

- There is some translational dispute over this verse, but the Greek translation of the Old Testament—written before Jesus was crucified—reads this way. Rabbis who came later and wanted to distance the text from Christ's crucifixion must contend with this. There is more to say, but this would be a very long handout.
- This is obviously fulfilled in the crucifixion.

—"I can count all my bones":

- This was David's way of saying that he is emaciated to the point of looking like a skeleton. As Jesus hung from the Cross naked, He no doubt would have looked this way.

—"they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots"

- Fulfilled in John 19:24, see chart above.
- After saying that he lies in the dust of death (15), David pictures his enemies now dividing his final possession. Again, this goes far beyond what David ever experienced to prophesy about Jesus. Jesus died, giving up not just His life, but the shirt on His back.

***19 But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog! 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!***

—"But" marks the final shift in the song toward deliverance and resurrection. The series of rapid-fire petitions portrays a boiling point in Christ's suffering: "do not be far off... come quickly... deliver my soul... save me"—all expressions, exclamatory.

—"dog... lion... oxen":

- Earlier, we saw the order of "bulls... lion... dogs", but now he essentially reverses the order, with "dogs... lion... oxen (like bulls)". Why?
- It seems that David portrays by the reverse order a reversing of his situation. This is the power of prayer.
- Perhaps confirming this interpretation is that the last verse moves from petition to answer: "you have rescued me...."

—"you have rescued me":

- This is fascinating for its subtlety. David goes from total desperation to sudden victory. We expect a dramatic pause, maybe a "Selah," but find none. Celebration comes, but this verse reflects a quiet turn, almost bleeding in with the petitions.
- It was like this with Jesus' death. When He cried, "It is finished", people went home disappointed, as if victory had whimpered to the grave.

***22 I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! 24 For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. 25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him. 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live forever!***

—Beginning with the subtle turn in 21b, this launches a new section (21b-31), which has the feel of an entirely different Psalm. Lament Psalms always end with some kind of positive turn, but this turn—like resurrection—is drastic.

—Verse 22 is quoted in Hebrews 2:12 on the lips of the resurrected Christ. The rest of this Psalm speaks from that perspective.

—This first stanza (21b-26) focuses on Israel, while the second (27-31) emphasizes the nations.

—Keywords related to Israel: "brothers... congregation... offspring of Jacob... offspring of Israel... congregation."

—Keywords linking this stanza: "I will praise you... praise Him... glorify him... From you comes my praise... praise the LORD!"

—With so much focus on the praises of Israel, we are reminded of the first stanza, in which God was enthroned on the praises of Israel (22:3)—the only reference to Israel in the first stanza. Poetically, then, David reveals that the God who earned Israel's praise in history (22:2-5) will continue to earn Israel's praise forever (22:22-26).

—The flow of the passage from Jew to Gentile reminds us that the Cross was not just a randomly chosen means for God to save a lot of people. It was the means by which He fulfilled His promise to Abraham that through Him, all the nations would be blessed. Jesus was born a Jew, born under the law, that He might fulfill it perfectly. Furthermore, He died on a Cross, that He might be cursed as the law prescribed, thus bearing the curse for us. The Gospel is not just a sin-forgiving math equation; it is the fulfillment of a sin-forgiving, nation-blessing promise, given through Israel. This is often lost in well-meaning Gospel presentations.

—I'm reminded of Scot McKnight's quote: "One reason why so many Christians today don't know the Old Testament is because their 'gospel' doesn't even need it!" The Gospel is good news, not merely because I personally get to go to heaven; the Gospel is good news because it centers on a God who fulfills promises to His people.

—"For He has not despised":

- Jesus was "despised by the people" (22:6), but He was not despised by God.
- Even in the forsakenness of the Cross, the Father never "despised" His Son. To characterize the Cross as the Father hating the Son is to go too far. It is to sever their Triune bond of eternal and infinite love. It is true that the immediate human comforts of this love were not felt on the Cross while Jesus bore our judgment, but this does not mean the Father despised the Son.

—"the affliction of the afflicted":

- David generalizes God's care for him as an afflicted one to speak of God's character: He cares for afflicted ones.
- In light of Christ, God cares for the afflicted because Jesus is our merciful High Priest, made like us in every respect. We who feel afflicted and forsaken can relate to a God who felt both of these. Jesus is thus a perfect Mediator.

—"he has not hidden His face":

- In David's experience, God did not truly forsake him or hide His face.
- In Christ's experience, God definitely did forsake Him.

—Verses 25-26 move from a word of praise to a sacrifice of praise. In Leviticus 7, it was prescribed that Israel celebrate answers to prayer, associated with vows, by feasting together. Here, David/Jesus are portrayed as feasting with God's people in praise to God.

***27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. 28 For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. 29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive.***

—Now we shift from Israel to the nations, as has been noted, with these keywords: "All the ends of the earth... all the families of the nations... the nations... of the earth."

—"kingship belongs to the LORD":

- Yahweh rules over the nations, which is why He wins the worship of all nations.
- This was fulfilled in Jesus, when He rose and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me..." (Matt. 28:18).

—"prosperous of the earth... all who go down to the dust":

- Both the rich and the poor will worship Yahweh. Both comfortable kings and the dying beggars will praise King Jesus. This continues the theme of Christ's victory for all people.
- The thought of "all who go down to the dust" continues with, "even the one who could not keep himself alive." It contrasts with Christ's prior experience: "you lay me down in the dust of death" (22:15). The point is that all who die with Jesus also rise with Jesus.

***30 Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; 31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.***

—Not only all peoples, but all peoples throughout all times, will worship the resurrected King.

—Just as Israel's fathers worshiped Yahweh in the past, Israel's spiritual descendants through all nations will worship Him in the future.

—"he has done it": very similar to, "It is finished."