

Psalm 22 Continued

Psalm 22:11 "Be not far from me; for trouble [is] near; for [there is] none to help."

Who had been so near unto him, as to take him out of the womb, and to take the care of him ever since. This is to be understood not with respect to the omnipresence of God, who is everywhere, and is not far from any of us. But of his presence, which was now withdrawn from Christ, and he was filled with a sense of divine wrath, and with sorrow and distress. And also of his powerful and assisting presence which he had promised, and Christ expected, and believed he should have, as he had. The reasons for it follow.

"For trouble is near": Satan was marching towards him with his principalities and powers, to attack him in the garden and on the cross. Judas, one of his own disciples, was at hand to betray him. A multitude with swords and staves were about to seize him. The sins and chastisement of his people were just going to be laid upon him. The sword of justice was awaked against him, ready to give the blow. The hour of death was near, he was brought to the dust of it, as in (Psalm 22:15). A second reason is given:

"For there is none to help": None among his disciples. One of them was to betray him, another to deny him, and all to forsake him and flee from him, as they did. Nor any among the angels in heaven. For though they ministered to him in the wilderness, and strengthened him in the garden, there were none near him on the cross. That it might be manifest that salvation was wrought out alone by him, (Isa. 63:5). And, indeed, if any of these had been willing to have helped him, it was not in their power to do it, none but God could. And therefore he applies to him, who had promised and was as good as his word (Isa. 49:8).

We find in this, the loneliness that Jesus felt when all had abandoned Him. We know that even strong Peter denied Jesus when he felt he might be crucified with Him. The whole world may abandon you when terrible trouble comes, but God is always there. God did not abandon Jesus. This suffering of humiliation and death of the body on the cross had been part of God's plan from the beginning. Notice in the Scripture that Jesus of His own free will, lay His life down for all who are His followers.

John 10:17 "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

In the following Scripture, notice that no one takes the Lord's life, He gave His life.

John 10:18 "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Even though there were none to help Jesus, He still could have climbed off the cross had He wanted to. He gave His body unto death on the cross, that you and I could be saved through His shed blood.

Verses 12-13: This imagery of enemies as rapacious beasts returns (compare verses 16, 20-21).

Psalm 22:12 "Many bulls have compassed me: strong [bulls] of Bashan have beset me round."

By whom are meant the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees, among the Jews. And Herod and Pontius Pilate among the Gentiles. Comparable to bulls for their fierceness, rage, and fury against Christ (Psalm 2:1). And for their pushing at him with their horns of power and authority. And for their trampling him under their feet, his person and offices. These compassed him about at his apprehension, arraignment, trial, and condemnation. And there were many of them to one child, Jesus.

"Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round": Bashan was a very fruitful country, in which cattle of various sorts, and bulls among the rest, were fed and fattened (see Deut. 32:14). Bulls are noted for their strength in other writers. Hence great men, who abounded in riches and power, and used them to the oppression of the poor, are compared to the kine of Bashan (Amos 4:1). And a very fit name this was for the kings and princes of the earth. For Caiaphas, Annas, and the chief priests, that lived upon the fat of the land, who beset Christ around, and employed all their power and policy to take him and bring him to death. Nor is it unusual with Heathen writers to compare great personages to bulls.

Psalm 22:13 "They gaped upon me [with] their mouths, [as] a ravening and a roaring lion."

Either by way of derision and contempt (Job 16:10). Or belching out blasphemy against him, or rather, with the greatest vehemence, crying out "Crucify him, crucify him" (Luke 23:21). And this they did:

"As a ravening and roaring lion": When it has got its prey and rejoices (Amos 3:4). And being in such hands, and encompassed about with such enemies, as Christ was in the garden. In the High Priest's hall, and in Pilate's judgment hall, is a third reason or argument used by him with God his Father, to be near to him and not far from him.

These bulls of Bashan just represent strong enemies, who surrounded Jesus. In fact, the crowd was screaming (crucify Him). At this time, it seemed the whole world was against Jesus. No one was crying out to help Jesus. The crowd did not even ask for Jesus to be released, when Pilate offered to pardon one prisoner. The people asked for Barabbas to be released instead. Notice in the next verse that even those high in authority in the temple wanted Jesus destroyed.

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

Notice also in verse 13 above that the enemy was LIKE a roaring lion. They were not a lion they were just acting as one. Jesus is the LION of the tribe of Judah.

Verses 14-15: These are graphic images showing that his vitality and courage had left him.

Psalm 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."

My heart faileth, my spirits are spent and gone like water, which once spilt can never be recovered. My very flesh is melted within me, and I am become as weak as water. See the like phrase (Joshua 7:5; compare 2 Sam. 14:14; Job 14:11).

"All my bones are out of joint": I am as weak and unable to move or help myself, and withal as full of torment, as if I were upon a rack, and all my bones were disjoined. Or, all my bones are separated, one from another; as they were in some sort in Christ. By the stretching of his body upon the cross.

"My heart": The seat of life, and fountain which supplies spirits and vigor to the whole body.

"Is like wax": Melted, as it follows, through fear and overwhelming grief: compare (Psalm 68:2; 97:5).

They beat Jesus so severely before they took Him to crucify Him, that He was too weak to carry His cross. The verse above is just saying that His weakness was such that all the strength had been drained out of Him. His heart was also broken that those He loved so much had run away.

Psalm 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.

All strength dies out under the action of the many acute pains which rack the whole frame. And as little remains as there remains of moisture in a potsherd.

"And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws": An extreme and agonizing thirst sets in, the secretions generally fail, and the saliva especially is suppressed, so that the mouth feels parched and dry. Hence the cry of suffering which was at last wrung from our Lord, when, just before the end, he exclaimed, "I thirst" (John 19:28).

"And thou hast brought me into the dust of death": "The dust of death" is a periphrasis for death itself, which is so closely associated in our thoughts with the dust of the tomb (see below, verse 29; and compare Psalms 30:10; 104:29; Job 10:9; 34:35; Eccl. 3:20; 12:7).

At one point Jesus had cried out, I thirst. Potsherd means dry pottery, or the dry earth. Dust in the Scripture, has to do with death.

Psalm 22:16 "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."

“They pierced my hands and my feet”: The Hebrew text reads “like a lion”, i.e., these vicious attacking enemies, like animals, have torn me. Likely, a messianic prediction with reference to crucifixion (compare Isa. 53:5; Zech. 12:10).

Gentiles were spoken of as dogs by the Israelites. Actually, it was the Roman soldiers (Gentiles), who carried out the nailing of Jesus' hands and feet to the cross. Though we say, the Romans and the self-righteous Jews killed Jesus, we were all to blame. Our sins nailed Jesus to the cross.

Psalm 22:17 "I may tell all my bones: they look [and] stare upon me."

Our Lord's active life and simple habits would give him a spare frame, while the strain of crucifixion would accentuate and bring into relief every point of his anatomy. He might thus, if so minded, "tell all his bones." This is a graphic picture of emaciation and exhaustion (compare Job 33:21; Psalm 102:5).

"They look and stare upon me": Meaning not his bones, but his enemies. Which may be understood either by way of contempt, as many Jewish interpreters explain it. So the Scribes and elders of the people, and the people themselves, looked and stared at him on the cross, and mocked at him, and insulted him. Or by way of rejoicing, saying, "Aha, aha, our eye hath seen", namely, what they desired and wished for (Psalm 35:21). A sight as was enough to have moved a heart of stone made no impression on them. They had no sympathy with him, no compassion on him, but rejoiced at his misery. This staring agrees with their character as dogs.

Perhaps this is when they had taken Jesus' robe away, and He could see His own bones.

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

Apparently, his enemies were so sure that Jesus would perish, they were already dividing his “clothing” among themselves.

“They part ... and cast”: All 4 gospel writers appeal to this imagery in describing Christ’s crucifixion (Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:24).

We see the fulfillment of this very Scripture in the following.

Matthew 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."

If nothing else in the Bible causes a person to believe, then the exact fulfillment of something prophesied hundreds of years before should be enough. This casting lots upon His vesture had to be humiliating.

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

See (Psalm 22:11).

"O my strength": Christ as God is the mighty God, the Almighty. As Mediator, he is the strength of his people; but, as man, God is his strength. He is the man of his right hand, whom he has made strong for himself, and whom he has promised his arm shall strengthen (Psalm 80:17). And therefore, he addresses him in this manner here, saying:

"Haste thee to help me": His help was alone in God his strength. There were none that could help him but he, and he seemed to stand afar off from helping him (Psalm 22:1). And his case being so distressed, as is represented in the preceding verses, it required haste.

The word used for strength is really stronger than just strength, it possibly means the source of all my strength.

Psalm 22:20 "Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog."

"The sword" symbolizes the authority of the Roman governor. That authority by which Christ was actually put to death. If he prayed, even on the cross, to be delivered from it, the prayer must have been offered with the reservations previously made in Gethsemane. "If it be possible" (Matt. 26:39); "If thou be willing" (Luke 22:42); "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." The human will in Christ was in favor of the deliverance. The Divine will, the same in Christ as in his Father, was against it. My darling, literally my only one, from the power of the dog. By:

"My darling": There is no doubt that the soul is intended, both here and in (Psalm 35:17). It seems to be so called as the most precious thing that each man possesses (see Matthew 16:26).

"The dog": Is used, not of an individual, but of the class. And is best explained, like the "dogs" (in verse 16), of the executioners.

I will say again, that the power of the Gentiles (in this case Romans), was earthly power. Notice also in the verse above that the cry is for salvation of the soul, not the flesh. Jesus knew that the flesh must die. Flesh and blood are for this earth.

1 Corinthians 15:50 "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

To truly understand the person who enters heaven, study all of chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians beginning with about the 42nd verse. Jesus dismissed His Spirit from His body, and commanded it to go to the Father from the cross.

Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

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

"The lion": Either the devil, that raging and roaring lion, who did many ways assault and annoy him. Or his lionlike enemies.

"Hast heard me": We welcomed breaking of God's silence finally arrives. This is fully in keeping with His character (compare Psalms 20:6; 28:6; 31:22, 118:5).

"From the horns of the unicorns": The idea here is, that he cried to God when exposed to what is here called "the horns of the unicorns." That is, when surrounded by enemies as fierce and violent as wild beasts. As if he were among "unicorns" seeking his life, he had called upon God, and God had heard him. This would refer to some former period of his life, when surrounded by dangers, or exposed to the attacks of wicked men, and when he had called upon God, and had been heard.

We see a change to full assurance that God is with Him. We would call His attitude now is as one who has prayed through. He has found victory.

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

The psalmist cannot contain himself; he must testify loudly in the great assembly of Gods great mercies. His exuberance is meant to be contagious (compare Heb. 2:12).

I personally believe that this is speaking of the 40 days Jesus ministered here on the earth after the resurrection. Jesus first sought out the disciples, and then they accepted the great commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel. This 40-day ministry of Jesus established the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 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."

A phrase denoting those who are pious.

"Praise him": This is language which may be supposed to be addressed by the speaker in the great congregation. In the previous verse he had said that he would praise God "in the midst of the congregation." He here speaks as if he were in that congregation, and addressing them. He, therefore, calls on them to praise and honor God.

"All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him": The descendants of Jacob; that is, all who are true worshippers of God.

"And fear him": Honor him, worship him (see the notes at Psalm 5:7).

"All ye the seed of Israel": Another name for Jacob (Gen. 32:28), and designed to denote also all who are true worshippers of Yahweh.

This is the message of grace that Jesus preached. If you fear (reverence), Him, praise Him. Christians are spiritual Israel. Christians are Abraham's seed. Christians, glorify God in all your actions and speech. He is worthy of praise.

Psalm 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."

This expresses the belief that his prayer had been heard. The fact that he had been thus heard is here assigned to be the ground or reason for the exhortation in the previous verse, addressed to all the pious. The Lord had heard his prayer, and this was a reason why others should also confide in the Lord, and feel assured that he would likewise hear their prayers.

"Neither hath he hid his face from him": When men did, as ashamed of him (Isa. 53:3). For though he forsook him for a while, and in a little wrath hid his face from him for a moment, that he might bear the whole curse of the law for us. Yet he returned again, and did not hide his face from him.

"But when he cried unto him, he heard": Cried not only on account of his crucifiers, that God would forgive them. But on account of himself, that he would not be afar off from him. That he would take his spirit or soul into his hands, into which he committed it. That he would deliver him from the power of death and the grave, and loose their bands; in all which he was heard (Heb. 5:7).

Most commentators think this is speaking of Jesus being afflicted, but I believe this is speaking of Jesus Himself, ministering to the afflicted.

Mark 2:17 "When Jesus heard [it], he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Jesus always cared for those less fortunate. He brought sight to the blind, and healed the sick of body as well as spirit.

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

That is, I will praise thee. I will call to remembrance thy goodness, and will unite with others in celebrating thy faithfulness and lovingkindness.

"In the great congregation" (see the notes at (Psalm 22:27)).

"I will pay my vows before them that fear him": Either those which he made in the council and covenant of grace, when he engaged to become a surety for his people. To assume their nature, to suffer and die for them, to redeem them from sin and misery, and bring them nigh to God. And save them with an everlasting salvation. All which he has openly done (see Psalm 31:19). Or those which he made in (Psalm 22:21). That he would declare the name of the Lord unto his brethren, and sing praises unto him in the midst of the church (compare with this Psalm 116:12).

Praise is not truly praise, unless it originates in the heart. We sing praise and worship songs in our church. I personally believe that music should not be played in the church that does not have words clearly understandable which elevate Jesus. Praise, whether in word or song, should be used to minister, not to entertain. Fear in this instance is to hold in awe or to reverence.

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

That is, the poor or humble, gentle and teachable. Namely, believing and godly persons whose hearts the grace of God hath softened and sweetened. Subduing their pride and passion, and their rebellion against God, and fierceness toward men. Shall partake of those spiritual blessings which God hath provided for them in his gospel. That grace, and peace, and comfort, which all believing souls enjoy. In a sense of God's love, in the pardon of their sins, and in the influences of God's Spirit. Of these and not of any temporal blessings, this clause is doubtless to be understood.

"They shall praise the Lord that seek him": In Christ, with their whole heart. Who being filled by him and satisfied, bless the Lord for their spiritual food and comfortable repast. As it becomes men to do for their corporeal food (Deut. 8:10).

"Your heart shall live for ever": This is an address of Christ to them that fear the Lord, the seed of Jacob and Israel, the meek ones. And that seek the Lord, his face and favor, and who eat and are satisfied. Signifying, that they should be revived and refreshed, should be cheerful and comfortable. And should live by faith on Christ now, and have eternal life in them. And should live with him for ever hereafter, and never die the second death.

Most probably this is speaking of spiritual Bread. Jesus told the woman at the well, if she drank of the water He gave her, she would never thirst again. This is the same thing here. This is partaking of Jesus as the Bread of Life. Jesus spoke of His body as the Bread. He also told His disciples they must eat of His body to live forever. The heart of man is what he is. An evil heart brings death, but a good heart brings life.

Psalm 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."

His testimony expands by soliciting universal praises for universal divine blessings (compare Psalms 67:7; 98:3).

This has just about been fulfilled today. The whole world has heard of Jesus. Since the day Jesus was crucified, the gospel has spread to the whole world. Salvation is not withheld from anyone whether they are Caucasian, Negroid, or Asiatic. Salvation is offered to whosoever will accept it. Today Christianity has swept the globe and is practiced in every nation to some extent.

Psalm 22:28 "For the kingdom [is] the LORD'S: and he [is] the governor among the nations."

This is added as a reason why the Gentiles should be converted. Because God is not only the God and Lord of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles, and of all nations. And therefore, though for a time he thought fit to confine his kingdom or visible church to Israel. Yet he had resolved, in due time, to enlarge it, and to set up his throne and government in the Gentile world. Which were no less created and redeemed by him than the Jews (Rom. 3:29-30; Zech. 14:9).

"And he is the Governor among the nations": He rules in the hearts of some by his Spirit and grace, and over others with a rod of iron.

Today Jesus rules over all the Christians, but there is coming a time very soon when He will set up His kingdom here on the earth, and He will be King over all. We see the extent of that rule in the following Scriptures.

Philippians 2:10-11 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;" "And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The 1000-year reign on the earth is just the beginning. He will reign forever in heaven.

Psalm 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."

All they that be fat upon the earth. It was said (Psalm 22:26), that the meek, the lowly, and poor should eat and be satisfied. It is here foretold, that the fat ones of the earth; the rich and great, the nobles, princes, and kings, should be called in to partake of the feast.

"Shall eat and worship": This word is added to show what kind of eating he spoke of. That it is a spiritual eating, a feeding upon the bread of life, a partaking of Christ and his benefits. High and low, rich and poor; all mankind is invited to partake of the gospel-feast.

"All they that go down to the dust": That is, the whole human race; for none can escape death.

"Shall bow before him": "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

"And none can keep alive his own soul": Life is Christ's gift; the soul cannot be kept alive except through him, by his quickening Spirit (John 6:53, 63).

Jesus is the Judge of all. Not all will die, but all will stand before Jesus as Judge. Those of us, who remain until the coming of the Lord, will be Judged by Him as well. Life and death are in the hands of Jesus. Jesus separates the goats on the left (lost), from the sheep on the right (believers in Christ). In the final analysis we live in heaven, or go to hell at the command of Jesus. We have no power over our outcome at all. We must place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Those who are already dead and are dust will rise. Some to everlasting life.

Daniel 12:2 "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame [and] everlasting contempt."

I say one more time, our only hope lies in Jesus.

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

The Church is founded on a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. So long as the world endures, Christ shall always have worshippers, a "seed" which will "serve" him.

"It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation": If we accept this rendering, we must understand that the seed of the first set of worshippers shall be the Lord's people for one generation. The seed of the next for another, and so on. But it is suggested that the true meaning is, "This shall be told of the Lord to generation after generation"

The seed that will serve Him are the Christians. We are His. He bought and paid for us with His precious blood.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

We belong to Jesus. Christians are followers of, and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 22:31 "They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done [this]."

One generation after another. There shall always be a succession of regenerate persons, who shall come to Christ, and to his churches. And a succession of Gospel ministers among them, who shall come forth, being sent and qualified by Christ.

"And shall declare his righteousness": Either by the faithfulness of God, in fulfilling his promises. Or especially those which respect the mission of Christ, and salvation by him, as Zacharias did (Luke 1:68). Or rather the righteousness of Christ, which is revealed in the Gospel, and makes a most considerable part of the declaration of it. And is published by Gospel ministers in all ages, as the only justifying righteousness before God. And that:

"Unto a people that shall be born": In successive generations; that shall be brought upon the stage of time and life. Or that shall be born again; for to such only, in a spiritual and saving way, is the righteousness of Christ declared, revealed, and applied, by the blessed Spirit, through the ministry of the word. It is added:

"That he hath done this": Wrought this righteousness; so Jarchi. That is, is the author of it; and is become the end of the law for it; has finished it, and brought it in. Or else all the great things spoken of in this psalm, relating to the Messiah. His sufferings, death, and resurrection, and the calling of the Gentiles; all which are the Lord's doings, and are what is declared in the Gospel. The Targum is, "the miracles which he hath done". The Septuagint version, and those that follow

it, connect this clause with the preceding thus, "to a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made". Made them his people, created them in Christ, and formed them for himself.

We see from this that, the story of the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ will go on forever. Our children and grandchildren will be taught of Him. Even I was not born in the time all this happened, but I believe that every word is true because it is in the Bible.

John 20:29 "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed [are] they that have not seen, and [yet] have believed."

Mark 16:15 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Psalm 22 Continued Questions

1. What emotion was spoken of in verse 11?
2. Who had denied Jesus when everyone thought he was too strong to deny?
3. Was Jesus unwilling to die on the cross for all of us?
4. What do the bulls of Bashan represent in verse 12?
5. What was the crowd surrounding Jesus crying?
6. Who persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas' release, instead of Jesus' release?
7. Who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah?
8. Why was Jesus as weak as water?
9. Why was Jesus' heart broken?
10. What does potsherd mean?
11. Who is intended by [dogs] in verse 16?
12. What does verse 17 mean about staring upon Him?
13. Where, in the gospels, do we find the same words that are in verse 18?
14. What should be proof enough that Jesus was who He said He was?
15. What does the word, that was translated strength, in verse 19 really mean?
16. What Gentiles actually carried out the crucifixion?

17. What kind of power did they have?
18. Verse 20 says deliver my soul, not the _____.
19. 1 Corinthians 15:50 tells us what cannot inherit the kingdom?
20. Jesus dismissed His _____ from His body, and told it to go to the Father.
21. What change do we see in verse 21?
22. What 40 days is verse 22 speaking of?
23. What was accomplished during the 40 days of ministry of Jesus after His resurrection?
24. What was the message Jesus taught?
25. Those that are whole need not a _____.
26. When is praise, really praise?
27. Praise should _____, not entertain.
28. What is the eating in verse 26?
29. Who is salvation open to?
30. Who does Jesus rule over?
31. What 2 very different things can the people awaken from the grave to?
32. Who are the seed in verse 30?