

PSALM 22

THE PSALM OF THE CROSS

This Psalm is a gem among the Psalms that contain prophecies concerning Christ and His Kingdom; it is peculiarly excellent and remarkable. Here it almost seems that instead of delivering a prophecy of the future, David is recounting a history of the past! The things that he writes here are recorded with such amazing detail that they almost seem to be a record of events that took place within the Psalmist's own sight. His expressions concerning Christ are no more obscure than those of Peter, Paul, or any of the other Apostles; he speaks of Christ being nailed to the cross, and of the piercing of His hands and His feet, as if the entirety of the awful sight had taken place before his own physical eyes. But that is not all. This Psalm also touches upon those deep, sublime, and heavy sufferings which the Savior experienced when agonizing in the midst of the terrors and pangs of Divine wrath and displeasure against the whole weight of human sin – which surpasses all human thought and comprehension! Perhaps no other Psalm in the whole Book contains matter that is more weighty. Here the hearts of the Godly can truly perceive those sighs and groans which are inexpressible by a mere man – but which our Lord Jesus uttered when in the heat of the battle that He fought on our behalf against sin, Satan, death, and hell. Therefore, this Psalm ought to be most highly prized by all His redeemed people.

It would be a waste of time to continually remark on how impossible it is to picture King David as being personally represented in every detail of this

Overview of the Psalm, adapted from Charles Spurgeon:

This is, beyond all others, "The Psalm of the Cross." The entire Psalm may have been actually repeated word-by-word by our Lord when He was hanging upon the tree. It begins with, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And in the original Hebrew, it ends (according to some translations) with the words, "It is finished!" For plaintive expressions rising from unutterable depths of woe, we may say of this Psalm, "There is none like it." It is the photograph of our Lord's saddest hours, the record of His dying words, the bottle full of His last tears, and the memorial of His expiring joys. David and his afflictions may be here, in a very modified sense; but just as the star is concealed by the light of the sun, the reader who sees Jesus will probably neither see nor care to see David. Before us, we have a description of both the darkness and the glory of the cross – the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which shall follow. O for grace to draw near and see this great sight! We should read reverently – pulling off our shoes from our feet, just as Moses did at the burning bush – for if there is holy ground anywhere in the Scriptures, it is certainly in this Psalm!

From the opening verse to the 21st, we have a most pitiful cry for help; and from verses 22-31, we have a most precious foretaste of deliverance. The first division may be further subdivided at the 10th verse – with verses 1-10 being an appeal based upon covenant-relationship, and verses 11-21 being an equally earnest plea derived from the imminence of peril.

Psalm. Although he did experience much suffering and many trials, he was never in the situation here described; and therefore, as we read, we will forget David and look entirely to Him Whom David – as a prophet, and under the spirit of prophecy – is so accurately describing in this sacred composition. Let us look into the Evangelists' records of the Savior's death after reading David's prophetic descriptions of our Redeemer, and behold how the historical narratives correspond so precisely with the prophetic predictions in every point! Never, indeed, were there sorrows like His sorrows in His humiliation! The Lamb in the midst of bulls is the One Whom the Gospels describe as experiencing the buffetings of the soldiers, the reproaches of the scribes and Pharisees, the scourge and the spear, and the thorny crown. Who can read of the things described in this Psalm without being amazed by the striking similitude that they have with the details of Christ's crucifixion that are given in the Gospels? Who can read of a soul so afflicted as to be poured out like water, and all the bones of His body out of joint; and then behold Jesus being nailed to the cross and being raised upright, causing the dislocating (but not breaking) of the bones of His sacred Body – who can read all these things without crying out, "Behold the Man!" And was not Jesus parched, with His tongue clinging to His mouth, when He said, "I thirst"? In short, under every detail – in His buffetings, sufferings, crucifixion, and death – if the Psalmist had been in the judgment-hall of Pilate, and on the hill of Calvary, he could scarcely have made a more accurate portrait of the Lamb of God than he has done here. That is how precisely this prophecy was fulfilled, which was delivered a thousand years before its accomplishment! Dearest Savior! May our entire souls go forth to You in the fullest love and affection!



But just as David clearly portrays the sufferings of Christ; so also, with equal plainness, he sets forth the glories which followed them – for in the end of the Psalm (verses 22-31), he shows that Jesus would be delivered from the mouth of the lion and of the dog, and from the midst of death and sufferings. He shows that through His resurrection, which was worked by Divine power, He would be glorified; and he prophesies that His Gospel would be preached – not only among the Jewish people, but also throughout all the nations and kingdoms of the world. The rich and powerful ones of this world, and the poor also, shall be converted unto Christ! His Church shall be everlasting, and His spiritual posterity shall be infinite. As King, He shall be praised and celebrated throughout all ages; His Kingdom shall endure forever, and it shall remain invincible against all the kingdoms of the world!

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the unparalleled love which You lavished upon us as You accomplished the wonderful work of redemption for us on the cross! Amen.