

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

Why are You so far from helping Me,

And from the words of My groaning?

² O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;

And in the night season, and am not silent.

³ But You *are* holy,

Enthroned in the praises of Israel.

⁴ Our fathers trusted in You;

They trusted, and You delivered them.

⁵ They cried to You, and were delivered;

They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.

⁶ But I *am* a worm, and no man;

A reproach of men, and despised by the people.

⁷ All those who see Me ridicule Me;

They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying,*

⁸ "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;

Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

⁹ But You *are* He who took Me out of the womb;

You made Me trust *while* on My mother's breasts.

¹⁰ I was cast upon You from birth.

From My mother's womb

You *have been* My God.

¹¹ Be not far from Me,

For trouble *is* near;

For *there is* none to help.

¹² Many bulls have surrounded Me;

Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled Me.

¹³ They gape at Me *with* their mouths,

Like a raging and roaring lion.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water,

And all My bones are out of joint;

My heart is like wax;

It has melted within Me.

¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd,

And My tongue clings to My jaws;

You have brought Me to the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded Me;

The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.

They pierced My hands and My feet;

¹⁷ I can count all My bones.

They look *and* stare at Me.

¹⁸ They divide My garments among them,

And for My clothing they cast lots.

¹⁹ But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me;

O My Strength, hasten to help Me!

²⁰ Deliver Me from the sword,

My precious *life* from the power of the dog.

²¹ Save Me from the lion's mouth

And from the horns of the wild oxen!

You have answered Me.

²² I will declare Your name to My brethren;
 In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.
²³ You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
 All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
 And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
²⁴ For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
 Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
 But when He cried to Him, He heard.
²⁵ My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
 I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.
²⁶ The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
 Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.
 Let your heart live forever!
²⁷ All the ends of the world
 Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
 And all the families of the nations
 Shall worship before You.
²⁸ For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,
 And He rules over the nations.
²⁹ All the prosperous of the earth
 Shall eat and worship;
 All those who go down to the dust
 Shall bow before Him,
 Even he who cannot keep himself alive.
³⁰ A posterity shall serve Him.
 It will be recounted of the Lord to the *next* generation,
³¹ They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,
 That He has done *this*.

Introduction

Psalm 22 is described as a Messianic Psalm.

The reason for this title is that the contents in it point to the Messiah Jesus Christ.

Although the writer of the Psalm was David and he obviously went through a time of suffering, it is difficult to point to a time in his life that would describe fully his experience here in Psalm 22.

We know that David was a prophet of God.

(Acts 2: v. 29-31 in N.K.J.)

²⁹ "Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹ he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

We know also that prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God.

Therefore, it is likely that although David did go through intense suffering at some time, his actual words were **prophetic**, and this is **supported by Jesus Christ Himself.**

(Matthew 27: v. 46.)

⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Jesus quoted from Psalm 22: v.1 when He was dying on the cross.
 He clearly understood the words of David as being prophetic.

So this Psalm is prophetic, but it is also about David.

Also in this Psalm we can draw comfort in our own lives when we go through periods of suffering. It is a fact that more growth in the Christian life is attributed to suffering, rather than to the times of material blessings which God may pour upon our lives.

James, in his letter to the 12 tribes of Israel, lets us know that persevering through trials and problems makes us a more complete Christian.

(James 1: v. 2-4 in N.K.J.)

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

This Psalm neatly divides into two sections.

There is firstly David's prayer in his time of suffering – v. 1-21.

Then we have David's praise after his suffering v. 22-31.

1. David's Prayer in his time of suffering – v. 1-21.

There were three burdens that moved David to pray for God's help. These burdens can also be applied to Jesus.

a) David felt abandoned by the Lord -v. 1-5.

The opening words of this Psalm immediately take us to Jesus on the cross. Jesus quoted these words after a period of three hours of darkness.

(Matthew 27: v. 45-54 in N.K.J.)

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

⁴⁷ Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

⁴⁹ The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

⁵⁴ So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Jesus had told His disciples in **John 16: v.32** that God was with Him, however Jesus now cried out that God had forsaken Him.

This was the only time that Jesus felt forsaken by God.

There was a very good reason for this. God was involved in a mysterious transaction with Jesus. We don't actually know how this happened, but we do know why it happened and what it achieved for us today.

God was removing Himself from His Son in order for Jesus to take the **punishment for our sin.**

2 Cor. 5: v. 21 in N.L.T.

²¹ For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Jesus became a curse for us.

(Gal.3: v. 13 in N.L.T.)

¹³ But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Notice that both Jesus and David cried out "My God, My God!"

They both made it clear that they still knew and trusted in **Father God.**

Although both Jesus and David felt forsaken, they still didn't lose faith in whatever God was doing in the situation.

This is one of the **most important applications** to every Christian who suffers and feels that God has forsaken them.

When we suffer as a Christian we must never lose sight of the fact that **God is doing something in our situation.**

Sometimes we understand it when we are going through the suffering, sometimes we understand it after the suffering and we are able to praise God for it. However, sometimes we will never understand until we get to Heaven.

Many famous Hymns over the years have been written out of the lives of people who have suffered.

George Matheson wrote the classic hymn "O love that will not let me go.."

after a young lady to whom he was engaged, found that he had become totally blind, and then she refused to marry him.

Out of that rejection he wrote of a love that was **steadfast and unflinching** through all of the circumstances of life.

The first verse reads :

"O love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer fuller be.

And out of his blindness and physical darkness, he affirmed:

O light that follows all my way

I yield my flickering torch to thee;

These are the words that Mr. Matheson spoke. "Something happened that caused me the most severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering. It was the quickest bit of work I ever did in my life. I had the impression of having it dictated to me by some inward voice, rather than having worked it out for myself. **The whole work was completed in five minutes.**"

How wonderful that from such difficult suffering can come such an amazing song. 150 years later this song is still requested at Funerals and Weddings.

It is my Mother's favourite Hymn. She was 92 last Friday. (22nd March)

Testimony about Adoniram Judson

Judson was a famous pioneer missionary to Burma, now called Myanmar.

He suffered many hardships trying to reach the people of that land with the gospel.

He suffered hunger and deprivation for 7 years.

He was put into prison/jail and subject to cruel treatment for 17 months.

As a result, he carried the marks on his body made by the chains and the iron shackles that had bound him in prison/jail.

As soon as he was released from prison/jail, he asked the king for permission to enter another province to preach the gospel. The king denied his request and this is what he said, "**My people**

are not fools enough to listen to anything a missionary might say, but I FEAR they might be impressed by your scars and turn to your religion.”

Clearly even an ungodly, non-Christian recognised that perhaps the God of the Bible would honour the suffering of one of His servants.

He was right. **God will always honour the suffering of His servants.**

Finally, on this topic I must mention a Welshman.

His name is **Robert Jermain Thomas**, who was martyred on the beach in Korea in August 1866. At that time Korea was in total spiritual darkness.

Thomas gave his executioner a Bible just before he was killed.

The story goes that his executioner later became a Christian.

The amazing thing was, that 41 years later a Revival broke out in Korea on the very spot that Thomas was killed.

Today, the country of Wales is in spiritual darkness, (Wales is part of the U.K.) and God is sending Korean Christians, as missionaries to evangelise the Welsh people.

I don't know how they are getting on in Wales, but I am sure that God is using them.

In v. 1-5 David felt abandoned, but now in v. 6-11 David was despised.

b) David was despised by the people – v. 6-11.

The words that David speaks in these verses especially apply to Jesus.

Matthew 27: v. 41-43.

⁴¹ Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ⁴² “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. ⁴³ He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ”

Isaiah 53: v. 3.

³ He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

David reminded God that He had cared for him since his birth.

Why should God abandon him now?

David had learnt to trust God, and God was not going to abandon David now.

c) David was condemned by the Law. v. 12-21.

Today Bashan is called the “Golan Heights.” We went there on our trip to Israel last year. David was looking around and compared his enemies to animals, bulls in v. 21, lions in v. 13,21 and dogs in v.16,20.

David felt like a criminal being crucified and his words certainly resemble what happened to Jesus on the cross.

v. 14-15.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
And all My bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It has melted within Me.

¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And My tongue clings to My jaws;
You have brought Me to the dust of death.

These verses tell us exactly what Jesus felt like as He hung on a wooden cross, being crucified. The amazing thing is that Jesus suffered all of this for us.

The greatest thing in all the world, came out of the suffering of God's only Son Jesus Christ. That greatest thing is that we can become a child of God, forgiven and set free from eternal death. With the promise of a new body and a new place to live for all eternity. Finally, in v. 19-21, David looked up to God and prayed one more time for the strength that he needed. At the end of v.21 the words, "**You have answered Me,**" come like water gushing forth from a waterfall.

Finally, God came to David's rescue!

Most Christians who go through suffering discover that there is a limit to their suffering and God comes and delivers them, just in time.

The only suffering that is forever is the suffering that comes to those people who reject Jesus!

This is the turning point of the Psalm. David now has a time of PRAISE in v. 22-31.

2. David's Praise in his time of Victory – v. 22-31.

We now move from suffering to glory and from prayer to praise.

The connection here between David and Jesus is this.

Jesus "endured the cross" but now He enters into the "joy that was set before Him."

Hebrews 12: v. 2.

² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

and Jude v. 24-25. - N.K.J.

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present *you* faultless

Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

²⁵ To God our Savior, Who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty,

Dominion and power,

Both now and forever.

Amen.

Jesus sang a Passover hymn before He went to the cross (Matt.26:30, Mark 14:26).

And according to Hebrews 2: v. 12, the risen Christ praised God in the midst of His people after His resurrection.

a) David praises God for His glorious kingdom – v. 26-29.

The image in these verses is that of a feast. It was a familiar picture to the Jews who anticipated a "Messianic Kingdom." (Isaiah 25: v. 6-9)

When a Jewish worshipper brought a peace offering to the Lord, he retained part of it to use for a feast for himself, his family and friends. (Lev. chapter 3- 17)

This tradition became a picture of the future glorious kingdom.

v.27 says "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you."

David's prophesy included the Gentile nations in God's future plans.

It is interesting that even today, the Orthodox Jews close their religious services by quoting Zechariah 14: v. 9.

(Zechariah 14: v. 9 in the N.K.J.)

⁹ And the LORD shall be King over all the earth.

In that day it shall be—

"The LORD *is* one,"

And His name one.

b) David foresees a future work of God – v. 30-31.

David had the vision to see that God's work would continue. It wasn't just about David and his present situation; it was about future generations.

We need to understand this philosophy too. What we do in our Christian life affects future generations.

The blessings of Jesus, through His redemptive work on the cross are a blessing to all generations, therefore we need to protect the Gospel and the Bible from corruption.

As we close this section of the Psalm it is good to have some practical application here. David's suffering was not purposeless. It was that it might bless others.

When we suffer in the path of obedience and service, our suffering results in blessing to others.

2 Corinthians 1: v. 6. (N.K.J.)

⁶ Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

There are three things that we can take home today to encourage us when we suffer for obedience to God's word.

1. **Suffering results in Praise to God.** - Jesus brought us our Salvation through suffering and pain, and it was all to God's praise. All of the Christians who have deeply touched my heart have suffered in some way.

On April 7th a lady is coming from England. She will give her testimony and you will be blessed because she has had to suffer. If you know the pain of losing a loved one, you need be here at the service on this day.

They used to say in England about 30 years ago, "If you want to go and be a missionary in Japan, first of all you have got to suffer!"

Suffering gives you a dimension in your life that can't be obtained in any other way. However, as you come through it, it will result in praise to God.

2. **Suffering brings courage and joy to those who are afflicted.**

Annie Johnson Flint the great hymn writer wrote her songs in the middle of great pain and suffering. She sat up at night surrounded by pillows to try and sleep. She could not sleep because of intense pain.

But her life and her songs were a blessing and strength to other people.

3. **Suffering has a redemptive influence and can lead to the conversion of those who do not know Jesus as their Saviour.**

God honours suffering in His saints that sometimes leads to the conversion of souls. God can also use suffering in a person's life to show them their need of Jesus.

People who are always seeking fulfilment in life through the pleasures of this world can often turn to Jesus when those pleasures are taken away.

Sometimes money is taken away. Sometimes a job or career is removed from our lives. Sometimes our health fails or we have an accident.

Whatever the situation, God can use our disappointments to turn us to Jesus, who will never be a disappointment in your life.

Matthew Chapter 16: v. 24-26 in N.K.J.

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"