

Psalms of the Messiah

Psalm 22 – The Kingdom Reign to All Ends of Earth

Introduction – David found himself in many situations where, in the flesh, strong men collapse in despair. This king put his despair to good work, bringing it to the LORD. This king's despair was wrapped with faith in Jehovah. This king spent less time reading the newspapers and more time meditating on God's promises and proclamations. This king was the foreshadowing of our King of kings. And if this psalm is about the rule of our King of kings, then there are startling implications for how we are to think and live.

Exposition of the Psalm –

Faithful Despair (vv 1-2) – The cry is not simply to God, but to “My God”. According to our flesh we can think we are cast off by God, and yet still turn in faith to *our* God. True prayer is often mingled with these contrary affections. Notice also that David continues to pray to a God he thinks isn't listening. What are we to learn during our times of despair?

History Teaches (vv 3-5) – Church history is the marrow of history. Remembering what God has done, and remembering that our fathers trusted God (trusted – 3x) and obtained deliverance is of greatest importance. Trust in the midst of a trial is our greatest need.

Encouragement from a Fellow Worm (vv 6-8) – If the King of Israel felt so, if the Son of God Himself was (see Is 53:3), then you are in great company – so take heart. The mocking of men is one of the hardest trials to endure, for it tests our ability to trust in promises yet unfulfilled in the face of ridicule from ‘the establishment’. We are to pray - to tell our heavenly Father of the blasphemy around us.

Taught to Trust (9-10) – It would be good for the ‘self-made’ men in our midst to remember that were it not for the hand of God you wouldn't have been conceived, born, fed, or grown up. From before you could reason, God has been teaching you to trust Him.

Present Distress (vv 11-20) – The trouble was near, and it was strong (11-13). Left to himself, he knew he didn't stand a chance (14-18). If you know you are living for the Lord, then whenever trouble comes, you can pray for the same deliverance, but only when you come to realize how dependent upon Him you are. Then He will be ‘My Strength’.

“Save me...” (v 21). This is a difficult verse to translate, and so I am persuaded to stick with the AV – “...for Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorn.” His point is that in the worst of situations, God does hear, and God does answer.

My Praise Shall Be of You (vv 22-26) – What is this picture of promise fulfilled? We see powerful declarations of God's faithfulness and a call for all to gather together in fear and praise. Those who have been afflicted have been restored, and the poor are filled physically and spiritually.

Promise Expanded (vv 27-31) – David does not stop with His own little kingdom, but sees the whole earth turning to the Lord. The rich will also turn to Him, no longer trusting in their riches. And faithfulness will pass down from generation to generation. Because it is God's Word, it is as good as done.

Declaration, Psalm 22 from the New Testament – Some have named this ‘the Fifth Gospel’ for its clear presentation of the crucifixion of the Messiah. Certainly, we see again that the New Testament is an important ‘inspired commentary’ for understanding the Old.

Matt 27:46 – Jesus gives a cry of despair, but in that despair He quotes scripture, still saying ‘my God’, with a full understanding of the whole psalm – a psalm of hope and triumph.

John 19:24 – This quotation shows us that the psalm describes several features of the crucifixion (Psalm 22:6-8, 14, 16, 17).

Heb 2:12 – This statement of triumph begins the final section of the psalm. It's quotation in Hebrews teaches us that this section refers to the time of and following the resurrection.

Great Expectations to All Ends of Earth – The first 21 verses of the psalm portrayed the crucifixion of our Lord. But Christ was not meditating only upon the first verse. He knew He was establishing the reign described in the whole psalm. When He cried out ‘*It is finished*’, He might have had the last phrase ‘*He has done this*’ in mind. You could summarize the psalm as a description of the suffering at the cross (vv 1-21) followed immediately from the resurrection on with His glorious dominion – not in heaven – but upon the earth. This is an earth where Christ is particularly present, not in Jerusalem, but in the great assembly (v 25, cf. Heb 12:23 – the church). God has not despised the suffering of His Afflicted One (v24), and so the whole world (extensive – v27) and families of the nations (intensive – v27) are ‘turning’ in conversion. The rich and the poor alike come to faith. And this is still a time when people are having children (v30), although now generation after generation are staying in the faith.

This is a description of the work of the gospel in this age of the kingdom. This is a description of the dominion of Christ before His Second Coming. We are the time of the manifestation of this glorious reign. God's Word is sure – it shall be done (v31).

Conclusion – David was forsaken, and Christ was forsaken as He hung on the cross full of our sin. You may feel as though you are forsaken in God's hard providences today. And surely the modern evangelical church has been forsaken to its banal entertainment of market-driven, therapy-centered worship services. The church appears as impotent as ever. What are we to believe – is the end drawing near? As surely as Christ's hands and feet were pierced, He will rule the families of the nations of all the ends of the earth. Are you letting the newspapers influence your Bible reading, or is your Bible reading influencing how you see the world?