

Psalm 22

Introduction to Messianic Psalms

- Definition of messianic psalms

Psalms that find their ultimate fulfillment in the person, work, or reign of the Messiah Jesus of Nazareth.

- Characteristics of messianic psalms

1. Psalms utilized by New Testament authors in relation to the person and work of Christ
2. Psalms containing elements that do not appear to find fulfillment in a mere person or king
3. Psalms related to a/the suffering servant

Introduction to Psalm 22

- The psalm is credited to David in the superscription.
- Most interpreters classify this psalm as a lament psalm with elements of prayer and declarative praise.
- Although this psalm is messianic, it does not directly refer to a king or a anointed one.
- A few interpreters see the psalm as directly prophetic.
- The historical context of the psalm, especially if attributed to David, is uncertain.

Exposition of Psalm 22

Message: The righteous who suffer can feel abandoned by God though they ultimately know that He is faithful and so continue to appeal for His help and commit themselves to public praise when that help comes.

I. An introductory cry to God expressing feelings of abandonment and yet confidence in God even in the midst of mistreatment is given (22:1–11).

A. A cry expressing feelings of abandonment is made (vv. 1–2)

Matthew 27:45

From the sixth hour [noon] until the ninth hour [3:00 PM] darkness came over all the land. 46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" – which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Mark 15:34

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*" – which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

B. A cry expressing confidence is made (vv. 3–5)

- Confidence based on God’s sovereignty (“enthroned as Holy One”¹ v. 3a; cf. 2:4; 55:19; 80:1; 99:1; 123:1)
- Confidence based on God’s past faithfulness (vv. 3b–5)

C. A cry expressing the tension between the mistreatment that is being experienced and the inherent need to continue to trust in God (vv. 6–11)

- The sense of abandonment is not only related to God but also to man and is portrayed by the idea that the sufferer is a “worm and not a man” (v. 6)
- The sense of abandonment is not only sensed by the sufferer but his tormentors mockingly point to it as well (v. 8).

II. A complaint against the viscous attackers and the agonizing suffering is given (22:12–18).

A. The vicious attackers are described (vv. 12–13)

- Bashan was an agriculturally rich plateau situated about 1600 to 2300 feet above sea level which was well known for its wheat crops and livestock, including the fattest and largest cattle in Israel.
- The threat of bulls is followed by the even more dangerous lions (v. 13).

B. The agonizing suffering is described (vv. 14–15)

C. The vicious attackers are described again (vv. 16ab)

- From bulls to lions to dogs.
- Dogs here are not to be thought of as pets.

D. The agonizing suffering is described again (vv. 16c–18)

- The translation “They pierced my hands and my feet” has engendered considerable discussion.²
- Many take “I can count all my bones” (v. 17a) to refer to an emaciated state.

¹ This could be translated with the sense of seated (or enthroned) on the praise of Israel. See NET or Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms Volume 1*, NIV Application Commentary, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 415.

² The MT reads “like a lion, my hands and my feet.” “The psalmist may envision a lion pinning the hands and feet of its victim to the ground with its paws (a scene depicted in ancient Near Eastern art), or a lion biting the hands and feet” (NET Bible note). The translation, “they pierced my hands and feet,” is often believed to have been influenced by the crucifixion of Christ. One Dead Sea Scrolls fragment from Nahal Hever has כָּאָרוּ, which might be translated “they dug at my hands and my feet” and thus support the “pierced” view.”

John 19:24

"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it."

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said,

"They divided my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothing."

III. An appeal for God's deliverance is given (22:19–21).

- A. The general appeal to come near to help (v. 19)
- B. The specific appeal to deliver and rescue from death or danger (vv. 20–21)

Note that the order of animals in vv. 12–16 is now reversed in vv. 20–21.

IV. A vow to praise God for His deliverance and a call for others to praise Him both now and in the future is given (22:22–31).

- A. A vow to praise God for His deliverance is given (v. 22)

Hebrews 2:12

He says,

"I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."

- B. A call for others to praise God is made (vv. 23–24)
 - The call (v. 23).
 - The reason for the call (v. 24)
- C. A renewed vow to praise God is given (v. 25–26)
 - The psalmist attributes his praise to God's deliverance (v. 25).
 - The fellowship offering in Leviticus 3:1–7 and 7:11–38 may serve as the background here.
- D. A claim that nations in the future will praise God (vv. 27–31)
 - The sufferer's praise and Israel's praise will extend to the nations (vv. 27–28).
 - The future praise will transcend socio-economic lines, including the rich (v. 29)
 - The future praise will transcend generational boundaries (vv. 30–31).

Exploration of the Messianic Elements of Psalm 22

- Definition of messianic psalms

Psalms that find their ultimate fulfillment in the person, work, or reign of the Messiah Jesus of Nazareth.

- According to UBS⁴, Psalm 22 is quoted 4 times in the NT and alluded to 20 times³
- How does this psalm appear to be messianic?

Characteristics	Present in Psalm 22?
Psalms utilized by New Testament authors in relation to the person and work of Christ	
Psalms containing elements that do not appear to find fulfillment in a mere person or king	
Psalms related to a/the suffering servant	

- What can this psalm teach us about Messiah Jesus?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- What can this psalm teach us about ourselves?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

³ Quotations: Ps 22:1 in Matt 27:46 and Mark 15:34, Ps 22:18 in John 19:24, and Ps 22:22 in Heb 2:12. Allusions: Ps 22 in 1 Pet 1:11; Ps 22:1–18 in Mark 9:12 and Luke 24:27; 22:5 in Rom 5:5; 22:7 in Matt 27:29 and Mark 15:29; 22:7–8 in Luke 23:35–36 and Matt 26:24; 22:8 in Matt 27:43; 22:15 in John 19:28; 22:16 in Phil 3:2; 22:16–18 in Matt 26:24; 22:18 in Matt 27:35, Mark 15:24, and Luke 23:34; 22:20 in Phil 3:2; 22:21 in 2 Tim 4:17; 22:23 in Rev 19:5; 22:28 in Rev 11:15 and 19:6.