



Psalm 22 - Plea for Deliverance from Suffering and Hostility

To the leader: according to The Deer of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.

Introduction

This psalm has the appearance of an especially anguished individual lament, where the suffering comes from the attacks of unscrupulous people and is intensified by the mockery of those who should feel sympathy; this person, nevertheless, looks forward to vindication and joyful worship with the rest of God's people. However, in view of its prominent place in the crucifixion story, Christian readers have found in it a description of the sufferings of Jesus. Many Christians have taken it as a straight prediction of Jesus' sufferings, as if the primary function of the psalm was to foretell the work of the Saviour; others have read it as a lament in its OT context, with a 'fuller meaning' revealed by Jesus' use of it.

It is better to see the psalm as providing a lament for the innocent sufferer, and then to see how all the Gospels use this to portray Jesus as the innocent sufferer par excellence. Consider how Matthew Chapter 27 uses the psalm. Matthew 27:35 echoes Psalm 22:18 (dividing the garments by lot); Matthew 27:39 echoes Psalm 22:7 (wagging heads); Matthew 27:43 echoes Psalm 22:8 (the derisive challenge for God to rescue him); and Matthew 27:46 cites Psalm 22:1 (Jesus crying out). Matthew presents Jesus as a thoroughly good and faithful person who is brutally and unjustly executed, and mocked by those who should have supported him.

However, this portrayal of Jesus in light of Psalm 22 allows Christ's followers as well to expect some kind of vindication, as vv.22-31 describe; and they are not disappointed as they read the resurrection account. Hebrews 2:12 cites Psalm 22:22, from the vindication section, to show that Jesus shares the humanity of his followers, since he calls them 'brothers.' To make this argument, the author of Hebrews must also see Jesus as the ideal human being, which means he is using the psalm much as the Gospels do.

Psalm 22:1-2 - Why Have You Forsaken Me?

David's anguished question expresses just what a person in the circumstances described in the psalm feels: distress at receiving no relief to his pain or answer to his prayers.

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?
- 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.

Psalm 22:1-2

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? This Psalm begins abruptly, with a disturbing scene: someone who knows and trusts God is forsaken, and cries out to God in agony. This is a Psalm of David, and there were many instances in the life of David where he might write such an agonised poem. Before and after taking the throne of Israel, David lived in seasons of great danger and deprivation.

While this Psalm was certainly true of King David in his life experience, it, like many Psalms, is even truer of Jesus the Messiah than of David. Jesus deliberately chose these words to describe his agony on the Cross (Matthew 27:46).

My God, my God. This opening is powerful on at least two levels. The cry My God shows that the forsaken one truly did have a relationship with God. He was a victim of the cruelty of men, but the cry and the complaint is to God, even my God, and not to or against man. Second, the repetition of the plea shows the intensity of the agony.

Why have you forsaken me? There is a note of surprise in this cry and in the following lines. The forsaken one seems bewildered; 'Why would my God forsake me? Others may deserve such, but I cannot figure out why he would forsake me.' One may easily imagine a situation in the life of King David where he experienced this. Many times he found himself in seemingly impossible circumstances and wondered why God did not rescue him immediately: <<*Even when I cry out, "Violence!" I am not answered; I call aloud, but there is no justice*>> (Job 19:7).

Yet beyond David and his life, this agonised cry and the intentional identification of Jesus with these words are some of most intense and mysterious descriptions of what Jesus experienced on the Cross. Jesus had known great pain and suffering, both physical and emotional, during his life.

Yet he had never known separation or alienation from God his Father. At this moment he experienced what he had not yet ever experienced. There was a significant sense in which Jesus rightly felt forsaken by God the Father at this moment.

On the Cross at that moment, a holy transaction took place. God the Father seemed to regard God the Son as if he were a sinner. As the apostle Paul would later write: *<<For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God>>* (2 Corinthians 5:21). Yet Jesus not only endured the withdrawal of the Father's fellowship, but also the actual outpouring of the Father's wrath upon him as a substitute for sinful humanity. Horrible as this was, it fulfilled God's good and loving plan of redemption. Therefore Isaiah could say *<<Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain>>* (Isaiah 53:10a). At the same time, it cannot be said that the separation between the Father and the Son at the Cross was complete. Paul made this clear: *<<in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us>>* (2 Corinthians 5:19). Refer also to the concluding comment to this document.

Why have you forsaken me? There is a definite question in these words of David, and as Jesus appropriated them to himself on the Cross. What Jesus endured on the Cross was so complex, so dark, and so mysterious that it was, at that moment in his full humanity, beyond his ability to figure out, at least in an emotional sense. The answer to Jesus' question 'Why?' can be imagined: 'Because my Son, you have chosen to stand in the place of guilty sinners. You, who have never known sin, have made the infinite sacrifice to become sin and receive my just wrath upon sin and sinners. You do this because of your great love, and because of my great love.'

Why are you so far from helping me? David knew what it was like to feel the presence and the deliverance of God, and had experienced such many times before. Every prior time of help made this dramatic absence of God's help more devastating. Worse yet, there seemed to be no explanation for the lack of God's help; thus the question, 'Why?' No doubt David experienced this, but only as a shadow compared to how Jesus experienced this. Prior to the Cross Jesus lived every moment in conscious fellowship with God the Father, combined with a continual dependence upon the help of both the Father and the Spirit. At the Cross, Jesus felt helpless, at it seemed that the Father was so far from helping him: *<<Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?>>* (Psalm 10:1).

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer. A further dimension of David's agony was the fact that he made repeated, constant appeals to God and yet felt utterly unheard. His groaning was unanswered, his cry ignored. David certainly

experienced this; the greater Son of David experienced it in a far greater degree. On the Cross, Jesus may have felt abandoned by the Father and therefore felt that his groaning and cries went unanswered.

And by night, but find no rest. Sleepless nights, taunted by any problems, whether real or imaginary, leaves a person exhausted the next day, making it even more difficult to function or to face the problems of life. There are other times when David faced extreme danger when he could sleep soundly because of his faith and trust in God, such as the time when his son Absalom sought his life and he had to hide in a cave: <<*I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the Lord sustains me*>> (Psalm 3:5).

Psalm 22:3-5 - Yet the Lord Has Been Our Trust

The singer knows himself to be a member of God's own people, who is therefore the object of God's special attention. God is especially present in Israel's worship (v.3), and has rescued their ancestors when they called for help (vv.4-5).

- 3 Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
- 4 In you our ancestors trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 To you they cried, and were saved;
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

Psalm 22:3-5

Yet you are holy. The forsaken one remembered God and his greatness, even when immersed in suffering. He did not curse or blaspheme God, and he knew that his present agony did not change God's holiness or greatness, i.e. **enthroned on the praises of Israel.** There is the sense that the present crisis filled David, and the greater Son of David, with doubt and confusion, yet he would not allow doubts as to the holiness or greatness of God: <<*I will also praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praises to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel*>> (Psalm 71:22). Whatever he did not know in his present situation, there were some things that he did know and could rely on.

In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. David also remembered how God had answered and delivered him and his forefathers many times before. Strangely, this would add measures of both comfort and despair:

- **Comfort,** knowing that he cried to the same God who had delivered before and who could deliver again.

- Despair, knowing that the God who had delivered before now seemed so distant and silent: <<*Truly, you are a God who hides himself, O God of Israel, the Saviour*>> (Isaiah 45:15).

One can almost hear the agony of the forsaken one: ‘They cried to you, and were delivered; I cry to you and am ignored.’

Psalm 22:6-8 - Yet I Am Derided

In contrast to the history of vv.3-5, the singer describes the mockery he encounters from his fellow members of the people (v.6). They even deride his faith (v.8), perhaps implying that they consider him a hypocrite.

- 6 But I am a worm, and not human;
scorned by others, and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me mock at me;
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;
- 8 ‘Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver —
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!’

Psalm 22:6-8

But I am a worm, and not human. The intensity of the conflict made David feel not only ignored, but insignificant. God seems to help other men, but seems to give no help to worms. The low standing he had in his own eyes and in the eyes of others simply added to his agony. Spurgeon wrote: “This verse is a miracle in language. How could the Lord of glory be brought to such abasement as to be not only lower than the angels, but even lower than men. What a contrast between ‘I am’ and ‘I am a worm’!”

David was often the object of torment by his enemies: <<*I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbours, an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me*>> (Psalm 31:11). It was dramatically fulfilled in the greater Son of David that, on the Cross, he was scorned by others, and despised by the people. Cruel men mocked Jesus in his greatest agony as recorded in Matthew 27:39-44, as they were destined to do: <<*He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account*>> (Isaiah 53:3).

All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads. David’s misery multiplied at those who mocked and misunderstood his agony. They used it all as an excuse to call into question his relationship with God, even as the

friends of Job did with that sufferer. It was as if they said, ‘It seemed that he trusted in the Lord, but we all know that the Lord rescues those who trust in him. It seemed that he delighted in God, but that must be false because he is not delivered.’

Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver. If Jesus identified with the opening words of Psalm 22 with his great cry from the Cross (Matthew 27:46), then his enemies unwittingly identified with the scornful enemies of God and his Anointed in their mockery of Jesus on the Cross: <<***He trusts in God; let God deliver him now***>> (Matthew 27:43a).

Let him rescue the one in whom he delights! This statement reveals the frequent ignorance and cruelty of those who oppose God and his people. It claimed to see no deliverance, when it would indeed come soon. It also questioned the delight of God in the forsaken one, when God did and does truly delight in that one.

Psalm 22:9-11 - But the Lord Has Cared for Me All My Life

The singer again recalls the past, as in vv.3-5, but this time it is more personal. In effect he tells God, ‘Not only did you show yourself faithful to our ancestors in Israel, you have been faithful to me from the very beginning of my existence.’ In this light he can pray confidently <<***Do not be far from me***>> (v.11).

- 9 Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
you kept me safe on my mother’s breast.
- 10 On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.
- 11 Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.

Psalm 22:9-11

Yet it was you who took me from the womb. David understood, both for himself and, prophetically speaking, for the yet-to-come Messiah from his perspective, that in the depth of agony and the sense of abandonment, one could still appeal to God in remembrance of better times. The forsaken one did not say, ‘Since I feel abandoned by God, I will abandon him.’ He remained steadfast through the dark night of the soul, and still made appeal to the God who cared for him since birth: <<***Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother’s womb. My praise is continually of you***>> (Psalm 71:6).

You kept me safe is an acknowledgement that God looks out and cares for those who turn to him in trouble and indeed at all times: <<*The Lord is good, a stronghold on a day of trouble; he protects those who take refuge in him*>> (Nahum 1:7).

From the womb, on my mother's breast, from my birth, you have been my God. The forsaken one argued on good, logical grounds. He reminded God of the care given since his very earliest days. That prior grace might seem to be wasted if the sufferer was not rescued in his present crisis.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. The plea for help is again eloquently and persuasively stated, for there was no one else who could help: <<*For the Lord saw that the distress of Israel was very bitter; there was no one left, bond or free, and no one to help Israel*>> (2 Kings 14:26). God seems far away; but trouble is near, and there is none to help, so you must help me, God!

Psalm 22:12-18 - I Am Surrounded by Enemies

The song returns to describing the situation: enemies who are bent on evil like bulls, a lion, and dogs leave the singer without energy or strength. Peter borrows the image of a 'roaring lion' for the devil, the evil enemy behind all evil enemies of the faithful: <<*Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour*>> (1 Peter 5:8).

- 12 Many bulls encircle me,
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
13 they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

Psalm 22:12-13

Many bulls encircle me. The forsaken one again describes his crisis. He describes the people tormenting him as strong bulls of Bashan, large animals proverbial for their strength: <<*You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth – of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan*>> (Ezekiel 39:18). They surround him and threaten him.

- 14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;

15 my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

Psalm 22:14-15

I am poured out like water. The forsaken one felt completely empty. He perceived no resource in himself able to meet the crisis at hand. Whatever strength or resistance he had was poured out like water upon the ground.

All my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast. This described the physical extremity of David at the time, but it also is an amazingly specific prophecy of the future suffering of the Son of David on the Cross. The deliberately awkward and strained position of the crucified man meant that one on the Cross could say my bones are out of joint. David did not know the practice of crucifixion in his day, but he described the physical agony of it with the accuracy of a prophet of the Lord. There is also some reason to believe, based mainly on: <<*Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out*>> (John 19:34), that on the Cross Jesus suffered from a ruptured heart, making the words my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast also amazingly specific.

My tongue sticks to my jaws. This was something common among those who were without water, as recorded during the siege of Jerusalem: <<*The tongue of the infant sticks to the roof of its mouth for thirst; the children beg for food, but no one gives them anything*>> (Lamentations 4:4). As was normal for anyone under the agony of crucifixion, Jesus suffered great thirst on the Cross: <<*After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty'*>> (John 19:28).

You lay me in the dust of death. David used this moving poetic phrase to describe the extent of his misery. He probably had in mind the curse God pronounced upon Adam after his sin: <<*you are dust, and to dust you shall return*>> (Genesis 3:19b). Since all humanity was contained in Adam, this curse extends to the entire human race, and David felt himself close to the dust of death. Obviously, David did not die in the crisis described by this Psalm; he lived to write it and others. He came to the edge of mortality when God brought him to the dust of death: <<*For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, died, was laid beside his ancestors, and experienced corruption*>> (Acts 13:36). Yet Jesus, the Son of David, did not merely come to the edge of death; he was plunged into the dust of death and into all of the cursedness implied by that. Jesus bore the sting of Adam's curse for all mankind: <<*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone*

who hangs on a tree'>> (Galatians 3:13), so that they would not have to bear it for themselves.

- 16 For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shrivelled;
- 17 I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me;
- 18 they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

Psalm 22:16-18

For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. David's crisis would be bad enough even if surrounded by sympathetic friends; his misery was multiplied because there were violent and wicked men on every side, just as Paul has warned others: <<*Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh!*>> (Philippians 3:2). In his death, the Son of David had few sympathisers. Haters, scoffers, and mockers surrounded Jesus on the Cross and sought to make his suffering worse (Matthew 27:39-44 and Mark 15:29-32).

My hands and feet have shrivelled. Although the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain, most other English translations render this clause similar to the NIV: <<*they pierce my hands and my feet*>>. The word is translated shrivelled here is given as 'pierced' in other Scriptures: <<*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago! Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?*>> (Isaiah 51:9), <<*But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed*>> (Isaiah 53:5 NLT), <<*And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that, when they look on the one whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn*>> (Zechariah 12:10). Perhaps here David referred to wounds he received in struggling against these determined enemies; perhaps he wrote purely prophetically. Whichever it was, hundreds of years before the Romans adopted the Persian practice of crucifixion, the prophet David described the wounds of crucifixion that the Christ would bear.

I can count all my bones, that is, 'my flesh is so wasted away that my bones poke through my skin.' David examined his wounds and understood that he had no broken bones. The Son of David also, despite his great suffering on the Cross,

suffered no broken bones. The apostle carefully noted this in John 19:31-37. It fulfilled this prophecy, as well as: <<**he protects all his bones; not one of them will be broken**>> (Psalm 34:20 NIV), and the requirements for the Passover lamb as described in Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12. Jesus became the ultimate Paschal Lamb of sacrifice: <<**Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed**>> (1 Corinthians 5:7).

They stare, that is, the enemies. In his crisis, David was the focus of unwanted attention. His tormentors did not allow him the dignity of suffering in private, but exposed all things to their stare. The Son of David also found no place to hide from the unwanted stares of cruel, mocking men at the Cross.

On the Cross Jesus was the focus not only of mocking and humiliation (Matthew 27:39-44 and Mark 15:29-32), but also of simple astonishment, as when the centurion said: <<**Surely he was the Son of God!**>> (Matthew 27:54b). In his account Luke also noted: <<**And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts**>> (Luke 23:48).

They divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots. David was so humbled before his adversaries, so powerless against them, that they took even his clothing and used it for themselves. As with other aspects of Psalm 22, this was fulfilled even more literally in the experience of Jesus than in the life of David. As was the custom of that time, Jesus was probably stripped naked for the Cross, and soldiers gambled. i.e. cast lots, for his clothing at the very foot of the Cross. Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24 and John 19:23-24 quote this line of Psalm 22 as being fulfilled.

Psalm 22:19-21 - Save Me as You Have Done Before!

Picking up from v.11 the singer lays out his request. In recalling God's past answers to his prayers, he asks for relief in his present distress. Note how dog, lion, and wild oxen reverse the order of the threats in vv.12-18.

- 19 But you, O Lord, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!
- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!
- 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.

Psalm 22:19-21

But you, O Lord, do not be far away! The request of v.11 is here repeated. David seemed to believe that he could endure anything if he enjoyed the conscious presence of God. His plea is not focused on the change of his situation, but on the presence of God in the crisis.

O my help, come quickly to my aid! Picturing his adversaries as vicious animals, i.e. the power of the dog, the mouth of the lion, and the horns of the wild oxen, David makes an earnest plea for the help and deliverance the presence of God brings. These lines reflect not only the great danger and misery of both David and the Messiah, but especially their trust in the Lord God as their deliverer. He and he alone is their hope.

Deliver my soul from the sword. The wrath of God was the sword, which took vengeance on all men in their representative; it was the flaming sword, which kept people out of paradise: <<*He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life*>> (Genesis 3:24).

Psalm 22:22-31 - Praise Will Result: From Me, From Israel, From All Nations

The song closes with confidence that when God answers the prayer, the singer will be vindicated and will again be able to join with God's people in worship. The song helps readers to see the outcome of this personal trial in its relation to the whole of God's people: the vindicated singer looks forward to telling forth God's praise among the assembled congregation (v.22 and v.25), and thus all the offspring of Israel will take encouragement and join in giving thanks (vv.23-24 and v.26). Indeed, the praising company will extend to the whole world, i.e. <<*all the families of the nations*>> (v.27), echoing Genesis 12:3 and 22:18; that is, the singer's personal story of trouble and vindication is part of the larger story of God's redemptive work in the world.

- 22 I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
- 23 You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

Psalm 22:22-23

I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters. Having been delivered, if not from the crisis itself, certainly from the sense of being forsaken in the crisis, now the promise is made to glorify and praise the God of deliverance. Others needed to

know of God's greatness in such extremity. Hebrews 2:12 quotes the second half of Psalm 22, specifically, v.22, proving clearly that the entire Psalm points to Jesus, not just the agony of the first half. On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prayed a glorious prayer, and one line of that prayer reads: <<***I made your name known to them, and I will make it known***>> (John 17:26). Those words, prayed in the shadow of the Cross, can be understood as a deliberate desire to fulfil this word in Psalm 22, **I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters**. Jesus understood that his obedient work on the Cross would bring great glory to his God and Father, declaring the greatness of his name. It may be said that this section of Psalm 22 reflects the primary reason Jesus went to the Cross: to glorify and obey his God and Father.

You who fear the Lord, praise him! The command is given to praise, to glorify, and to fear the Lord. The God of such great deliverance deserves all three things from all humanity: <<***Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you***>> (Isaiah 25:3).

Jesus prophetically does two great things in the aftermath of his great work on the Cross:

- Jesus declares God's name, i.e. **I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters**.
- Jesus leads the redeemed in praise, that is, **in the midst of the congregation I will praise you**.

24 For he did not despise or abhor
the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me,
but heard when I cried to him.

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

Psalm 22:24-25

For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted. David's triumphant words, again, perfectly fulfilled in his greater son Jesus, reflect a profound spiritual wisdom and depth. The God who answers the forsaken one still allowed the affliction of the afflicted; yet he has not despised or abhorred it. God has used and would use that affliction to good and great purpose. Some of God's people automatically associate all affliction with the disfavour of God. It is true that sometimes affliction may come as punishment for the unbeliever, or as discipline for the believer. Yet sometimes affliction is something God does not despise, and uses to good effect in the lives of his people. It is in this sense that

the words of Isaiah 53:10 were fulfilled: <<***Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain***>>. The affliction was not despised.

He did not hide his face from me. Certainly David, and indeed the greater Son of David, felt that the Father hid his face, as seen by: <<***why have you forsaken me?***>>, <<***Why are you so far from helping me?***>>, <<***You do not answer***>> in vv.1-2. Yet now, after God's answer has come, it is clear that he never did leave the afflicted, even in the midst of the affliction.

But heard when I cried to him. The answer seemed an intolerably long time in coming, but it came. David and the Son of David could both say, 'He heard my cry' as Jesus had always realised: <<***And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me'***>> (John 11:41b-42)

My praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. There are two aspects to a right response to such a wonderful deliverance. The first is public praise, the second is keeping promises.

- 26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
May your hearts live for ever!
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord;
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.

Psalm 22:26-27

The poor shall eat and be satisfied. If God shows such faithfulness to the afflicted, there is hope for the poor. The good God will take care of the poor who trust him and seek him. They will praise the Lord also. The faithfulness of God to the forsaken one becomes a foundation for his faithfulness to others in need, such as the poor. His satisfaction in the work of the Son of David means grace and blessing and joy for others: (May your hearts live for ever!)

Those who seek him shall praise the Lord. There is a promise in this, that those who seek him will in fact find the Lord, and thus they will praise him and they will be rewarded for doing so: <<***If you will seek God and make supplication to the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore to you your rightful place***>> (Job 8:5-6).

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord. The faithfulness of God to the forsaken one even becomes the basis for bringing all the ends of the world to the Lord. Not only is it true that the Lord has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted (v.24), but he uses that affliction to reach all the ends of the world for the knowledge of God, repentance unto him, and his worship (all the families of the nations shall worship before him).

As Hebrews 12:2b says of Jesus: <<*who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame*>>. Psalm 22 powerfully displays that joy, both in his obedience to and the glorifying of his God and Father, and the joy of rescuing and loving those who would trust and believe in him; that there would be brothers and sister to whom he would declare the name of God to (v.22).

- 28 For dominion belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.
- 29 To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
and I shall live for him.
- 30 Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord,
- 31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying that he has done it.

Psalm 22:28-31

For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations. The experience of affliction and crisis did not make the formerly forsaken one lose any sense of confidence in God's power and authority. The Lord's reign over the nations makes sense of both his prior crisis and the call to all nations to worship before the Lord (v.27).

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust. This is a clear reference to the mortality of mankind and therefore it encompasses the notion that all people shall bow down before the Lord: <<*Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*>> (Philippians 2:9-11).

Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. The faithfulness of God to the formerly forsaken one is told throughout the generations, bringing great glory to the Lord. They will all look at what has been accomplished in and through the formerly forsaken one and hear, 'That he has done this.' This results in:

- Service through the generations (posterity will serve him).
- God's fame through the generations (future generations will be told about the Lord).
- The spread of the message of God's righteousness through the generations (proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn).

Psalm 22 starts with a cry of despair and yet moves through to cries of praise and acknowledgement that God is the one who will save humankind. When Jesus cried out: <<*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*>> (Mark 15:34b), the Jews among the observers would have immediately recognised Psalm 22 and how it goes from despair to ultimate triumph. The ultimate triumph for humankind came through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the Cross, followed by his miraculous resurrection from death. Jesus knew all along that he would never really be forsaken by his Father.