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The Cross of Christ in a Psalm of David; Psalm 22

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Introduction - Psalm 22 is clearly and pointedly prophetic in its foretelling of the sufferings that Christ. Both Jesus' followers and opposers missed the clarity of the OT on this very point - that the Messiah would endure great suffering on behalf of His people. His disciples were distraught immediately after His death because they were not anticipating it. Peter at one time rebuked Jesus for even speaking of suffering. Those who wanted to kill Jesus, the ones regarded as knowing Scripture, never entertained the thought that Messiah would suffer. And yet it was prophetically written throughout the entire OT. In Genesis 3:15 the Lord declared to the serpent that he would bruise the head of the Coming Seed. Isaiah 53 is the most theological passage on the sufferings of the Coming One. v5 reads, "He was wounded for our transgressions." And here in Psalm 22, we are not only presented with the devastating sufferings of Christ on the cross but we are also given the glories that would be sure to follow His sufferings. In every major portion of the OT God communicated to His people that the Messiah would suffer enormous pain, mockery, and rejection, and those sufferings would defeat the Enemy, save His people, and result in the exaltation of the Son.

Let's note how precise Psalm 22 is when portraying the cross.

1. Psalm 22:1 was fulfilled in Matt 27:46 when Jesus cried out from the cross in the agony of bearing our sin, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" At that moment Jesus was taking the sin of the world upon His shoulders, bearing our sin and paying for our sin, experiencing firsthand the separation that sin creates. The one thing that grieved the Son more than any other suffering, the one thing that cut the deepest, was a sense of some kind of separation from the Father. There was no better way to describe His state of agony and piercing pain than to quote Psalm 22.
2. The mockery of Psalm 22:8 was fulfilled in Matt 27:43 when the religious leaders taunted, "He trusts in God; let God deliver Him now, if He desires Him. For He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"
3. Psalm 22:12 speaks of the strong bulls of Bashan. In Numbers and Deut we read of Israel entering into the territory of Bashan, whose king was Og. They defeated Og. After the conquest under Joshua, the entire

region became known as Gilead, and Bashan disappears from history. King Og and the residents of Bashan were dwelling in the Promised Land and did not belong there. They were to be removed. They were not followers of God, were not among those who would join with the people of Israel. So I take this as a reference to the Roman gov't as represented by Pilate and the roman soldiers who performed the actual crucifixion. In Matt 27:28-29, they stripped Jesus of His clothes, put a scarlet robe on Him, pressed a crown of thorns upon His head, kneeled before Him, and mocked Him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

4. Psalm 22:15 pictures the parched mouth and raging thirst of Christ as He was bleeding out on the cross. John 19:28 reads, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), 'I thirst.'"
5. Psalm 22:16 - they have pierced my hands and feet - the clearest statement of exactly how Christ would suffer by crucifixion was fulfilled in Matt 27:35.
6. Psalm 22:18 - they divide My garments and cast lots for My clothing was fulfilled in Matt 27:35.

There is little wonder why in Luke 24 Jesus tells the disciples that the Psalms are all about Him.

David knew this when he penned this tragically glorious psalm. There is a clear divine point between v21 and v22. From v1-v21 David is speaking as the Messiah in His sufferings and in vv22-31, David is speaking to the Messiah about His exaltation that follows His sufferings. Crown of thorns, vv1-21 - crown of glory, vv22-31. Sufferings, vv1-21 - Exaltation, vv22-31.

I. The Coming One will Suffer

A) In order to secure the salvation of His people, bear the full just wrath of the Father, in order to pay our debt of sin, Christ would endure tremendous suffering at every level of His humanity.

B) He suffered emotionally, enduring enormous shame and humiliation. He was ridiculed. He was jeered and railed. He was scorned. He was mocked. He was betrayed. He was denied. He was falsely accused. His words were twisted and then used against Him. He was laughed at. Degrading gestures were heaped upon Him. He was despised and rejected.

C) He suffered public scorn. Roman authorities belittled him. Jewish religious leaders condemned Him as a blasphemer of God. The crowds joined in the fury of a mob hungry for blood. His friends left Him.

D) He suffered horrible physical pain. He was beaten, lashed, crucified - hung on a tree, which symbolized the curse - exposed - tortured for all to see - thirsty - gasping - hanging.

E) But above all, He endured a profound spiritual agony beyond our comprehension. There are mysteries surrounding the sufferings of Christ, for which we can never fathom. There is a darkness not just of the day when Christ was crucified, but of the spiritual agonies that He endured when He was crucified. Things we know that happened, but so mysterious we don't know how - and we can't possibly fathom how deep they run.

(1) He bore the weight of our sin - every single one.

(2) He made full payment for those sins - every single one.

(3) Somehow, the Son of God, 2nd Person of the Trinity, eternally co-existing with the Father, in some way, somehow in His humanity, felt the crush and the emptiness and the darkness of separation from the Father. And it broke His heart. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!" was His cry. Psalm 22:14 says, "My heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast."

F) Now I want to make one other observation and a couple points of application before we move on.

1. No matter how devastating the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual anguish of Christ on the cross, He never stopped clinging to the faithfulness of the Father. Look at the "yets" – v3,9,19.

a. Oh, dear believer, know matter how devastating the circumstances of your life become, never stop trusting in the faithfulness of God to you in Christ, pray-pray-pray - God will answer! God will deliver! Yes - Psalm 22 open with "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" but that's not where it ends! It ends with "they shall come and proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn, that He has done it." Done what? answered! delivered! Saved!

b. Did you know that you are in Psalm 22 just as Christ is? We are the ones turning to Him. We are the ones worshipping Him, serving Him, telling of His righteousness, proclaiming that He has done it!

c. No matter how deep your valley, Christ's was deeper. No matter how devastating your circumstances, Christ's was far more. And God's faithfulness to Christ in His darkest hour is your guarantee of God's faithfulness to you in yours! Keep believing. Keep trusting. Keep clinging. You will one day, either in this life or the next, proclaim "He has done it!"

2. What Christ endured on the cross, all of the profound suffering, He did in our place. If it is true, and it is, that Jesus was paying for my sin on the cross, then every ounce of this suffering belonged to me, but He drank the cup of God's wrath that I may taste of His salvation.

-Jesus paid it all - All to Him I owe - Sin had left a crimson stain - He washed it white as snow.

3. What Christ endured on the cross, He did so for our joy - that's v26, "The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever!"

II. His Sufferings will Secure His Exaltation

A) Christ would not fail in all that He meant to accomplish on the cross, and the Father would make sure that He is richly rewarded for His willing sacrifice.

B) His exaltation includes the eternal praises of His people (read v23), His exaltation includes that salvation extends to the ends of the earth (read v27), His exaltation includes His universal sovereign reign (v28), His exaltation includes the due worship of everyone, including His enemies (v29), His exaltation includes the unending proclamation of His righteousness from generation to generation for evermore (vv30-31).

C) His Sufferings will Secure, will Produce, will result in, will be met with glorious, eternal, global praise - He is exalted and will be seen and known and praised as exalted far above all rule and power and authority from now until forever!

D)Philippians 2:5-11.

Conclusion - Psalms 21-22-23

The end of Psalm 21 says that the enemies of Christ "will not succeed." The beginning of Psalm 23 says that those who are in Christ "shall not want." Unbelievers will not succeed in dethroning Christ. Believers will not want because they have Christ. And in the middle stands Psalm 22, the cross of Christ, where Christ defeated the Enemy and saved His people.

Oh my friend, if you are without Christ, why not run to Him now? Join with the redeemed and proclaim throughout the ages "that He has done it!"