

## LESSON 7

October 13, 2024

### Unit II: Songs of the Old Testament

## We're in a Tight Spot

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 107:23-32

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Psalm 22; Daniel 3

PRINT PASSAGE: Psalm 22:1-11

#### KEY VERSE

**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?** (Psalm 22:1, KJV)

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**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?** (Psalm 22:1, NIV)

#### Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Draw parallels between the psalmist's experience and what is happening in the world today.
- Rely on the Lord's help in times of struggle.
- Identify an area of struggle and offer a prayer for God's help or rescue.

#### \*Key Terms

**Confounded (verse 5)**—Hebrew: *chapher* (*khaw-fare'*): to be abashed, disgraced, disgraceful, embarrassed, humiliated; "put to shame" (NIV).

**Forsaken (verse 1)**—Hebrew: *azab* (*aw-zab'*): left; neglected; abandoned; withdrawn from; deserted.

**Inhabitest (verse 3)**—Hebrew: *yashab* (*yaw-shab'*): to sit, remain, dwell; dwelling permanently in a place instead of transiently lodging; "enthroned" (NIV).

**Reproach (verse 6)**—Hebrew: *cherpab* (*kher-paw'*): criticism, taunting, resting upon the condition of shame; disgrace; "scorned" (NIV).

\*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

#### Introduction

Psalm 22 is one of the most beautifully confounding passages in the canon of Scripture. Those who seek to study the Messianic texts of biblical prophecy must understand dual fulfillment of prophecy. The beauty and authority of Old Testament prophetic texts are rooted in the God-given power



### The Biblical Context

Christians often interpret Psalm 22 as referring to Christ's death. It is frequently quoted in the Passion Narratives of the New Testament. However, it is essential to remember that this song was initially meant to serve as a lament for the people of God during the Old Testament period. The psalm is attributed to David as its author; there is no reason to doubt this tradition. The psalm is essentially a prayer by an individual who feels abandoned by God in the midst of a vicious attack by his enemies. Although several occasions in David's life could have produced such a composition, the psalm contains no specific historical references because it was not written to create a historical record but for use by later worshippers in similar situations. The psalm begins with a question to God, asking why He had been absent from the psalmist even though Israel praised Him and He had rescued His ancestors in the past. The psalmist's enemies had demeaned him because God was absent. He felt sub-human and complained about the harmful actions of his enemies, referring to them using animal analogies such as bulls, lions, and dogs. He then noted his fearful response. The psalmist made one final appeal for help before concluding his prayer with praise.

to speak concurrently (at the same time) to both the present and the future contexts, with pinpoint accuracy. One of the most authenticating proofs of the Bible's validity is the abundance of prophecies—like Psalm 22—that find fulfillment in the life and person of the Lord Jesus Christ. An estimated 25 to 33 percent of the Bible is prophetic in nature. No other book in the world contains as many fulfilled prophecies as the Bible. Fulfilled prophecy gives credibility to the Gospel message as the inspired Word of God that produces hope in the life of the believer. Psalm 22 is especially important because it shows God's control over history and proves that whatever God's Word declares does come to pass. Given the universality of the psalm's theme—human suffering—those who read and hear it can take it at “face value,” as the simple expression of one psalmist's personal, painful experience, and cry for deliverance from God. This is most likely the understanding of the earliest commentators of Hebrew Scriptures. The Christian church's traditional explanation is that Psalm 22 is divinely inspired to prophetically describe the suffering of Jesus on the Cross, one thousand years into the future.

### ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

#### Cry of the Forsaken (*Psalm 22:1-5*)

#### KJV

**MY GOD, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?**

**2 O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.**

**3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.**

**4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.**

**5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.**

#### NIV

**MY GOD, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?**

**2 My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.**

**3 Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises.**

**4 In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them.**

**5 To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.**

The psalm opens with a question that is well-known due to Jesus' cry of abandonment from the cross (see Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). In its original Old Testament context, this cry was uttered by the psalmist and later adopted by worshippers who felt abandoned by God in the midst of their pain (**verse 1**). The one praying had not yet given up on God, as he addressed his challenge to God Himself, but had not yet experienced any concrete response to his cries for help in his struggle. As a result, God seemed far from saving him. Although the psalmist did not divulge the exact nature of his problem, later worshippers can use this prayer as their own model when they find themselves in similar, albeit not necessarily identical, situations. **Verse 2** informs us that God had not yet responded to the prayer for help, even though the psalmist had constantly asked for it (day and night). David faced a difficult situation and cried out to God for help. Though he knew that God was compassionate and just, he wondered why He wasn't answering. Israel was God's chosen nation, the only one with His divine law and the ability to worship Him acceptably (**verse 3**). Past battles showed God's faithfulness to His covenant promises and faithfulness to the ancestors, yet now He seemed distant (**verses 4-5**). Despite these reasons for intervention, God remained silent. Through David's example, we learn that even in trying times, we can turn to God and trust in His steadfast love despite our doubts and fears.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How does David's cry of feeling forsaken resonate with your own experiences of spiritual struggle or feeling distant from God?

### Trust in the Lord (*Psalms 22:6-11*)

#### KJV

6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

8 He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

9 But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.

10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.

11 Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

#### NIV

6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.

8 "He trusts in the Lord," they say, "let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

9 Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast.

10 From birth I was cast on you; from my mother's womb you have been my God.

11 Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

The poet could not find solace in any comforting story due to the restlessness caused by his agony and grief (**verses 6-8**). His thoughts were constantly wandering and searching for the right way—sometimes directed toward God, sometimes toward himself, and sometimes toward his enemies. The desperation and struggles of the psalmist are expressed in a way that profoundly affects us with its honesty. He saw himself as a worm trampled underfoot and was ashamed in the eyes of his enemies due to God’s action. His physical sufferings were not as painful as the scorn of his enemies, which affected his relationship with God and confirmed his feeling that God had abandoned him. As a result, he felt hopeless, and the strain on his faith was the source of his suffering. The worshipper derived strength from his faith, even under attack (**verses 9-11**). He reflected that God had been with him since the beginning, guiding his every move. He realized that he depended entirely on God and could trust only Him. Despite facing ridicule from his opponents, he found solace in the teachings on creation, which reminded him that his life was in God’s hands. This realization gave him a sense of security and confidence, enabling him to pray to God even though he could only do so through traditional means. His faith grew stronger as he prayed, and he felt a stronger connection to God. He relied solely on God to provide for him in dire need.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Despite feeling forsaken, David continued to cry out to God. How can we find hope in seemingly hopeless situations?

## A Closing Thought

Even in our deepest pain, God is with us. Through Jesus, He offers us hope, comfort, and redemption. Let us trust that our trials serve a greater purpose in His eternal plan and cling to Him with all our hearts.

## Your Life

In our moments of brokenness, authentic worship allows us to cry out to God and express our pain and vulnerability. It is in these moments that we follow Jesus’ example and find strength in Him.

## Your World!

Psalm 22:1-11 reminds us that true worship requires humility, reverence, and a sincere response to God. As we embody these principles, we become beacons of hope, inspiring others to seek God’s mercy and restoration.

## Closing Prayer

Lord, hear our prayer. May our lives reflect eternal love and gratitude for our precious Savior, Jesus Christ. May we live for Him, trusting in His unfailing love. It is in His name that we pray. Amen.

