

Psalm 22: The "Holy Of Holies" Of the Psalter

Daniel Kelm

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Psalm 22 is referred to as "The Holy of Holies of the Psalter" and "The Psalm of the Cross." And it truly deserves these titles, despite the attempts of modern and/or unbelieving scholarship to deny its prophetic value. There are basically three views held on this Psalm: 1) That it: is a Psalm referencing either a) the struggles of David personally; b) the struggles of David as the anointed king of Israel; c) the struggles of the nation, Israel; or d) the struggles of some other man, perhaps Jeremiah; 2) That it is a Psalm of typical prophecy depicting one of the four above and the sufferings of Christ: and 3) That it is a Psalm which refers to Christ directly and no other.

Typical of the first view is this statement: by Reverend Cohen, a Jewish theologian:

A Christological intention has long been read into this Psalm, but modern Christian exegetes are agreed that it describes a situation then existing and does not anticipate an event in the future. 'It would not be sound or safe interpretation to rest much weight upon certain coincidences, touching and impressive as these are to the mind of the Christian believer....' The most acceptable opinion appears to be that the Psalmist: expresses his feelings as a member of the community of Israel at a time of suffering. (p. 61)

Calvin represents the second, popular view, when he says:

David complains in this psalm, that he is reduced to such circumstances of distress that he is like a man in despair.... At the same time, he sets before us, in his own person, a type of Christ, who he knew by the Spirit of prophecy to be abased in marvellous and unusual ways previous to his exaltation by the Father. (p. 356)

But Rudolph Thiel, speaking about Luther, says:

The prophetic meaning of the Psalms was for Luther, 'The foundation of all else, the light and authority, source and beginning.' For Christ alone is the meaning, content and goal of all Scripture - Christ, who sets his gospel over against the law of Moses, Christ, 'The Jacob's ladder to the knowledge of God.' (Gawrisch, p. 36)

So also Stoeckhardt says when he comments: "Only in the mouth of Christ do the words of this Psalm make good sense (p. 64)." He adds the weight of history:

That the Person of Christ, the Messiah Himself, is here foretold and presented in the Speaker was the consensus of the ancient Church and Synagogue. The New Testament Church has also ever understood this Psalm this way. The modern interpreters who do not see in the Speaker, the Messiah, obviously have a dense curtain before their eyes. (pp. 64-65)

It is interesting to observe that often the arguments against the direct prophecy of this Psalm can be seen for their lack of understanding the full revelation of God, and thus further support direct prophecy. For example, after stating that Catholic theologians support a literal, direct prophecy interpretation of Psalm 22, Kissane argues:

It is also to be noted that the conversion of the nations is not set down as the consequence of the sufferings of the psalmist, but rather of the manifestation of God's justice in the deliverance of the sufferer and his restoration to happiness. (p. 95)

Kissane misses the inseparable link between Christ's suffering and the demonstration of God's justice in saving us. God's justice was satisfied in the death of Christ, and our deliverance, as brothers of Jesus and recipients of His salvation work for us, is the very theme of Psalm 22.

Perhaps simply looking at the Psalm itself is the best refutation of theories other than direct prophecy. The use of verse 2 verbatim by Christ from the cross, the casting of lots for His garment, the parching thirst, the agony of the stretched bones, the digging into hands and feet, the cruel gazings on His sufferings, the mocking of His enemies, the salvation praise which extends to all nations are not equaled in the experience of David or any other mortal man. Read the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion and there can be no doubt. There will be doubt, of course, and this is why the point is often argued, if the Scriptures are not inspired throughout. Then the evangelists and the writer to the Hebrews (2:12) could have been drawing from the Old Testament source to heighten the story.

But this is not a problem for us. God has clearly spelled out and led us to believe that His Word is inspired, and that it was no "problem" for David or any other inspired Old Testament writer to fix his literary attention on times far beyond his own, extending into eternity. It becomes the privilege and responsibility of the New Testament Christian to continue searching the Scriptures, digging out every gem and treasure God has hidden there for us, following the threads which are gloriously woven together in Christ. Joachim Becker puts Psalm 22 into the tapestry of Old Testament Messianic prophecy:

With the prophecy of Nathan (2 Samuel 7) a new landmark is set up: the messiah will be a descendant of David within the tribe of Judah. From now on, expectation of the messiah is linked with the fate of the house of David. Explicit evidence, to be sure, does not appear until two centuries later in Isaiah (7:14; 8:23-9:6 [Eng. 9:1-7]; 11:1-10), Micah 5:1-5 [2-6], Amos (9:11), and Hosea (3:5). A kind of substitute for the missing evidence appears in the messianic psalms (2, 45, 72, 89, 110, 132), which are all considered preexilic. At the end of the monarchy and the beginning of the Exile, passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel furnish the welcome proof that we are dealing with a continuously flowing stream of expectation, surfacing occasionally, which hastens onward to its goal of fulfillment.

But can we also read this Psalm as the prayer and experience of suffering humans? Can we apply this Scripture to ourselves, our experiences? We must! Scripture is not written only to give us an historical accounting: it is the unique Book which finds constant and perfect application to our lives. Yes, we can and must apply the lessons of this Psalm to ourselves, but not without Christ. It is the suffering which He did, directly prophesied here, which frees us to reject sin and strive to be imitators of Him. In this sense, and this sense only, can David be a participant in the verses of the Psalm, just as all of us are. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes:

Jesus himself prayed the beginning of Psalm 22 on the cross and so clearly made it his prayer. Hebrews 2:12 places verse 22 in the mouth of Christ. Verse 8 and verse 18 are direct predictions of the crucifixion of Jesus. David himself may have once prayed this Psalm in his own song. If so, he did this as the king, anointed by God and therefore persecuted by men, from whom Jesus Christ would descend. He did it as the one who bore Christ in himself. But Christ himself used this prayer and for the first time gave it its full meaning. We can thus pray this Psalm only in the fellowship of Jesus Christ, as those who have participated in the suffering of Christ. We pray this Psalm, not on the basis of our fortuitous personal suffering, but on the basis of the suffering of Christ which has also come upon us. But we always hear Jesus Christ pray with us, and through him that Old Testament king; and repeating this prayer without being able to experience it or consider it in its deepest sense, we nevertheless walk with the praying Christ before the throne of God.

Let's then proceed to the Holy of Holies Psalm, Psalm 22, reverently because the ground we stand on is Golgotha, the Person we encounter is our Savior-God. Psalm 22 takes us to the heart of one of the greatest, most glorious mysteries: the interaction of the divine and human nature of Christ on the day of our salvation.

TRANSLATION:

¹: לְמִנְצַחַת עַל־אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:

FOR THE DIRECTOR, TO "DOE OF THE DAWN," A MELODY OF DAVID

צח piel ptcp.. could be translated "for musical presentation" (Luther)

"Doe of the Dawn" - a melody? The suggestion of a hind hunted to death in the early morning? cf. commentary

²: אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי לָמָּה עָזַבְתָּנִי רְחוֹק מִיִּשׁוּעָתִי דְבַרֵּי שְׁאֲגָתִי:

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME, DISTANT FROM MY DELIVERANCE AND THE WORDS OF MY ROARING?

שְׁאֲגָה noun, normally used of lions, but also of a human cry in distress (Ps. 38:9)

³: אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה וְלֹא־דוֹמִיָּה לִּי:

MY GOD, I CALL BY DAY, BUT YOU DO NOT ANSWER: BY NIGHT, AND THERE IS NO REPOSE FOR ME.

קרא (qal imperf.), ענה (qal imperf.) and other perfects and imperfects will frequently be translated as historic presents in this Psalm.

דוֹמִיָּה = "silence, still waiting, repose"

⁴: וְאַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ יוֹשֵׁב תְהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל:

BUT YOU ARE HOLY, ENTHRONED WITH THE PRAISES OF ISRAEL.

For translation "with," see G-K, para. 117, bb. Could also be rendered, "inhabiting the praises of Israel"

⁵: בָּךְ בָּטְחוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בָּטְחוּ וְתַפְלִטְמוּ:

OUR FATHERS TRUSTED IN YOU; THEY TRUSTED, AND YOU DELIVERED THEM.

פלת piel imperf. 2 sg. with older nominal suffix, b f o r ׀

⁶: אֲלֵיךָ זָעַקוּ וְנִמְלָטוּ בָּךְ בָּטְחוּ וְלֹא־בוֹשׁוּ:

THEY CRIED OUT TO YOU AND THEY WERE DELIVERED: THEY TRUSTED IN YOU AND THEY WERE NOT ASHAMED.

מלט niph. waw consec. perf. (the perf. consec. in immediate dependency on the preceding tense can be used as a frequentive to express past actions)

⁷: וְאֲנִכִּי תוֹלַעַת וְלֹא־אִישׁ חֲרַפְתָּ אֹדָם וּבְזוּי עָם:

BUT I AM A WORM AND NOT A MAN, A REPROACH OF MAN AND DESPISED BY PEOPLE.

בזה pass. ptcp. in construct state before a genitive of cause

⁸: כָּל־רָאִי יִלְעָגוּ לִי יִפְתְּרוּ בְשִׁפְהָ יִגִּיעוּ רֹאשׁ:

ALL, SEEING ME, MOCK ME. THEY OPEN THEIR MOUTHS, THEY WAG THE HEAD:

לעג hiph. imperf. פטר hiph. imperf. נוע hiph. imperf.

פ = instrument to introduce the object (G-K para. 119q), literally, "they separate with the lip"

⁹: גָּל אֶל־יְהִנָּה יִפְלִטְהוּ יִצִּילֵהוּ כִּי תִפֶּץ בּוֹ:

"GIVE IT TO THE LORD! LET HIM RESCUE AND DELIVER HIM, IF HE DELIGHTS IN HIM."

גלל qal inv. (BDB) Kretzmann "roll it upon Jehovah" Holladay "roll off" onto God (a concern)

פלט piel imperf. 3 sg. c acc. of person, taken jussively

נעל hiph. imperf. 3 sg. c acc. of person, taken jussively

כי translated conditionally ("if", agreeing with Mt. 27:43 "Let God rescue Him now if (ei) He wants Him."

¹⁰: כִּי־אַתָּה גַחֵי מִבֶּטֶן מִבְּטִיחֵי עַל־שָׁדַי אִמִּי:

BUT YOU CUT ME FROM THE WOMB, MAKING ME SECURE ON THE BREASTS OF MY MOTHER.

גחה dubious...only other usage an active ptcp., Ps. 71:6 (translation also dubious, perhaps "cut" (the umbilical cord)

בטח hiph. ptcp.

¹¹: עָלֶיךָ הִשְׁלַכְתִּי מִרְחֹם מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי אֱלֹהֵי אֶתָּה:

I WAS CAST UPON YOU FROM THE WOMB; FROM THE WOMB OF MY MOTHER YOU ARE MY GOD.

שלה hoph. perf. "to be cast" used metaphorically, "cast" on His protection

¹²: אַל־תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנִּי כִּי־צָרָה קְרוּבָה כִּי־אֵין עֹזֵר:

DON'T BE DISTANT FROM ME, FOR DISTRESS IS NEAR AND THERE IS NO HELPER.

¹³: סָבְבוּנִי פָרִים רַבִּים אַבְיָרֵי בָשָׁן כְּתֹרוּנֵי:

MANY YOUNG BULLS SURROUND ME; STRONG ONES OF BASHAN SURROUND ME.

סבב qal perf. 3 pl. c 1 sg. sffx.

כתר piel perf. 3 pl. c 1 sg. sffx.

¹⁴: פָּצוּ עָלַי פִּיהֶם אַרְיֵה טֹרֵף וְשֹׁאֵג:

THEY OPEN THEIR MOUTHS AGAINST ME LIKE A LION TEARING AND ROARING,

"The description of the external or internal state may follow, in poetry, in the form of a comparison with some well-known class (G-K para. 118r)"

¹⁵: כַּמַּיִם נִשְׁפַּכְתִּי וְהִתְפָּרְדּוּ כָּל־עַצְמוֹתַי הֵיחָ לִבִּי כַּדּוֹג נִמְס בְּתוֹךְ מַעַי:

I AM POURED OUT LIKE WATER, AND ALL MY MEMBERS ARE SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER. MY HEART IS LIKE WAX, DISSOLVED IN THE MIDDLE OF MY INWARD PARTS.

שפך niph. perf. 1 sg.

עצם "bones, substance, self, body, members, limbs"

פרד hithp. perf. 3 sg. ("of bones = be loosened at the joint" BDB)

מסס niph. ptcp.

מעו "internal organs, inward parts (intestines, bowels), belly"

¹⁶: יָבֵשׁ כְּחֶרֶשׁ כַּחֵי וְלִשׁוֹנִי מִדְּבַק מִלְּקוֹחֵי וְלַעֲפָר־מֹת תִּשְׁפָּתֵנִי:

MY STRENGTH IS DRIED UP LIKE A POTSHERD AND MY TONGUE IS MADE TO CLEAVE TO MY GUMS. YOU ARE SETTING ME IN THE DUST OF DEATH.

דבק hoph. ptcp.

שפת qal imperf.

17: כִּי סָבְבוּנִי פְּלִבֵּים עֲדַת מְרַעִים הִקִּיפוּנִי כְּאֹרֵי יְדַי וְרַגְלָי:

FOR DOGS HAVE SURROUNDED ME, A GANG OF EVILDOERS HAS ENCLOSED ME; THEY HAVE BORED MY HANDS AND MY FEET.

עֲדָה positively, "congregation", but any group acting concertedly

נִקְרָה hiph. perf. 3 pl. c 1 sg. sffx.

כּוֹר meaning indefinite, perhaps "bore, dig, hew"; כּוֹר for כּוֹר, then כְּאֹרֵי ?

18: אֲסַפֵּר כָּל-עֲצָמוֹתַי הַמָּה יִבִּיטוּ יְרֵאוּ-בִּי:

I CAN COUNT EXACTLY ALL MY BONES. THEY LOOK ON: THEY GLOAT OVER ME.

סָפַר piel imperf. the imperfect in a permissive sense (G-K para. 107s)

נִבְטָה hiph. imperf.

19: יִחְלְקוּ בְּגָדֵי לָהֶם וְעַל-לְבוּשָׁי יַפְּיִלוּ גִזְרֵל:

THEY DIVIDE MY GARMENTS AMONG THEMSELVES AND THEY CAST LOTS FOR MY CLOTHING.

נִפְלָה hiph. imperf.

20: וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-תַרְחֻם אֵילֹוֹתַי לְעֲזָרָתִי חוֹשֵׁה:

BUT DON'T YOU BE DISTANT, LORD. MY HELP, HURRY TO MY ASSISTANCE.

חוֹשֵׁה qal imv.

עֲזָרָה noun = "help, assistance"

21: הַצִּילָה מִחֶרֶב נַפְשִׁי מִיַּד-כְּלֶבֶת חַיֵּדְתָּנִי:

RESCUE MY LIFE FROM THE SWORD, MY PRECIOUS LIFE FROM THE PAW OF THE DOG.

נִצַּל hiph. imv.

חַיֵּד "only one' poet. for 'my life,' as the one unique and priceless possession which can never be replaced (BDB)"

22: הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי מִפִּי אַרְיֵה וּמִקֶּרְנֵי רַמִּים עֲנִיתָנִי:

DELIVER ME FROM THE LION'S MOUTH. YOU HAVE RESPONDED TO ME FROM THE HORNS OF THE WILD OXEN.

יָשַׁע hiph. imv.

עָנָה qal perf. 2 sg. c 1 sg. sffx . G-K: "and thou hast answered (and saved) me..."

23: אֲסַפְּרָה שְׁמֹךָ לְאָחָי בְּתוֹךְ קָהֵל אֶהְלֵלְךָ:

LET ME DECLARE YOUR NAME TO MY BROTHERS; IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ASSEMBLY I WILL PRAISE YOU.

סָפַר piel imperf. 1 sg. taken cohortatively

קָהֵל "the gatherings at religious feasts are probably referred to in Ps. 22: 22 (23), 25, 26 (26, 27)" Girdlestone, p. 231

הִלַּל piel imperf. 1 sg. c 2 sg. sffx.

24: יִרְאַי יְהוָה הַלְלוּהוּ כָּל־יִצְרָע יַעֲקֹב כִּבְדוּהוּ וְגִוְרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל־יִצְרָע יִשְׂרָאֵל:
THOSE WHO FEAR THE LORD, PRAISE HIM! ALL THE SEED OF JACOB, GLORIFY HIM! STAND IN
AWE OF HIM, ALL SEED OF ISRAEL!

הלל piel imv. c 2 pl. sffx.

כבד piel imv. c 2 pl. sffx.

גור qal imv. "dread"

25: כִּי לֹא־בָזָה וְלֹא שָׁקַץ עֲנוֹת עֲנִי וְלֹא־הִסְתִּיר פָּנָיו מִמֶּנּוּ וּבִשְׁוֹעוֹ אָלָיו שָׁמַע:
FOR HE DID NOT DESPISE OR DETEST THE AFFLICTED ONE'S MISERY; AND HE DID NOT HIDE
HIS FACE FROM HIM, BUT WHEN HE CRIED OUT TO HIM, HE LISTENED.

ענות "affliction, misery"

עני "poor, afflicted, humble, unfortunate, wretched"

חִסְתָּהּ perf.

שוע piel inf. cstr. c 3 sg. sffx.

26: מֵאִתְּךָ תְּהַלֵּלְתִּי בְּקִהְלֵךְ רַב וְדָרִי אֲשַׁלֵּם נֶגֶד יִרְאִיו:
MY SONG OF PRAISE IN THE GREAT ASSEMBLY IS FROM CLOSE PROXIMITY WITH YOU; I WILL
COMPLETE MY VOWS BEFORE THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.

" אָת expresses closer association than מֵאֵת...מֵאֵת expresses 'from close proximity to' (BDB)"

שָׁלַם piel imperf.

27: יֹאכְלוּ עֲנָוִים וְיִשְׂבְּעוּ יִהְלְלוּ יְהוָה דְּרֹשָׁיו יַחֲי לְבַבְכֶם לְעֵד:
THE HUMBLE WILL EAT AND WILL BE SATISFIED; THOSE SEEKING THE LORD WILL PRAISE
HIM. YOUR HEARTS WILL LIVE FOREVER!

עני cf v. 25

דרש qal ptc, c 3 sg. sffx.

28: יִזְכְּרוּ וַיָּשׁבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה כָּל־אֲפֹסֵי־אָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְפָנָיו כָּל־מְשַׁפְּחוֹת גּוֹיִם:
ALL ENDS OF THE EARTH WILL REMEMBER AND WILL RETURN TO THE LORD. ALL THE RACES
OF THE NATIONS WILL WORSHIP BEFORE YOU.

שחיה hithp. imperf. 3 pl.

29: כִּי לַיהוָה הַמְּלוּכָה וּמִשְׁלַל בְּגוֹיִם:
FOR THE DOMINION BELONGS TO THE LORD, AND HE* RULES AMONG THE NATIONS.

* personal pronoun, expected as subject of participial clause, is frequently omitted (G-K para. 116s)

30: אֲכָלוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ כָּל־דֹּשְׁנֵי־אָרֶץ לְפָנָיו יִכְרְעוּ כָּל־יִוְרְדֵי עֵפֶר וְנִפְשׁוּ לֹא תִיָּה:
ALL THE WEALTHY OF THE EARTH WILL EAT AND WILL WORSHIP; ALL THOSE WHO GO
DOWN TO THE DUST WILL BOW DOWN BEFORE HIM - HE (man) CANNOT PRESERVE HIS LIFE.

דָּשְׁן "fat, vigorous, stalwart ones"

Beck: "He Himself will not grant to them life." KJV: "and none can keep alive his own soul" NIV:

"those who cannot keep themselves alive" BDB: "preserve oneself alive"

תייה piel pf. 3 ms.

³¹זָרַע יַעֲבֹדֶנּוּ יִסְפָּר לְאֲדֹנָי לְדֹר:

POSTERITY WILL SERVE HIM; GENERATIONS WILL BE TOLD ABOUT THE LORD.

ספר pual imperf. (lit. "it will be recounted concerning the Lord")

³²יָבֹאוּ וְיַגִּידוּ צְדָקְתְּךָ לְעַם נֹלָד כִּי עָשָׂה:

THEY WILL COME AND REPORT HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO PEOPLE BEING BORN, FOR HE HAS DONE IT.

ילד niph. ptcl., understood like a gerundive, "to be born"

COMMENTARY:

1 *For the director, to "Doe of the Dawn," a melody of David.*

The question of the superscription is: does it simply indicate a particular melody or chant or is its title intended to summarize the contents of the psalm? Perhaps both. The song, to be sung by the Levitical choir, pictures the deer hunted to death in the early morning. Luther explained this by pointing out that the sufferings of the Lord began in the early morning.

On the other hand, the dawn may refer to the deliverance which follows the night of misery and temptation. Reverend Cohen, the Jewish theologian, says that the rabbis referred to both the hunted hind of the dawn and dawn as a hind leaping in full vigor. Either and both will serve to convey the two-part division of this psalm, the suffering and exaltation of Christ.

2 *(1) My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me, distant from My deliverance and the words of My roaring?*

We are plunged immediately into the darkness with our Savior's cry of anguish. It is noon, at the climax of His sufferings, and the darkness has set in. For others, even unbelievers, there remains on this earth some evidences of God's goodness (light, food, etc.), but now not only has the Father's love, but all earthly blessings as well, been removed. Hell is total separation from God and His blessings. So He cries out "why?" Stoeckhardt comments:

The grand counsel of God had slipped into oblivion for a moment. We cannot fathom the depth of this amazing humiliation of Christ that for a moment He had forgotten why He had to suffer and die. Of course, it was only His human consciousness that failed him. Or, let us put it this way, only according to His human nature could He sink so low.

So we see Him "roaring," and this from the man distinguished for meekness! But there is no sin here. The question "why?" is not asked in anger and rejection, but in trust. He says "My God," placing His trust in Him. It reminds us that, whatever the difficulty, we must place our trust in God. Jesus did it from the position of hell, the place of no hope. Only our Savior could do this. But because He did, we do not have to be in that same position. It should strengthen us to call out in trust: "my God" whatever the difficulty. Stoeckhardt says of these words: "It was by this prayer that Christ conquered and overcame the power of hell."

3 *(2) My God, I call by day, but You do not answer; by night, and there is no repose for Me.*

Could it be that, according to His human nature, He reckoned that the suffering should be over by now? He had endured the trials, the beating, the spitting, the mockery, and had been on the cross for more than three hours already. It had been, literally, night and day from the trials in the middle of the night to the afternoon here, and now it is dark again. But "day and night" should be correctly understood in their Hebrew parallelism to mean "constantly." The Savior's constant, faithful prayer had arisen, yet there was no "repose," no solace or peace. Again, we see the description of hell given here as our Lord enjoys not one moment of relief, but is constantly tortured for our sins.

4 *(3) But You are holy, inhabiting the praises of Israel.*

Perowne says "it is impossible to describe the sadness, the humility, the tenderness, the longing of this complaint." Is the Lord accusing God of being inconsistent here, tolerating sin and preferring sinners to the righteous? Stoeckhardt suggests this, but Calvin stresses that He is holding up the shield of faith to repel temptation, what he calls a "remedy against distrust." This fits better with the entire message of the psalm, showing us a tempted, tortured Savior who clung tenaciously to His Father to accomplish His mission. It is an

unwavering confidence here, not disposed to blame God, but rather to importune Him. Spurgeon says: "we may not question the holiness of God, but we may argue from it, and use it as a plea in our petitions," as did Moses, David, Daniel, etc. Jesus does what we, Scripturally, tell our members to do. He remembers who God is, what His promises are, and calls on Him.

"Inhabiting the praises of Israel" may be an allusion to the phrase "dwelling between the cherubim," the holy place where Israelites viewed God as presiding in power.

5&6 (4&5) *Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried out to You and they were delivered; they trusted in You and they were not ashamed.*

Jesus, true man, King of the Jews, Representative of all men, says "Our fathers." Remember how He loved to refer to Himself as the Son of Man. The entire history of the Jewish people had been a record of the gracious acts of God toward His people. Think of the psalms which recount and rejoice over miracles and victories in battle. God wants us to remind Him of His goodness, and our petitions of trust evoke more than psychological benefit—they, by the grace of God, move the heart of the Almighty. Our Lord employs this in His pleading. Three times He uses the words "they trusted" and once "they cried," wrestling with God in prayer. "And they were not ashamed." Had Jesus failed there would, of course, have been nothing but shame. But our Savior remembers and reminds God that those who trust in Him are never put to shame.

7 (6) *But I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of man and despised by people.*

Jesus has just compared Himself to His earthly fathers, but His situation is much worse; Jesus, in His most extraordinary suffering, is "a worm and not a man." It is certainly true that carrying the sins of the world made Him the lowest ("He became a curse for us"), but this describes His treatment by us, the very people He came to save! The religious leaders accused Him of blaspheming, cursing God. When He had explained His upcoming suffering and death to the disciples, they were outraged at the thought. But when it actually happened, they were ashamed. What did passers-by see? They viewed some foul, vile, criminal, not human. The words here are reminders of our Lord, the suffering servant, in Isaiah 52:14 and 53:3.

Yet again, we see in Jesus not a desperate, angry man, but One who continues to trustingly plead for relief. He reminds His Father of His condition because He knows that God is the help of the helpless. What glory we see in this lowest level of deprivation and what love it should wake in us, not just a gut-wrenching sympathy, but faithful love which responds to the faithful, saving love of our Lord!

8 (7) *All, seeing Me, mock Me. They open their mouths, they wag the head:*

Perhaps people were shaking their heads, as if doubting he was in His right mind, as if disbelieving he could be so foolish. Perhaps they were protruding the lip, considered a very strong indication of contempt in the Middle East. It was all utter derision, and the sea of faces is against Him. Matthew 27:34. Priests and people, Jews and Gentiles, soldiers and civilians all united in the general scoff, and Spurgeon asks: "How can we ever complain of ridicule after this?"

9 (8) *"Give it to the Lord! Let Him rescue and deliver Him, if He delights in Him."*

The opening expression, literally, "Roll it on the Lord," has the thought of rolling a burden off your shoulders. The same verb, galal, is found in Psalm 37:5, "Commit your way to the Lord." Imagine the sting of this statement! Mockery often contains an element of truth. The mockers here realized that Jesus had always placed full confidence and trust in the Lord, and they throw this in His face! It is the charge of hypocrisy, that He falsely pretended to be one who could rely on God. His crucifixion now seemed proof that this was untrue. As true man, there was certainly the temptation to abandon the trust, give up and give in to despair.

But what blind irony! That the Jews should use this language in taunting Him, unconsciously quoting this Psalm and demonstrating yet again that He was the Messiah prophesied to them! When we are abused or tempted, let us remember the One who endured such total contradictions and count ourselves blessed to suffer with Him.

10 (9) *But You cut Me from the womb, making Me secure on the breasts of My mother.*

Perowne says: "Faith turns the mockery of His enemies into an argument of deliverance." Jesus had always put full confidence and trust in the Lord, and this unshaken trust of Messiah in the salvation plan of God shows here. He remembers the divine plan and its unfolding on earth. There is solid reason to trust, to confide in God, because it had been a life-long relationship. As if in response to the taunts, our Savior replies: "Yes, I have always trusted in the Lord, and will continue to trust, because He will never fail Me." Here we must remember, too, without forgetting His inseparable divine nature, that He is true man. As He saw His mother standing there, wonderful thoughts of the divine plan's unfolding pass through His mind. Perhaps the sight of His mother triggered, certainly supported these thoughts.

When tempted or weak, adherents to today's decision theology can only remember the emotional "high" of a personal commitment to God. Here Jesus, however, remembers the solid foundation of what God has done, and pleads on the basis of God's strength. Spurgeon writes: "Oh noble perseverance of faith, thus to continue pleading with holy ingenuity of argument!" The example of Jesus points us to the importance of establishing a life-long relationship of trust with our Savior-God, and relying on Him rather than ourselves.

11 (10) *I was cast upon You from birth; from the womb of My mother You are My God.*

The subject of birth and infancy takes on interesting dimensions in the prayer of the God-man. As any child, Jesus was known and planned by God before birth, an important point in today's abortionist world. But here, Jesus particularly remembers the special plan of God in sending His own Son. Kretzmann makes the interesting point that His mother is mentioned in four ways here, and elsewhere in the Old Testament, but never is His earthly father mentioned once in Old Testament Scripture. Of course! He is praying to His real Father. But as true man, seeing His mother, calling on the God of faithful Grace, He might here have remembered the special weakness and humility of His infancy: the poverty, the manger, the jealousy of Herod which God has preserved Him through.

It is a reminder to us, too, that infancy is a most vulnerable age. Were it not for His complete protection, life could not be sustained. What a wonderful object lesson God gives us in the pattern of life! We enter this world totally dependent, and if we live to an old age, leave entirely dependent. But this is true of every age. It is the middle years of life when Satan tries to deceive us into thinking that we are independent. From this preserve us, Heavenly father!

But returning to the prayer of Jesus, Luther comments:

Here the tribulation begins to grow lighter, and hope inclines toward victory; a support, though small, and sought out with deep anxiety, is now found. For after he had felt that he had suffered without any parallel or example, so that the wonderful works of God as displayed toward the fathers afforded him no help, he comes to the wonderful works of God toward himself, and in these he finds the goodwill of God towards him, and which was displayed towards him alone in so singular a way.

12 (11) *Don't be distant from Me, for distress is near and there is no helper.*

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and You will honor Me (Ps. 50:15)." Our Lord takes God at His Word, and now enters His plea. Despite apparent (and here very real) rejection, He turns to the only One who can help. Despite our human feelings of rejection by God, we must keep turning to Him.

Had our savior given up His wrestling, we would have nowhere to turn. But now we are assured that we will never be rejected, that He is always there to turn to.

"Don't be distant" is a hyperbolic way of saying "Come closer to help." Distress is near, and God must be nearer, not farther. Trouble is certainly near...Jesus is approaching death, and the united forces of hell are licking their chops! Jesus can see His mother and loved disciple, but they are powerless to help Him. He must "tread the wine press alone." Our Lord calls for strength to sustain Him.

13 *(12) Many young bulls surround Me; strong ones of Bashan surround Me.*

The rich meadow country of Bashan, northeast of Gilead, served as grazing terrain which pastured many well-fed cattle and steers. Partially because of its isolation, the animals of Bashan were noted for being uncommonly fierce. It is certainly easy to imagine this thought passing through the Redeemer's mind from the cross as He sees the railing priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees and rulers! These fierce, savage, violent men mimicked the strength and fierceness of the "strong ones of Bashan." Cohen notes that these bulls gore their victims, which seems to be the point of comparison here. The same point is made in Amos 4:1: "Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy." In prayer, Jesus seems to be alternating from recalling God's mercies to relating His struggles, a picture of the heaven-and-hell confrontation at the cross.

14 *(13) They open their mouths against Me like a lion tearing and roaring.*

The gruesome picture here is that of the lion who, having stilled its foe, now tears it open and devours. We think of Peter's words: "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (I Peter 5:8)." The arch-enemy, Satan, and his henchmen are attacking while Jesus cannot defend Himself. He must face the full vent and fury of Hell if He is to pay the price for our sins.

15 *(14) I am poured out like water, and all my bones are separated from each other. My heart is like wax, dissolved in the middle of my inward parts.*

It is unfortunate that this description, so graphic, is minimized to inner struggles alone by men like Calvin, who do not see Christ as the only fulfillment of this passage. Cohen, a Jew, says that "courage and strength" deserted the sufferer. But our understanding of crucifixion and the direct prophecy here helps us to see more clearly. "All" the bones, each one in distinct pain, seem as if they have broken apart. The bones are out of joint, "separated from each other" as the suspension from the cross has slipped them out of their sockets at the joint. The heart, its pericardial sac filling with water, "is like wax, melted," and we think of the death of the crucified as an inward drowning. The "inward parts," including the lungs, fill with blood and water. His life is ebbing, all is in the process of dissolution. He has become like the Old Testament libation, poured out as an offering before the Lord.

We must be careful, however, not to picture our Lord's suffering in such a way that we become only sympathetic bystanders, shocked and riveted by human tragedy and cruelty, yet oblivious to the infinitely greater suffering of soul that Jesus fought in His battle with hell. Despite our efforts to understand, the hymn "Just As I Am," with its line "Thy love unknown has broken every barrier down" fits well to describe our inability to comprehend His spiritual and physical torments. It is also important to remember that our Savior suffers all this willingly, and that this dissolution cannot arbitrarily claim His life, as it does other men. He said: "I have authority to Lay it (His life) down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from My Father (John 10:18)."

16 *(15) My strength is dried up like a potsherd and My tongue is made to cleave to My gums. You are setting Me in the dust of death.*

As He drowns within, He withers on the outside. He is like a piece of an earthen pot, baked in the fire until the last particle of moisture is driven out of the clay. Worse, He has been fragmented and rejected as useless. Spurgeon says: "the Paschal lamb was roasted in the fire." His vitality is gone, and He feels the agony of burning thirst ("My tongue is made to cleave to My gums").

He is sinking into death. But It is important to note Jesus' realization that God Himself is leading Him into it ("You are setting Me in the dust of death"). Despite the fierceness of the faces all around, Jesus understands that this is the hand of God. While the sinner may accuse God of killing him, we dare not put these atrocities into the thoughts of the God-man. As man is fashioned out of dust, Jesus knows that, as man's Substitute, He must be set in the dust of death.

17 (16) For dogs have surrounded Me, a gang of evildoers has enclosed Me; they have pierced My hands and My feet.

The "Doe of the Dawn" is surrounded by a wild pack of hounds. Cohen writes:

Every oriental city and village abounds with troops of hungry and half-savage dogs...howling dismally at night, and devouring even the dead bodies of men when they can reach them.... Thus cruel, fierce and filthy persons are frequently compared to dogs.

It is a "congregation" of evil, the synagogue of Satan.

The much-debated word of this verse is כָּאֵרֶי, translated here "they pierced." The form, as recorded, would mean "like a lion." But there are several arguments against this translation. First, the translation would not make sense. One lion, surrounding hands and feet? There are variant readings, and Calvin suggests that the passage was corrupted by Jews, citing the Septuagint as proof (which translates "pierced").

Other mss have כָּאֵרֶי . In Isaiah 18:3 כָּאֵרֶי is translated "as a lion." But in the old Masora a footnote is added: "Not in the sense of Ps.22:16." Ancient interpreters took the form as a verb, and Gesenius treats it as a Chaldean participle. Even Cohen, the Jewish theologian, allows for a verb, although he suggests that both the verb and the noun could be read into the text. In addition, we have the clear words of Is. 53:5 ("But He was pierced for our transgressions") demonstrating that this thought is not unique among the body of Old Testament prophecy.

18 (17) I can count exactly all My bones. They look on; they gloat over Me.

The crowd is looking on with both a morbid and malicious delight. Jesus has become a ghastly skeleton. Here the thought is not that "not one of His bones will be broken," but that He has become so emaciated, the strain is so great, that His skeleton is visible. "Each one (His bones) stands out with its own special ache (Briggs)." This passage helps us to understand Is. 52:14.

Let us blush for human nature, and mourn in sympathy with our Redeemer's shame. The first Adam made us all naked, and therefore the second Adam became naked that He might clothe our naked souls (Spurgeon).

19 (18) They divide my garments among themselves and they cast lots for my clothing.

Cohen can only say "The language is imaginative, not factual." We can say much more, quoting Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34 and John 19:23 and 24 as the direct fulfillments of what our Lord says here. Jesus sees the soldiers acting as if He were already dead, but is still alive to view this despoiling as if He had already lost. What must have passed through the agonized Redeemer's mind as true man! The two words for "clothing" in the Hebrew give no indication of a seamless garment. It is the ingenuity of God's plan which saw to it that each word of Scripture was very literally fulfilled.

20 ***(19) But don't You be distant, Lord. My help, hurry to my assistance.***

Back to the Lord! An eye focused on the surrounding sin might destroy now, as Jesus sees the end of His suffering approaching. Stoeckhardt: "Therefore He pleads with His Lord to come to His aid in death into the power of which God is just now delivering Him." Jesus had come to die. At this point it is difficult to think of the Savior still asking: "If it is possible, take this cup from Me." Instead, it is more logical and advances the thought to see Him praying here that now, in death, His mission could be completed successfully. It is appropriate, now, to ask for deliverance from the deep spiritual, mental and physical horrors of hell which He has been suffering. Remember His calm, loud, final pronouncements, and the reaction of the centurion: "and when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard His cry and saw how He died... (Mark15:39)." Isn't it appropriate to assume that verses 20-22 (19-21) represent the prayer, its answer and the confidence which returns to our Savior?

Now God the Father hurries to help; all has been accomplished. Jesus' words "My Help" or "My Strength" remind believers of our strength, and of Paul's words: "For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Cor.12:10)," because strength comes from turning to our Strength.

21 ***(20) Rescue My soul from the sword, My precious life from the paw of the dog.***

The "sword" is figurative, representing a violent death. We remember the last moments on the cross: calm, peaceful, triumphant. He breathed His last, expiring willingly, and in His end we see that the Father graciously answered the prayer of this verse.

נַפְשִׁי can be "life" or "soul." Perhaps "soul" is the better rendering here. His life will be laid down, only to be restored on the third day. His soul is preserved because He has completed all perfectly, and thus He commits His spirit to the Father. He refers to His "precious life," His "one and only," "darling" soul. We have the right to be selfish about our souls, for "what can a man give in exchange for his soul (Matt. 16:26)." But Jesus had still more reason. All souls were here thrown in the balance, dependent on the purity and salvation of His soul, His perfect life and death. Spurgeon writes: "would that all men made their souls their 'darlings.'"

22 ***(21) Deliver me from the lion's mouth. You have responded to Me from the horns of the wild oxen.***

Kretzmann says that Satan himself is being referred to here. It is in the singular, and we have no reason to disagree. Finally, the confrontation has been between heaven and hell, God and Satan.

Note the past tense: "You have responded" or "You have answered." We can easily imagine the victorious ending of this prayer-verse just before our Lord's triumphant cry: "It is finished!" Our Lord sees that His prayer has been answered and the victory has been won.

Calvin writes beautifully here:

He was more mightily delivered than if God had prevented Him from falling a victim to death, even as it is a much greater deliverance to rise again from the dead than to be healed of a grievous malady. Death, therefore, did not prevent Christ's resurrection from at length bearing witness that He had been heard.

It might have seemed that God did not care. But as we see the celebration in the verses to follow, we dare not forget that this psalm clearly demonstrates that each and every sorrow and suffering has a blessed purpose. As every detail of our Savior's crucifixion was not extraneous, but a vital part of our salvation, so every moment of our lives, good or bad, has a loving purpose assigned to it by our God, who controls all. And His ultimate objective is our salvation, for which He allowed His Son to be crucified.

23 ***(22) Let me declare Your name to My brothers; in the middle of the assembly I will praise You.***

Kretzmann says that our Lord is "now enthroned at the right hand of God." I have translated the first verb as a cohortative, "Let Me declare." This is the Savior's constant intercession at the throne as our exalted Prophet, and it is a request which God gladly answers "yes." Jesus proclaims the Good News, and with the verses preceding, we understand how the Christ declares God as a saving Name. He calls us "brothers." We are the same people who taunted, gloated and crucified Him. But our status has changed because of what He did for us, and He delights to call us brothers. What a beautiful title to remember when addressing our Savior!

The verse does not allow us to think of Him only in heaven. "In the middle of the assembly I will praise You." He is, simultaneously, in heaven and on earth, causing praise to come to the lips of converted souls. Strong encouragement is given here for preachers, whom He uses as His mouthpiece, but assures: "I will declare."

There is a strong reminder here, too, for all that have been delivered, that we must not be like the nine ungrateful lepers. We thank Him by speaking about His goodness to others. Praise is public; evangelism is not optional, but integral to faith.

24 ***(23) Those who fear the Lord, praise Him! All the seed of Jacob, glorify Him! Stand in awe of Him, all seed of Israel!***

Now He calls upon the Church to praise God. It is a command to the "fearers of the Lord," the true believers. Those who have not believed the Gospel will never understand, and will only "fear" and "dread" Him. But we are compelled to proclaim by the joy of salvation which is ours. How can we not praise Him? This is a three-fold command from our risen Savior!

25 ***(24) For He did not despise or detest the Afflicted One's misery; and He did not hide His face from Him, but when He cried out to Him, He listened.***

This verse reiterates the reason for our praise. The essence of every worship service should be the suffering of Christ which brings the joy of salvation. God's answer of salvation to Jesus is our answer for eternity and for the struggle of earthly existence. The Father could not hide His face, but had to answer Jesus' righteous cry, and now our cry, through faith, has been declared righteous. God is not like man. He does not despise or mistreat or ignore the humiliated, a great comfort to us, who are humbled before almighty God.

26 ***(25) My song of praise in the great assembly is from close proximity with You. I will complete My vows before those who fear Him.***

God is both the source and object of praise. Throughout His ministry Jesus had stressed His inseparable unity with the Father. It is this interaction which makes the words and actions of incarnate Jesus so singularly essential and eternal. It is this grace, demonstrated in the salvation plan of Father and Son, which elicits our praise. Calvin comments that "in important affairs, and when threatened with imminent danger, it was a common practice among God's people to vow a peace-offering, and after having obtained the object of their desire, they performed their vow." Leviticus 7:11-16 describes the fellowship offering which was an expression of thankfulness. The meat of the sacrifice was to be eaten, which helps to explain the following verse. Jesus' "vows," His work of salvation, have now been paid, and they are distributed to all.

27 ***(26) The humble will eat and will be satisfied; those seeking the Lord will praise Him. Your hearts will live forever.***

Poor sinners, aware of their unworthiness and desiring God's mercy, are welcome guests at this thanksgiving fellowship. In the Old Testament, when such a thank offering was brought, it usually included a special meal to which the poor of the land were also invited. Such is the case here, as poor, humble sinners are promised: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled (Matt. 5:6)."

Several translations, including NIV, render the last clause "may your hearts live forever," perhaps with the thought of the host at the meal expressing a blessing. But I have translated: "Your hearts will live forever." The Psalm has proven that our Salvation is an accomplished fact, and we are kept by this Gospel. One fellowship meal cannot assure continued life, but belief in Jesus does. There may be trials and temptations in our lives, but Jesus says of Himself: "Here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever (John 6:49-51)."

28 ***(27) All ends of the earth will remember and will return to the Lord. All the races of the nations will worship before you.***

We should understand the "seed of Jacob" and "seed of Israel" in verse 24 as all true believers in Christ. But so that no one will misunderstand that this joyous message is for all "races of the nations," it is clearly spoken here. It is interesting to note the progression: 1) remember; 2) (re) turn; and 3) worship. The Gospel will be heard, souls will repent, and believers will rejoice as they worship God. Spurgeon reminds us: "Moreover, every congregation, having the exalted Christ in its midst, has also the duty to transmit Christ's preaching to the ends of the earth." "They will remember," but someone must bring it to mind for them. It is our vow of gratitude to proclaim his salvation.

29 ***(28) For the dominion belongs to the Lord, and He rules among the nations.***

We think of the various hymns of praise similar to this in Revelation. "The Lord" here is not only the Father, who answered his Son's prayer, but it is also the Son Himself, who has taken up his power and now reigns.

Zechariah 14:9 ("The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name") concludes Jewish services. How sad that these services and their attendants do not truly recognize from Psalm 22 the One who brings all nations together and makes us true children of God! How vital it is for us to proclaim the true "Lord" of this verse!

30 ***(29) All the wealthy of the earth will eat and will worship; all those who go down to the dust will bow down before Him - man cannot preserve his life.***

Are the "wealthy," the "fat," to be considered the spiritually well-to-do? That does not seem to fit the context here, and would add nothing to the narrative. It would seem better, since the poor and humble have already been introduced, that the "wealthy of the earth" here refers to the materially prosperous. Then the sense is that all classes on earth will be represented at the King's table by faith. There is a reminder ("Man cannot preserve his life") that the common denominator, death, will eliminate earthly class distinctions. All must go the way of death, as Christ did. Those who look to Him, wealthy or poor, will find the same success that He did.

31 ***(30) Posterity will serve Him; generations will be told about the Lord.***

The beautiful promise contained here is that there will always be spiritual children who trust in the Lord; the church will endure to the end of time. Always, always, wherever we are, we have God's promise that there are souls to reach, hearts that will open to the message of the gospel. This announcement from our God inspires our efforts to sing His praises in ever-widening circles.

32 ***(31) They will come and report His righteousness to a people being born, for He has done it.***

This is what we declare, "His righteousness," not just what He is, but what "He has done" for us, His faithfulness in keeping his promises concerning the salvation of men. That action, and the interaction of Father and Son, has been richly illustrated for us in this Psalm. As we read the words "He has done it," we hear the very same triumph cry issuing from the Cross: "it is finished!" Christians are the "they" of this verse, and it is

our privilege to announce the victory of our Savior over sin, death and hell to all. May Psalm 22 inspire us all in this highest calling!

SOLI DEO GLORIA!

Outline of Psalm 22

Prof. Aug. Pieper
(*Quartalschrift*, Jan. 1905, p 35f.)

Preliminary Remarks

The opinion is widespread that no definite outline is to be found in the individual books and parts of the Scriptures. The very opposite is true; everywhere an outline corresponding to the subject matter is obvious. The poetic parts of Scripture, in particular, excel in a clear, logical line of thought; and the Psalms, even the alphabetic ones, are no exception. The principle of Hebrew poetry, the parallelism of members, according to which the individual lines of a verse and the individual smaller or larger verse groups are arranged in a synonymous, antithetic, or synthetic relationship to one another, is in itself a guarantee of this.

The 22nd Psalm does not have a more detailed outline than the rest of the Psalms. We want to show by way of example here in the first part, however, that the logical arrangement of the thoughts extends to the smallest detail. The second part we have outlined only according to its larger thought patterns.

The theme is in the superscription: The Doe of the Dawn. Stripped of its figurative language it is: The Lord's Agony in Death and Joy in Deliverance. If one understands it from the point of view presented in the exposition as the expression of His spiritual state in the hour before and after the favorable turn of His suffering, one will have to formulate it something like this: The Fervent Prayer of the Savior in the Hour When God Forsook Him and Then Again Embraced Him. Under this theme the two chief parts, vv. 2-22 and 23-32, naturally fall into place as

1. His lament while forsaken;
2. His song of thanksgiving after His deliverance.

The plan in detail is as follows:

THE SAVIOR'S GREAT PRAYER IN THE HOUR WHEN THE JUDGMENT OF GOD COMES ON HIM FOR OUR REDEMPTION

- I. His heart-rending lament upon being forsaken by God, vv. 2-22
 - A. He presents His having been forsaken by God as an incomprehensible fact, vv. 2-11.
 1. It is a fact, vv. 2-3
 - a. He says it is: You have forsaken me, v. 2a
 - b. He describes His forsakenness, vv. 2b-3
 - 1) He cries, but no help comes to Him, v. 2b
 - 2) He calls incessantly but receives no answer, v. 3
 2. It is incomprehensible, vv. 4-11
 - a. For You are the Holy One, vv. 4-6
 - 1) As such You are praised by Israel, v. 4b
 - 2) As such You manifested Yourself to the fathers, vv. 5-6
 - b. But to me You now appear otherwise, vv. 7-9
 - 1) You do not regard me as a man, but as a worm, v. 7a
 - 2) You abandon me to mockery, vv. 7b-9
 - a) To disdain in the heart, v. 7b
 - b) To scornful gestures, v. 8
 - c) To derisive talk, v. 9
 - c. But You ought to deal with me above all as the Holy One, vv. 10-11
 - 1) By Your special decree and act I was born a man, v. 10a

- 2) From my earliest youth You taught me to trust in You, v. 10b
- 3) You took me up from my mother's womb when no one else received me, v. 11a
- 4) From my childhood until now You have shown Yourself to be my God, v. 11b

Transition: How can You forsake me in this way? V. 12 forms the transition to the second half of this part, bringing to a close the discussion of the riddle with the plea for deliverance and introducing the following with the assertion that the distress is pressing Him hard, and there is no helper.

B. He describes His personal condition of distress at having been forsaken by God as having become serious in the extreme, vv. 13-19

1. First description (Emphasis on the inner distress), vv. 13-16
 - a. My enemies have encircled me (outward trouble), vv. 13, 14
 - 1) They are many, v. 13a
 - 2) They are strong, v. 13b
 - 3) They are enraged, v. 14
 - b. My life ebbs away (inner distress), vv. 15, 16
 - 1) I have lost control of my members, v. 15b
 - 2) My courage has melted away, v. 15c
 - 3) My strength is dried up, v. 16a, b
 - 4) You are laying me into the dust of death, v. 16c
2. Second description (Emphasis on the outward trouble), vv. 17-19
 - a. Those who have encircled me are utterly wicked, v. 17a, b
 - b. They do their worst to me, vv. 17c-19
 - 1) They lacerate my hands and feet, v. 17c
 - 2) My worst pain is their greatest delight, v. 18
 - 3) They treat me as one already dead by dividing my clothes, v. 19

C. He addresses Himself to His God with a fervent appeal for deliverance, vv. 20-22

- *1. Asking His God to come to His aid, v. 20 (Who?)
 - a. The Lord, "Jehovah," the God of the Covenant, whose faithfulness still stands firm, v. 20a
 - b. The Mighty One, who even in this trouble is still able to help, v. 20b
2. Asking Him to come to His aid effectively, vv. 20-21 (How?)
 - a. Coming to His side, v. 20a
 - b. Coming with haste, v. 20b
 - c. Forcefully snatching Him from danger, v. 21a
3. Asking Him to rescue Him from death, vv. 21-22 (from what?)
 - a. From death inflicted by dogs, v. 21
 - b. From death inflicted by the lion, v. 22a
 - c. From death inflicted by bulls, v. 22b

* In agitated forms of prayer such as this the words do not as a rule follow the order of a single point of view, but are mingled together according to various principles of division. We are dividing here according to the subject matter.

The transition to the second chief part is effected here by the perfect form of the final verb in v. 22.

- I. His song of thanksgiving for the help He has received, vv. 23-32
 - A. He solemnly promises in thankful praise to glorify God's Name in Israel, vv. 23-27
 1. He wishes to praise Him publicly in the congregation, v. 23
 2. He wishes to summon all of God's people to give glory to Him, v. 24
 3. He wishes to relate to them what the Lord has done for Him, v. 25
 4. He wishes to pay His vows before the whole congregation and make them to share in the fruits of His redemption, in order that they may praise God and have everlasting life, vv. 26,27
 - B. The heathen, too, He wants to induce to glorify God, vv. 28-32
 1. The whole world is to experience God's salvation, be converted, and worship God, v. 28
 - a. Because as it is He reigns over them according to His power, v. 29a
 - b. Because He desires to reign over them now according to His grace, v. 29b
 2. All classes of men on earth are to share in His grace, v. 30
 3. Without interruption throughout all ages a seed will serve Him and praise His Name, v. 31
 4. To succeeding generations they will pass on the righteousness which God bestows—that He alone has done and has accomplished everything, v. 32

Homiletical Note: It is self-evident that a great many sermon outlines can easily be derived and assembled from this outline. Nevertheless, one will do well not to break up the Psalm into parts that are too small. We would advise making *six* sermons of it.

- I. Vv. 1-3, in other words, what is included in the outline under I, A, 1. This could serve as the basis for the first part of the sermon, while in a second added part one would treat the practical significance of Christ's being forsaken by God for our salvation.
- II. Vv. 4-11, everything in the outline included under I, A, 2; again stressing its importance for us from various angles.
- III. Vv. 13-19, outline I, B, 1 & 2
- IV. Vv. 20-22, outline I, C, 1, 2, 3
- V. Vv. 23-27
- VI. Vv. 28-32

Tr: WRG

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