

## PSALM 22 – The Sufferings of the Messiah (part 2)

**Verse 8 (synthetic parallelism)** – Verse 8 contain the words of scorners. Verses 6 and 7 describe the feelings of Christ on the cross just as they describe David's feelings as he was being pursued by his enemies. What David felt were the feelings of Christ as He hung on the cross because of our sins. Verse 8 describes the words of the scorners who mocked Christ on the cross. Yet, here in this psalm these words describe David as he continued to trust in the LORD no matter how men rejected and failed him. They mocked and taunted him to no end as he fled from Israel to foreign territory to find some semblance of safety and security! Based upon this trust, David hung on to the LORD and refused to stop trusting no matter how bleak his circumstances were. His trust in the LORD was not dependent upon the external circumstances. It is false faith to believe in the LORD for gain only. David believed and trusted in the LORD at all times. He trusted in the LORD to defend him when he was a shepherd boy looking after his father's sheep. He trusted in the LORD when all things seemed to fail around him. His enemies mocked and scorned his belief and trust in the LORD to deliver him. They would wait and see how the LORD would deliver him since the LORD delighted in him.

The chief priests, scribes and elders spoke these words and mocked the LORD as they stood beneath the cross (cf Matthew 27:43). Picture this - Christ is hanging and dying on the cross for the sins of the world; and the most religious and knowledgeable (in the Word of God) people on earth are standing before Him, which God had prophesied from the moment man fell into sin in the Garden of Eden; and they are as blind as a bat before the noonday sun. What a tragedy that these men were so close to the greatest sight to behold on earth and they ended up mocking and taunting the LORD with sarcasm, to their own shame and condemnation. Yet it was not only they who were guilty - all of us were also guilty of these acts and words! They fulfilled what the Word of God had predicted they would do! The LORD knew the hearts of these sinful men hundreds of years before they were born and that they would taunt and sarcastically mock the LORD while He hung on the cross!

It was because the LORD delighted in, i.e. was well pleased with, David that He allowed David to endure all the injustices and pain in his lifetime to teach him patience and dependence on the LORD, and not on self, as he served and lived for Christ on earth! David learned well. God was very well pleased with Christ as He hung on the cross for our sins. Precisely because God was well pleased with Christ, HE DID NOT TAKE HIM DOWN FROM THE CROSS! If God was not well pleased with Christ dying on the cross for us, then God would have intervened immediately and would not have allowed His only begotten Son to die the way He did. He would have called legions of angels to deliver His Son from the cross. But He did not because Christ, His only begotten Son, did all that the Heavenly Father commanded in order to save mankind from his sins. He obeyed all of God's laws perfectly so that all who believe in Christ would be given the righteousness that is of the law. Christ was

led like a lamb to the slaughter just as the Heavenly Father wanted so that the world might be saved. God was very well pleased with Christ and that is why He did not deliver Him from the hands of wicked men!

**Verse 9 (synthetic parallelism)** – When did David begin trusting in the LORD? David testified here that it was from the time of his birth. Of course, when David was born he was not aware of the LORD's hand in his birth and life. But like every believer before and since the time of David, hind sight is the clearest sight. After a sinner becomes a saint, his eyes are opened. He looks back at his life and sees very clearly the hand of God. David experienced here what every believer has experienced since the beginning of time. God took David out of his mother's womb. This points to intimacy and personal care. God was there when David was born. The safety of His birth was in the hand of God almighty and not man. God was the One who enabled David to hope, i.e. to put his confidence in God even when he was upon his mother's breast, i.e. when he was a baby or a toddler. The intimate care of the LORD in David's life was life-long. Would David now suddenly mistrust the LORD when his enemies were all around him and mocked him? The LORD had been there for him from birth and would not suddenly abandon him! Never! David continued to trust God and to lean on Him regardless of the external circumstances.

These feelings applied to Christ as well. From the time of Christ's birth, it has always been the LORD who protected and watched over Him. The safety of His birth in the manger was God's doing. There was no doctor or any midwife present and yet the birth was smooth and safe. After His birth, Herod wanted Christ killed. Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt for protection and safety. Yet it was always God who kept Christ safe. Christ's confidence has always been in His heavenly Father to watch over Him all the days of His sojourn on earth till the day of His death and resurrection.

**Verse 10 (synthetic parallelism)** – David was cast upon God from the time of his birth. The verb "cast upon" means "thrown down". The LORD had always been David' protector and provider. The LORD kept him safe from his birth and not man, even though his parents raised him. David acknowledged that the LORD had always been his God from his mother's belly. This could only be acknowledged by one who was born again. Could it mean that David was already born again before he was born, i.e. while he was in his mother's womb? It seems very likely if this verse describes David's life. Is it impossible for a baby to be born again before he is born physically? The Bible says that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit while he was in his mother's womb (cf Luke 1:13-15). No one can be filled with the Holy Spirit without first being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. No one can be indwelt by the Holy Spirit without first being born again! Since John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit while he was in his mother's womb, this means that he was born again before he was physically born. This seems to be true for David as well. He knew God from his mother's belly. We can say that David was speaking figuratively and not literally but the language

implies a literal understanding rather than a figurative one. When applied to Christ, it is definitely literal and not figurative. That being the case, it has to be consistently applied as literal in both instances.

When applied to Christ, this verse makes perfect sense. From the time of Christ's birth, God has been protecting Him. He has been cast upon God to look after Him. Christ was born a "helpless" infant. God took care of Him and kept Him from harm and danger since the day of His birth. God was His God. Christ did not need to be born again to realize this truth. Christ was always God. He was very much aware of God from infancy!

**Verse 11 (synthetic parallelism)** – David's cry to God was that He be not far from him. The reason is that trouble was near. The word "trouble" means "to feel very tight", i.e. to be cornered. There was no one who could help! David described his fugitive days (from King Saul) very accurately. There was literally no one in Israel who could help him. They were all afraid for their own safety and lives. The priests and high priest, Ahimelech assisted David and were slaughtered by King Saul despite their explanation about not knowing that David was a fugitive and that they meant the king no harm. King Saul killed them all anyway, except for Abiathar, one of Ahimelech's sons, who escaped to join David (cf 1Samuel 22). King Saul's wrath against anyone who helped David was well known throughout Israel. That is why when David said that there was no one to help him, he meant every word of it.

When applied to Christ, this verse comes alive even more. Trouble surrounded Christ all His earthly life, from the time of His birth to the day he was betrayed and crucified! The cry for God to be near Him to help Him was real, as His humanity was just as real as His deity. Christ prayed constantly to His Heavenly Father for strength and help. There was none to help Christ; even when He asked for help, none came. Remember when Christ was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and He asked His three most confident disciples, Peter, James and John to watch and pray with Him? (cf Matthew 26:36-46). They fell asleep because they were exhausted. The Heavenly Father was there to strengthen and help Christ through His time of great grief. The Bible describes that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." (cf Luke 22:44).

How great and wonderful it is to lean on God and not man for help. How needful it is for all of us as God's children to lean daily on God to see us through life's trials and struggles. We never have to go through life alone. God will always be there for us from the time of our birth! Just as it was true for David and Christ, it is also true for every believer.

**Verse 12 (synthetic parallelism)** – David felt that his enemies were like bulls. They compassed, i.e. surrounded, him and he could not escape. The use of bulls describes his enemies' powerful fierceness and relentless nature like that of bulls when they are riled. They would charge headlong and would not stop until they hit their target. They would gore anyone who stands in their path. They were strong, as David described in the next line. They

were like the strong bulls of Bashan. Bashan was a mountainous region with rich fertile land. The bulls that lived there were strong and very rugged from walking the mountainous terrain day after day. They would also be fat and huge due to the fertile land they worked in. Therefore, they would have the reputation of being stronger than the bulls that worked in the plains or flat ground. David's enemies behaved like the Bashan bulls and were constantly besetting or besieging him. They not only surrounded him but they were enclosing him as well. The circle was getting smaller and tighter! They were near to capturing and killing him. They were furious and fearsome in their demeanour with only one goal in mind . . . to kill David!

The enemies of Christ were also like these bulls. They would include the Sanhedrin council made up of the high priests, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes and elders. They were indeed powerful men wielding great power given by the Roman kings. They answered only to these and the provincial kings such as Herod, Pilate, Festus and Agrippa. The Sanhedrin Council was given absolute power to rule their own people with their own rules, albeit rules guided by Roman laws. They tried Jesus with a mocked trial and presented false witnesses in order to condemn Him in their "kangaroo court"! They forced Pilate to crucify Christ by manipulating the mob. Indeed they were like the strong bulls of Bashan, fat and fierce and powerful! They cornered Christ and crucified Him.

**Verse 13** (emblematic parallelism) – From behaving like bulls, David here described his enemies using the imagery of lions. These enemies had their mouths opened wide like ravening and roaring lions. The word "ravening" means "to pluck to pieces", i.e. very hungry lions with their mouths opened ready to devour their prey! The word "roaring" means "moaning". These lions were growling loudly and they had their mouths opened ready to devour David. David was close to capture and death.

Did the enemies of Christ not instigate the mob to shout "crucify Him" repeatedly? They were like ravening and roaring lions with their mouths wide open that could not wait to devour Christ. They wanted Christ dead as soon as possible. They screamed into the ears of Pilate to crucify Christ! They got what they wished for!

[to be continued]