

Psalms 22-23

Three Psalms about Messiah

23 The Shepherd and the sheep

24 The Sovereign Crowned

22 The Servant Suffering

David wrote in a way that was personal to him, and has integrity at that level. He uses poetic language, with strong metaphors, to describe his external and internal experiences. It should be read in that way and not converted into prose – this is a basic rule for reading the Psalms and similar literature, e.g. Job 38.

David had many distressing experiences. In some cases e.g. Psalms 3, 18, 51, we know the background, but not here.

There are **a couple of clues**:

- It was composed **for public use**, addressed to the choir director, and therefore from the period after he was crowned king.
- **It begins as a lament and ends in praise.** It was set to a tune “The hind of the morning”. This suggests that it was not “downbeat” and that the emphasis of the Psalm is at the end rather than the beginning.

David also wrote as a prophet and his life was prophetic of Jesus the Messiah – see Acts 2: 29-30, cf Psalm 16.

Some of the **language** he uses goes **far beyond his own experience** and **points to Jesus**. This is **the main way of interpreting this Psalm**.

There are **remarkable predictions about the last events in the life of Jesus, fulfilled in detail**

v1/Matt. 27:46, Mark 15:34, v7/Luke 23:35, Matt: 27: 39, Mark 15:29, v8/Matt. 27: 43, v15/John 19:28, v16/Matt. 27:35, John 20: 25, v17/Luke 23:27 and 35, v18/Matt. 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:24, v22/Hebrews 2:12, and v24/Hebrews 5:7.

There are **two sections**:

- 1) Lament** 1- 21
- 2) Response** 22-31

Section 1 is a revelation of the physical and emotional and spiritual suffering of the Messiah.

His suffering was unique in its purpose and depth, and has its focus in Gethsemane and in his torture and death, including the sense of desolation with which the Psalm begins.

Every aspect of this suffering was necessary for our full salvation – justification Romans 4:25-5:1, forgiveness and cleansing 1John 1:9, healing and deliverance Matt. 8: 16-17, 1Peter 2:24.

Read this Psalm using Isaiah 53 as a commentary.

It is also a revelation of his full humanity, so we can identify with and learn from his response. We have to live with the fact that He was fully human and fully God at the same time – a true mystery. **The question “Why” is deeper than the intellect – beware of dealing with it at an inappropriate level.**

Debate with God is permissible in times of confusion and distress.

Notice the **thought flow**:

“My God, my God, **why** have you forsaken me?” 1-2.

“**Yet** You are holy ... our fathers trusted ... and were not put to shame” 3-5.

“**But** I am a worm ... despised by the people” 6-8.

“**Yet** You are the one who brought me from the womb” 8-10.

“Be not far from me ... **for ... for ... for**” 11-18.

“**But** You O LORD ... O You my help ... You answer me” 19-21.

Jesus’ cries in the Garden and from the cross were real, not reading a script, Hebrews 5: 7-9.

Section 2 is the response to God’s answer to his prayer.

There is a sudden change in mood at verse 22. **We have moved from crucifixion to resurrection.**

Resurrection was Jesus’ vindication, the Father’s crowning declaration that He was satisfied with the obedience and sacrificial death of his Son, Acts 2:24 and 30-31, Rom. 1: 3-4, Eph. 1:19-21, Heb. 13:20, Rev. 1:5.

He has been heard on account of his godly fear, v23-24 cf Heb. 5:7.

His isolation is ended; He is in company with his brothers v22-23 cf Heb. 2: 10-12a.

He is worshipping with God’s people v25 cf Heb. 2: 12b.

Salvation has been released for Israel v23 and the nations v26-27, cf Isaiah 53: 10-12.

God will be glorified v28-31. Jesus’ suffering and resurrection will usher in the Kingdom of God. The effects will reverberate to the end of time, to the glory of God the Father, Phil. 2: 5-11, 1Cor. 15: 21-28.