

Psalm 22 – John Karmelich

1. Welcome to a Study of Psalm 22.
 - a) Psalm 22 happens to be my favorite of all the Psalms, so I wrote on this one as a separate study.
 - i) One of these days, Lord willing, I'll write a commentary on all the Psalms. ☺
 - ii) For now I'm just going to write about my favorite one!
 - b) The focus of this study on Psalm 22 as prophecy.
 - i) That means a study of Psalm 22 as it predicts the events around the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - ii) I take the argument that the entire Psalm is about "The Cross".
 - iii) The primary focus of this study is on the prophetic aspects of the Psalm.
 - c) It is important to state you can study Psalm 22 from other views as well.
 - i) You can study Psalm 22 in context to what "David was going through" at the time he wrote it.
 - ii) You can study as it applies to your life today.
 - iii) I'll mention some of those as we go, but again, the focus of this study is on Psalm 22 as it is prophetic of the events of the Cross.
 - iv) With that stated, let's get started.
2. Psalm 22, Introduction: For the director of music. To the tune of "The Doe of the Morning." A psalm of David.
 - a) If you read through the Psalms in the bible, you will notice some short, introductory notes written before the first verse of the Psalm.
 - b) Many of them were set to music, as was this Psalm.
 - c) Remember David is "King David", who lived around 1,000 BC. Most of his life is described in 1st and 2nd Samuel, as well as elsewhere in the bible.
 - d) It is probable that David wrote a song called "The Doe of the Morning", or it was some other tune at that time. The main point is that David wrote the Psalm.
 - e) There is no other biblical reference to the "Doe of the Morning", so it is probably some melody known at that time.
3. Psalm 22, Verse 1, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?
 - a) When Jesus was on the cross, he quoted the first sentence of Verse 1 of Psalm 22. (Reference: Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34).
 - i) Despite the fact Jesus was in terrible pain and suffering, he took the time and trouble to quote the opening line of Psalm 22.
 - b) There was a common practice of Jewish rabbis of that time that applies here:
 - i) When a rabbi wanted his students to study a passage of the bible, he would quote one verse of that passage. The rabbi would then expect his students to go home, go find that passage, and then study the section around it.
 - ii) It is my argument that Jesus is doing the same thing here.
 - iii) Jesus is specifically quoting the opening verse of Psalm 22 from the cross.
 - iv) He wants us to understand Psalm 22 in connection to the events of the cross.
 - v) Jesus wants us to understand that Psalm 22 is prophetic about the events of the cross itself.
 - vi) Psalm 22 is written as if Jesus himself wrote that Psalm from the cross!
 - vii) At the same time, you have to remember Psalm 22 was written about 1,000 years prior to the events of the cross.

- c) One of the most important aspects to understand about the cross is the idea of separation.
 - i) The true pain of the cross was not just the physical pain, but also the pain of separation from God the Father.
 - ii) Remember that Jesus did not begin to exist when he was born to Mary and Joseph.
 - iii) Jesus always existed. He was always with the Father.
 - a) The Gospel of John opens with: In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1, NIV)
 - b) Further, John said, "The Word became flesh" to verify that John was talking about Jesus and nicknamed Jesus "The Word".
 - iv) Even during the time Jesus walked the earth He did the will of his father.
 - a) Jesus told his disciples shortly before the events of the cross: If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. (John 15:10 NIV)
 - b) My simple point is that Jesus was always "connected" with God the Father.
 - v) The only exception to Jesus being "connected" to God the Father was the 3 hours on the cross!
 - vi) Why? Because that is the time when God the Father had to turn his back on Jesus.
 - a) The prophet Habakkuk has an interesting comment about God the Father and the concept of sin.
 - b) "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong." (Habakkuk 1:13a)
 - c) If Jesus was to pay the price for sin, God had to turn away.
 - d) Thus Jesus and God the Father were "separated" for the time span when Jesus hung on the cross!
 - d) Which leads us back to Verse 1.
 - i) The point of Verse 1 is that it reads "like" Jesus is crying out to God the Father.
 - ii) This was the first time in Jesus' life that he was separated from God the Father. You can read Verse 1 from the standpoint of Jesus feeling the separation from God the Father for the first and only time in history. Thus he cries out in that pain.
 - iii) I argue that the pain of separation hurt far worse than the physical pain of the suffering of the cross.
 - iv) As the old saying goes, it wasn't the nails that held Jesus to the cross, but the love for you and me!
4. Verse 2: O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent.
- a) The verse mentions both "day and night".
 - b) The time span Jesus hung on the cross was in the daytime. From studying the Gospel accounts of the day of crucifixion, you can tell that the time of the cross was during the daylight hours. (References: Study Matthew 27, Mark 15, and John 18:28).
 - c) With that in mind, what does the bible say about part of the time span that Jesus was on the cross?
 - i) "From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land." (Mathew 27:45 NIV)
 - ii) In fact, the next verse in Matthew is the one where Jesus cries out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
 - iii) Therefore, the 3-hour time span is both "day" (daytime) and "night" as Matthew 27:45 says, "darkness came over the whole land".

- d) Now let's read Verse 2 of Psalm 22 again: O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent. (Psalm 22:2 NIV)
- i) Isn't it an interesting coincidence that Verse 2 of Psalm 22 mentions "day and night" in the same sentence? Initially it sounds like David is saying that all day and all night he was crying out to the Lord. Reading it in context of the Cross, you now have a whole new understanding of Verse 2 of this Psalm.
 - ii) It is referring to "day and night" in the same 3-hour time span.
- e) The verse also mentions Jesus "crying out" to the father in Verse 2.
- i) Again, we are reading of Jesus' pain of separation from God the Father.
 - ii) The verse mentions God the Father's silence as God must "turn his back" on sin, as referenced in Habakkuk 1:13.
5. Verse 3: Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel. ⁴ In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. ⁵ They cried to you and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.
- a) This verse, along with the next several verses, remind us that God keeps his promises.
 - b) Why does David, (and Jesus prophetically) cry out?
 - c) Let's talk about the personal application first, and then get back to "the cross":
 - i) During the difficult moments of life, it is essential to remember the unconditional promises of God.
 - ii) God promises us eternal life. As long as you are putting your trust in Jesus, there is nothing you can do to change that fact. What is eternity in comparison to your time on earth? What is pain in comparison to the joy of eternity?
 - iii) I am by no way condoning suicide to get into heaven, nor am I saying that your pain is not "real" because you are a Christian.
 - iv) My point is the times of pain cause us to have doubts about our faith. God allows suffering in our life in order to test our faith. It is as if God is saying to us during those times, "Do you trust me? Do you really trust me?"
 - v) It is during those times that it is important to remember the unconditional promises of God. God states in Romans 8:28 that all things happen to us for a reason. That means all the events of our lives are "God-filtered" for His purpose. God may, or may not let us in on that purpose, but there is a purpose nonetheless.
 - d) Which leads us back to this set of verses. Notice that the despair and pain of Verses 1 and 2 cause the writer of the Psalm to focus on the promises of God in Verses 3-5.
 - i) It is as if the writer is saying, "God, in past times, those who trusted in you were saved despite the pain they have gone through. I am trusting in those same promises right now, even though I don't know what is going to happen to me."
 - ii) I take the view that Jesus "thought those thoughts" at this moment.
 - a) Remember Jesus was separated from God the Father for this 3-hour span.
 - b) Therefore, Jesus "comforted himself" by remembering God's promises.
 - c) It is a model for us, during those difficult times, to keep the eternal focus, still have joy in hearts and still praise God despite the pain of the moment.
6. Verse 6: But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people.
- a) This may be my favorite verse in Psalm 22. It is wonderful once you study the meaning of the word "worm" here in Verse 6.
 - b) The Hebrew word for worm is "to-laf".
 - i) A "tolaf" is a red worm. In fact red-dye was made from the "tolaf" worm.
 - ii) Do you know how these worms die? It's a great story!
 - a) They cling to the side of tree.
 - b) Then they have children and then they die.
 - c) The baby worms live by feeding off the body of the dead parent.

- iii) That's a great word picture. What did Jesus say we are to do with his dead body that also hung from a tree? ""Take and eat; this is my body." (Matt. 26:26 NIV)"
- iv) Those baby worms are "living" off the body and blood of the dead worm that is hanging on a tree!
- v) When the worm dies, it becomes very white like snowflakes.
 - a) Remember what did Isaiah said about our sins: "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins (like the living tolarf worm) are like scarlet (red in color), they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18 NIV)
 - b) That tiny, insignificant little tolarf worm is a wonderful picture of what Jesus did for us on the cross!
- c) As to the rest of Verse 6, "scorned by men and despised by the people", it is pretty self-explanatory. It deals with the fact that Jesus was rejected by most of Israel other than a handful of followers.
 - i) You have to remember that Jews of that day wanted a "ruling messiah (king)", not one who would die for their sins.
 - ii) I suspect that if Jesus used his miraculous power to overthrow Rome, the vast majority of Jews would have accepted him as the Messiah. If that happened, Jesus could not have died for the sins of the world.
 - iii) Since Jews of that day already believed they were going to heaven for "being good people", they didn't need someone to die for their sins.
 - iv) By the way, that same misconception is true with most non-Jews today. Ask most people if they are going to heaven, they will say yes because they are a "good person". I'm convinced that is Satan's greatest lie.
 - v) God is perfect. A perfect God demands perfection to spend eternity with Him. Therefore, a perfect "substitute" is needed to pay the price for our sins.
- 7. Verse 7: All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: ⁸ "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."
 - a) These verses are direct predictions of events that happened right around Jesus at the cross. This verse in particular, along with some other verses coming up, speak of the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish people.
 - i) When Jesus was dying at the cross, there were bystanders hurling insults at him.
 - b) It is almost as if rejection "wasn't enough". There had to be people at the cross hurling insults. Remember that the expectations of the Messiah were one who was going to overthrow Rome. When Jesus "didn't accomplish that", there was anger at Him.
 - i) "When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him." (Matthew 27:47-49 NIV)
 - c) Remember that 4-5 days prior to the Cross, a large crowd was cheering Jesus on "Palm Sunday", hoping he was the Messiah. Now, the only people at the cross were those who came to insult Jesus (other than a few women followers and the disciple John).
- 8. Verse 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 upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God.
 - a) Just because the Jewish people rejected Jesus, doesn't mean he's not the Messiah.
 - i) In human terms, a person is only a king or a president if the people accept them. Jesus is divinely appointed, whether people accept Him or not.
 - a) God the Father gives Jesus all authority. There is not much we can do to change that. ☺
 - b) "Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18 NIV)

- c) Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, (John 5:22 NIV)
 - d) Jesus said, "The one who sent me (God the Father) is with me (Jesus); he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." (John 8:29 NIV)
 - b) It is important to understand that Jesus wasn't "born" in the same sense that we are. Jesus always existed. Jesus "allowed himself" to come into human form as an innocent baby to a poor Jewish couple.
 - i) This verse discusses the fact that the God of the Universe was put into the trust of a poor Jewish couple for his survival!
 - ii) One of the mysteries of Christianity is Jesus' knowledge of his mission before the "dove" ascended upon him to begin his ministry.
 - a) Joseph and Mary were told Jesus was the Messiah because an angel told them He would have the "throne of his father David" (Ref.: Luke 1:32). That is a title associated with the promise made to King David about a coming king that would live forever. (See 2nd Samuel 7:12-16).
 - b) The only clue we have is that when Jesus was a young boy he made the statement of "being about my father's business" (Luke 2:49).
 - c) On a different note, you can read these verses as Jesus reminding himself what is important. The pain of the cross is one of separation from God the Father.
 - i) Remember that one of two times the bible records that Jesus wept is over the fact the Nation of Israel corporately rejected him. (Luke 19:41). Jesus weeping wasn't a feeling of "woe is me, they don't like me." It was the realization of the eternal punishment they will receive for that rejection.
 - ii) That is the attitude Jesus desires for us to have. He wants us to see people not as having faults or "too bad for them". Jesus desire was that they turn their ways and live forever. That is the "heart" that He desires for us to have toward others.
9. Verse 11: Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.
- a) The more I read this Psalm, the more I am convinced that the pain of separation is greater than all the physical pain Jesus had received.
 - b) The verse mentions, "trouble is near". I believe the trouble refers to the "bulls and lions" of the next two verses, which I'll discuss next.
10. Verse 12: Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
- a) I have been told that if you alone in a bull ring with a bunch of bulls, they will form a circle and surround you. They will keep circling, looking for a reason to attack. Think about that word-picture and reread Verse 12.
 - b) Many commentators see this reference to demonic influences at the foot of the cross.
 - i) At the time David wrote this Psalm, bulls were used as sacrifices to pagan gods by the local Canaanites.
 - ii) So if that is true, why were demonic forces at the cross? What did they want?
 - iii) Remember that the fundamental purpose of Satan is to stop, prevent, and slow-down God's plan of redemption.
 - iv) I believe by the time of the cross, Satan understood Jesus' purpose and mission.
 - v) Remember that when Satan tempted Jesus (Matthew 4, Luke 4), an overriding theme of the temptations was to get Jesus to take a "short cut". It is as if Satan was saying, "You don't have to go to the cross, just showoff your power as God and everyone will believe you". The problem with that idea is that it avoids God-The-Father's will for Jesus. That "plan" avoids the price to be paid for sin.

- vi) Which leads back to the events of the cross. There were people at the foot of the cross hurling insults at him. The cry of these insults were, "Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." (Mark 15:32). It is the same demonic concept that Satan tried earlier. It is the idea of "tempting" Jesus to avoid the pain of the cross and show off his power."
 - a) That is why I believe there were demonic forces working through people hurling insults at Jesus at this moment. That ties to this "bull" reference.
11. Verse 13: Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me.
- a) OK John, if the bulls represent demons, who do the lions represent? ☺
 - i) A clue to this word-picture is to think of the nickname for lions: "King of the Beasts". Lions are associated with kings. Lion statues are common by thrones.
 - b) With that in mind, I believe this verse ties to the Roman soldiers and the Roman government authority in the rejection of Jesus.
 - i) The Cross wasn't just a "Jewish" rejection, but also that of the Roman authorities.
 - ii) The Roman authorities, from Pontius Pilate on downward, agreed to the crucifixion. One of the lessons for us to learn from Pilate is "neutrality" is not allowed on Jesus. One is either be "for" or "against" Jesus.
 - c) There is a difficult concept to grasp here of "personal responsibility" mixed with "God knows all things". God the Father knew in advance that the Jewish nation along with the Roman leadership would reject Jesus. Yet, despite that knowledge in advance, they are still accountable for their actions.
 - i) The same goes with people today. God knows in advance who will accept Jesus and who will not. Yet, God still holds us accountable for that decision.
 - ii) It is something from a human perspective that cannot be reconciled.
 - iii) It reminds me of the expression: "A God that can be fully understood is not a god worth worshipping". One of the reasons we turn to God is that we don't comprehend all things.
12. Verse 14: I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.
- a) The phrase "poured out like water" is a word picture of rejection. It means to be discarded like a half-empty glass of water that no one wants to finish.
 - b) Much of these two verses focus on a physical description of the pain of the cross.
 - i) Part of the physical pain is when one hangs on the cross, the body weight causes the bones to go out of joint. Remember David wrote this about 1,000 years before crucifixion was ever invented!
 - ii) Verse 15 mentions his strength drying up from the pain.
 - a) The actual death of crucifixion comes from suffocation. The pain of hanging on a cross makes it difficult to take a breath. It also causes dehydration. Verse 15 describes that dehydration.
 - c) Verse 14 also mentions "my heart has turned to wax".
 - i) This is not a literal reference, but a word picture. The next phrase emphasizes that fact as it says, "it (my heart)" has melted away within me".
 - ii) One of the interesting events of the Cross is Pilate ordered all the men sentenced to death by the cross to have their legs broken to hasten their death. (John 19:31). Remember that death came from suffocation. On the cross, one has to "pull themselves up" on the foot-nails in order to take a breath. To break their legs would hasten the death.

- iii) Now let's read Verse 33 and 34 of John: "But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water." (John 19:33-34, NIV).
 - iv) First of all, isn't it interesting the soldier disobeyed a direct commandment of his superior officer? Let's face it, the soldier could have broken Jesus' legs even though he was dead just to obey the command. John states in Verse 36 that the reasons the bones were left unbroken is to fulfill prophecy (That prophecy has to do with the Passover lamb. Ref.: Exodus 12:46).
 - v) Let's get back to the Psalm. The Psalm said, "My heart turns to wax".
 - a) The soldier threw a spear into Jesus side, and blood and water flowed out. I've heard a doctor's description of crucifixion in that Jesus died of internal bleeding. In a sense, "Jesus died of a broken heart". Thus the word-picture of the Psalm, "my heart turns to wax (melted)."
13. Verse 16: Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet.
- a) OK, we're back to the animal kingdom. ☺ We've had bulls and lions, and now we have dogs. Who do the "dog's" represent?
 - b) It is helpful to know that in Hebrew, the word "dog" and the word for Gentile (non-Jew) is the same root word. It is not just a Gentile, but also one who doesn't believe in God.
 - c) Some believe it refers to the Roman soldiers who actually drive in the nails and gambled for his clothes. That would explain the connection of the first part of this verse with the second part of this verse. It was Roman soldiers that actually drove the nails into Jesus' hands and feet.
 - d) Notice the last part of Verse 16 says, "They have pierced my hands and my feet"
 - i) Even if you think some of the references in this Psalm to the cross are a stretch of the imagination, you have to admit this phrase is impressive.
 - ii) The original concept of crucifixion was invented around 600 BC by the Phoenicians. When they did it, they just impaled someone on a pole.
 - a) The idea of nailing one's hands and feet to wood was invented by the Romans. Remember David penned this Psalm around 1,000 BC. Even if you don't trust that date, it is common knowledge that the entire Old Testament was translated into Greek 150-200BC. When that translation was made, the concept of crucifixion still was unheard of. Yet David specifically wrote, "they have pierced my hands and my feet."
 - iii) I always liked the "first person" aspect of that phrase. It is as if David himself prophetically understood what was going to happen and put himself in that place.
14. Verse 17: I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me.
- a) If you read through all of the New Testament, you never read of a physical description of Jesus. You don't know if he was tall or short. You don't know the tone of his skin or the color of his hair. You don't know if he was very skinny or overweight.
 - i) I always suspected Jesus was just "average looking" and nothing special.
 - ii) This verse is not talking about the fact that Jesus was so skinny, he could count all of his bones. Our Lord and Savior was not anorexic. ☺
 - iii) Which leads us back to this description of "I can count all my bones".
 - iv) Reading this in context of the New Testament, I don't believe this is Jesus' seeing all of his bones. I believe it refers again, to the fact that none of Jesus bones were broken. That is why the text says, "I can count all of my bones". I discussed earlier how the Roman soldier did not break Jesus' legs despite the command of his superior officers.

- v) To quote the Gospel of John again, "These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," (John 19:36 NIV)
 - vi) John is referring to the Exodus requirement that no bones be broken on the sacrificial lambs of Exodus. I believe the fact that the Psalm is saying "I (we) can count all of my bones" refers to the fact that none were broken.
 - b) This verse is combined with the final phrase of, "People stare and gloat over me".
 - i) The "Cross" was a combination of physical suffering and rejection.
 - ii) The pain Jesus' felt was a combination of all the physical torture of being on the cross and at the same time, being rejected and gloated over by bystanders.
 - iii) Think about this verse of Psalm 22 in light of what people were saying about Jesus at the cross:
 - a) "In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him." (Matthew 27:41-42 NIV)
 - b) The fulfilled prophecy is the New Testament word "mock" in comparison to "gloat" as found in this verse of Psalm 22.
15. Verse 18: They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.
- a) For those of you having doubts that Psalm 22 is about the Cross, Verse 18 should be my closing argument. ☺
 - i) When you read through the Gospels, you discover that the soldiers gambled ("cast lots") for Jesus' clothing at the cross. The Roman soldiers were paid for their "work" of crucifixion by receiving whatever the condemned man still owned.
 - a) It's real tempting to digress here. Here were these soldiers, staring at the creator of the universe, but more interested in his material clothing!
 - ii) Verse 16 said, "They have pierced my hands and feet". David wrote that almost a 1,000 years before crucifixion was invented. That should convince you. If that's not enough, think about Verse 18 in light of the New Testament.
 - b) The apostle John even stated that Verse 18 is a direct fulfillment of prophecy:
 - i) "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did. (John 19:24 NIV)
 - a) The "scripture to be fulfilled" is Verse 18 of Psalm 22.
 - b) John claims that Verse 18 is prophetic of Jesus.
 - c) So you see, it's not just me claiming Psalm 22 is about Jesus. ☺
16. Verse 19: But you, O LORD, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me.
- a) The Psalm changes tone in Verse 19.
 - b) Verse 17-18 focuses on the people "around" the cross. Those verses focus on the "mockers" and those gambling for his clothes.
 - c) In Verse 19 we are back to Jesus himself. It is as if we are reading his thoughts.
 - i) Notice the focus of this verse is not "woe is me", but the focus is on "Lord help me!" That is a good lesson for us to learn during the difficult times. There is nothing wrong with crying out to the Lord to rescue you in difficult times. God wants our focus on Him, and not ourselves.
 - d) What impresses me about this verse is the writer refers to God as His strength.
 - i) One of the great mistakes we make as Christians is to make "little gods" out of self-discipline. We think that if we just "try harder", we can do God's will.

- ii) We forget easily that our strength to accomplish anything comes from God.
 - a) This does not mean we can ignore sleep, eat all junk food and say, “Well, God is my strength, I can do anything through him!”
 - b) God gave us a body and he expects us to treat it well.
 - c) At the same time, one has to remember that all we accomplish for God does not come through our human strength, but through God working in us and through us.
 - e) Let’s get back to this verse. How does Jesus deal with the physical pain and the pain of rejection of those around him?
 - i) He doesn’t say, “Woe is me”. He doesn’t say, “mind over matter”. He doesn’t say, “If I just try hard enough, I can ignore the pain”. He prays to God the Father to give him the strength to handle the situation.
 - ii) That is a great model prayer for us during the difficult times: “Lord, give me the strength to handle the situation. Give me the discernment to make the right decisions through this situation. Let not the lessons of this situation be wasted.”
 - f) In a sense, this prayer is answered. The prayer says, “Come quickly to help me”.
 - i) Think about this verse: “Pilate was surprised to hear that he (Jesus) was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died.” (Mark 15:44 NIV)
 - a) Let’s face it. Pilate was probably an expert on crucifixion. He had sentenced enough men to crucifixion that he knew how long it takes.
 - b) He was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead.
 - c) Now think about the prayer of this Psalm that says, “Come quickly to help me”. God the Father “took his life” relatively quickly as opposed to letting Jesus suffer longer. It is my theory that God the Father answered Jesus’ prayer of “come quickly” by 1) accepting Jesus sacrifice and 2) not letting Jesus suffer “longer than necessary”.
 - d) Don’t get me wrong. Jesus still hung there long enough to give the Gospels validity. I’m simply arguing that God the Father did not let Jesus suffer longer than what was necessary. It was an answer to prayer.
17. Verse 20: Deliver my life from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs.²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.
- a) Verse 20 continues the prayer of Verse 19.
 - i) These two verses are full of “word-pictures” of those who condemned Jesus.
 - b) We’re back to two previous references: The “dogs” and the “lions”, as well as a new one, “the horns of the wild oxen”. Let’s review each one:
 - i) The “dogs” refer to “Gentiles, i.e., non Jews” at the cross. It most likely refers to the Roman soldiers.
 - ii) The “lions” is a reference to those in government authority. “Lion” is the king of the beasts, and is associated with Royalty. It refers to those who sentenced Jesus to death.
 - iii) The “new” word picture reference is “The horns of the wild oxen”.
 - a) In the Old Testament, “horns” are associated with power. Animals that have horns use their horns as their source of strength and power.
 - b) This may refer to the same Government leaders, using a different word-picture. It may refer to the Jewish leaders who condemn Jesus, or the Roman leaders. Either way, it refers to the leaders who condemned Him.

18. Verse 22: I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.
- a) The tone changes in Verse 22 from the “negative” to the “positive”.
 - b) The Psalm spent three verses asking God the Father to rescue Him from the physical pain of the external circumstances (i.e., those who mocked him and condemned him to death)
 - c) Now the Psalm focuses on eternal rewards. The Psalm is now heaven-focused.
 - d) It is important to understand the Jewish concept that anybody who is hung from a tree is eternally condemned. (Reference: Deuteronomy 21:23) I believe one of the reasons the Jewish leadership wanted Jesus crucified as because that “counts” as being hung from a tree as wood is a tree-based product.
 - i) The religious leaders believed if Jesus hung from a tree, that would negate his claims of being the Messiah as you are biblically “cursed” if hung on a tree.
 - e) With that in mind, visualize Jesus thinking, “I will declare your name to my brothers, in the congregation I will praise you.” Translation: Jesus will be resurrected.
 - i) Yes, Jesus is condemned by “hanging on a tree”. He is cursed with sin.
 - a) Theologically speaking, remember that Jesus became sin at that moment.
 - b) “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2nd Corinthians 5:21 NIV)
 - c) Because God the Father accepted Jesus sacrifice as sin, that is why Jesus was resurrected. That is why Jesus could declare, prophetically through this Psalm that he will “live again”.
 - f) The Psalm declares that “I (Jesus) will declare your name to my brothers;”
 - i) So who are Jesus brothers? Jesus answered that question himself:
 - a) “He (Jesus) replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” (Matthew 12:48-50, NIV)
 - ii) The interesting part about this Psalm is that it does not say, I “did” declare your name, but I “will” declare your name. That is why I believe it ties to the resurrected Jesus in heaven declaring, “who is His brothers” on judgment day.
 - g) One can also make a theological argument that Verse 22 ties more to the role of the Holy Spirit than it does Jesus himself.
 - i) The primary role of the Holy Spirit is to give glory to God and to get people’s hearts to turn to Jesus. You can re-read Verse 22 from that perspective.
19. Verse 23: You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
- a) I just argued a moment ago that you could read Verse 22 from the perspective of the Holy Spirit. I’ll argue that Verse 23 is more so to that fact.
 - b) Again, the role of the Holy Spirit is to get our focus upon God the Father and Jesus.
 - i) The Holy Spirit never focuses on himself, but on God the Father and Jesus.
 - ii) In this context, it is almost as if The Holy Spirit is a “church choir director” saying, “Don’t sing about me, I’m just here trying to lead the choir to sing about God”.
 - iii) In that context, you can read Verse 23 as if it is the Holy Spirit asking for praise for what Jesus did on the cross!
 - c) This verse specifically focuses on the nation of Israel.
 - i) Here is Jesus being crucified. The verse is saying to the Jewish nation in a sense, “You know, despite what you did, it is not too late.” Salvation is offered to the Jewish nation first and then to all non-Jewish people. (See Romans 1:16) As long as you are alive, it is never too later to turn your heart to Jesus.

- d) Back to the Psalm itself, I want you to notice the progression:
 - i) First we had a number of verses focusing on the individual pain of the cross.
 - ii) Then we had some verses focusing on the outsiders mocking Him.
 - iii) Then we had a “first person” prayer asking God to rescue Him.
 - iv) Now we have a “group prayer”. It is almost as if the writer is saying, “Hey, I’ve let go of my hurt. I’ve praised God, and now I want everyone to join me in praising God.”
 - a) The application is: We often do our “best witnessing” for God once we’ve let go of our pain and anger. Once we’ve got the right perspective and our focus is back on God and not our problem, then we can encourage others to join in our prayer for God.
 - b) I’m not saying we have to wait for the “perfect moment” to be a witness to others. I’m saying that people watch us when we are in pain. If they can see the joy in our hearts despite the negative circumstances, then we become great living witnesses for God.
20. Verse 24: For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.
- a) The perspective of Verse 24 is now on God the Father.
 - i) It is still about the cross, but the perspective has changed.
 - ii) The point of Verse 24 is that God the Father accepted Jesus sacrifice.
 - b) Notice Verse 24 uses the term “the afflicted one”.
 - i) One can read this verse referring to anyone who is afflicted, but reading it in context of the entire Psalm, one can see how it refers to a specific person, i.e., Jesus on the cross.
 - c) A few verses back, we had Jesus praying to asking God to “rescue” him in Verse 19.
 - i) This verse is an answer to that prayer. It is God saying, “Yes I have heard that prayer and yes I am answering that prayer”.
 - d) There is a nice personal application to this as well.
 - i) The prayer is specifically about Jesus, but the bible also tells us that God does hear the prayers of the afflicted. It is a reminder that during our times of suffering, God is there listening to our prayers. Take comfort in that!
 - ii) “So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him; For He hears the cry of the afflicted.” (Job 34:28 NKJV)
 - iii) The next question is, “If God loves us so much, why doesn’t God immediately come and rescue us out of all that pain? Tough question! ☺
 - a) First of all, if God gave us nothing but happy times and no suffering, people would become Christians not to worship God, but to avoid pain.
 - b) Second, there is usually a lot we learn from those tough times. Most of us have had our greatest growth during the difficult times of our life.
 - c) All of our suffering is “God-filtered”. It is allowed for a purpose. That is the idea behind Romans 8:28 that says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28 NIV)
 - (1) John’s loose translation: Everything that happens to those who give their life for Jesus is “God-filtered” for a purpose.”
21. Verse 25: From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you will I fulfill my vows.
- a) We’re back to Jesus “speaking” from the cross. Let me paraphrase:
 - i) “When we get to heaven, everyone will praise Jesus in gratitude for the price he paid for sins.”

- b) The last part of the verse says, "I fulfill my vows". Remember that Jesus understood that he was to be crucified. He stated so many times in the Gospels. The "vow" was Jesus agreed to pay the price for sins and God the Father accepted that payment.
 - c) The first part of this verse says, "From you comes the theme of my praise".
 - i) The "you" refers to God the Father. It was "His idea" for Jesus to pay the price. The "theme" is the whole idea of the plan to have Jesus die for our sins.
 - d) This verse is a "hint" of Revelation Chapter 5.
 - i) It is a ceremony where Jesus is given the title deed to the earth (and all that is created for that matter.) As someone with a real estate background, I like to refer to Revelation, Chapter 5 as "The close of escrow". ☺
 - ii) Revelation 5 speaks of a "great assembly" as does Verse 25 of Psalm 22. I visualize millions or billions of people in heaven watching this great ceremony in Rev. 5.
 - iii) It is a ceremony where "no one was found who was worthy" (Rev. 5:4) other than Jesus himself. It speaks of Jesus being the only one to fully obey the law and is "worthy" to receive the title deed.
 - a) In that sense, no one is "good enough" to be in heaven based on keeping the law. Then Jesus shows us being compared to a "slain lamb" (Rev. 5:6) who was found "worthy" of God.
 - e) With all of that in mind, reread this verse. This Verse in Psalm 22 is talking about Jesus will fulfill his vow (to pay the price on the cross) knowing that it is all part of God's redemptive plan for mankind.
22. Verse 26: The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the LORD will praise him--may your hearts live forever!
- a) The first part of this verse says, "The poor will eat and be satisfied."
 - i) Let's tie this to something Jesus taught, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6 NIV)
 - ii) With "Matthew in mind", I don't think Verse 26 is talking about physical hunger. I believe the "satisfaction" refers to those who are seeking God.
 - iii) Remember that the Cross refers to a time of separation between God the Father and God the Son. God the Father "turned his back" on Jesus as He cannot look upon sin. Jesus became sin at this point for our sakes.
 - iv) This verse can be read in the idea of Jesus thinking, "I am here in all my suffering, but I think about the fact that I will be resurrected. My sacrifice will be accepted. I will be satisfied despite my pain of the moment."
 - b) These verses of praising God are reminders that during times of suffering, we are to be "heaven focused". It is the reminder that our rewards are in heaven and not on earth.
 - i) Paul said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2nd Cor. 4:17 NKJV).
 - ii) If you think of all the physical pain Paul went through, it is incredible that he uses the term "light affliction". This is a man who was beaten, stoned, left for dead, etc. Yet he refers to all of this as "light affliction". Because Paul was "eternal-reward" focused, the pain is bearable. The eternal rewards are far longer than any suffering we have in this life. That is the idea of the "forever" term used as the last word in this verse of the Psalm.
23. Verse 27: All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, ²⁸ for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations. ²⁹ All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him--those who cannot keep themselves alive.
- a) There is some point in future time where everybody bows down to God. That is what these three verses are talking about.
 - i) We either do it by force or by free choice.

- b) Revelation 20:11 refers to a “great white throne judgment” where nonbelievers are judged. I believe it is at this time where everyone bows to God.
 - c) Paul also mentioned this fact. “It is written: “As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.”” (Romans 14:11 NIV)
 - d) There are those who argue that Psalm 22 is not talking about the Messiah, but just God the Father, or they argue it is only talking about David’s suffering before God.
 - i) Personally, I can’t find any scripture references to David having his hands and feet pierced or gambling for his clothing, so that kills that argument. ☺
 - ii) Second, there are all sorts of Old Testament predictions talking of a future king (The word Messiah is Hebrew for king) who would rule over all the nations. That is a promise made to King David in 2nd Samuel 7:13. It refers to a descendant of David. Jesus was from the lineage of King David.
24. Verse 30: Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. ³¹ They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn-- for he has done it.
- a) These two verses speak of the future reputation of Jesus “post-cross”.
 - i) Prior to the cross, only those in Israel at that time had heard of him.
 - ii) “Post-Cross”, his name spread worldwide. That is what these verses predict.
 - b) When you think of the “God of Israel, “pre-Jesus”, information about our God pretty much stuck to Jewish people. I’m sure some of the surrounding nations heard about the Jewish God, but there was no real spread of Judaism outside of Israel, other than to direct decedents of Jewish people. Then Jesus came along. ☺
 - i) Now the “God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” is worldwide spanning the globe.
 - c) It’s sort of funny to think about the fact that we Christians serve a God we’ve never seen nor audibly heard. Yet, we’re willing to bet our eternal salvation this story is true.
 - d) I want to end with a discussion of the last phrase, “he has done it”.
 - i) Do you remember what were Jesus’ final words on the Cross?
 - a) They were, “it is finished”. (John 19:30 NIV)
 - ii) Remember that Jesus from the cross made a handful of statements:
 - a) The first one was, “My God My God why have you forsaken me?”
 - b) The last one he said is “It is finished”.
 - c) Some of you are familiar with the Greek word “Tetelistai”, meaning it is finished. It also means, paid in full, done deal. It’s all over. It is like paying off your mortgage. The receipt from the bank says, “paid in full”.
 - iii) Which leads us back to the last phrase of Psalm 22.
 - a) In the Pre-Christian Greek translation of Psalm 22, the last word used is “Tetelistai”. This is called the Septuagint translation. It was written between 100-200 BC.
 - b) Jesus last words on the cross were “It is finished, i.e., “Tetelistai”.
 - c) Both Psalm 22 and Jesus’ last words on the cross both end with the idea that it is completed. The price for sins has been paid. (Pause) Done deal!
 - iv) With that in mind, think of the next Psalm, which is Psalm 23.
 - a) Psalm 23 is the “Lord is My Shepherd” Psalm. It is the most famous Psalm in the bible. The emphasis is on the peace we have with God.
 - b) You can’t have Psalm 23 without Psalm 22 coming first.
 - c) The price was paid for our sins in Psalm 22. Then comes the peace of God.
 - d) Psalm 22 ends with “Tetelistai”. It is done. The price has been paid for.
 - e) Then and only then, can we have the peace of God as Psalm 23 describes.

25. OK, let's wrap this up:
- a) Psalm 22 focuses primarily on the events of the cross.
 - b) The last few verses focus on the results of the cross.
 - c) Because the price was paid on the Cross, the name of Jesus was spread around the world. Eventually every knee will bow to Jesus, either by force or by free will.
 - d) The choice is ours. The price has been paid. Tetelistai!
26. Let's pray: Father, we thank you that the price has been paid. Help us during our own struggles to keep that perspective. That everything this life has to offer doesn't compare with the riches that you have prepared for us for all of eternity. Help us to keep that focus as we show our gratitude by serving you. Guide us for Your glory. In Jesus name we pray, Amen!

Supplement: Bibliography

"If I have seen further, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants."
(Isaac Newton)

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Even more than any commentary, I give God credit for any and all inspiration of these studies. The text itself is far greater than any commentaries listed here. With that said, I do enjoy reading and listening to other perspectives. Some of the ideas mentioned in this commentary come from comments made from one of these sources. Here are the commentaries I have used in preparation of this lesson, in no particular order.

1. Commentary on Psalm 22 by Jon Curson. This is from the "Thru-The-Bible" Audio Commentary in MP3® format. Copyright © 2004 Searchlight Ministry. Ordering and download information is available at <http://www.joncourson.com/>. Jon Curson also did a more recent sermon on Psalm 22. At this time, it is available for download at this time at http://www.thewordfortoday.org/ccm_audio.cfm?MessageTypeID=3
2. The Suffering Savior (A commentary on Psalm 22) by Ray Steadman. This is available to read at <http://www.pbc.org/dp/stedman/psalms/0401.html> Copyright © 1995 Discovery Publishing, a ministry of Peninsula Bible Church.
3. The Expositor's Bible Encyclopedia, Zondervan Publications, (via CD-ROM 1998 release). This is a multi-volume encyclopedia with notes on every verse of the Bible. (It is available at Christian bookstores.) Paperback books are published on individual Bible books from this source.
4. The Life Application Bible, Zondervan Publishing <http://www.zondervanbibles.com/0310919770.htm>
5. The John MacArthur Study Bible, NKJV - This is the NKJV of the bible with commentary notes on most scripture verses. (Available at Christian Bookstores.)