

PSALM 22 – The Sufferings of the Messiah (part 4)

Verse 23 (synonymous parallelism) – David called upon all who fear the LORD to praise Him, especially the sons of Jacob. They had the best reason to praise the LORD, more than anyone else. They were the people of God entrusted with the only dwelling place of the LORD on earth, the Tabernacle. They had the Word of God. They had the priesthood whereby their sins could be forgiven when they offered the animal sacrifices by faith. Israel, the sons of Jacob had everything to succeed and be a godly witness of God's grace in their lives to a world in darkness. Why did God call Israel the seed of Jacob and not Israel? The reason is probably because the LORD wanted Israel to think of her humble beginning. Remembering one's humble beginnings evokes thankfulness which turns to praise! Israel needed to fear the LORD and to stop sinning. Using synonymous parallelism, the LORD called all the seed of Israel to glorify Him and to fear Him. The name "Israel" is used to remind her how far she had come - from the days when Jacob was just one man to a nation at this point in time!

Verse 24 (synthetic parallelism) – God hath not despised (held in contempt) nor abhorred (counted filthy or made detestable) the affliction of the afflicted. Sometimes help from God seems to be slow in coming, and believers feel that the LORD might have deserted them or does not care about them. The LORD does not hold in contempt His children's afflictions, neither does He count their afflictions detestable in His sight. Believers must patiently wait for the LORD's timing, for He always knows what is best for His children. He does not hide His face from them either. Whenever they cry to Him, He will always hear; except when believers regard iniquities in their hearts. The LORD will never leave His children to be afflicted and not do anything about it. All our cries are heard by God.

Applied to Christ, this verse surely describes His time of suffering before and during the crucifixion. He was afflicted because of our sins. God never despised or abhorred what Christ endured for us. When Christ cried to God, He was heard!

Verse 25 (synthetic parallelism) – David says here that his praise shall be of God in the great congregation. David will praise God for all that He has done in his life. He was not ashamed of his God. He dared and wanted to tell the great congregation, i.e. Israel, that God is faithful and He is real. He can be real to all who trust in Him and receive Christ as their Lord and Saviour. David added that he would pay his vows before them that fear Him. The vows here would be the praises and testimonies that David probably promised the LORD that he would tell to the world when God delivered him. The ones who feared Him would be those who were also believers like himself. They would understand. They would be encouraged. They too would want to have such an intimate relationship with the LORD. They would not be cast down. They would be lifted up but they had to wait patiently for the LORD to deliver, just as He delivered David.

Verse 26 (synthetic parallelism) – The proud think highly of themselves and will not acknowledge that it is the LORD who had been gracious to them, who enabled them to be victorious over their enemies. They would attribute their success and victories to their own strength and doing. They would not be satisfied with what they have attained. They are greedy for more, their pride and ego egging them further to conquer more and more. But the meek shall eat and be satisfied. They trust in the LORD to provide. Whatever the LORD provides, they are thankful because they know that the LORD knows what is best for them spiritually. The meek understand that if the LORD wants them to have more, He will give. When that happens, the meek know that their spiritual lives will be able to cope with the increase of wealth. Even when wealth does not come, they are contented because godliness with contentment is great gain for them. They do not want their spiritual walk with the LORD to be jeopardised through wealth gained by all means possible instead of trusting in the LORD to provide in His time! Daniel and Joseph waited and never pursued fame and fortune. They went after spirituality only. When fame and fortune came in God's time, their spiritual lives were not ruined by them. They continued to trust in the LORD in times of want as well as in plenty.

The ones who seek the LORD will praise Him. The word "seek" has the idea of one who seeks to worship. Praising the LORD becomes a constant focus. When believers enter into God's house with this motivation, they would never grow tired of praising Him. Their relationship with the LORD is vibrant and alive. Their praises are fresh and new every morning! "Their heart shall live forever" means that they will praise the LORD forever. As long as their relationship with the LORD remains, their praises will constantly flow from their hearts and lives and lips. This was David's personal experience and he described this as the norm for every believer.

Verse 27 (synonymous parallelism) -- The final result of praising the LORD is that all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD. To praise the LORD is to magnify Him and not self. He increases and man decreases. When man does not praise the LORD, he magnifies self or another man. This is the inevitable result for not praising the LORD! It is so important to praise the LORD and understand that one day the ends of the world would remember Him and turn to Him. God's people must be encouraged because of this truth. What does it mean to remember and turn to the LORD? It means that all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before the LORD. This usage of synonymous parallelism emphasises the LORD and the response of the people of the world to the LORD one day. Praise is worship and worship is praise. The two cannot be separated. They are intricately intertwined and must co-exist in the believer's life. To praise and to worship God will be every believer's eternal joyous activities. A true child of God can never be tired of worshipping and praising the LORD! It is never mundane whenever he praises the LORD in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

Verse 28 (synonymous parallelism) – This verse describes the kingdom of the LORD. The kindreds from all nations worshipping the LORD are the kingdom of the LORD. The kingdom is not about a place but the people of God in that place which is heaven. He will govern, i.e. rule, the nations. Believers from all nations will worship the LORD. The LORD will govern them in perfect peace and justice.

Verse 29 (synthetic parallelism) – All they that be fat upon the earth shall eat and worship. The word "fat" means "rich and wealthy." It cannot be understood literally. It is true that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle but with God all things are possible. Here is an example that there will be rich people on earth who will become genuine believers. They are not penalized or marginalized by the LORD for being rich just as God will show His grace not only upon those who are materially poor. The doctrine of election is that the LORD chooses whom He has determined before the foundation of the world. The poor will also come to believe. All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him. The phrase "go down to the dust" refers to those who are close to death probably due to abject poverty, sickness and anguish of mind and spirit. Both the rich and the poor will worship before the LORD, for all of them are His children. None can keep alive his own soul. Whether one is poor or very rich, he has no power to keep alive his own soul. When it is time to leave this world, no amount of money can buy one extra second. **Verse 30** (synthetic parallelism) – A seed shall serve him, i.e. Christ. It shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation. In other words, the LORD will ensure that throughout the ages there will be a seed of Christ. There will be believers who will serve the LORD. God will always have His remnant. Generation after generation the LORD will always have true genuine believers. It is a question of which part of the earth or which country or at which age there might be more believers due to a revival. The light of Christ will continue to shine. At the second coming of the LORD Jesus Christ it will shine the brightest. Every eye shall see Him and confess Him as LORD.

Verse 31 (synthetic parallelism) – Believers from all the nations of the earth will come and declare God's righteousness to a people that shall be born. It is the LORD who has done this! This is the fulfilment of the Great Commission given by Christ before His ascension. In every generation there will be testimonies and witnessing no matter how terrifying and intense the persecution might be. The LORD will never allow the light of the gospel to be snuffed out by the evil one. When the present generation praises the LORD, it impacts a new generation that is born into this world! They will be told that it is the LORD who has done this. It includes creation, salvation and all that is taught in Holy Scriptures. They will be taught that salvation is found in none other than the LORD Jesus Christ! Amen.