

The Suffering, Praise and Posterity of the Messiah - Pt. 1

Psalm 22:1-2

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Deer of the Dawn." a Psalm of David.

¹ *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?
Why are You so far from helping Me,
And from the words of My groaning?*

² *O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;
And in the night season, and am not silent.*

Psalm 22 is one of the more well-known Psalm having several verses that our Lord spoke while hanging of Calvary's cross at the time of His great sacrifice for His people. Just to make note, as we usually do, the Psalm is addressed to the "chief musician", a term that is used a number of times throughout the Psalms and has given rise to infinite conjecture. It may be either upon the *death (muth)* of the *fool (labben)*, as an anagram on Nabal, or as Gesenius, "to be chanted by boys with virgins' voices," *i.e.*, in the soprano. It may also refer to the more prominent section of the choir or to the stringed instruments that are more prominently heard. It has also been thought to be the general term by which all stringed instruments are described. "The chief musician on *Neginoth*" was, therefore, the conductor of that portion of the temple choir who played upon the stringed instruments, and who are mentioned in Ps. 68:25. Whatever it's true sense, it assuredly calls for special attention in order to draw the listeners attention to the text of the piece.

This psalm presents David's readers with a great contrast in mood. Lament characterizes the first 21 verses, while praise and thanksgiving describe the last 10 verses. Prayer accounts for this dramatic shift from lament to praise. It is the story of first being God-forsaken and then God-found and filled. It was applied immediately to David and ultimately to the Greater David, Messiah. The NT contains 15 messianic quotations of or allusions to this psalm, leading some in the early church to label it "the fifth gospel."

There are a number of commentators who have outlined the Psalm somewhat akin to the following:

1. The Psalmist's Hopelessness (22:1-10)
 1. His Hopelessness and National History (22:1-5)
 2. His Hopelessness and Natal History (22:6-10)
2. The Psalmist's Prayer (22:11-21)
 1. A No-Help Outlook (22:11-18)
 2. A Divine-Help Outlook (22:19-21)
3. The Psalmist's Testimonies and Worship (22:22-31)

1. An Individual Precipitation of Praise (22:22–25)
2. A Corporate Perpetuation of Praise (22:26–31)

Rather than take the time to go over each point, let's just take a walk-thru of the Psalm as a whole. The "Chief Musician" may also be a reference to the individual who oversaw all of the musicians for David in the choir and instrumental aspect of the worship. This was quite an influential position and referred to often by David and the rest of the Kings of Israel as what might have been called a "Chief Seat" in both the Temple and the Synagogue (after the Captivity). The Hebrew could actually be translated in this fashion. This rendering makes some sense as it was one of the reproaches urged by Our Lord against the scribes and Pharisees that they loved the chief seats in the synagogues (Mt 23:6; Mk 12:39; Lk 11:43; 20:46). These were special seats set in front of the ark containing the Scriptures and of the reader's platform, and facing the congregation. They were specially reserved for those who were held in the highest honor in the congregation. There were seventy-one such seats in the great synagogue of Alexandria, which were occupied by the members of the great Council in that city. At any rate, it surely was something that David wished to use to draw the attention of his readers.

Note that David makes reference to "The Deer of the Dawn" in the Title... This unique phrase in the superscription is probably best taken as a tune designation. There are several other Psalm that have similar (though not identical references as well. Having referred, it seems to the leader of a group of musicians or the chief group itself, it makes sense that David would refer to the tune to which he wished the content placed. We

We can also think about the flow of the Psalm is wonderful, speaking, as it does, of Christ's sufferings and coming glory.

1. The sufferings, 1–21, are a graphic portrayal of crucifixion (cf. Mt 27:27–50),
2. And are followed by the glory, 22–31 which is a bold statement of the glory that is our Lord Jesus' alone.

See the next portion of this study in our next post...