

Enthroned on the Praises of Israel

Psalm 22

Series: Psalms
Sermon by Ken Puls
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Isaiah 62:1–7 — **Call to Worship.**

Open your Bibles this morning to Psalm 22. If you are using one of the Bibles provided on the backs of the chairs in front you, Psalm 22 is found on page 457.

Psalm 22 is perhaps one of the most profound and far reaching psalms in the Bible. It's a psalm that begins in the depths of great anguish and lament—and a psalm that soars to the heights of glory and praise. It is deeply personal, serving as a great help and comfort to those facing trials and opposition. And at the same time it is highly prophetic, taking us to Jesus—to the cross and into the heart of our Savior as He faced suffering and agony as He bore the sins of His people and died that we might be reconciled and brought near to God.

The psalm is filled with many profound truths that point us to Christ and Him crucified—far more than we will be able to glean in our time this morning. And so I will be focusing on one truth in particular. Verse 3 declares of God:

Psalms 22:3 ... you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

Some translations say here: "**inhabiting** the praises of Israel."

This is an amazing statement!

Our God inhabits praise!

And so the question I want to answer from this text today is—HOW?

In what way is our Sovereign God enthroned or seated on our praise?
How does a holy God draw near and inhabit the worship of His people?

This morning we will look at the psalm as a whole and specifically at the connection between God and our praise.

If you're taking notes, I have three main points:

- I. David's Cry for Deliverance—the opening context of the psalm
- II. The Coming Deliverer—the New Testament fulfillment of the psalm
- III. The Culmination of Praise—the glorious conclusion to the psalm

Let's begin by reading the psalm together. [READ Psalm 22, ESV]

TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO THE DOE OF THE DAWN.
A PSALM OF DAVID.

Psalms 22:1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.

Psalms 22:3 Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

4 In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.

5 To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

Psalms 22:6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

8 "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

Psalms 22:9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.

10 On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother's womb you have been my God.

11 Be not far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.

Psalms 22:12 Many bulls encompass me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

13 they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

Psalms 22:14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;

15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

Psalms 22:16 For dogs encompass me;
 a company of evildoers encircles me;
 they have pierced my hands and feet—
 17 I can count all my bones—
 they stare and gloat over me;
 18 they divide my garments among them,
 and for my clothing they cast lots.
 Psalms 22:19 But you, O LORD, do not be far off!
 O you my help, come quickly to my aid!
 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,
 my precious life from the power of the dog!
 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!
 You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!
 Psalms 22:22 I will tell of your name to my brothers;
 in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!
 All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,
 and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
 24 For he has not despised or abhorred
 the affliction of the afflicted,
 and he has not hidden his face from him,
 but has heard, when he cried to him.
 Psalms 22:25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
 my vows I will perform before those who fear him.
 26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
 those who seek him shall praise the LORD!
 May your hearts live forever!
 Psalms 22:27 All the ends of the earth shall remember
 and turn to the LORD,
 and all the families of the nations
 shall worship before you.
 28 For kingship belongs to the LORD,
 and he rules over the nations.
 Psalms 22:29 All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
 before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
 even the one who could not keep himself alive.
 30 Posterity shall serve him;
 it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
 31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
 that he has done it.

This is the Word of the Lord—Thanks be to God.

I. David's Cry for Deliverance—the opening context of the psalm

The psalm begins with David's cry for deliverance. It is not clear what occasion or event stirred David to write these words, but it is apparent from the opening lines that he is in great distress.

Part 1 of the psalm (the first 21 verses) is a lament as David tries to make sense of his suffering.

What is most intriguing about David's words is how he faces his initial feelings of abandonment and unrest. He prays fervently, openly sharing his heart with God, seeking, questioning, while holding fast to God, reminding himself of truth, preaching truth to his soul.

The psalm opens in dialog—in a back and forth exchange—as David looks at himself in his immediate distress but then looks to God to find hope and comfort.

Look now again at the opening of the psalm. We read in the inscription:

Psalms 22 TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO THE DOE OF THE DAWN.
A PSALM OF DAVID.

The inscription informs us that this is a psalm of David. Though it is a personal song that begins with intense grief, it is given to the choirmaster—intended for use in the public worship of God's people. "The Doe of the Dawn" is most likely the name of a well-known tune that accompanied the words.

PART 1: Prayer for Deliverance

The psalm opens in the first two verses with questions. David feels abandoned. He is asking: Where is God in what I am facing? Why does He not answer me when I call to Him?

Psalms 22:1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
 Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?
2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
 and by night, but I find no rest.

In verses 3–5 he begins to find his answer. He remembers what is true of God. God is holy. He always does what is right. He sits enthroned on Israel's praise.

Psalms 22:3 Yet you are holy,
 enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In verses 4–5 David looks back on the history of Israel and remembers the mighty works of God—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Joseph, Moses and the Exodus, the Conquest of the Promised Land, the time of the Judges—and he confesses:

Psalm 22:4 In you our fathers trusted;
 they trusted, and you delivered them.
5 To you they cried and were rescued;
 in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

Psalms 22:16 For dogs encompass me;
 a company of evildoers encircles me;
 they have **pierced** my hands and feet —
 17 I can count all my bones—
 they stare and gloat over me;
 18 they divide my garments among them,
 and for my clothing they cast lots.

Then in 22:19 he repeats his prayer from verse 11

Psalms 22:19 But you, O LORD, do not be far off!
 O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

He looks to God for deliverance—repeating in a poetic chiasm the four descriptions of his enemies:

20 Deliver my soul from **the sword**,
 my precious life from the power of **the dog!**
 21 Save me from the mouth of **the lion!**
 You have rescued me from the horns of **the wild oxen!**

Do you see what David is doing here? Do you see how he stands up to adversity?

David continually brings his thinking back to the faithfulness of God and prays for His nearness and help. For the believer who is suffering, this psalm is a wonderful model of prayer and meditation. David is facing real grief and anguish—feeling real distress and agony—real question about: “Where is God in this?” “Why doesn’t God hear me and answer?”

And yet he anchors his soul in truth, trusting and resting in God for hope, holding firm to his faith, even when he is despised and rejected for doing so.

Psalm 22 is a prayer for God to come near. It is a plea that He would reach down and rescue.

In both verse 11 and verse 19 David specifically asks God to come, to be near him.

Psalm 22:11 Be not far from me.
 Psalm 22:19 Do not be far off.

So how does God answer David’s prayer?

The words David used as he voiced his prayer to God point us to God’s answer as we hear those words echoed in the New Testament. Though the closing verses of the Psalm 22 (which we will consider in a moment) testify that God gave David an immediate answer that caused him to rejoice and sing praise in the gathered worship of Israel, his prayer was answered in its fullness in the coming of Jesus. Jesus is the One who came near.

T—Jesus came down to rescue us and bring us into His Kingdom ...

This bring us to—

II. The Coming Deliverer—the New Testament fulfillment of the psalm

Psalms 22 points us to the Savior. Jesus came and dwelt with His people.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

As David looked to God for hope, he was foretelling the heart and mission of the Redeemer.

Jesus said in—

Luke 24:44 ... that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

And this includes these words spoken by David here in this psalm.

There are many connections in Psalm 22 to Jesus and the cross.

Consider for a moment some of the parallels with Isaiah's prophecies and the Gospels—

1) Dividing His garments and casting lots

Psalms 22:18 they **divide my garments** among them,
and for my clothing they **cast lots**.

Matthew 27:35 And when they had crucified him, they **divided his garments** among them by **casting lots**.

2) Dried up and Thirsty

Psalms 22:15 my strength is **dried up** like a potsherd, and my **tongue sticks** to my jaws;

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "**I thirst.**"

3) Despised and Rejected

Psalms 22:6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and **despised** by the people.

Isaiah 53:3 He was **despised** and **rejected** by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was **despised**, and we esteemed him not.

4) Mocked and Derided

Psalm 22:7 All who see me **mock** me; they make mouths at me; they **wag their heads**;

Matthew 27:39 And those who passed by **derided** him, **wagging their heads**

We see the parallel in the very words hurled at both David and Jesus—

Psalm 22:8 “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

Matthew 27:41–43 So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

5) In the opening cry of the psalm

Psalms 22:1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

David answered this question in verse 3 of Psalm 22. He said:

Psalms 22:3 Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

God is holy. He cannot look upon sin.

Habakkuk 1:13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong,

And so when Jesus took upon Himself the sins of His people, His Father turned His face away. David’s cry and David’s hope in this psalm came to mind and to the lips of Jesus while he was suffering on the cross for us. David only felt abandonment, though God was always with him. Jesus actually experienced separation from His holy Father, enduring His wrath due our sin that we might be cleansed and reconciled and brought near.

Jesus was smitten by God and afflicted—

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
 he has put him to grief;
 when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
 he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
 the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

6) We see a parallel in the final declaration of the psalm

Psalm 22:31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
 that **he has done it**.

John 19:30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "**It is finished**," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

As we will see in a moment, the psalm ends in victory with a final word—one word in the Hebrew. It is translated in the ESV as **He has done it!** But it can also be translated: **It is finished!**

Psalm 22 points us to the completed work of Christ on the cross.

This bring us to the conclusion of Psalm 22—

III. **The Culmination of Praise—the glorious conclusion to the psalm**

As God answers David's prayer, the psalm ends with a crescendo of praise that resounds throughout space and time. David had said of God in verse 3 that He is enthroned on Israel's praise. The word for *enthroned* is found often in the Old Testament translated also as "dwell, sit, inhabit."

It is used in verses such as—

Deuteronomy 6:7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you **sit** in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

2 Samuel 7:1–2 Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I **dwell** in a house of cedar, but the ark of God **dwells** in a tent."

1 Kings 1:46 Solomon **sits** on the royal throne.

2 Chronicles 6:21 And listen to the pleas of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen from heaven your **dwelling** place, and when you hear, forgive.

Psalms 2:4 He who **sits** in the heavens laughs;
 the Lord holds them in derision.

Psalms 9:7 But the LORD **sits enthroned** forever;
 he has established his throne for justice,

Psalms 110:1 The LORD says to my Lord:
 “**Sit** at my right hand,
 until I make your enemies your footstool.”

Psalms 113:5 Who is like the LORD our God,
 who is **seated** on high,

God has ordained praise as His throne—His dwelling place.

1) In the Old Testament He designated the place of His praise as Zion (the gathered people of God).

Psalms 76:2 His abode has been established in Salem,
 his dwelling place in Zion.

We hear the call to praise throughout the psalms:

Psalms 9:11 Sing praises to the LORD, who sits enthroned in Zion!
 Tell among the peoples his deeds!

Psalms 65:1 Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion,
 and to you shall vows be performed.

Psalms 102:21 that they may declare in Zion the name of the LORD,
 and in Jerusalem his praise,

Psalms 135:21 Blessed be the LORD from Zion,
 he who dwells in Jerusalem!
 Praise the LORD!

Isaiah encouraged the people to pray to God in—

Isaiah 62:7 and give him no rest
 until he establishes Jerusalem
 and makes it a praise in the earth.

How did God accomplish this? Again—He made His people a praise by sending His Son to save us.

2) God redeemed Zion by sending Jesus our King

Psalms 2:6 “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

It was to Zion that Jesus came to suffer and to die for His people. He came into our midst as the Lamb to be slain. As prayer and praise arose in the temple in Jerusalem, interrupted by the rending of the veil, the King of kings was close at hand, answering the very cries for salvation that had echoed for generations in their songs.

- 3) In the Old Testament the place of God's praise was represented in a physical city Jerusalem and a physical temple

But now the place of God's praise is the hearts and lives of His people, especially as we are joined together as His church.

2 Corinthians 6:16 . . . For we are the **temple** of the living God; as God said, "I will make my **dwelling** among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ephesians 2:21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy **temple** in the Lord.

We are the ones God has rescued to be a people of praise.

Hebrews 13:15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

And God is magnifying His praise by multiplying His people.

- 4) God is extending His praise as His gospel goes out—conquering hearts and lives

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying,
"Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth."

Notice how Psalm 22 ends.

PART 2: Praise for Deliverance

Verse 22 is the turning point in this psalm.

Psalms 22:22 I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

So take heart today!

When David speaks of God as inhabiting the praise of His people, he is saying that God is with us, near at hand. We do not worship a God who is far off and unreachable. He is indeed high and lifted up, holy and transcendent, seated in the heavens. But He is also gracious, merciful and near. He has provided a way for us to draw near through the death of His Son. He is God with us, present in our midst, identifying with us as brothers, suffering and dying in our place.

When we cry to Him, He is an ever-present help in time of trouble; He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. And when we lift up our voice in worship, adoring Him, exalting Him, He is present with us, enthroned on our praise, His glory and power on display in our lives.

God is always present with us; even when we can't discern it, even when we fail to acknowledge Him. But in our praise, we are reminded of His nearness and we are reminded of His Lordship.

Our very worship, lifting our hearts and voices, reflects the reality that He is high and lifted up, exalted above all things. He is the Sovereign One seated on His throne. But our worship as well reflects the reality that God is here. His throne—His dwelling place—is with us. His glory is manifest in us—we are made to glorify Him. He has rescued and redeemed us. The power of His gospel has changed us. His Spirit indwells us. He has made us to the praise of His glorious grace and He is enthroned upon praise.

So come to Him today. He is near at hand.
He alone can rescue and make your life a praise.
Trust Him, look to Him, and live for His glory.
May our lives and this church be to His glory
as we declare His praise
here in this place, in our city,
throughout the earth,
and to the next generation.

Let us pray.

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