

CRY OF DESPAIR

I would dare say that the most recognized psalm in the psalter is the 23rd, both in its entirety and for its opening line, "The LORD is my Shepherd..." The runner up, at least for opening line, may be the psalm right before, Psalm 22. Its opening line is so well known because Jesus quoted it as he hung on the cross (Matthew 17:46 and Mark 15:34). We will be focusing on Psalm 22 in this article.

This song is one of the longer ones of Book One (Psalms 1-41) at 31 verses, so we will not have space to include the text here. As always (say it with me), please read and re-read the psalm several times, and meditate on it. Try to imagine what David was going through and the emotions those circumstances stirred within him.

I have separated the song into eight sections, but I encourage you to get to know it so well that you can pick out where David changes thought or moves in a different direction. Hebrew poetry (really most poetry) is written with images through metaphors and other literary concepts. It makes the reader work to understand the picture being painted in their mind by the words on the page.

Here's how I divided the psalm:

- * (1-2) Thoughts of Despair
- * (3-5) Thoughts after Reflection
- * (6-8) What Others May Think About Me (Others' Perspectives)
- * (9-11) What God Thinks About Me (God's Perspective)
- * (12-18) Trials & Tribulation
- * (19-21) Prayer
- * (22-24) Praise
- * (25-31) Ultimate Justice

Some of my thoughts after reflecting on Psalm 22:

1. This song is like a roller coaster which makes it a great analogy to life - one moment I may be plummeting into the depths of despair, then riding high and shouting praises to God soon after.
2. How people view me or speak about me does not define who I am nor does it determine my value. I (and you) have value and purpose because we are made in God's image and he loves us.
3. Remember who can truly deliver us through any circumstance.
4. Remember to give glory and honor to whom they are due.
5. Keep in mind the promises that God and Jesus have made. They are sure and trustworthy.

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