
For the Chief Musician; set to "The Doe of the Morning." A Psalm by David.

PSALM 22: 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?

Under great affliction and distress, the psalmist prays unto God, Psa 22:1-3; appeals to God's wonted kindness in behalf of his people, Psa 22:4, Psa 22:5; relates the insults that he received, Psa 22:6-8; mentions the goodness of God to him in his youth, as a reason why he should expect help now, Psa 22:9-11; details his sufferings, and the indignities offered to him, Psa 22:12-18, prays with the confidence of being heard and delivered, Psa 22:19-24; praises God. and foretells the conversion of the nations to the true religion, Psa 22:25-31.

The title of this Psalm, To the chief Musician upon Ajeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David, has given rise to many conjectures. The words אֵילֵת הַשָּׁחַר ayeleth hashshachar are translated in the margin, "the hind of the morning;" but what was this? Was it the name of a musical instrument? or of a tune? or of a band of music? Calmet argues for the last, and translates "A Psalm of David, addressed to the Musicmaster who presides over the Band called the Morning Hind." This is more likely than any of the other conjectures I have seen. But ayeleth hashshachar may be the name of the Psalm itself, for it was customary among the Asiatics to give names to their poetic compositions which often bore no relation to the subject itself. Mr. Harmer and others have collected a few instances from D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*. I could add many more from MSS. in my own collection: - thus Saady calls a famous miscellaneous work of his *Gulisstan*, "The Country of Roses," or, "The Rose Garden:" and yet there is nothing relative to such a country, nor concerning roses nor rose gardens, in the book. Another is called *Negeristan*, "The Gallery of Pictures;" yet no picture gallery is mentioned. Another *Beharistan*, "The Spring Season;" *Bostan*, "The Garden;" *Anvar Soheely*, "The Light of Canopus;" *Bahar Danush*, "The Garden of Knowledge;" *Tuhfit Almumeneen*, "The Gift of the Faithful," a treatise on medicine; *Kemeea Isadut*, "The Alchymy of Life;" *Mukhzeen al Asrar*, "The Magazine of Secrets;" *Sulselet al Zahab*, "The Golden Chain;" *Zuhfit al Abrar*, "The Rosary of the Pious;" *Merat al Asrar*, "The Mirror of Secrets;" *Durj al Durar*, "The most precious Jewels" *Deru Majlis*, "The Jewel of the Assembly;" *Al Bordah*, "The Variegated Garment;" a poem written by *Al Basiree*, in praise of the Mohammedan religion, in gratitude for a cure which he believed he received from the prophet who appeared to him in a dream. The poem is written in one hundred and sixty-two couplets, each of which ends with *mim*, the first letter in the name of Mohammed.

Scarcely one of the above titles, and their number might be easily trebled, bears any relation to the subject of the work to which it is prefixed, no more than *Ajeleth Shahar* bears to the matter contained in the twenty-second Psalm. Such titles are of very little importance in themselves; and of no farther use to us than as they serve to distinguish the different books, poems, or Psalms, to which they are prefixed. To me, many seem to have spent their time uselessly in the investigation of such subjects. See my note on 2Sam 1:18 (note).

On the subject of the Psalm itself, there is considerable diversity of opinion:

1. Some referring it all to David;
2. Others referring it all to Christ; and,

3. Some, because of the application of several verses of it to our Lord in his sufferings, take a middle way, and apply it primarily to David, and in a secondary or accommodated sense, to Christ.

Of this opinion was Theodore of Mopsuestia. who gave a very rational account of his own plan of interpretation; for which he was condemned by the second council of Constantinople or fifth Ecumenic council. Grotius and others have nearly copied his plan; and I think, with a little correction, it is the only safe one. That several parts of it relate to David, primarily, there is very little reason to doubt; that several passages may be applied by way of accommodation to our Lord, though originally belonging to and expressing the state of David, may be piously believed; and that it contains portions which are direct prophecies of our Lord's passion, death, and victory, appears too evident to be safely denied. On this plan I propose to treat it in the following paraphrase; keeping it as near to the Gospel standard as I can. Dr. Delaney supposes the Psalm to have been written by David when he was at Mahaniam, the very place where God appeared to Jacob in his distress. See Genesis 22: And on this supposition the third, fourth, and fifth verses may be easily and strikingly illustrated: Our fathers trusted in thee; why may not I? Thou didst deliver Them; why may not I expect deliverance also? They cried unto thee, trusted in thee, and were not confounded; I cry until thee, trust in thee; and why should I be confounded? For thou art the same God, thou changest not; and with thee there is no respect of persons. Thus David encouraged himself in the Lord; and these considerations helped to sustain him in his painful exercises and heavy distresses.

Verse 1

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? - Show me the cause why thou hast abandoned me to my enemies; and why thou seemest to disregard my prayers and cries? For a full illustration of this passage, I beg the reader to refer to my note on Mat 27:46.

The words of my roaring? - יגגתי shaagathi, The Vulgate, Septuagint, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic, with the Anglo-Saxon, make use of terms which may be thus translated: "My sins (or foolishness) are the cause why deliverance is so far from me." It appears that these versions have read יגגתי shegagathi, "my sin of ignorance," instead of יגגתי shaagathi, "my roaring;" but no MS. extant supports this reading.

PSALM 22: 2 My God, I cry in the daytime, but you don't answer; in the night season, and am not silent.

Verse 2

I cry in the day-time, and in the night-season - This seems to be David's own experience; and the words seem to refer to his own case alone. Though I am not heard, and thou appearest to forget or abandon me; yet I continue to cry both day and night after thy salvation.

PSALM 22: 3 But you are holy, you who inhabit the praises of Israel.

Verse 3

But thou art holy - Though I be not heard, even while I cry earnestly, yet I cannot impute any fault or unkindness to my Maker; for thou art holy. and canst do nothing but what is right. This is the language of profound resignation, in trials the most difficult to be borne.

Inhabitest the praises of Israel - Thou dwellest in the sanctuary where the praises, thanksgivings, and sacrifices of thy people are continually offered.

PSALM 22: 4 Our fathers trusted in you. They trusted, and you delivered them.

Verse 4

Our fathers trusted in thee - David is supposed to have been, at the time of composing this Psalm, at Mahanaim, where Jacob was once in such great distress; where he wrestled with the angel, and was so signally blessed. David might well allude to this circumstance in order to strengthen his faith in God. I am now in the place where God so signally blessed the head and father of our tribes. I wrestle with God, as he did; may I not expect similar success?

PSALM 22: 5 They cried to you, and were delivered. They trusted in you, and were not disappointed.

Verse 5

They cried unto thee - So do I: They were delivered; so may I: They trusted in thee; I also trust in thee. And were not confounded; and is it likely that I shall be put to confusion?

PSALM 22: 6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people.

Verse 6

But I am a worm, and no man - I can see no sense in which our Lord could use these terms. David might well use them to express his vileness and worthlessness. The old Psalter gives this a remarkable turn: I am a worme, that es, I am borne of the mayden with outen manseede; and nout man anely, bot god als so: and nevir the latter, I am reprove of men. In spitting, buffetyng, and punging with the thornes and outkasting of folk; for thai chesed Barraban the thefe, and nought me.

PSALM 22: 7 All those who see me mock me. They insult me with their lips. They shake their heads, saying,

Verse 7

Laugh me to scorn - They utterly despised me; set me at naught; treated me with the utmost contempt. Laugh to scorn is so completely antiquated that it should be no longer used; derided, despised, treated with contempt, are much more expressive and are still in common use.

They shoot out the lip, they shake the head - This is applied by St. Matthew, to the conduct of the Jews towards our Lord, when he hung upon the cross; as is also the following verse. But both are primarily true of the insults which David suffered from Shimei and others during the rebellion of Absalom; and, as the cases were so similar, the evangelist thought proper to express a similar conduct to Jesus Christ by the same expressions. These insults our Lord literally received, no doubt David received the same.

PSALM 22: 8 "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him. Let him rescue him, since he delights in him."

PSALM 22: 9 But you brought me out of the womb. You made me trust at my mother's breasts.

Verse 9

But thou art he that took me out of the womb - Thou hast made me; and hast guided and defended me from my earliest infancy.

PSALM 22: 10 I was thrown on you from my mother's womb. You are my God since my mother bore me.

PSALM 22: 11 Don't be far from me, for trouble is near. For there is no one to help.

Verse 11

Be not far from me; for trouble is near - A present God is a present blessing. We always need the Divine help; but more especially when troubles and trials are at hand.

PSALM 22: 12 Many bulls have surrounded me. Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.

Verse 12

Many bulls have compassed me - The bull is the emblem of brutal strength, that gores and tramples down all before it. Such was Absalom, Ahithophel, and others, who rose up in rebellion against David; and such were the Jewish rulers who conspired against Christ.

Strong bulls of Bashan - Bashan was a district beyond Jordan, very fertile, where they were accustomed to fatten cattle, which became, in consequence of the excellent pasture, the largest, as well as the fattest, in the country. See Calmet. All in whose hands were the chief power and influence became David's enemies; for Absalom had stolen away the hearts of all Israel. Against Christ, the chiefs both of Jews and Gentiles were united.

PSALM 22: 13 They open their mouths wide against me, lions tearing prey and roaring.

Verse 13

They gaped upon me - They were fiercely and madly beat on my destruction.

PSALM 22: 14 I am poured out like water. All my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax; it is melted within me.

Verse 14

I am poured out like water - That is, as the old Psalter: Thai rought na mare to sla me than to spil water.

The images in this verse are strongly descriptivr of a person in the deepest distress; whose strength, courage, hope, and expectation of succor and relief, had entirely failed.

Our Lord's sufferings were extreme; but I cannot think there is any sound theologic sense in which these things can be spoken of Christ, either in his agony in the garden, or his death upon the cross.

PSALM 22: 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You have brought me into the dust of death.

Verse 15

My strength is dried up - All these expressions mark a most distressed and hopeless case.

Into the dust of death - This means only that he was apparently brought nigh to the grave, and consequent corruption, this latter David saw; but Jesus Christ never saw corruption.

PSALM 22: 16 For dogs have surrounded me. A company of evildoers have enclosed me. They have pierced my hands and feet.

Verse 16

For dogs have compassed me - This may refer to the Gentiles, the Roman soldiers, and others by whom our Lord was surrounded in his trial, and at his cross.

They pierced my hands and my feet - The other sufferings David, as a type of our Lord, might pass through; but the piercing of the hands and feet was peculiar to our Lord; therefore, this verse may pass for a direct revelavion. Our Lord's hands and feet were pierced when he was nailed to the cross, David's never were pierced.

But there is a various reading here which is of great importance. Instead of כָּאֲרוּ caaru, they pierced, which is what is called the kethib, or marginal reading, and which our translators have followed; the keri or textual reading is כָּאֲרִי caari, as a lion. In support of each reading there are both MSS. and eminent critics. The Chaldee has, "Biting as a lion my hands and my feet;" but the Syriac, Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Arabic read, "they pierced or digged;" and in the Anglo-Saxon the words translate: "They dalve (digged) hands mine, and feet mine."

The Complutensian Polyglot has כָּאֲרוּ caaru, they digged or pierced, in the text; for which it gives כָּרָה carah, to cut, dig, or penetrate, in the margin, as the root whence כָּאֲרוּ is derived. But the Polyglots of Potken, Antwerp, Paris. and London, have כָּאֲרִי caari in the text; and כָּאֲרוּ caaru is referred to in the margin; and this is the case with the most correct Hebrew Bibles. The whole difference here lies between ' yod and ' vau. which might easily be mistaken for each other; the former making like a lion; the latter, they pierced. The latter is to me most evidently the true reading.

PSALM 22: 17 I can count all of my bones. They look and stare at me.

Verse 17

I may tell all my bones - This may refer to the violent extension of his body when the whole of its weight hung upon the nails which attached his hands to the transverse beam of the cross. The body being thus extended, the principal bones became prominent, and easily discernible.

PSALM 22: 18 They divide my garments among them. They cast lots for my clothing.

Verse 18

They part my garments - This could be true in no sense of David. The fact took place at the crucifixion of our Lord. The soldiers divided his upper garment into four parts, each soldier taking a part; but his tunic or inward vestment being without seam, woven in one entire piece, they agreed not to divide, but to cast lots whose the whole should be. Of this scripture the Roman soldiers knew nothing; but they fulfilled it to the letter. This was foreseen by the Spirit of God; and this is a direct revelation concerning Jesus Christ, which impresses the whole account with the broad seal of eternal truth.

PSALM 22: 19 But don't be far off, LORD. You are my help: hurry to help me.

Verse 19

Be not thou far from me - In the first verse he asks, Why hast thou forsaken me? Or, as if astonished at their wickedness, Into what hands hast thou permitted me to fall? Now he prays, Be not far from me. St. Jerome observes here, that it is the humanity of our blessed Lord which speaks to his divinity. Jesus was perfect man; and as man he suffered and died. But this perfect and sinless man could not

have sustained those sufferings so as to make them expiatory had he not been supported by the Divine nature. All the expressions in this Psalm that indicate any weakness as far as it relates to Christ, (and indeed it relates principally to him), are to be understood of the human nature; for, that in him God and man were united, but not confounded, the whole New Testament to me bears evidence, the manhood being a perfect man, the Godhead dwelling bodily in that manhood. Jesus, as Man, was conceived, born, grew up, increased in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man; hungered, thirsted, suffered, and died. Jesus, as God, knew all things, was from the beginning with God, healed the diseased, cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead; calmed the raging of the sea, and laid the tempest by a word; quickened the human nature, raised it from the dead, took it up into heaven, where as the Lamb newly slain, it ever appears in the presence of God for us. These are all Scripture facts. The man Christ Jesus could not work those miracles; the God in that man could not have suffered those sufferings. Yet one person appears to do and suffer all; here then is God manifested in the Flesh.

O my strength - The divinity being the power by which the humanity was sustained in this dreadful conflict.

PSALM 22: 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog.

Verse 20

Deliver my soul from the sword - Deliver נפשי naphshi, my life; save me alive, or raise me again.

My darling - יחידתי yechidathi, my only one. The only human being that was ever produced since the creation, even by the power of God himself, without the agency of man. Adam the first was created out of the dust of the earth; that was his mother; God was the framer. Adam the second was produced in the womb of the virgin; that was his mother. But that which was conceived in her was by the power of the Holy Ghost; hence the man Christ Jesus is the Only Son of God; God is his Father, and he is his Only One.

PSALM 22: 21 Save me from the lion's mouth! Yes, from the horns of the wild oxen, you have answered me.

Verse 21

Save me from the lion's mouth - Probably our Lord here includes his Church with himself. The lion may then mean the Jews; the unicorns, רמים remim (probably the rhinoceros), the Gentiles. For the unicorn, see the note on Num 23:22. There is no quadruped or land animal with one horn only, except the rhinoceros; but there is a marine animal, the narwhal or monodon, a species of whale, that has a very fine curled ivory horn, which projects from its snout. One in my own museum measures seven feet four inches and is very beautiful. Some of these animals have struck their horn through the side of a ship and with it they easily transfix the whale, or any such animal. The old Psalter says, "The unicorn is one of the proudest best that is, so that he will dye for deede if he be haldyn ogayn his wil."

PSALM 22: 22 I will declare your name to my brothers. In the midst of the assembly, I will praise you.

Verse 22

I will declare the name unto my brethren - I will make a complete revelation concerning the God of justice and love, to my disciples; and I will announce to the Jewish people thy merciful design in sending me to be the Savior of the world.

PSALM 22: 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify him! Stand in awe of him, all you descendants of Israel!

Verse 23

Ye that fear the Lord - This is an exhortation to the Jews particularly, to profit by the preaching of the Gospel. Perhaps, by them that fear him, the Gentiles, and particularly the proselytes, may be intended. The Jews are mentioned by name: Glorify him, all ye seed of Jacob; fear him, all ye seed of Israel.

PSALM 22: 24 For he has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, Neither has he hidden his face from him; but when he cried to him, he heard.

Verse 24

For he hath not despised - It is his property to help and save the poor and the humble; and he rejects not the sighings of a contrite heart. Perhaps it may mean, Though ye have despised me in my humiliation, yet God has graciously received me in the character of a sufferer on account of sin; as by that humiliation unto death the great atonement was made for the sin of the world.

PSALM 22: 25 Of you comes my praise in the great assembly. I will pay my vows before those who fear him.

Verse 25

The great congregation - In Psa 22:22 he declares that he will praise God in the midst of the congregation. Here the Jews seem to be intended. In this verse he says he will praise him in the Great Congregation. Here the Gentiles are probably meant. The Jewish nation was but a small number in comparison of the Gentile world. And those of the former who received the Gospel were very few when compared with those among the Gentiles who received the Divine testimony. The one was (for there is scarcely a converted Jew now) קהל kahal, an assembly; the other was, is, and will be increasingly, קהל רב kahal rab, a Great Assembly. Salvation was of the Jews, it is now of the Gentiles.

PSALM 22: 26 The humble shall eat and be satisfied. They shall praise the LORD who seek after him. Let your hearts live forever.

Verse 26

The meek shall eat - עֲנָוִים anavim. the Poor, shall eat. In the true only Sacrifice there shall be such a provision for all believers that they shall have a fullness of joy. Those who offered the sacrifice, fed on what they offered. Jesus, the true Sacrifice, is the bread that came down from heaven; they who eat of this bread shall never die.

PSALM 22: 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD. All the relatives of the nations shall worship before you.

Verse 27

All the ends of the world - The Gospel shall be preached to every nation under heaven; and all the kindred of nations, מִשְׁפְּחוֹת mishpechoth, the families of the nations: not only the nations of the world shall receive the Gospel as a revelation from God, but each family shall embrace it for their own salvation. They shall worship before Jesus the Savior, and through him shall all their praises be offered unto God.

PSALM 22: 28 For the kingdom is the LORD's. He is the ruler over the nations.

Verse 28

The kingdom is the Lord's - That universal sway of the Gospel which in the New Testament is called the kingdom of God; in which all men shall be God's subjects; and righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, be universally diffused.

PSALM 22: 29 All the rich ones of the earth shall eat and worship. All those who go down to the dust shall bow before him, even he who can't keep his soul alive.

Verse 29

All they that be fat upon earth - The rich, the great, the mighty, even princes, governors, and kings, shall embrace the Gospel. They shall count it their greatest honor to be called Christian; to join in the assemblies of his people, to commemorate his sacrificial death, to dispense the word of life, to discourage vice, and to encourage the profession and practice of pure and undefiled religion.

That go down to the dust - Every dying man shall put his trust in Christ, and shall expect glory only through the great Savior of mankind.

None can keep alive his own soul. The Vulgate has: Et anima mea illi vivet, et semen meum serviet ipsi; "and my soul shall live to him, and my seed shall serve him." And with this agree the Syriac, Septuagint, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Anglo-Saxon. The old Psalter follows them closely: And my saule sal lyf til him; and my sede hym sal serve. I believe this to be the true reading. Instead of נפשו naphsho, His soul, some MSS., in accordance with the above ancient versions, have נפשי naphshi, My soul. And instead of לא lo, not, two MSS., with the versions, have לו lo, to Him. And for חיה chiyah, shall vivify, some have יחיה yichyeh, shall live. The text, therefore, should be read, My soul (נפשי naphshi) shall live (לו lo) to him: my seed (זרעי zari) shall serve him. These may be the words of David himself: "I will live to this Savior while I live; and my spiritual posterity shall serve him through all generations."

PSALM 22: 30 Posterity shall serve him. Future generations shall be told about the Lord.

Verse 30

Shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation - They shall be called Christians after the name of Christ.

PSALM 22: 31 They shall come and shall declare his righteousness to a people that shall be born, for he has done it.

Verse 31

Unto a people that shall be born - That is, one generation shall continue to announce unto another the true religion of the Lord Jesus; so that it shall be for ever propagated in the earth. Of his kingdom there shall be no end.