This psalm is preamble with: **To the Chief Musician. Set to ‘The Deer of the Dawn.’ A Psalm of David**. The tune is unknown, but the words point to David’s Greater Son, Jesus the Messiah.

‘This is a gem among the Psalms, peculiarly excellent and remarkable. It contains those deep… and heavy sufferings of Christ, when agonising in the midst of… divine wrath and death which surpass all human thought and comprehension.’ (Martin Luther, cited in Charles Spurgeon)

He speaks about his suffering and the struggle with death that he is going through, as he pleads with God to deliver him from such a death. In the end, his prayers are answered and he ends up declaring that the Lord has answered.

It is not known why, or for wat occasion David wrote this psalm, but he writes about being forsaken by God, possibly as he was surrounded by his enemies, who were persecuting him.

The language used describes a death, not by illness or old age or in battle, but by execution – which is highly significant when seen in the perspective of this psalm being prophetic in regards to the Messiah.

Hebrews 2:12 quotes Psalm 22:22, which is done in terms of Jesus’ death.

Within this psalm there is no reference to sin, or confession for it. nor is there any form of calling a curse upon those who are the writer’s enemies.

In summary, it is a psalm written by a righteous man who was being put to death by wicked men.

**Psalm 22:1-10**

**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me and from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season and am not silent.**

**But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.**

**But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!’**

**But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother’s breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother’s womb You have been My God.**

Despite being scoffed at by his enemies and apparently forsaken by God, David is able to be confident that God had not fully abandoned him.

These opening verses are his cry of distress – divided into two parts, the first being a lament **v1-5**, followed by his confidence **v6-10**.

**v1-5**

**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me and from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season and am not silent.**

David’s sense was that God had withdrawn from him for some reason **v1**, but his hope was that God had previously answered the prayers of his ancestors **v4**.

**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**

Clearly the writer is someone who knows and trusts God, but as he is **forsaken**, he cries out to God in agony – the same words that Jesus deliberately chose during his agony on the cross **Matthew 27:46**.

‘We can be fairly certain that Jesus was meditating on the Old Testament during the hours of his suffering and that he saw his crucifixion as a fulfilment of Psalm 22…’ (Boice)

‘On the cross, a holy transaction took place. God the Father regarded God the Son as if He were a sinner. As the Apostle Paul would later write, God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him **2 Corinthians 5:21**.’ (Guzik)

**O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear**: A further dimension of David’s agony was the fact that he made repeated, constant appeals to God and yet felt utterly unheard.

**But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel** - Yet, David’s confidence came for knowing that God answers prayers. He is holy and set apart from the false gods, as he is both alive and active. The fact that God is enthroned, enables Him to receive praise from His people for answering their prayers.

**Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed** – David is encouraged as he remembers that his own ancestors put their trust in God, they also prayed to Him when they were in trouble and He rescued – **delivered** – them. So David continues to pray.

‘The use of the plural pronoun ‘our fathers’ shows how one with his people Jesus was even on the cross.’ (Spurgeon)

**v6-10**

**But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!’ But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother’s breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother’s womb You have been My God.**

Next there is confidence. Though David says he is scorned by men, he knows that God will not abandon him forever. He laments that men despise him as **a worm** – implying he is defenceless and treated as worthless.

**They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ‘He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him’** – the insults mocked David’s faith as the Lord did not rescue him. **Matthew 27:39-44** includes the same language – those who mocked at the cross fulfilled this prophecy, acknowledging Jesus as the suffering Messiah.

**Out of the womb… from birth… You have been My God**: The Forsaken One is reminded that God has taken care of him since he was born and would continue to look after him now.

**Psalm 22:11-18**

**Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.
For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me.
They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.**

David now laments what he is going through – a struggle with death at the hands of his enemies. He pleads with God not to be far off, as he is helpless.

**v12-15**

**Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.**

David describes the people tormenting Him as **strong bulls of Bashan**, large animals proverbial for their strength. They surround Him and threaten Him.

**I am poured out like water** – because of his enemies’ attacks, David strength was being sapped, in the same way the water is poured away.

**My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me** – Whilst this described the physical endurance’s of David at the time, it is a specific prophecy of the future suffering of the Messiah on the cross.

‘The deliberately awkward and strained position of the crucified man meant that on the cross Jesus could say, ‘**My bones are out of joint**.’ David did not know the practice of crucifixion in his day, but he described the physical agony of it with the accuracy of a prophet of the LORD. There is also some reason to believe (based mainly on **John 19:34**), that on the cross Jesus suffered from a ruptured heart, making the words ‘**My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me**’ also amazingly specific. As was normal for anyone under the agony of crucifixion, Jesus suffered great thirst on the cross - **My tongue clings to My jaws John 19:28**.’ (Guzik)

**You have brought me to the dust of death** – this is David’s description to describe the extent of his misery. It is a reminder of the curse God pronounced upon Adam after his sin – **Genesis 3:19 For dust you are, and to dust you shall return**. , a curse that extended to the entire human race by being descendants of Adam.

**v16-18**

**For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me.
They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.**

David’s crisis was made worse because he was surrounded by his enemies. Likewise, Jesus had few sympathisers when he died – ‘…haters, scoffers and mockers surrounded Jesus on the cross and sought to make His suffering worse.’ (Guzik) **Matthew 27:39-44, Mark15:29-32**.

**They pierced My hands and My feet** - perhaps here David referred to wounds he received in struggling against his enemies, but his words are prophetic, describing the wounds of crucifixion that would be received by Jesus.

**I can count all My bones** – the inference here is that David had no broken bones, in the same way that Jesus suffered no broken bones – a fact noted in **John 19:31-37**. As well as fulfilling the crucifixion prophecy, this fact fulfilled **Psalm 34:20**, I addition to the detail of the Passover lamb **Exodus 12:46**, **Numbers 9:12**.

**They look and stare at Me** – as well as Jesus being the focus mocking and humiliation, he was also the subject of astonishment - as when the centurion said, ‘**Truly this was the Son of God!**’ **Matthew 27:54** and **all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home, beat their breasts Luke 23:48**.

**They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots** – David appears to have been so powerless against his enemies that they even took his clothing. The custom of the time in Jesus’ day was for those being crucified to be stripped and for the soldiers to gamble (**cast lots**) for the clothing at the foot of the cross **Matthew 27:35**, **John 19:23-24**.

**Psalm 22:19-21**

**But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion’s mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen!**

**But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me** – David repeats his original request from **v11**. He is repeating his thought that anything is endurable if he is in the presence of God. His plea is not actually requesting a change of his situation, but that God will be with him in the crisis.

**Hasten to help Me… Deliver Me… Save Me** - Picturing his adversaries as potentially vicious animals (**the dog, the lion’s mouth, the horns of the wild oxen**), David asked for God’s help and deliverance by being with him. These lines acknowledge the trust that David had in the LORD God as his deliverer.

**Psalm 22:22-31**

**You have answered Me. I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You. You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard. My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; Those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever! All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, And all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the LORD’s and He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship; All those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him,
even he who cannot keep himself alive. A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation, They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this.**

**You have answered Me** – David has been answered by God and he declares praise to God to the assembly. **v22** is quoted in **Hebrews 2:12** as Jesus’ praise for deliverance. Clearly, Jesus’ prayer to be delivered from death in **Hebrews 5:7** was not answered in human terms, but as He was raised from the dead, it was done in a different way. In David’s account, he was literally saved from physical death.

‘This was also the resolution for Job, another forsaken one. For all believers, even without an immediate deliverance from difficulty, there is immense comfort in knowing that God is there and that He is not silent in the midst of our crises.’ (Guzik)

**I will declare Your name to My brethren** - Having received deliverance, there is a need to glorify and **praise** God for the deliverance. **You who fear the LORD, praise Him** – this is a command for all who fear the Lord to praise and worship Him, because He is always looking out for us - **He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted**.

David’s triumphant words are fulfilled by Jesus, who also fulfils **Isaiah 53:10** at the same time - **it was the will of the Lord to crush Him**.

David then addresses the entire world, in an anticipation that the world would turn and worship God - **All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD and all the families of the nations shall worship before You.**

**The poor shall eat and be satisfied** – God shows faithfulness to the afflicted and gives hope to **the poor**. God will take care of those who seek and trust Him - they will also **praise the LORD**.

**For the kingdom is the LORD’s and He rules over the nations** – David may have been referring to God the Father, but he prophetically writes that one day Jesus will reign over all nations.

**All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship; all those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him** - though everyone will honour the LORD, they will honour Him in different ways. **The prosperous of the earth** enjoy a fellowship meal and **worship** God. In contrast, **those who go down to the dust** simply **bow before** the LORD in humble reverence. Dust can be taken as all humanity (the mortality of man), but also that some will be humbled further.

**Philippians 2:10-11**- **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father**.

**…even he who cannot keep himself alive** - of all humanity, Jesus was singular as One who could **keep himself alive**. Jesus said of His life, **No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again John 10:18**.

**A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the LORD to the next generation, they will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this -** faithfulness of God will ensure that future generations will look upon the Forsaken One and see God’s glory.

‘We can say that Jesus thought of His Jewish brothers on the cross (**My brethren v22**), He thought of the Gentiles who come into the assembly of the redeemed (**in the great congregation v25)**, He even thought of future generations whom He would rescue and who would trust Him (**to the next generation… to a people who will be born…** **v30-31**).’ (Guzik)

‘In the fullest measure, Jesus appropriated the victory of the second half of this psalm just as much as He did the agony of the first half. ‘Just before He died, Jesus cried out, ‘It is finished’ **John 19:30**. Psalm 22:31 reads, ‘He has done this,’ referring to God as subject. But there is no object for the verb in Hebrew and it can equally well be translated, ‘**It is finished.**’’ (Boice)

**The Messiah in Psalm 22**

**In extreme agony, Messiah would cry out for God’s help.**

**Messiah would be a despised and rejected individual.**

**In the agony of death, Messiah would be stared at and mocked.**

**The Messiah’s bones would be pulled out of joint.**

**The Messiah’s heart would rupture.**

**The Messiah would suffer an extreme degree of thirst.**

**The Messiah’s hand and feet would be pierced.**

**The Messiah’s clothing would be divided up by the casting of lots.**

**At the point of death, the Messiah’s trust would be in God the Father.**

**The Messiah would be resurrected.**