

What To Do If You Feel Abandoned And Alone?

Psalms 22

Have you ever felt abandoned?

Do you ever feel like no one cares about your situation?

What to do when you feel abandoned and alone?

Psalm 22 is considered a prophetic psalm that gives us a prescription for what to do when we feel abandoned and alone.

Written by David, however, we do not know of a life situation in his life that matches up with this psalm.

David wrote about a personal situation from an emotional level, yet God miraculously used his words to prophesy Christ's crucifixion.

How do we know this is a prophetic psalm?

44 Then he said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” (Luke 24:44 NLT)

Matthew’s story of the crucifixion mirrors Psalm 22.

35 After they had nailed him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice. (Matthew 27:35 NLT)

18 They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing. (Psalm 22:18 NLT)

39 The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. 40 “Look at you now!” they yelled at him. “You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, if you are the Son of God, save yourself and come down from the cross!” 41 The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders also mocked Jesus. (Matthew 27:39–41 NLT)

7 Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads... (Psalm 22:7 NLT)

43 He trusted God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, 'I am the Son of God.' " (Matthew 27:43 NLT)

8 "Is this the one who relies on the Lord? Then let the Lord save him! If the Lord loves him so much, let the Lord rescue him!" (Psalm 22:8 NLT)

45 At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. 46 At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matthew 27:45–46)

1 My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help? (Psalm 22:1 NLT)

What Does The Bible Say?

1 My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help? 2 Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief. (Psalm 22:1–2 NLT)

Have you ever felt that way?

3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. (Psalm 22:3)

There is a purpose for your pain.

39 He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” (Matthew 26:39 NLT)

Your pain could be disciplinary action for lack of obedience.

Your pain could be to teach you a spiritual lesson.

Your pain could be to teach someone else a spiritual lesson.

How Can You Obey?

9 Yet you brought me safely from my mother's womb and led me to trust you at my mother's breast. 10 I was thrust into your arms at my birth. You have been my God from the moment I was born. (Matthew 26:39 NLT)

Remember that God has taken care of you in the past.

12 My enemies surround me like a herd of bulls; fierce bulls of Bashan have hemmed me in! 13 Like lions they open their jaws against me, roaring and tearing into their prey. 14 My life is poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax, melting within me. (Psalm 22:12–14 NLT)

Be honest about your situation.

19 O Lord, do not stay far away! You are my strength; come quickly to my aid! 20 Save me from the sword; spare my precious life from these dogs. (Psalm 22:19–20 NLT)

Understand that your strength comes from the Lord.

22 I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among your assembled people. 23 Praise the Lord, all you who fear him! Honor him, all you descendants of Jacob! Show him reverence, all you descendants of Israel! 24 For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy. He has not turned his back on them, but has listened to their cries for help. 25 I will praise you in the great assembly. I will fulfill my vows in the presence of those who worship you. (Psalm 22:22–25 NLT)

Use your pain as a platform to share Christ with others.

When you think like this when you feel abandoned, you will remember:

You are not a victim.

You are never alone; God has a plan for you.

That God is using you for His glory.

Your pain can bring others to Christ.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Additional Notes:

Explore:

Similarities between Matthew and Psalm 22:

This week's Bible & Science is from Two Fighting Dinosaurs? (<https://answersingenesis.org/dinosaurs/bones/two-fighting-dinosaurs/>).

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Explore:

There are many kinds of psalms, written in different styles and for different purposes. Some psalms offer God praise and thanksgiving, while others cry out to him in despair. Some celebrate God's Law and wisdom; others recount God's saving work throughout Israel's history. And some are written for temple-entry rituals or corporate worship. Here are some examples of the types of psalms you will encounter:

- Praise psalm: Psalm 146
- Individual lament psalm: Psalm 22
- Corporate lament psalm: Psalm 44
- Torah psalm: Psalm 19
- Wisdom psalm: Psalm 49
- Royal psalm: Psalm 20
- Temple-entry psalm: Psalm 15
- Thanksgiving psalm: Psalm 84

- Historical psalm: Psalm 105
- Song of Zion psalm: Psalm 46

John D. Barry, Jake Mailhot, David Bomar, et al., eds., *DIY Bible Study* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

Explore:

Psalms are a kind of poetic songs, although not in the sense in which most English-speakers understand “poetry.” Hebrew poetry focuses more on the pairings of textual forms or logic, instead of rhyme and meter. There are some acrostic psalms that begin lines or sections with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet (e.g., Psalm 25, 34, 119, 31).

Do we use Psalms, Psalm, or psalm?

- Psalms (plural, capitalized) indicates the name of the Old Testament book that collects these works of Hebrew poetry.

- A psalm (singular, lower case) indicates one of these poetic works in general.
- Psalm 23 (singular, capitalized) indicates a particular one of the psalms.

Explore:

The Book of Psalms is commonly divided into five groups or “books,” as outlined below:

- Book 1 (Psalms 1–41)
- Book 2 (Psalms 42–72)
- Book 3 (Psalms 73–89)
- Book 4 (Psalms 90–106)
- Book 5 (Psalms 107–150)

The division into five books is ancient. Portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls dating from the first century contain this division. Jewish

tradition holds that Ezra compiled the collection of the psalms following the exile to Babylon. The psalms come from a variety of authors, including David, Moses, and others. We have no indication of who wrote some of them. David seems to have written more of them than any other individual. The Hebrew word for psalms means praise, so in Hebrew, the book is the Book of Praises. The word psalm comes from a Greek word that indicates songs accompanied by stringed instruments.

Explore:

STRONG BULLS OF BASHAN?

We know by now that Bashan carries a lot of theological baggage. It was the Old Testament version of the gates of hell, the gateway to the underworld realm of the dead. It was known as “the place of the serpent” outside the Bible. It’s associated with Mount Hermon, the place where Jews believed the rebellious sons of God from Genesis 6:1–4 descended.

Simply put, if you wanted to conjure up images of the demonic and death, you'd refer to Bashan. If it's true that elements of Psalm 22 prefigure the crucifixion, it makes sense that a reference to Bashan would be part of that. But we still need a bit more context for understanding it.

In earlier discussion of Bashan, I briefly noted the presence of the cult site at Dan located within its northern region. The site was infamous with respect to the idolatrous worship of Samaria, the renegade northern kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel who forsook David's dynasty after Solomon died. This confederacy and rival kingdom was set up by Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:25–33). So the worship of other gods—gods besides Yahweh who were called demons (shedim)—was part of the identity of Bashan.

That helps us process Amos 4, where the “bovines of Bashan” also appear:

1 Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who live on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the powerless, who crush the poor, who say to their husbands, “Bring something so that we may drink!” 2 My Lord Yahweh has sworn by his holiness that, “Behold, the days are coming upon you when they will take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fishing hooks (Amos 4:1–2).

Since the “cows of Bashan” are said to speak to their “husbands,” scholars are universally agreed that Amos is specifically addressing upper-class women of northern Israel who were idolaters of the golden calves of Bashan. I wouldn’t disagree with that necessarily, but there’s more to the wording than that.

Amos could be targeting temple priestesses who served the gods along with male priests. It is also quite possible that the cows of Bashan are the deities themselves in the form of the idols. This

possibility is strengthened by noticing their crimes: “oppressing the poor [dallim]” and “crushing the needy [ebyonim].” These same two Hebrew words are used in Psalm 82, where the corrupt elohim are accused of exactly these same crimes (Psa 82:3–4).

For our purposes, what we know for sure about Bashan is that it has secure associations with demonic powers. Although Psalm 22 wasn’t originally messianic in focus, Matthew’s use of it fixes that association. The implication is that Jesus, at the moment of agony and death, was surrounded by the “bulls of Bashan”—demonic elohim who had been the foes of Yahweh and his children for millennia.

Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, First Edition. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 289–291.

Explore:

Difficulty and Suffering Are Part of Life in This World

(Psalm 22:1-2, 6-8, 12-18)

Psalm 22 speaks of experiencing difficulty or suffering, a universal human experience. Many scholars identify the writer of the psalm as David. Others suggest someone such as Queen Esther. Nevertheless, David seems a likely choice. In verses 1 and 2, the author described the relative positions or actions of two characters:

- God: seemed to have forsaken His faithful one. He seemed far off.
- The writer (the faithful one): cried out day and night, but received no answer from God, merely silence.

- Verses 6-8 describe the writer's own self- image, as well as the perception others had of him:

- He felt like a worm, not a man or human being.

- He was scorned and despised.

- As a result, all who saw (friends, not just ene-

mies) mocked and insulted him, ridiculing his trust in God.

Dangerous, deadly, and ferocious enemies (called bulls, lions, and dogs) surrounded the writer. They would soon do him in.

As for the writer, he felt he would soon pass away as quickly

as pouring out a cup of water. Physically, he had disjointed

bones, a melting heart, painful dehydration, and painful

punctures. So close was his doom, that people were already

dividing up his possessions that he would soon no longer need

—even his clothing (verses 12- 18).

The writer was clearly in anguish. He suffered physically,

mentally, and emotionally. All human societies know about

suffering. It resides, one way or another, among people of all languages and customs. We know that God has not “moved away,” but suffering can make us feel as though He has left us alone. It affects how we view ourselves and how others view us as well. It can convince us that cruel enemies surround us, even if they do not. Suffering convinces us we will soon be done for, with nothing to show for our confidence in God. Fortunately, the verses describing suffering’s effects are not the end of this psalm!

Explore:

Believers Pray When Times are Tough, Remembering Who God Is and What He Has Done (Psalm 22:3-5, 9-11, 19-21)

The writer’s focus did not remain fixed on himself and his troubles. Indeed, he consciously looked to God and to what He

had done in the past (verses 3-5). God, the Holy One, was unlike any of the false gods of other nations. The nation of Israel had known suffering and dreadful circumstances in the past, yet that suffering was never the final word. The psalmist's trusting forefathers found deliverance. Things did not look hopeful for the psalmist. Yet he recalled that things did not look hopeful for Israel in the past, either. God did not disappoint those who trusted in Him.

In addition, there was more going on than the national ties with fellow and long-gone Israelites. He recognized his own personal relationship with God (verses 9-11). His whole life had been lived under God's protection, from the moment of his birth. Jehovah had been his God, even in childhood. As a result, he boldly called out for God's help. He knew from experience he could depend on God for help in times of trouble.

He continued to call out to God. Only God could protect his life in such dire circumstances. He clearly saw that without God's

intervention, death would surely result. Note the references to the sword, and again to the wild animals—wild dogs, lions, and oxen (verses 19-21).

We, too, can call out to God when facing difficult circumstances. Our lives have been in His hands for as long as we have existed, even before we could know anything about the situation. We may feel alone and abandoned. Yet God's history with His people throughout the Bible, in history since then, and even in our own lives (when we can see clearly) gives us hope. Your group may have people who claim not to know much about history or claim not to care much about history. If so, point out that God's actions in history help us have confidence in what He will do in the future. We do well to remind our children and ourselves what God has done for us in our own lifetimes. Look for examples of God's deliverance and provision to set up as milestones in the minds of your family members.

Explore:

Word Picture—Many translations give this psalm a title “according to the deer of the dawn” or “according to the doe of the dawn.” The image captures the ideas and feelings that one often experiences when in the middle of suffering. It reminds us of a deer who has been hunted through the night and just as the deer is about to reach its “breaking point,” so does a new day. The break- of-day “dawn” provides the timeliest moment of relief from those who have been in pursuit of its life.

Explore:

Many Christians consider Psalm 22 to be messianic—portraying something out of the life of the Messiah. Matthew, John, and Mark all read it with new perspective following the crucifixion of Jesus. Consider the following, in Matthew 27 (also John 19:24; Mark 15:29-34):

Psalms 22:18 - Matthew 27:35

Psalms 22:7 - Matthew 27:39

Psalms 22:8 - Matthew 27:43

Psalms 22:1 - Matthew 27:46

Would we have associated the descriptions of Psalm 22 with the Messiah, before the sufferings of Jesus? Probably not. Neither did the Jews of Jesus' day. It was something that only became visible after the fact. After the crucifixion, Christ's disciples could not escape the uncanny way in which they had seen the psalm come to life before their very eyes. It surely drew their

attention to the later verses (verse 27 and on) that spoke of an outreach to the nations—all the earth.

Explore:

Believers Respond to Difficulty With Trust and Praise

(Psalm 22:22-31)

Circumstances never have the final say! The psalmist determined to do what needed to be done, regardless of the seemingly hopeless situation. He was going to praise God (verses 22-24).

Wild dogs, lions, and angry oxen would not silence the psalmist.

He would yet again call upon his fellow believers to praise and honor God. He knew God had heard him, even though His response up until that time had been silence. And God, having heard, would act.

The results of God's action would deliver more than just His distressed servant. God's actions of deliverance pointed to an

even greater deliverance to come. It would involve the poor, those at the ends of the earth, people of all (Gentile) nations. It would display God's dominion, even over all the nations of the earth (verses 25-28).

Just as the poor would find their deliverance in God, the rich would know Him, too. Rich and poor alike perish at their appointed time. They will know God's rule. The deliverance the psalmist had in mind extended beyond his own time. He spoke of future generations, of posterity, and of those yet unborn (verses 29-31). Why? Because God has done it!

By a conscious act of faith, the psalmist moved from his own groaning and distress to a view of God. He remembered God's acts of deliverance in times past. Then, at last, he looked forward, sweeping into the future events of the world. What did he see—politics, inventions, great human accomplishments? No, his breathless vision looked ahead to a time when all peoples

would learn of God and serve Him. Much of this has happened in human history since the psalm was written, but the story is still not finished. God continues to deliver, and every day, people of those future generations and posterity learn of Him and proclaim His righteousness. Circumstances will always yield to the accomplishment of God's Word.

Note that the phrase the nations most often designated Gentile populations, not Jews. This psalm indicates, centuries before the church, God's intention to bring salvation to Jew and Gentile alike. We have our own part to play in what this psalm describes. God is still at work bringing the knowledge of salvation to the nations of the earth. Rich and poor alike, from all languages, nations, and cultures, are called to serve God, throughout all generations.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

1. Difficulty and Suffering Are Part of Life in This World.
2. Believers Pray When Times are Tough, Remembering Who God Is and What He Has Done.
3. Believers Respond to Difficulty With Trust and Praise.

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the

Bible: Attributed to David, this psalm was possibly written sometime after 1020 B.C. during one of the periods when David was being pursued by his enemies. Psalm 22 deals with trusting God through difficult times.

Explore:

Should our praise and faith express themselves primarily silently and personally, or should they take on a more public audible

form? In the case of the kind of suffering Psalm 22 describes, the answer seems clear. Public suffering—fueled by the animosity of dangerous and public persecutors—calls for public praise and public faith. It is fine to pray in our hearts and honor God. Often, that is precisely what we should do. Yet, when the battle has been taken public, then the victory must be public as well. Our praise and faith need to be heard by all who have heard of our distress.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or

her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ- followers. When they do,

Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

Why does the biblical flood make more sense in explaining how animals could have died quickly and been fossilized?

Question 2 of 5

Why can we trust God even when we don't feel Him near us?

Question 3 of 5

Why might God allow us to go through difficulty?

Question 4 of 5

What do we know about God that encourages us to trust Him in difficult times?

Question 5 of 5

How can praising God help us deal with difficulty?

