

# **David's Messiah**

## **An Oratorio of the Crucifixion**

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East Ridge Bible Church  
9400 Wallace Lake Road  
Shreveport, Louisiana 71106

**Joe Griffin**  
Grace Doctrine Church  
**Joe Griffin Media Ministries**  
1821 South River Road  
St. Charles, Missouri 63303

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### Introduction:

**Psalm 22: Superscription** To the chief musician;  
upon *Aijeleth Hashshahar*,<sup>1</sup> *The Hind of the Morning*. A  
Psalm of David.

Superscriptions in the Psalms are part of the inspired Word of God and inform us of details related to the composition it introduces. Psalm 22 is an oratorio, the first in a trilogy by David that also includes Psalms 23 and 24.

These three Psalms are musical compositions. Psalm 22 is about Jesus, the *good* Shepherd giving His life for the sheep. Psalm 23 is about the *great* Shepherd Who by resurrection cares for the sheep. Psalm 24 portrays Messiah as the *chief* Shepherd coming as the King of glory to reward His sheep.

The title, *David's Messiah*, emphasizes the point that the Psalm is a musical composition that is prophetic of the suffering Messiah. The introduction assigns the score to "the chief musician," which the NASB describes as "the choir director."

David lived in the tenth-century B.C., over 3000 years ago. His composition of *Messiah* precedes that of Georg Friedrich Handel by 2,742 years, with the latter's debut of *Messiah* occurring in the Musick Hall of Dublin, Ireland, on Easter Sunday, April 13, 1742.

David's oratorios are descriptive of the cross, the resurrection, and the Rapture/Second Advent as was Handel's *Messiah*. Somehow the latter's performances wandered away from the work of Jesus to the birth of Jesus with its performances now erroneously performed during the Christmas season.

The superscription provides the title of David's *Messiah* as *Aijeleth Hashshahar*, translated, *The Hind of the Dawn*, the melody bearing reference to the glory which bursts forth in the night of affliction. The Babylonian Talmud adds, "... till the east is lighted up."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> אֵיֶלֶת שַׁחַר ('*ayyeleth shachar*): "The Hind of the Morning."

<sup>2</sup> Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. Francis Bolton (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 1:308.



The dawning of the morning is compared with the horns of a hind, since the first rays of dawn appear like horns. According to this ancient tradition, a lamb was sacrificed as soon as the sentinel on the pinnacle of the Temple glimpsed the first rays of the morning light. Whatever may be the precise significance of “The Hind of the Morning” (perhaps the title of a tune to which the song was to be sung), the blessed subject of this most marvelous prophetic ode is the dawning of redemption through Him who is the Lamb of God and is attributed to David, who was a prophet par excellence (Acts 2:30), but everything in it transcends David or any mere mortal.<sup>3</sup>

With this introduction we now begin the analysis of David's *Messiah*: An Oratorio of the Crucifixion.<sup>4</sup>

## I. Analysis of Psalm 22:1–21

1. One of the more graphic descriptions of the crucifixion is found in Psalm 22. What is notable is that the Psalm was written by David about 1,000 years before its fulfillment.
2. Even more interesting is the fact that crucifixion was not a method of capital punishment, particularly among the Persians, Seleucids, Carthaginians, Romans, and even the Jews until about the sixth century B.C. some four-hundred years after the life of David.<sup>5</sup>
3. David, who was a genius in many areas including music, composed this Psalm to be sung to the tune of a work entitled, “The Hind of the Morning's Dawn,” or more succinctly, “The Morning Deer.”
4. The Psalm has three stanzas: (1) Spiritual Suffering, vv. 1–10, (2) Physical Suffering, vv. 11-21, and (3) Resurrection and Glory, vv. 22-31.
5. We will move through the Psalm only using exegesis where necessary while noting a few interesting points as we note numerous prophetic fulfillments in the New Testament.

**Psalm 22:1** My God, My God why have you forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

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<sup>3</sup> Merrill F. Unger, “Psalm 22,” in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament: Genesis–Song of Solomon* (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1981), 1:774–75.

<sup>4</sup> “Oratorio, a large-scale musical composition on a sacred or semisacred subject, for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra. An oratorio's text is usually based on scripture, and the narration necessary to move from scene to scene is supplied by recitatives sung by various voices to prepare the way for airs and choruses” (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. [Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010], 8:980).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:762.



1. Verse 1 is a prophecy of the sacrificial spiritual death of Messiah and it begins with the two-fold cry, אֱלֹהִים, אֱלֹהִים ('Eli, 'Eli): “My God, My God.” The repetition of a noun in the Hebrew is idiomatic for intensity.
2. This intensity was magnified by the inscrutable pressures of the cross itself, the imputation of our sins, and the severity of divine judgment.
3. No person in all of human history has ever faced the magnitude of intensified pressure, as did Jesus Christ for three hours on the cross.
4. One of the key restraints placed on our Lord in carrying out Operation Reconciliation was that He could not utilize any of His divine attributes during the Incarnation.
5. It is necessary to note why Christ could not rely on His deity during the course of the Incarnation:

**If Jesus relied on His deity, then Satan could say, “If You must rely on Your deity in order to carry out Your plan, and Your deity is obviously greater than any created being, then neither angels nor mankind can be held guilty for their failures.”**

6. The Lord’s objective was to prove that a Member of true humanity could exist, make decisions, and function on planet earth while maintaining status quo perfection.
7. Consequently, Jesus had to rely strictly on the ministry of God the Holy Spirit during the First Advent. This is the “prototype” system to which believers in the Church Age would utilize “operationally” for the power to grow in grace and execute the plan of God in that dispensation.
8. From this we discern the principle of **κένωσις (kénōsis)** which comes from the verb **κενῶω (kenóō)**: “to make empty” which is the opposite of the verb **πληρῶω (pleróō)**: “to make full, particularly, to fill a vessel.”
9. These words’ application to Jesus refer to the requirement that He deprive Himself of the proper function of His divine attributes and function strictly on His human assets.

**Philippians 2:6** Jesus Christ being eternally in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be maintained,

**v. 7** but He deprived [ aorist active indicative of the verb **κενῶω (kenóō)**: self-restriction of utilization of His divine attributes ] Himself of the proper function of deity when He had received the 'inner essence'/form of a servant/slave although He had been born in the outward likeness/image of mankind. (EXT)

**VISUAL #1:**

**Kenosis  
Illustrated**



10. In verse 6, the word “being” is the present active participle of the verb **ὑπάρχω** (*hupárchō*): “existing in a status quo.”
11. That status quo is the Lord’s undiminished and eternal deity. It is a durative present tense referring to continuous action of being God. Jesus produces the action of being Deity and the indicative mood certifies this status quo as a constative reality.
12. However, the verse continues to indicate that the Lord did not consider that status to be singularly maintained while also functioning in the status of true humanity during the Incarnation.
13. Consequently, in Philippians 2:7, we learn that He deprived Himself of the proper function of deity when functioning in the body of a salve being born in the image of mankind.
14. The verb **kenóō** means “to empty, or to deprive.” The aorist tense is culminative which views the action in its entirety, but emphasizes the existing results: the voluntary deprivation of His divine attributes.
15. Jesus Christ produced the action of the verb by His voluntary compliance to the plan of God for the Incarnation. The indicative mood certifies these things as biblical and historic facts.
16. **Principle:** Jesus Christ is the unique Person of the universe. He is different from God in that He is Man; He is different from Man in that He is God.
17. **Principle:** In His status of true humanity, Christ was born as Adam was created, i.e., perfect. (1 Corinthians 15:45)
18. One of the key restraints place on Jesus Christ in carrying out Operation Reconciliation was that He could not utilize any of His divine attributes during the Incarnation. This requirement is known as the doctrine of **κένωσις** (*kénōsis*): “empty vessel.”<sup>6</sup>
19. This doctrine is briefly defined as follows:

**Κένωσις.** The humanity of Christ in hypostatic union voluntarily restricted the independent use of His divine attributes in compliance with the plan of God for the Incarnation.
20. Every thought, every decision, and every action on the part of our Lord’s humanity during the Incarnation and the events of the cross were motivated by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and doctrine in His soul.
21. During the three house of maximum judgment on the cross, during which the Father forsook Him, it was the Holy Spirit Who sustained Him.

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<sup>6</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, “κέν-ωμα,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., rev. Henry Stuart Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), 939.



22. Isaiah gives the prophecy of Messiah being sustained by the Holy Spirit in:

**Isaiah 42:1** “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Holy Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.”

23. Matthew quotes this verse from Isaiah in:

**Matthew 12:18** “Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him and He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles.”

24. In Luke 4:14 it is noted that, “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit and news about Him spread through the whole countryside.”

25. This passage continues to reveal that Jesus made one of His customary visits to the synagogue in Nazareth and volunteered to read from the Scriptures.

26. Luke 4 reveals what transpired next on that occasion:

**VISUAL #2:**  
Scrolls of  
the Tanakh

**Luke 4:17** And the book [ βιβλίον (*biblíon*): the scroll of Isaiah ] of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

**v. 18** “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed,

**v. 19** to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”

**v. 20** And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant [ ὑπηρέτης (*hupēretēs*)<sup>7</sup> ] and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

**Luke 4:21** And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

27. We note this passage to document that it was by means of the Holy Spirit that Christ was enabled to teach and perform miracles. Matthew 12:18 and Luke 4:18 note that Messiah was indwelt by the Holy Spirit during the Incarnation.

<sup>7</sup> “The attendant in a synagogue who handed the volume to the reader and returned it to its place (Luke 4:20)” (Spiros Zodhiates, gen. ed. “*hupēretēs*,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. [Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993], 1418). These synagogue attendants are referred to by the Jews today as a chazzan: [ חַזָּן (*chazzan*) ]: “The earliest appearances of the word *chazzan* in Jewish literature are in the Mishnah and Talmud and referred to a congregational officiant or sexton” (“How Long Have Jews Had Cantors?” <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-cantor/> accessed June 18, 2018). We have assigned this title to the usher in James 2.



28. It was this indwelling ministry and enabling power of the Holy Spirit which sustained our Lord's humanity while under the unique pressures of the cross.
29. So, in Psalm 22:1, Messiah asks the question, "My God, My God, why?" This is the interrogative adverb מַה (*mah*): "why," followed by the Qal perfect of the verb אָזַח (*'azav*): "to forsake." It is the masculine, singular for the subject indicating it is God the Father Who produces the action.
30. From this we get the translation: "My God, My God, why have You [God] forsaken Me [Messiah]."
31. The fulfillment of this prophetic quote is documented in the New Testament:

**Matthew 27:46** About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lamá sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

1. In the Greek, there is a different interpretation of the doubling of the vocative, "My God."
2. Whereas the Hebrew placed the emphasis on the intensity of the circumstances imposed by the Subject, the Greek places the emphasis on the quality of the Subject.
3. Here two divine attributes are emphasized: (1) divine integrity and (2) divine omnipotence. Divine integrity is composed of both righteousness and justice.
4. Righteousness demanded from Justice that Messiah be judged for the sins of the world. Righteousness required this based on the fact that such a judgment was compatible with the grace plan of God agreed upon in eternity past.
5. The plan of God stipulated that the Second Person of the Trinity would take on human form, and in true humanity, be judged for the sins of the world.
6. Upon arriving at the predetermined point in history where this substitutionary sacrifice was to be offered, Righteousness demanded judgment from Justice.
7. Consequently, Justice became the point of contact for divine judgment of Messiah.
8. Where perfect divine Love had previously been our Lord's point of contact with the Father, on the cross, it was replaced by Justice.
9. The power to judge Messiah was from the source of divine Omnipotence.

**Visual #3:**

**Integrity  
of God:  
Function**

