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Faith Bible Church <http://www.fbcweb.org/index.html>
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JEWISH APOLOGETICS (103)
<http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/Jewish-Apologetics-103.pdf>

Objection #87: Psalm 22 is the story of David’s past suffering. There is nothing prophetic about it.

Brown’s short response to this objection:

Actually, Psalm 22 is the prayer of a righteous sufferer, brought down to the jaws of death and then rescued and raised up by God in answer to prayer, a glorious testimony to be recounted through the ages. As such, it applies powerfully to Jesus the Messiah, the ideal righteous sufferer, surrounded by hostile crowds, beaten, mocked, crucified, and seemingly abandoned by man and God, but delivered from death itself and raised from the dead by the power of God, a story now celebrated around the globe. That’s why he quoted words from this psalm with reference to himself when he hung on the cross. How strikingly they apply to him! What is also interesting is that some of the great Rabbinic commentators—including Rashi—interpreted the psalm as a prophecy of Israel’s future suffering and exile, not as the story of David’s past suffering. Not only so, but a famous Rabbinic midrash composed about twelve hundred years ago said that David spoke of the Messiah’s sufferings in Psalm 22. We can therefore say with confidence that the application of this psalm to the death and resurrection of the Messiah is in keeping with the clear meaning of the text.¹

It is in areas like this that Brown is so helpful. Most Christians, including myself, do not have a broad background in rabbinical writings. Therefore, if a Jew tells us that Judaism has always understand this passage as *only* a reference to David, we likely could not provide an answer to this objection. However, Brown shows in this section how ancient Judaism took this passage as not only applying to David but to the Messianic age. Furthermore, he illustrates that it only could apply to the Messiah because the sufferings of the sufferer in Psalm 22 resulted in a

¹Michael L. Brown, *Messianic Prophecy Objections —Volume 3*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 117-22. In his book, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response which is followed by a more developed response. This DDR series, for the most part, tracks the objection and his *short* response after which you will find my comments. I highly recommend his book if you are interested in his longer responses (there is far too much material to include in this series).

worldwide ministry of more people coming to know God. Historically this was only fulfilled by Christ.

There is also a powerful apologetic principle here in that by learning what the answers are to the objections, the believer's faith is actually strengthened as he uncovers more truths about God, His Word, and the Messiah. Without apologetics the believer who is hit with such a challenge may not lose his faith, but there will likely be a gnawing question. With apologetics the believer sees more of just how the Word of God is alive and power. Often we learn more when we are challenged, though there may be a time of uneasiness as we seek the answers. But what a "wow!" when we see the answers and our faith is confirmed once again. This is far better than *merely* using the Word of God in some narcissistic only-focus-on-me-and-my-problems-and-ECS use of the Word of God.

In Christ Alone,

Pastor Don