

Prayer for Psalm 22 in *Praying Through the Psalms*

By Yohanna Katanacho

"O Lord, why have you forsaken me? I am a Palestinian, a Syrian, an Egyptian, and a resident of Gaza. Why have you forsaken me (v.1)? After sunset, darkness prevails. There is no rain; drought is everywhere.

I look at the symptoms trying to discern the disease. As I contemplate my predicament, I wonder if you have forsaken me. Where are you first mercies? Where are the spiritual awakenings and blessings? I pray and you don't respond (v. 2). Do you consider me your son? If so, why am I considered a disgrace before the world (v. 6)? Your church is dispersed and on the run in Iran, Syria and Iraq - so many places. I have nothing to be proud of; I feel like a despicable worm before the rest of humanity (v. 6). I have no beauty in me and no fortitude.

I am surrounded by evildoers trying to kill my Christian faith and my religion (vv. 12-18). Extremists kidnap your followers in Syria. They threaten us in Egypt. They kill us in Iran. They write hate language against us in Israel and they terrify us in Gaza.

Ah Lord, may your sun rise again on the Middle East! Deliver us from the mouth of the lion. I want a divine revival! Will you not bless our countries?

Yes, you will bless us in the name of Jesus. I shall tell my brothers and sisters that you are coming and that you are a blessing itself. I shall tell them that you have not hidden your face from us. You shall continue to see and to listen because you are just. I shall tell them that all the ends of the earth will come back to you, and all the tribes of the nations will kneel down before you. This is your assured promise.

Ah Lord, I wait for your healing. Come and heal our country from this epidemic. Come, O Lord Jesus to Bethlehem, to Jerusalem, to Nazareth, to Tel Aviv, to Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and to all the countries of our region. May every knee bow down before you! Honour your church in the Middle East. We want a whole nation to be born by your miraculous work. We want a nation that worships you because it has recognized that Christ is alive! O Lord, may this future shape my present!"

"Cry with Us"

By Yohanna Katanacho (source: <https://ifesworld.org/en/journal/a-theology-of-tears-cry-with-us/>)

*This is a season of weeping and mourning, but it is not void of hope.
Our tears are the bridge between brutality and humanity.
Our tears are the salty gates for seeing a different reality.
Our tears are facing soulless nations and a parched mentality.
Our tears are the dam preventing rivers of animosity.
For the sake of the mourning men, cry with us to reflect your amity.
For the sake of the poor children, cry with us demanding sanity.
For the sake of lamenting mothers, refuse violence and stupidity.
Love your enemies and cry with them is the advice of divinity.
Blessing those who curse is the path to genuine spirituality.
Pouring tears of mercy and compassion is true piety.
Pray with tears, for the sake of spreading equity.
Followers of Jesus: crying is now our responsibility.
But don't cry for your friends only; but also for your Enemy.*

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