

Lesson 4

The Christ in Prophecy (3)

Introduction

From cover to cover, one can trace the developing message of the coming Savior through every book of the Old Testament. We see images of the Anointed, the Seed of David, the suffering Servant, and the Prince of Peace. This lesson will examine the glimpses of our Savior inside the book of Psalms.

Reading the historical account of this time, we observe how the primary concentration is focused on the events going on inside the nation of Israel, whereas Psalms gives us a connection to the nation's spiritual life. Much of the book is attributed to David. In the Psalms we find constant references to a coming King who would reign over His people eternally. What can we learn about Jesus from the Psalms?

The Nature of Christ

Jesus' deity

Jesus is the Son of God

I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you." – Psalm 2.7

Jesus is worthy of our worship

The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols; worship him, all you gods! – Psalm 97.6-7

Hebrews 1.6 makes the application from this Psalm to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is pictured as God in Himself

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions. – Psalm 45.6-7

Here, the name for deity, God, is applied to Jesus by the Father Himself. This passage is also connected to Hebrews 1.8-9.

Jesus' Humanity

In the Psalms, we also learn about the humanity of Christ.

What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, – Psalm 8.4-6

The Work of Christ

In the Psalms, Jesus is presented as a prophet proclaiming God's truth and mercy.

I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you, – Psalm 22.22

Jesus' position as both **king** and **priest** are also seen.

As King

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions, – Psalm 45.6-7

Hebrews 1.8-9 applies this psalm to Christ.

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!," – Psalm 110.1-2

See also Matthew 22.43-44; Mark 12.36; Luke 20.42-43; Acts 2.34-35; 1 Corinthians 15.25; Hebrews 1.13; 10.12-13.

As Priest

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." – Psalm 110.4

This passage is linked to Hebrews 5.6, 10; 6.20; 7.17, 21.

Other Aspects of His Work...

In addition to His work as priest and king, Psalms also gives us a few more details regarding Jesus's life on earth:

Psalm 78 speaks of His teaching in parables.

Psalm 72.10-11 refers to who he will be adored by notable people. Some link these verses to the wise men of the east in Matthew 2.

Some also tie **Psalm 8.2** to a reference to Jesus and the way little children were drawn to Him. This verse is linked to Matthew 21.16.

Jesus' Rejection and Betrayal

All four gospels weave in the story of Jesus' **rejection** by the Jews. This fact was clearly foretold in the Psalms.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes, – Psalm 118.22-23

This psalm is repeated throughout the New Testament: Matthew 21.42; Mark 12.10-11; Luke 20.17; Acts 4.11; Ephesians 2.20; and 1 Peter 2.7.

Jesus' **betrayal** is foretold in:

Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me. – Psalm 41.9

Jesus quoted a portion of this Psalm in John 13.18. *This passage in Psalms is a type of the kind of ordeal Jesus would experience. A type involves similarities, not an exact duplication.*¹⁰ Notice how in John's account that Jesus omitted the phrase in whom I trusted. The situation of psalm 41 typified Jesus' circumstances in the idea of betrayal. But it could never be said that Jesus trusted Judas because He knew from the beginning that Judas would betray Him, John 6.64.

With these things in mind, we could also refer to Psalm 69. Much of it refers to Christ, but not all of it. Psalm 69.5 refers to the Psalmist and could never be applied to Jesus. *The correct interpretation of Messianic psalms is known by the light of the New Testament and its usage of them.*¹¹

Events Surrounding Jesus' Death

Psalm 22 is one of the most well-known Psalms that can be applied to Jesus' suffering and death:

- Jesus' despair is foreseen: 22.1. This connects to Matthew 27.46 and Mark 15.34.
- The crowd's disposition is described: 22.7-8. This connects to Matthew 27.43.
- His hands and feet would be pierced, 22.16-17. This connects to John 20.25.
- Individuals would gamble for his clothing, 22.17-18. This connects to Matthew 27.35; Luke 23.34; and John 19.24.
- Psalm 34.20 predicts that none of His bones would be broken.

The brutality of Jesus' death through the way He was executed was unknown during David's time. He could only be writing via inspiration. The earliest forms of crucifixion are traced to the Phoenicians who placed the dead bodies of their enemies on crosses after a battle. Later, the Persians and Romans would perfect the method to include live individuals who would hang suspended until death occurred. The way the Psalmists predictions were specifically and literally fulfilled should give us great comfort in knowing that the Scripture is the Word of God.

Jesus' Resurrection

One of the greatest characteristics of the Messianic psalms is their prediction of Jesus' resurrection.

I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. – Psalm 16.8-10

But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. Selah. – Psalm 49.15

These passages **do not** portray some experience of the writer which finds its fulfillment in the life of Christ. They are predictions by David and have nothing to do with his own death. See Acts 2.29-31 and Acts 13.35-37.

¹⁰ Jackson, J. (n.d.). "A Study of Messianic Psalms". The Christian Courier. Retrieved 04/09/2014 from <http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1198-study-of-messianic-psalms-a>

¹¹ Jackson.

The Ascension and Other Events

His ascension

You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there. – Psalm 68.18

His enthronement

The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies! Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours. – Psalm 110.1-3

Psalm 110.1 speaks about His enthronement at the right hand of God. Mark spoke of this as fact, Mark 16.19. Paul taught about the power and position of Jesus, Philippians 2.9-11.

His reign as conquering king

Notice also in Psalm 110 that verses 2-3 speak of Jesus’ reign as a conquering king. He has defeated His enemies and will rule in peace, joy, and righteousness. This foreshadowing has been fulfilled with His crucifixion, resurrection, and the advent of the church age.

Conclusion

The book of Psalms presents us with an incredible study about our Savior. In it we see details about who He is, His work, betrayal, suffering, death, and resurrection. Every one of these events have been fulfilled. Praise God that we have a living King who serves us every day. *Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him,* Psalm 2.10-12.