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Saved from the Flood Psalm 69

This week marks 30 years since the terrible West Virginia floods of 1985. The observance has brought to mind once again the awful events of November 4th and 5th as the remnants of Hurricane Juan dumped 8-10 inches of rain on the Northern part of our state. The results were devastating. Many towns like Parsons and Rowlesburg were completely under several feet of water. Whole communities were destroyed. 3,500 homes were demolished. Roads and bridges were wiped out. Worst of all, 47 people lost their lives. The photographs and interviews that have been reviewed this week serve to remind us of the devastating impact of these events on the people who lived in these communities. One reporter recounted the dazed look in the eyes of the people he encountered as he traveled with the governor through the affected areas. Perhaps those events help us better understand the words of David in Psalm 69 as he compared his struggles to an overwhelming flood. In so doing he points us to the only source of help in devastating times and to Christ and what He has done for us.

Psalm 69: An Expression of David's Experience

In Psalm 69 we find David's response to overwhelming events in his life. I encourage you to read this whole Psalm as we begin this study.

*¹Save me, O God, For the waters have threatened my life.
²I have sunk in deep mire, and there is no foothold; I
have come into deep waters, and a flood overflows me. ³I
am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; My eyes
fail while I wait for my God.*

We do not know the specific events David is facing but in verses 4-12 we read of some of the cause of his distress. Many powerful people hate him without cause and are seeking to destroy him (vs. 4). His troubles may be partly due to his own sin and failure (vs. 5). He fears his circumstances may harm other followers of God (vs. 6). He is facing reproach and dishonor (vs. 7). He is estranged from his own family (vs. 8). Even his response of mourning these circumstances became a source of ridicule to others (vs. 10-12). And so, in facing such overwhelming trials, David continues to pray:

*¹³But as for me, my prayer is to You, O Lord, at an
acceptable time; O God, in the greatness of Your
lovingkindness, Answer me with Your saving truth.
¹⁴Deliver me from the mire and do not let me sink; May I
be delivered from my foes and from the deep waters.
¹⁵May the flood of water not overflow me Nor the deep
swallow me up, Nor the pit shut its mouth on me.*

*¹⁶Answer me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good;
According to the greatness of Your compassion, turn to
me, ¹⁷And do not hide Your face from Your servant, For
I am in distress; answer me quickly. ¹⁸Oh draw near to
my soul and redeem it; Ransom me because of my
enemies! ¹⁹You know my reproach and my shame and
my dishonor; All my adversaries are before You.*

David then vividly describes the emotional impact of these events and the response of his enemies.

*²⁰Reproach has broken my heart and I am so sick.
And I looked for sympathy, but there was none,
And for comforters, but I found none. ²¹They also gave
me gall for my food and for my thirst they gave me
vinegar to drink.*

In verses 22-28 we find an example of what is known as an *imprecatory Psalm* as David prays for God's judgment upon those who are persecuting him and dishonoring the name and glory of God. We will touch on these verses shortly and perhaps deal with the imprecatory Psalms in a future study.

We see David's final response is to praise God as he asks for deliverance and to focus on God's promises of deliverance and blessing of God's people (vs. 29-36). He has already focused on the character of God – His lovingkindness and compassion (vs. 16). Now, in the midst of the flood, he lifts his voice to praise the name of God with song (vs. 30).

In this expression of David's experience we certainly see how we might respond in overwhelming times of trial and trouble.

Psalm 69: An Expression of Jesus Christ's Experience

While Psalm 69 is a Psalm of David as he wrote of his own experiences, it is also a *Messianic Psalm* that speaks of the experiences of our coming Savior, Jesus Christ. Some believe all the Psalms have their fulfillment in Jesus. Others feel that you can only consider a Psalm as referring to Christ if it is specifically spoken of as such in the New Testament. Either way, this Psalm clearly points us to the life and work of Jesus here on earth as it is the second most quoted Psalm in the New Testament (after Psalm 22). Perhaps as we have read the Psalm you have noticed verses that remind you of Jesus' life and ministry.

Verse 4 is quoted in John 15:25: "**...They have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.'**

The first part of verse 9 is quoted in John 2:17: "**His disciples remembered that it was written, 'ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.'**

The second part of verse 9 is quoted in Romans 15:1-3: "**For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, 'THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME.'**

Verse 21 we see fulfilled in Matthew 27, Luke 23, Mark 15, and John 19: "**When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished...**"

Paul quotes verse 22 in Romans 11:8-10, applying the imprecatory section of this Psalm to those who reject Christ in unbelief.

Acts 1:16, 19-20 sees verse 25 as being fulfilled in what took place as Judas betrayed Christ.

So the specific New Testament references demonstrate that while this Psalm described David's response to terrible circumstances, it also describes our Savior's experiences here on earth. Aside from the specific references, what other aspects of this prayer do we see fulfilled in Christ's life?

Verse 8 says "**I have become estranged from my brothers and an alien to my mother's sons.**" In John 7:5 we discover that "**not even Jesus' brothers were believing in Him**". In Mark 3:21, when crowds began to gather around Jesus, "**His own people went out to take custody of Him saying, 'He has lost His senses'**".

Verse 20 laments, "**I looked for sympathy, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none.**" When Jesus prayed in the garden, He asked Peter, James, and John to watch and pray with Him, yet they fell asleep. As He was arrested, the disciples all fled, leaving Him alone. Peter denied Him.

In reading this Psalm and seeing how it is fulfilled in the life, experiences, and ministry of Christ, we are again in awe of all Christ endured on our behalf. We think of the flood of temptation He endured yet overcame. We think of the flood of ridicule and reproach He must have endured all His life. We think of the flood of betrayal and abandonment by His closest friends. We think of the flood of scorn, mockery, and humiliation He endured at His trial and crucifixion. But there is an even greater flood that Jesus endured for us.

Verse 4 states "**What I did not steal, I then have to restore**". This points to **Christ, Who knew no sin, becoming sin on our behalf** (2 Cor. 5:21). Verse 26 describes how the enemies and unbelievers "**persecute Him whom You Yourself (God) have smitten, and tell of the pain of those whom You have wounded**". Certainly we are reminded that it is God the Father who poured out His wrath on His own Son in our place.

...We ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. ⁶ All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Most of all, let us simply think of Christ as we read this Psalm. He was fully God, yet He was fully man and this describes His completely human response to the flood of trials and difficulties He experienced. It vividly reminds us of all He endured for us.

Psalm 69 points to both the experiences of David and of Jesus Christ. We can learn and benefit from both.

- With David we learn we can trust in God in the midst of the worst "floods" we face in our lives. With David, along with Peter sinking in the waves (Matt. 14:30) we cry out, "Save me, O God!"
- We are amazed once again by all that Christ has done for us. Surely we are led to repent and trust in Him when we consider the floods He willingly endured. We praise, worship and seek to live for Him. We know we have a faithful high priest who can sympathize with us as He has endured every flood which we might face in our lives. (Hebrews 4:15)

BIBLE STUDIES

Thursdays, 12:00 Noon

MCMANUS (House) CONFERENCE ROOM

(252-M Located by minority offices near House chamber)