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Songs of the Savior (Studies On Seeing Christ in the Psalms)

Music and singing are central in the lives of those who follow Jesus Christ. The followers of God sang throughout the Old Testament. Songs of joy and celebration were written to commemorate God's deliverance and victory in battle. Songs of lament were penned to mourn over defeat and captivity due to sin. Individuals wrote songs drawn from their own lives and expressed the joys and sorrows of all they experienced. In the New Testament singing has been important to believers as well. Paul exhorted us to "speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). In Paul's letters we find parts of the songs sang by those early churches. And at the end of time we find both angels and believers from every nation standing before God's throne crying out in songs of praise and worship (Rev. 5:9; 15:3).

Singing is so important for believers that our largest book in the Bible is a collection of songs, or "psalms". It is often our favorite book as we go there to find encouragement in difficult times and to help us praise and worship our Lord. For many years churches sang only from the Psalms. We often identify best with the authors of the Psalms as we see them struggle with same trials, challenges, and emotional responses that we do. This is certainly one of the purposes of the Book of Psalms – to help us in times of trial and in our worship and praise of God.

But there is another purpose for the Psalms. As with all the Old Testament, the Psalms ultimately point us to the Savior, Jesus Christ. In this series of studies, we will see that the Psalms are "Songs of Savior", written to teach us about, point us to, and help us worship our Lord Jesus Christ.

We often go to the Book of Psalms to find comfort and encouragement in times of trouble and to help us praise and worship God. The purpose of this series of studies is to help see that we can go to the Psalms, (as well as the rest of the Old Testament), to learn about our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The title of our series, "Songs of the Savior", refers to two aspects of the Psalms we want to study. First, we will consider songs ABOUT the Savior – Psalms that teach us who Christ would be and what He would do. We also want to contemplate the truth that these are songs OF the Savior – songs and prayers that Jesus Himself sang and prayed.

Songs About the Savior

How do we know that the Psalms are songs about the Savior? First, the Psalms is by far the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament. The New Testament writers often quoted from a Psalm and demonstrated how that Psalm pointed to the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Jesus taught us how the Psalms pointed to Himself. As He confronted the religious leaders, Jesus slyly

put a stop to their attempts to trap Him with their questions by taking them to Psalm 110, showing how that Psalm was speaking of Him:

42 "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "The son of David." 43 He *said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying,

***44 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,
"SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,***

UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET"?"

45 If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" 46 No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question. Matt. 22:42-46

The religious leaders were stopped because they did not understand or would not admit that Psalm 110 was written about Christ.

After the resurrection, Jesus met with His followers and gave them these encouraging words:

44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the

Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Luke 24:44-47

Jesus taught that the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (the three divisions of the Old Testament) taught truth regarding Him which was fulfilled in His birth, life, suffering, death, and resurrection. It will help us better understand the Old Testament when we realize it is the story of how God would send His Son to redeem and save sinful people. It will give us whole other level of appreciation for the Psalms when we see how it tells the same story.

In Peter’s first great evangelistic sermon, as he proclaimed the truth of Jesus’ resurrection, he declared, quoting from Psalms 16:

²⁹ “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.

Luke 2:29-31

Peter declares that in Psalm 16 David was speaking as a prophet, proclaiming the truth that the coming Savior would rise from the dead! The New Testament writers showed us and gave us examples of how the Psalms are songs *about* our Savior.

Some Psalms clearly speak of the coming of our Savior. These are called ***Messianic Psalms***, or Psalms about the coming Messiah. Some Psalms speak *directly* of the Messiah. They clearly could not be referring to David or the other authors. Other Psalms speak *typically* or *picture* the coming Savior. God providently worked out circumstances and events so that as the author wrote of his own experiences, it pointed us to Christ and what He would experience. These Psalms are quoted in the New Testament and an event in Christ’s life, death,

or resurrection is pointed to as a fulfillment of that Psalm.

Songs Sung By the Savior

A truth about the Psalms that may give us even more joy and encouragement as we study them is that fact that these are songs that were sung by our Savior. There are glorious things to consider when we contemplate this truth.

Jesus is God the Son who took on human nature. He became a man so that He might represent us, live a perfect life, and suffer and die for us on the cross. The writer of Hebrews tells us that “***...We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15).*** Jesus would have known the Psalms and often sung the Psalms. As we read the Psalms it helps us begin to understand how He experienced all the same temptations, trials, and emotional struggles that each of us experience. It helps us begin to understand just a little better what Christ did for us!

Seeing Jesus in the Psalms

The purpose of this series of studies is to help us learn to see Jesus in the Psalms. We will always find in Psalms a great source of assurance, joy, and encouragement, even in times of trial and difficulty. Seeing our Savior in the Psalms will bring us to a whole new level of appreciation of this book. As we look at various Psalms, we will find that we are:¹

Singing about Jesus – We are learning truths about who He is and what He has done for us.

Singing to Jesus – Of course we know that the Psalms are full of songs of praise which we sing to our Savior.

Singing with Jesus – We learn from the Psalms what it meant for Christ to take on human nature and experience all the same aspects of life as us.

This should be a greatly encouraging series as we study the Songs of the Savior.

¹Murray, David. *Jesus on Every Page*. Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition. P. 187.

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDIES

Thursdays 12:00 Noon

McManus Conference Room

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