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The Savior Singing Our Songs (Studies On Seeing Christ in the Psalms)

For the most part we appreciate our representative form of government (except perhaps during election time such as we are enduring right now). We elect those who will represent us and make laws on our behalf.

There seems to be a challenge with our system in recent years in that whoever wins, there seems to be a large percentage who do not agree with those elected and who loudly complain in protest. We struggle when those elected do not align with our beliefs and convictions or do not represent us well.

The fact is no earthly leader will ever be a perfect representative for us. The Bible teaches us however that we do have a perfect representative, Jesus Christ! As we consider the truth that Jesus is our true and perfect representative, we can gain a deeper and better understanding of the Psalms when we ponder the fact that The Savior is Singing our Song.

One of the most breathtaking truths of the Christian faith is that God the Son left heaven, came to earth, and took on human nature. God became a man. Jesus was fully and completely God and fully and completely man. It is quite impossible for us to understand how this could happen. It is simply overwhelming when we consider the question WHY this took place. Why did God become a man? The amazing truth is that God the Son became a man so that He could be a representative for sinful people. In Hebrews 2 we read:

But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. (vs. 9).

...He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. (vs. 17-18)

And we have already considered 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. ¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* (Heb. 4:15-16)**

Jesus became a man, He took on human nature so that He could become our faithful high priest – our representative before God. As our representative, He could live a perfect life on our behalf so that His righteousness, goodness, and obedience could be credited to us. He could suffer and die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for sin which

we deserved. He would rise from the dead so that we might rise with Him to newness of life.

It is this truth that Jesus Christ is our representative that will help us see how all the Psalms point to and are fulfilled in Him. The impact of these songs written down for us is even greater when we realize the Savior is singing our songs!¹

Jesus is the Representative Singer of the Psalms

Jesus would have been very familiar with the Psalms and would have sung them regularly. At the Last Supper we are told they sang a hymn – surely one or more of the Psalms. Jesus *literally* sang the Psalms. When we think of Jesus as our representative, we realize that Jesus knows what it is to suffer. In the Psalms we find a mirror of our own trials and suffering, and we remember that Jesus endured trials and suffering and sang these songs as well. The Psalms remind us of all that Christ endured for us. Jesus knows what it is to be abandoned by friends. Jesus knows what it is to be tired and hungry. Jesus knows what it is to sorrow and mourn by the graveside of a loved one. As a man Jesus learned what it meant to wait patiently on the Lord. Jesus knows what it is like to be surrounded by wicked people and falsely and unjustly accused.

Whatever our situation of trials, pain, or suffering, we can take it to Jesus knowing that He empathizes with us. He knows and understands all our sorrows and struggles. As we sing these songs, we can know that Jesus sings them with us.

Jesus is not only singing with us the Psalms of suffering and lament, He also models for us the singing of Psalms of praise. We listen amazed as we hear Jesus pray to and praise His Father (John 17). Just hours before His death Jesus broke bread and “gave thanks”. Jesus shows us what a genuine life of praise looks like.

Jesus is the Supreme Singer of the Psalms

Many of the Psalms point us to experiences we have shared with Jesus. Others point us to truths and experiences of Jesus that we cannot fully share with Him. Jesus Christ is the only One who fully fulfilled the desires and exhortations found in the Psalms. Many Psalms express a love for God, a longing for His Word, and a desire to obey Him. Even David, who wrote many of these Psalms did not love God completely or follow and obey God's Word. We certainly cannot perfectly accomplish these things either. For example, we read in Psalm 24:

***Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
And who may stand in His holy place?
4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood
And has not sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive a blessing from the LORD
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
(Ps. 24:3-5)***

We ask of David, the writer of this Psalm, did he have clean hands and pure heart? We know the answer from the sin and deceit we read about in 2 Samuel 11. We ask of ourselves, do we have clean hands and a pure heart? We well know the answer to this question. So how can we ascend into the hill of the LORD? How can we stand in His holy place? We can do so because Jesus had clean hands and a pure heart. Jesus never lied or was deceitful. He suffered and died for those of us who were, and His clean hands, pure heart, and complete honesty are credited to us when we trust in Him.

In the Psalms there are aspects of the writers' experiences that point us to Christ. When we read of the trials, suffering, and struggles of life, we remember that Jesus is the supreme singer of the Psalms of lament. Whatever trials and suffering we might experience in life, they are nothing compared to what Christ endured for us. This helps us put our lesser suffering in it's proper place.

There is another important truth to remember as we think of Jesus singing these Psalms. Many of the Psalms speak of the blessings that come from loving and following God (Ps. 1). Jesus is the supreme example of one who loved God and kept His word. Yet what happened to Christ? He endured the suffering and death of the cross! Now He certainly enjoys the blessing of presence with His Father, but He went through the suffering of the cross first. This may likely be our experience as well. Though we seek to love God and follow Him, we may endure great trials and suffering in this life before we enjoy the blessings of presence with Him. (See Ps. 73 for one who struggled with this very issue.)

This approach will help keep us from taking a simply moralistic message from the Psalms. It is tempting for us to think as we read "I just need to try to love God more; to desire His word more, to have cleaner hands and a purer heart". Rather this gospel-centered view of the Psalms should point us away from our own efforts to what Christ

has done for us. Jesus' life and death for us is what motivates us to love Him and live for Him. We can gain a much greater appreciation of His life and death for us when we read the Psalms.

Jesus is the Returning Singer of the Psalms

As we read the Psalms we see a great longing for the coming kingdom when the true King will reign with justice and righteousness. They look forward to when the reign of this King will be recognized by all. They look forward to the triumph of the King we read about in Revelation 5:

"And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." (Rev. 5:13)

These Psalms point us to the rule and reign of Jesus Christ when we know that ***"...At the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*** (Phil. 2:10-11).

We see this in the very structure of the entire book of Psalms and in many of the individual Psalms. Generally, the Book of Psalms begins with songs of lament speaking of the great trials and suffering in life. Psalms ends with a collection of songs of glorious praise (Psalm 145-150). Many individual Psalms follow the same pattern. The writer begins with an expression of deep sorrow over suffering or a questioning of God's presence. Yet they will end with an expression of trust, praise, and worship. This should remind us that Christ is going to return to rule and reign and we will then experience the glory and blessing of His presence.

Remembering that Jesus is our representative as we read the Psalms may help us gain a greater appreciation of all He has done for us. Jesus sings these songs with us. Jesus is the supreme expression of what we read in the Psalms. And we sing of the time when Jesus will come to rule and reign.

Perhaps during this election season which seems to a time of great division and strife, it will encourage us to sing:

"The Lord is King forever and ever..." (Ps. 10:16)

¹Outline and material for this study adapted from *"The Singing Savior: Seeing Christ in the Psalms"*. Iain Duguid. www.sermonaudio.com.

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