



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Songs of the Savior

SELECTED PSALMS : JOHN 19:24, 28, 36

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Music plays an important part in most of our lives. Some enjoy expressing themselves through singing or playing an instrument or perhaps even writing songs or poetry. The rest of us certainly enjoy listening to music or perhaps reading poetry. Music may be “just entertainment” as we are getting ready for work or traveling across town. However, music or poetry can deeply move us as we share the expression of others’ feelings and reactions to life experiences that often seem to connect with our own.

The book of Psalms, many people’s favorite portion of scripture, serves just such a purpose. It is a collection of songs or poems that express the feelings and experiences of believers related to their faith in God and their struggles of daily life. We read songs of worship to God written by people overwhelmed with God’s holiness, gracious works, or the awesome beauty of His creation. We identify with questions of doubt and discouragement in the face of difficult trials and circumstances. We find expressions of thankfulness for God’s mercy, deliverance, and protection. We overhear declarations of love for God and His Word. Certainly, we can find almost any experience or emotion in our own lives expressed in the Book of Psalms.

However, Psalms is not just a book of songs or poetry that might help encourage us in our Christian lives. We find that ultimately Psalms, like the rest of scripture, points to Jesus Christ and His work of redemption for sinful people. In Luke 24 Jesus taught His followers how all of the Old Testament scriptures, the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and even the Psalms concerned Him and were written about Him (vs. 27,44). He reminded the religious leaders that the scriptures testified about Him (John 8:39). In our studies we have seen how often the Law (1st five books of the Bible) points to Jesus. We have briefly considered how the Prophets spoke of Christ many years before He came to suffer and die for us. In this study we will take a look at how the Psalms speak of Christ and His life and work.

The person of Christ – who He is – is clearly presented in the Psalms as is His work – what He has done for us. Some have said that an entire biography of Christ could be compiled from the Psalms. In the Psalms we can find the following references to the life of Christ, written 1000 years before His birth. His coming to earth as a baby (Psalm 22:9-10). His titles of “Son of Man (Psalm 8), “Son of God”

(Ps. 2), and “the Anointed One” or “Christ” (Ps. 2). Psalm 23 speaks of the Lord being our shepherd, clearly fulfilled in Jesus as “the Good Shepherd” (Jn. 10:11). We could go on and on but we will look at just a few representative passages that demonstrate how the Psalms indeed show how it was necessary for our Savior to suffer and die for us, and that He would rise again from the dead.

HOW CAN SONGS WRITTEN LONG BEFORE HIS COMING SPEAK ABOUT CHRIST?

The Psalms are a collection of songs or poems relating the feelings and reactions of believers to their relationship with God and the blessings, challenges, and struggles of their daily lives. Even as they were writing of their own thoughts and experiences, God was moving them to write words that would have a deeper and fuller fulfillment in Christ and His coming. In this sense King David, the author of many of the Psalms, was considered a prophet (Acts 2:29-35). These Psalms are often

quoted in the New Testament. Some of the Psalms seem to refer to various aspects of Christ’s life and work in their entirety and are often called “messianic Psalms” (Psalms about the Messiah). Even as David wrote of things going on in his own life, his words would ultimately be fulfilled in Christ’s coming, suffering, dying for our sin, rising again, and being exalted. We will see this more clearly in the examples we will consider.

SONGS OF THE SAVIOR

Throughout the Psalms we find passages that describe, point to, and predict how Jesus would come, suffer, and die for us. These were written 1000 years before Christ’s birth. Let us look at just a few.

A song of Betrayal – In Psalm 41:9 we read, “...Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me”. This clearly points to Jesus’ betrayal by Judas at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:23; Jn. 13:18).

A song of Crucifixion – Psalm 22 gives us a vivid description of the kind of death Jesus would die, many years before crucifixion was ever dreamed up as a form of execution. The opening words are poignant, “**My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?**” These words stand out because we immediately recognize them as

BIBLE STUDIES

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the words spoken by Jesus on the cross (Matt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34). I encourage you to open up a Bible and read Psalm 22, and then go

to one of the Gospel accounts and read of the crucifixion of Jesus. We do not know what experiences David may have been writing about, but we see how God used him to pen words describing the suffering Jesus would experience for us.

We see even further details describing the suffering Christ would experience for us. We see in the Gospel of John that these details took place specifically so that the scriptures would be fulfilled. Let us look at John 19:23-25; 28-29; and 33-36 to see how all these details took place at the crucifixion in order “to fulfill the scripture” which was given to us in the Psalms.

²³Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece.

²⁴So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be”; this was to fulfill the Scripture: “THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS.”²⁵Therefore the soldiers did these things. This fulfilled Psalm 22:18 which says, “They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots”.

²⁸After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, “I am thirsty.”²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. This fulfilled Psalm 69:21 which says, “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

...The soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; ³³but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. ³⁶For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, “NOT A

BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN.” This was often done as an act of mercy to hasten the death of the victims. However Jesus was already dead and this fulfilled Psalm 34:20 which says “He keeps all his bones. Not one of them is broken”.

A Song of Resurrection – In Psalm 16:10 we read, “For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol (the grave); Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay”. In Acts 13:35 Peter clearly declares that this is fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

SONGS OF THE KING

We not only see songs of the suffering Savior, we see songs of the Savior who will ultimately be King. We see this proclaimed at the end of Psalm 22 and in Psalm 24

NOT JUST SONGS ABOUT THE SAVIOR

There are two meanings in the title of our study, “Songs of the Savior”. The Psalms are not just songs about our Savior and His suffering and death for us. The amazing thing about these songs is that they are expressions of His own heart as He came to earth and experienced the trials and temptations all leading up to His suffering and death. We see the emotional cry of desolation as He endured the wrath of His Father as He took the punishment for our sin upon Himself. The Psalms are not only about events and details foretold 1000 years before Christ came, we also get a first person glimpse of Jesus’ own feelings and experiences while He was working, suffering, and dying for our redemption.

CONCLUSION

First, the “Songs of the Savior” testify to the exact and detailed fulfillment of prophecies made about Christ long before His birth.

Second, they lead us deeply into the state of mind of the One who, on the cross, was betrayed, suffered, and died for our sin. Due to this, “...**Since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.**” Hebrews 2:18

Third, the Psalms show Jesus’ ministry to be that of the Savior, the Lamb who takes away our sin when we trust in Him. The focus is all on Him. He is not only Lord and Savior, but the Psalms show Him

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to be an example for those who trust Him, teaching us how to trust God and follow Him in the most difficult of circumstances.