

Week 15 – Jesus and the Psalms

A Psalm of Thanksgiving

The Psalms were a part of Jesus' life and teaching

- As a faithful Jew, Jesus would have recited the Psalms both devotionally and as a part of corporate worship. It is helpful to remember that Jesus would have been using a version of the Septuagint.
- Jesus frequently quoted the Psalms
 - o In Matthew 21:16, Jesus challenges the Jewish leaders' offense at children praising Jesus by quoting Psalm 118:25,26, "Have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants, you, Lord, have called forth your praise.'"
 - o In Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17, after telling a parable of his rejection, he asked the crowd, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'" a quotation of Psalm 118:22-23.
 - o In Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36 and Luke 20:42, Jesus concludes an argument about the Messiah with a quotation of Psalm 110:1, "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'"
 - o In Matthew 23:39 and Luke 13:35, Jesus borrows a phrase from Psalm 118:26 – "For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"
 - o In Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34, Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1 – "About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, '*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?')".
 - o In Luke 23:46, Jesus quotes or alludes to Psalm 31:5, "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last."
 - o In Luke 24:44, Jesus speaks with the disciples, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms."
 - o In John 10:34-36, Jesus counters his Jewish opponents' accusation of blasphemy by quoting from Psalm 82:6, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are "gods"?' If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came – and Scripture cannot be set aside – what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son.'"
 - o In John 13:18, Jesus quotes Psalm 41:19 – "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'"
 - o In John 15:25, Jesus draws from either Psalm 35:19 or Psalm 69:4 – "But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.'"

The New Testament Writers Often Draw on the Book of Psalms as Proof of Jesus' Messiahship

- Matthew often connects a verse from the OT with an action of Jesus frequently using the phrase, "For it is written." He quotes the Psalms on two occasions. His other favorite OT book is Isaiah.
 - o At his temptation – Matthew 4:6 quotes Psalm 91:11,12. (See also Luke 4:11).
 - o In response to his teaching with parables – Matthew 13:35 quotes Psalm 78:2.
- In Mark 11:9, Luke 19:38 and John 12:13, the crowds shout out "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" from Psalm 118:25, 26 to Jesus as a form of praise.
- In John 2:17, the disciples connect Jesus's clearing of the Temple courts with Psalm 69:9: "Zeal for your house will consume me."
- In John 6:31, the crowd quotes from Psalm 78:24-25 when asking Jesus for a sign.
- In John 19:24, John connects the Roman soldiers casting lots for Jesus clothes with Psalm 22:18, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."
- In John 19:36, John connects Psalm 34:20 with the fact that none of Jesus's bones were broken.
- In the book of Acts, Peter often quotes the Psalms as evidence of Jesus's Messiahship
 - o Acts 2:28 quotes Psalm 16:8-11. "You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay" (16:10).
 - o Acts 2:35 quotes Psalm 110:1: "The LORD says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'"
 - o Acts 2:11 quotes Psalm 118:22.
- Seen through the lens of Psalm 2:1-2, the church viewed their persecution as one of the ways the nations raged against God's anointed (see Acts 4:26).
- Paul also frequently cites the Psalms as evidence of Jesus's lordship.
 - o Acts 13:33 quotes Psalm 2:7: "He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have become your father.'"
 - o Acts 13:35 quotes Psalm 16:10.
 - o Acts 15:11 quotes Psalm 117:1 – "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples extol him."
 - o 1 Corinthians 15:27 quotes from Psalm 8:6 as a prophecy of the resurrection.
 - o In Ephesians 4:8, Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18 as a way of affirming Christ's ability to give gifts to his followers.
- The author of Hebrews leans heavily on the book of Psalms to affirm Jesus as the Messiah with over 15 quotations drawing from Psalm 2; 8; 22; 40; 45; 95; 102; 104; 110; 118.
- In 1 Peter 1:7, the apostle quotes from Psalm 118:22.
- In Revelation 2:27, the angel quotes Psalm 2:9 ("He shall rule all the nations with an iron scepter") as a sign of Jesus's authority (see also Revelation 12:5; 19:15).
- The song in Revelation 15:3-4 draws in part from Psalm 11:1,3, Psalm 86:9, and 98:2.