

Praying the Psalms

Zoom Bible Study | Lesson Eight

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Praying the Messianic Psalms

The New Testament writers refer to the book of Psalms more often than any other book of the Old Testament. One major focus of the Psalms is the work of the Messiah and His kingdom. These messianic Psalms include Psalms 2, 22, 45, 72 and 110.

What Jesus said about the Psalms

Luke 24:40 – 44: When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate it in their presence. ⁴⁴He said to them, “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.”

Jesus told them that everything written about him in the Old Testament **MUST** be fulfilled. What is the impact of this statement; what would this say to those who were listening to Jesus?

Here is a teaching that Jesus gave in the temple:

Mark 12:35 – 37:

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? ³⁶David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”” ³⁷David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?” The large crowd listened to him with delight.

Psalms 110:1:

The Lord says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

What is Jesus trying to teach the disciples here?

The Psalms and the Sufferings of Christ

Mark 14:20 – 21:

“It is one of the Twelve,” he replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with me. ²¹The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

Psalms 41:9:

Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.

Speaking of Judas, note how Peter referred to the Psalms.

Acts 1:15 – 20:

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) ¹⁶ and said, "Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ He was one of our number and shared in our ministry." ¹⁸ (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹ Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰ "For," said Peter, "it is written in the Book of Psalms:

"May his place be deserted;
let there be no one to dwell in it,
and,
"May another take his place of leadership.'

Peter quoted from Psalm 69:25 and 109:8:

*May their place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in their tents.
May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership.*

You remember how the soldiers cast lots for Christ's tunic:

John 19:23 - 24:

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴ "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So this is what the soldiers did.

This was foretold by David:

Psalm 22:18: They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

As Jesus suffered upon the cross, he quoted from Psalms:

Psalm 22:1 – 2:**"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"**

Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?
² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, but I find no rest.

Jesus cried this in Aramaic which was the common language of the time.

Mark 15:34:

And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

By reciting this ancient psalm, Jesus reveals he died not only as a savior and God, but as a man whom even God the father seems to have abandoned.

Jesus also quoted from Psalm 31, as he came to the end of his suffering on the Cross:

Psalm 31:5:

Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.

Luke 23:46:

Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

It was also foretold in the Psalms that they would not break any bones in Jesus' body.

Psalm 34:19 – 20:

The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the Lord delivers him from them all;
²⁰ he protects all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.

John 19:32 – 36:

The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken..."

Psalm 22

This Psalm is a detailed prophecy of the sufferings of a crucified man written long before crucifixion was even invented.

Psalm 22 (Selected verses)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?
² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, but I find no rest.
⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.
⁷ All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
⁸ "He trusts in the Lord," they say,
"let the Lord rescue him.
Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him."
¹⁸ They divide my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.
¹⁹ But you, Lord, do not be far from me.
You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

The Glories of Christ

This is from Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:25 – 31:

²⁵ David said about him: "I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

Then Peter interprets this for them:

²⁹ "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath

that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay.

Psalm 16:8 – 11:

I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

The New Testament continually uses the book of Psalms to fix our gaze upon the excellencies of Christ, upon his majesty, beauty, and glory.

Closing

Mark 12:1 – 12:

Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. ²At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

⁶“He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

⁷“But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ⁸So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

⁹“What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰Haven’t you read this passage of Scripture:

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

¹¹the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes?”

¹²Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

Psalm 118:22 – 23:

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;

²³the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

The purpose of the parable was to show the hostility of the Jewish leaders to Jesus. Again he quotes from this well-known Psalm to show that he is the stone that they are rejecting.

He came unto his own and his own received him not.