

The Psalms: Reflecting on the Old Testament, Anticipating the New Testament

The Book of Psalms is the hymnbook of the Old Testament. The life of any community is expressed in and shines most clearly through the songs it sings. In our worship services, the songs we sing reveal the deep emotions of our heart and the primary principles of our faith. The Book of Psalms, therefore, is a collection of the hopes, fears, thanks, praise, and theology of the heart of God's people. These hymns have been recited daily by the faithful for thousands of years, and they continue to inspire the hearts of the faithful to our day.

An essential component in the worship of both Israel and the Church, the psalms have remained central to the worship of the Church throughout her history. They are important because they proclaim the truth of the faith in divinely inspired language, and give the faithful the language to express their innermost thoughts in prayer and song. The psalms form the heart of our personal daily prayers in the Liturgy of the Hours and the Daily Office. And they have provided, and continue to provide, inspiration for many of the prayers, hymns, and songs used in our corporate worship today. The psalms are extremely useful for all who seek a closer relationship with our Lord. They have been used throughout Church history, and the history of Israel before her, as prayers of the heart. In these hymns toward God the faithful have always been able to find expression of their faith.

The Book of Psalms is the pivotal point of Holy Scripture from which we can look back to the Old Covenant and understand the deep and abiding love of God for all of His creation, and toward the New Covenant and the prophetic promise of Messiah's reign. In the psalms we have a poetically historical recitation of God's love for and ministry to His people, and a look forward to how He sovereignly prepared the way for the ultimate liberation of all mankind from sin and death through His Son Jesus. The Book of Psalms is, therefore, a record of God's creative and redeeming acts chronicled in the Old Testament, and a prophetic proclamation of Israel's hope in the coming of Messiah recorded in the New Testament. All of the major themes of the Bible can be found in these 150 psalms.

The New Testament writers quoted the psalms more often than any other book of the Old Testament. Jesus Himself quoted the Book of Psalms, and made reference numerous times in His earthly ministry to

concepts elucidated in the book. The evangelist Luke tells us that the risen Jesus opened the minds of His disciples to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:32), and declared to them that "everything written about Me in the law of Moses, and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). The Book of Psalms was key to the disciples' understanding of who Jesus is. Even the devil himself understands the power and authority of the Word contained in the psalms. When he tempted our Lord in the wilderness he quoted the psalms as authoritative (Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:9-11). And St. Paul and the other New Testament writers liberally quote the psalms as authoritative for establishing doctrine.

In regard to the Old Testament, when the writers of the psalms sought to proclaim God's power, His presence in the life of His people, and the very nature of who God is, they would rehearse the important events in the life of the community of the faithful. When seeking to describe God, the psalmists would describe what He had done. For example, they would declare that our God is "the God who delivered our fathers from the land of Egypt." They would also "remind" God of what He had done, what He had promised, and what they had done in covenant with Him. So it is in the Book of Psalms that we find numerous recitations of the principal events and fundamental themes of the Old Testament. We can, therefore, glean from these hymns of Israel the history and theology of God's people.

Through regular recitation of the psalms in our private and public worship we can develop a greater understanding of the Scriptures as a whole. We can also learn how to worship the Lord as the Church and Israel before her have done. We can make the words of the psalmists our own, praying the psalms as Jesus and His disciples did, and as the Church has continued to do for more than 2000 years.

In the pages that follow, I have laid out a selection of psalms which provide a sample of the historical reflections on the story of the Old Covenant and the hopeful anticipation of Messiah realized in the New Covenant. Before each psalm a brief introduction is provided describing the type of psalm and the purpose for which the psalmist wrote it. At the conclusion there is a summary of the themes and important points made in the psalm. With each psalm you will find citations after relevant verses directing you to the Old Testament story to which it refers or the New Testament verses declaring its fulfillment.

Reflecting on the Old Testament:

Psalm 78

Psalm 78 is subtitled "A Maskil of Asaph." It is a musical composition by the priest, Asaph, a Levite and musician of the Temple. This psalm was probably written for use as a congregational hymn to be sung by the pilgrims who came to the Temple for the Passover celebration. The emphasis of the psalm is on the Exodus through the early days of settlement in the promised land. We can see from statements like that found in verse 4 that Asaph sought to show how God has been working through Israel's history, and to recognize His warning against falling into apostasy as the northern tribes had done. Thus the psalm is a hymn of celebration of God's redeeming, of Judah as home to God's temple, and the faithfulness of God to David's lineage.

¹ Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth! . . .

⁴ We will not hide them from their children;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.

⁵ He decreed statutes for Jacob
and established the law in Israel,
which he commanded our forefathers
to teach their children,

⁶ so the next generation would know them, Deuteronomy 6:7
even the children yet to be born,
and they in turn would tell their children.

⁷ Then they would put their trust in God
and would not forget his deeds
but would keep his commands. . . .

¹² He did miracles in the sight of their fathers Exodus chs. 7-11
in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.

¹³ He divided the sea and led them through; Exodus ch. 14
he made the water stand firm like a wall.

¹⁴ He guided them with the cloud by day
and with light from the fire all night.

¹⁵ He split the rocks in the desert Exodus ch. 17
and gave them water as abundant as the seas; Numbers 20:10-13

¹⁶ he brought streams out of a rocky crag
and made water flow down like rivers. . . .

²³ Yet he gave a command to the skies above
and opened the doors of the heavens; Exodus ch. 16
²⁴ he rained down manna for the people to eat,
he gave them the grain of heaven.

²⁵ Men ate the bread of angels;
he sent them all the food they could eat.

²⁶ He let loose the east wind from the heavens Numbers ch. 11
and led forth the south wind by his power.

²⁷ He rained meat down on them like dust,
flying birds like sand on the seashore.

²⁸ He made them come down inside their camp,
all around their tents.

²⁹ They ate till they had more than enough,
for he had given them what they craved.

³⁰ But before they turned from the food they craved,
even while it was still in their mouths,

³¹ God's anger rose against them;
he put to death the sturdiest among them,
cutting down the young men of Israel.

³² In spite of all this, they kept on sinning;
in spite of his wonders, they did not believe.

³³ So he ended their days in futility
and their years in terror.

³⁴ Whenever God slew them, they would seek him;
they eagerly turned to him again.

³⁵ They remembered that God was their Rock,
that God Most High was their Redeemer.

³⁶ But then they would flatter him with their mouths,
lying to him with their tongues;

³⁷ their hearts were not loyal to him,
they were not faithful to his covenant.

³⁸ Yet he was merciful; Numbers 14:20f, etc.
he forgave their iniquities
and did not destroy them.

Time after time he restrained his anger
and did not stir up his full wrath.

³⁹ He remembered that they were but flesh,
a passing breeze that does not return.

⁴⁰ How often they rebelled against him in the desert
and grieved him in the wasteland!

⁴¹ Again and again they put God to the test;
they vexed the Holy One of Israel.

⁴² They did not remember his power—
the day he redeemed them from the oppressor,

43 the day he displayed his miraculous signs in Egypt,
his wonders in the region of Zoan.

44 He turned their rivers to blood; Exodus 7:14
they could not drink from their streams.

45 He sent swarms of flies that devoured them, Exodus 8:16
and frogs that devastated them. Exodus 7:25

46 He gave their crops to the grasshopper, Exodus 10:1
their produce to the locust.

47 He destroyed their vines with hail Exodus 9:13
and their sycamore-figs with sleet.

48 He gave over their cattle to the hail,
their livestock to bolts of lightning.

49 He unleashed against them his hot anger,
his wrath, indignation and hostility—
a band of destroying angels.

50 He prepared a path for his anger;
he did not spare them from death
but gave them over to the plague.

51 He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt, Exodus 12:29
the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham.

52 But he brought his people out like a flock; Exodus 12:33f
he led them like sheep through the desert.

53 He guided them safely, so they were unafraid;
but the sea engulfed their enemies. Exodus 14:28

54 Thus he brought them to the border of his holy land,
to the hill country his right hand had taken.

55 He drove out nations before them Deuteronomy 7:1
and allotted their lands to them as an inheritance; Joshua 23:4
he settled the tribes of Israel in their homes.

56 But they put God to the test
and rebelled against the Most High;
they did not keep his statutes.

57 Like their fathers they were disloyal and faithless,
as unreliable as a faulty bow.

58 They angered him with their high places; 1 Sam. 9:12;
they aroused his jealousy with their idols. 1 Kg. 15:14; 22:43;

59 When God heard them, he was very angry; 2 Kg. 18:4; 23:8
he rejected Israel completely.

60 He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh, 1 Sam. 4:1f; Jer. 7:12f; 26:6
the tent he had set up among men.

61 He sent the ark of his might into captivity,
his splendor into the hands of the enemy. . . .

67 Then he rejected the tents of Joseph, 1 Kg. ch. 12f; 2 Kg. ch. 17
he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;

68 but he chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion, which he loved.

69 He built his sanctuary like the heights,
like the earth that he established forever.

70 He chose David his servant 1 Sam. ch. 16
and took him from the sheep pens;

71 from tending the sheep he brought him
to be the shepherd of his people Jacob,
of Israel his inheritance.

72 And David shepherded them with integrity of heart;
with skillful hands he led them.

Summary: As we can see from the citations above, the primary foci are on the deliverance from Egypt, the mercy and provision of God for His people, and warnings against apostasy. The psalm is composed of a preface and three distinct divisions which highlight the important themes.

Verses 1 through 8 form a preface to the recitation of the historical deeds. Verse 4 states the purpose: “we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD...”

Verses 9 through 39 give an overall picture of God’s provision and man’s iniquity. That section concludes with the promise that “he forgave their iniquities...He remembered that they were but flesh.” In this section Asaph gives a quick overview of the “miracles”—the plagues—in Egypt, and the deliverance at the Red Sea. He reviews God’s provision in the wilderness: water from the rock, manna and quail for food.

Verses 40 through 55 detail the plagues and the destruction of Israel’s enemies as a reminder of God’s power. Then the Lord brings them to Canaan, to their inheritance.

Verses 56 to 72 form the conclusion and warning. “But they put God to the test...” the psalmist begins, “They angered him with their high places.” It is a reminder that God is faithful to His covenant, and He will reject any who follow after other gods. The psalmist points to the faithlessness of the northern kingdom, celebrates God’s choice of Judah over the other tribes, and the exalted place of the Davidic covenant.

Psalm 83

This short psalm, a lament by the priest Asaph, was apparently composed during a time of siege by Israel's neighbors. He reminds the hearers that God delivers His people who cry to Him. It is a rehearsal of God's victories in ages past--specifically His victory over the kings of Canaan who opposed Israel during their settlement in the promised land. These would likely be the same people oppressing them now. Verses 9-11 rehearse how God delivered His people from these enemies:

- ⁹ Do to them as you did to Midian, Judges chs. 6-8
 as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon, Judges chs. 4-5
¹⁰ who perished at Endor
 and became like refuse on the ground.
¹¹ Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, Judges ch. 7
 all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, Judges ch. 8
¹² who said, "Let us take possession
 of the pasturelands of God."

Psalm 105

This lengthy psalm is a song of praise, a contemplation of "the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced" (vs. 5). The emphasis is on God's faithfulness to His covenant, specifically the inheritance promised to Abraham: "He remembers his covenant forever...the covenant he made with Abraham..." (vv. 8-9).

- ⁵ Remember the wonders he has done,
 his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,
⁶ O descendants of Abraham his servant,
 O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones.
⁷ He is the LORD our God;
 his judgments are in all the earth.
⁸ He remembers his covenant forever,
 the word he commanded, for a thousand generations,
⁹ the covenant he made with Abraham, Genesis chs. 15 & 17
 the oath he swore to Isaac. Genesis ch. 26
¹⁰ He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, Genesis ch. 28
 to Israel as an everlasting covenant:
¹¹ "To you I will give the land of Canaan Genesis 17:8
 as the portion you will inherit."
¹² When they were but few in number,
 few indeed, and strangers in it,

- ¹³ they wandered from nation to nation,
 from one kingdom to another.
¹⁴ He allowed no one to oppress them;
 for their sake he rebuked kings: Genesis 12:17; 20:3
¹⁵ "Do not touch my anointed ones;
 do my prophets no harm."
¹⁶ He called down famine on the land
 and destroyed all their supplies of food; Genesis 41:53f
¹⁷ and he sent a man before them—
 Joseph, sold as a slave. Genesis ch. 37
¹⁸ They bruised his feet with shackles,
 his neck was put in irons,
¹⁹ till what he foretold came to pass,
 till the word of the LORD proved him true.
²⁰ The king sent and released him,
 the ruler of peoples set him free.
²¹ He made him master of his household, Genesis ch. 41
 ruler over all he possessed,
²² to instruct his princes as he pleased
 and teach his elders wisdom.
²³ Then Israel entered Egypt; Genesis ch. 46
 Jacob lived as an alien in the land of Ham.
²⁴ The LORD made his people very fruitful; Exodus ch. 1
 he made them too numerous for their foes,
²⁵ whose hearts he turned to hate his people,
 to conspire against his servants.
²⁶ He sent Moses his servant, Exodus ch. 3
 and Aaron, whom he had chosen. Exodus 4:14f
²⁷ They performed his miraculous signs among them,
 his wonders in the land of Ham.
²⁸ He sent darkness and made the land dark— Exodus 10:21
 for had they not rebelled against his words?
²⁹ He turned their waters into blood,
 causing their fish to die. Exodus 7:14-24
³⁰ Their land teemed with frogs,
 which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers. Exodus 7:25f
³¹ He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
 and gnats throughout their country. Exodus 8:16-32
³² He turned their rain into hail,
 with lightning throughout their land; Exodus 9:13-35
³³ he struck down their vines and fig trees
 and shattered the trees of their country.
³⁴ He spoke, and the locusts came, Exodus 10:1-20
 grasshoppers without number;

- 35 they ate up every green thing in their land,
ate up the produce of their soil.
- 36 Then he struck down all the firstborn in their land, Exodus 12:29
the firstfruits of all their manhood.
- 37 He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, Exodus 12:33-36
and from among their tribes no one faltered.
- 38 Egypt was glad when they left,
because dread of Israel had fallen on them.
- 39 He spread out a cloud as a covering, Exodus 13:21-22
and a fire to give light at night.
- 40 They asked, and he brought them quail Num. 11:31-35; Ex. 16:4
and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
- 41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out; Exodus ch. 17
like a river it flowed in the desert. Numbers 20:10-13
- 42 For he remembered his holy promise
given to his servant Abraham.
- 43 He brought out his people with rejoicing,
his chosen ones with shouts of joy;
- 44 he gave them the lands of the nations, Deuteronomy 7:1
and they fell heir to what others had toiled for-
- 45 that they might keep his precepts
and observe his laws.
Praise the LORD.

Summary: Obviously the primary theme rehearsed is the Abrahamic covenant. The psalmist recalls the protection God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, how “he rebuked kings” on their account. Then the hearer is guided through the process by which God led Israel into their promised inheritance, celebrating God’s provision on each step of the journey.

Themes: Jacob is forced to flee the land, and move his family to Egypt due to famine, but God had made provision through Jacob’s son Joseph. When the rulers of Egypt turned against Israel, God provides the means of escape through Moses and Aaron.

The psalmist details the plagues, His “miraculous signs”, and recounts how He brought out Israel, providing guidance in a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. He provided quail and manna to eat, and water from the rock, “For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham” (vs. 42). The psalm concludes with the return of Israel to the promised land, conquering the possessing nations.

Psalm 106

Though similar in content to Psalm 105, this psalm is composed as a somber confession of sin and a prayer for help rather than as a praise and celebration. It begins with the Hebrew word “hallelujah” and a call for giving thanks, however, the reason we are told to give praise and thanks is as a reminder to “do what is right” (vs. 3). This is followed by a plea for God to remember to show favor to those who are His inheritance.

The psalmist then rehearses many of the same events as Psalm 105, but focusing on how God’s chosen people have sinned throughout their history, forgetting what He had done for them. He recounts the various rebellions against God and His chosen leaders. He rehearses the many times that God delivered them when they cried out to Him, only to quickly return to their apostasy.

Ultimately, “for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented” (vs. 45). The psalmist then concludes with a prayer for God to save us “that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.”

Praise the Lord!

- O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever!
- 2 Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord,
or show forth all his praise?
- 3 Blessed are they who observe justice,
who do righteousness at all times!
- 4 Remember me, O Lord, when thou showest favor to thy people;
help me when thou deliverest them;
- 5 that I may see the prosperity of thy chosen ones,
that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,
that I may glory with thy heritage.
- 6 Both we and our fathers have sinned;
we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.
- 7 When our fathers were in Egypt,
they gave no thought to your miracles;
they did not remember your many kindnesses,
and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea. Exodus 14:11f
- 8 Yet he saved them for his name's sake,
to make his mighty power known.
- 9 He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up; Exodus 14:21f
he led them through the depths as through a desert.

10	He saved them from the hand of the foe; from the hand of the enemy he redeemed them.		31	This was credited to him as righteousness for endless generations to come.	
11	The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them survived.	Exodus 14:26f	32	By the waters of Meribah they angered the LORD, and trouble came to Moses because of them;	Numbers 20:2-13
12	Then they believed his promises and sang his praise.	Exodus ch. 15	33	for they rebelled against the Spirit of God, and rash words came from Moses' lips.	
13	But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his counsel.		34	They did not destroy the peoples as the LORD had commanded them,	Judges 2:11-19
14	In the desert they gave in to their craving; in the wasteland they put God to the test.	Numbers ch. 11	35	but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs.	Judges 3:5-6
15	So he gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease upon them.	Numbers 11:31-34 Numbers 11:35	36	They worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them.	Judges 2:12
16	In the camp they grew envious of Moses and of Aaron, who was consecrated to the LORD.		37	They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons.	2 Kings 16:3-4
17	The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan; it buried the company of Abiram.	Numbers ch. 16	38	They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood.	
18	Fire blazed among their followers; a flame consumed the wicked.		39	They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.	
19	At Horeb they made a calf and worshiped an idol cast from metal.	Exodus ch. 32	40	Therefore the LORD was angry with his people and abhorred his inheritance.	
20	They exchanged their Glory for an image of a bull, which eats grass.		41	He handed them over to the nations, and their foes ruled over them.	Judges 2:14
21	They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt,		42	Their enemies oppressed them and subjected them to their power.	
22	miracles in the land of Ham and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.		43	Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin.	Judges 2:16
23	So he said he would destroy them— had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.	Exodus 32:11f	44	But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry;	Judges 3:9
24	Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise.	Numbers ch. 14	45	for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented.	Judges 6:7f; 10:10f
25	They grumbled in their tents and did not obey the LORD.		46	He caused them to be pitied by all those who held them captive.	
26	So he swore to them with uplifted hand that he would make them fall in the desert,		47	Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to thy holy name and glory in thy praise.	
27	make their descendants fall among the nations and scatter them throughout the lands.				
28	They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods;	Numbers ch. 25			
29	they provoked the LORD to anger by their wicked deeds, and a plague broke out among them.				
30	But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was checked.	Numbers 25:6-9			

Summary: As noted in the introduction, there are many of the same themes in this psalm as in the previous one, but the focus here is on how Israel continually forgot God's commandments and disobeyed His word.

This psalm's rehearsal of events begins in Egypt with the plagues, and the reminder that "they gave no thought to your miracles." He then reminds the hearer that at the Red Sea the people rebelled against God and Moses before He delivered them.

The psalmist then takes the hearer through the events of the wilderness, but rather than celebrating God's ability to provide for their every need, he rehearses how the people repeatedly sinned against God in spite of His mercy and provision. There is mention of the quail and manna, but God sends a plague upon the people for their stubborn hearts. He recounts the rebellion against Moses and the fashioning of the golden calf. He reminds them that their fathers refused to trust God and enter the promised land, not believing His promise. And even when God did provide water by the hand of Moses (utilizing the Numbers 20 passage as opposed to the Exodus 17 account), it went ill with Moses because the people rebelled against the spirit of God.

And, finally, rather than a celebration of entry into the promised land, the psalmist here recounts how their fathers disobeyed God and did not destroy all the peoples of the promised land and thus "mingled" with the nations, adopting their idols, religious practices, and customs. He reminds the hearer that "Many times [God] delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion" (vs. 43). Ultimately, "for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented" (vs. 45). The psalm then concludes with a prayer that God in His mercy will save the hearer now.

Anticipating the New Testament:

As has been mentioned, the psalms are quoted more often in the New Testament than any other Old Testament texts. There are more than 70 direct quotations of the psalms in the New Testament, and more than 60 of the psalms are either quoted directly or one of the themes of a psalm are alluded to in the New Testament text.

In light of the sheer volume of material available for reflection and inspection, I have chosen to offer a small sample of psalms which have a direct Messianic prophetic quality to them. These are some of the psalms that the New Testament writers understood as prophetically declaring the truth about the identity of Jesus as Messiah, our Savior and King.

Psalm 110

As we transition from our reflection on the Old Covenant to our anticipation of the New Covenant, we can turn to Psalm 110 for inspiration. This is a "Royal Psalm," or a song sung at the coronation of the king (compare Psalms 2, 24, etc.). In this psalm the king is being invited by the Lord to take the throne and rule over God's people. This theme of the king's reign was picked up by numerous New Testament writers, and our Lord Himself quoted it referring to Himself. The reference to Melchizedek draws us back to the Book of Genesis, and the prophetic promise of a priestly king hearkens us forward to the New Testament. There is no other verse of Old Testament Scripture more quoted than the opening line of Psalm 110. And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews spends three chapters (chapters 5-7) explaining the relevance and importance of Psalm 110:4 to the New Covenant made in the Priest and King, Jesus Christ.

The Lord says to my lord:
"Sit at my right hand,
till I make your enemies your footstool."

Matthew 22:44
Mark 12:36
Luke 20:42
Acts 2:34
1 Corinthians 15:25
Hebrews 1:13

² The Lord sends forth from Zion
your mighty scepter.

Rule in the midst of your foes!

³ Your people will offer themselves freely
on the day you lead your host
upon the holy mountains,

From the womb of the morning
like dew your youth will come to you.

⁴ The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind,

"You are a priest for ever
after the order of Melchiz'edek."

Genesis 14:17-24
Hebrews chs. 5-7

⁵ The Lord is at your right hand;
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

⁶ He will execute judgment among the nations,
filling them with corpses;

Matthew 25:31
Revelation 15:4

he will shatter chiefs
over the wide earth.

⁷ He will drink from the brook by the way;
therefore he will lift up his head.

Summary: In addressing the Pharisees with the question “What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?” and answering with Psalm 110:1, Jesus declares that He is not only the Son of David, but the pre-existent Son of the Father. He is BOTH Son of David AND Son of God. This same line is also used by the New Testament writers to profess the profound doctrines of: the eternal identity of Jesus; His triumph over evil, sin, Satan, and death; and His glorification to the right hand of the Father. (see: Mark 16:19; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2) In addition, by claiming the authoritative nature of this psalm, these New Testament writers also declare that Jesus is not only the promised King, He is a Priest--the Great High Priest--“forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

Psalm 22

This lament of King David is most readily recognized as the psalm quoted by Jesus as He hangs on the cross at Calvary. David was crying to the Lord for mercy and deliverance from mortal illness. It is picked up by our Lord as His personal plea in time of mortal distress. Psalm 22 has become the psalm most closely connected with our Lord’s suffering and death.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matthew 27:46
Why art thou so far from helping me,
from the words of my groaning?
² O my God, I cry by day, but thou dost not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.
³ Yet thou art holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
⁴ In thee our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
⁵ To thee they cried, and were saved;
in thee they trusted, and were not disappointed.
⁶ But I am a worm, and no man;
scorned by men, and despised by the people.
⁷ All who see me mock at me, Matthew 27:39-43
they make mouths at me, they wag their heads; Mark 15:29
⁸ “He committed his cause to the Lord; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!” Luke 23:35
⁹ Yet thou art he who took me from the womb;
thou didst keep me safe upon my mother’s breasts.
¹⁰ Upon thee was I cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me thou hast been my God.

¹¹ Be not far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is none to help.
¹² Many bulls encompass me,
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
¹³ they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.
¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax,
it is melted within my breast;
¹⁵ my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
thou dost lay me in the dust of death. John 19:28
¹⁶ Yea, dogs are round about me;
a company of evildoers encircle me;
they have pierced my hands and feet— John 19:37
¹⁷ I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;
¹⁸ they divide my garments among them,
and for my raiment they cast lots. John 19:23-24
¹⁹ But thou, O Lord, be not far off!
O thou my help, hasten to my aid!
²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog! Philippians 3:2
²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lion,
my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen!
²² I will tell of thy name to my brethren;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee: Hebrews 2:11-12
²³ You who fear the Lord, praise him!
all you sons of Jacob, glorify him,
and stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel!
²⁴ For he has not despised or abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted;
and he has not hid his face from him,
but has heard, when he cried to him.
²⁵ From thee comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
²⁶ The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord!
May your hearts live for ever!
²⁷ All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord;

and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.

Revelation 15:4

²⁸ For dominion belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.

²⁹ Yea, to him shall all the proud of the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
and he who cannot keep himself alive.

³⁰ Posterity shall serve him;
men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation,

³¹ and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
that he has wrought it.

Summary: We can hear, in the words of this psalm, the Passion of our Lord. Even the details of His time upon the cross are anticipated in the words of verses 14-18. But, just as our Lord triumphed over death, we hear the promise of His Resurrection victory in the final verses of this psalm.

Psalm 69

A lament by King David, this Psalm is a prayer and confession of sin. Psalm 69 has been interpreted by the New Testament writers and by the Church in the same way as Psalm 22 -- a prophetic proclamation of the Savior's suffering and death.

Save me, O God!

For the waters have come up to my neck.

² I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me.

³ I am weary with my crying;
my throat is parched.

My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.

⁴ More in number than the hairs of my head
are those who hate me without cause;
mighty are those who would destroy me,
those who attack me with lies.

What I did not steal
must I now restore?

⁵ O God, thou knowest my folly;
the wrongs I have done are not hidden from thee.

⁶ Let not those who hope in thee be put to shame
through me, O Lord God of hosts;
let not those who seek thee
be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel.

John 15:25

⁷ For it is for thy sake that I have borne reproach,
that shame has covered my face.

⁸ I have become a stranger to my brethren,
an alien to my mother's sons.

⁹ For zeal for thy house has consumed me,
and the insults of those who insult thee
have fallen on me.

¹⁰ When I humbled my soul with fasting,
it became my reproach.

¹¹ When I made sackcloth my clothing,
I became a byword to them.

¹² I am the talk of those who sit in the gate,
and the drunkards make songs about me.

¹³ But as for me, my prayer is to thee, O Lord.
At an acceptable time, O God,
in the abundance of thy steadfast love answer me.
With thy faithful help

¹⁴ rescue me from sinking in the mire;
let me be delivered from my enemies
and from the deep waters.

¹⁵ Let not the flood sweep over me,
or the deep swallow me up,
or the pit close its mouth over me.

¹⁶ Answer me, O Lord, for thy steadfast love is good;
according to thy abundant mercy, turn to me.

¹⁷ Hide not thy face from thy servant;
for I am in distress, make haste to answer me.

¹⁸ Draw near to me, redeem me,
set me free because of my enemies!

¹⁹ Thou knowest my reproach,
and my shame and my dishonor;
my foes are all known to thee.

²⁰ Insults have broken my heart,
so that I am in despair.
I looked for pity, but there was none;
and for comforters, but I found none.

²¹ They gave me poison for food,
and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

²² Let their own table before them become a snare;
let their sacrificial feasts be a trap.

²³ Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see;
and make their loins tremble continually.

John 2:17

Romans 15:3

Matthew 27:34,48

Mark 15:36

Luke 23:36

John 19:28-29

Romans 11:9-10

24 Pour out thy indignation upon them,
and let thy burning anger overtake them.

25 May their camp be a desolation,
let no one dwell in their tents. Acts 1:20

26 For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten,
and him whom thou hast wounded, they afflict still more.

27 Add to them punishment upon punishment;
may they have no acquittal from thee.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living;
let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

29 But I am afflicted and in pain;
let thy salvation, O God, set me on high!

30 I will praise the name of God with a song;
I will magnify him with thanksgiving.

31 This will please the Lord more than an ox
or a bull with horns and hoofs.

32 Let the oppressed see it and be glad;
you who seek God, let your hearts revive.

33 For the Lord hears the needy,
and does not despise his own that are in bonds.

34 Let heaven and earth praise him,
the seas and everything that moves therein.

35 For God will save Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah;
and his servants shall dwell there and possess it;

36 the children of his servants shall inherit it,
and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

Summary: The New Testament writers saw the prophetic utterances of David fulfilled in Jesus' cleansing the Temple (vs. 9) and in His crucifixion (vs. 21). Jesus' response to the outrage over His cleansing of the Temple was: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John says, "He was speaking of the temple of His body" (John 2:19-21). And Paul, quoting verse 9 in the context of bearing burdens, says, "whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction..." (Rom. 15:4). But the primary focus of the evangelists was on verses 20-21. At the time of Jesus' greatest grief He "looked for pity...and for comforters" in the Garden of Gethsemane, "but I found none." And as He thirsted on the cross, "they gave me vinegar to drink." And Luke saw in verse 25 a reference to Judas. He quotes this verse in Acts 1:20 as the disciples seek to replace the betrayer.

Psalm 69 is the prayer of Jesus, as the author to the Hebrews says, of Him who "offered up prayer and supplications, with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death" (Heb. 5:7).

Psalm 118

We will conclude our looking ahead to the New Testament in the psalms with the last of the six "Egyptian Hallel" psalms (Psalms 113-118). These are the psalms which are sung at the annual feast of the Passover. These psalms celebrate Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt, but they also look forward to man's deliverance from bondage to sin through Jesus Christ.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever!

2 Let Israel say,
"His steadfast love endures for ever."

3 Let the house of Aaron say,
"His steadfast love endures for ever."

4 Let those who fear the Lord say,
"His steadfast love endures for ever."

5 Out of my distress I called on the Lord;
the Lord answered me and set me free.

6 With the Lord on my side I do not fear. Hebrews 13:6
What can man do to me?

7 The Lord is on my side to help me;
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

8 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to put confidence in man.

9 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to put confidence in princes.

10 All nations surrounded me;
in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

11 They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;
in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

12 They surrounded me like bees,
they blazed like a fire of thorns;
in the name of the Lord I cut them off!

13 I was pushed hard, so that I was falling,
but the Lord helped me.

14 The Lord is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

15 Hark, glad songs of victory
in the tents of the righteous:
"The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,
16 the right hand of the Lord is exalted,
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!"

Psalm 32:1-2	Romans 4:7-8	Psalm 94	
Psalm 34		vs. 11	1 Corinthians 3:20
vs. 8	1 Peter 2:3	vs. 14 *	Romans 11:1-2
vv. 12-16	1 Peter 3:10-12	Psalm 95:7-11	Hebrews 3:7-11,15,18; 4:1,3,5,7
vs. 20	John 19:36	Psalm 97:7	Hebrews 1:6
Psalm 35		Psalm 98:3 *	Luke 1:54
vs. 11	Mark 14:57	Psalm 102:25-27	Hebrews 1:10-12
vs. 19	John 15:25	Psalm 103:17 *	Luke 1:50
Psalm 36:1	Romans 3:18	Psalm 104:4	Hebrews 1:7
Psalm 37:11	Matthew 5:5	Psalm 105:8-9 *	Luke 1:72-73
Psalm 38:11 *	Luke 23:49	Psalm 106	
Psalm 40:6-8	Hebrews 10:5-7	vs. 10 *	Luke 1:71
Psalm 41		vs. 45 *	Luke 1:72
vs. 9	John 13:18	vs. 48	Luke 1:68
vs. 13 *	Luke 1:68	Psalm 107:9 *	Luke 1:53
Psalm 42:5	Matthew 26:38; Mark 14:34	Psalm 109	
Psalm 44:22	Romans 8:36	vs. 4	Luke 23:34
Psalm 45:6-7	Hebrews 1:8-9	vs. 8	Acts 1:20
Psalm 48:2 *	Matthew 5:35	vs. 25	Matthew 27:39
Psalm 51:4	Romans 3:4	Psalm 110	
Psalm 53:1-3	Romans 3:10-12	vs. 1	Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42,43; Acts 2:34, 35; Hebrews 1:13.
Psalm 55:22 *	1 Peter 5:7		Compare. Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Luke 22:69; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12,13; 12:2;
Psalm 62:12 *	Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6		1 Peter 3:22
Psalm 68:18	Ephesians 4:8	vs. 4	Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17,21
Psalm 69		Psalm 111:9 *	Luke 1:49,68
vs. 4	John 15:25	Psalm 112:9	2 Corinthians 9:9
vs. 9	John 2:17; Romans 15:3	Psalm 116:10	2 Corinthians 4:13
vs. 21	Matthew 27:34,48; Mark 15:36; Luke 23:36; John 19:28-29	Psalm 117:1	Romans 15:11
	Romans 11:9-10	Psalm 118	
vv. 22-23	Acts 1:20	vs. 6	Hebrews 13:6
vs. 25	Luke 1:68	vv. 22-23	Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10,11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:4,7
Psalm 72:18 *		vv. 25-26	Matthew 21:9; 23:39; Mark 11:9; Luke 13:35; 19:38; John 12:13
Psalm 78		Psalm 132	
vs. 2	Matthew 13:35	vs. 5 *	Acts 7:46
vs. 24	John 6:31	vs. 11 *	Acts 2:30
Psalm 82:6	John 10:34	vs. 17 *	Luke 1:69
Psalm 86:9 *	Revelation 15:4	Psalm 135:14 *	Hebrews 10:30
Psalm 88:8	Luke 23:49	Psalm 140:3	Romans 3:13
Psalm 89		Psalm 143:2 *	Romans 3:20
vs. 10 *	Luke 1:51	Psalm 146:6	Acts 4:24; 14:15
vs. 20	Acts 13:22		
Psalm 90:4	2 Peter 3:8		
Psalm 91			
vv. 11-12	Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10-11		
vs. 13	Luke 10:19		