

Christ in the Hebrew Poets

“The One Who Rescues”—Christ in Psalms

Introduction: Continue this series on Poetic Literature of Scripture

- 17 Historical Books (Genesis through Esther)
- 17 Prophetic Books (Isaiah through Malachi)
- 5 Poetic Books (Job through Song of Songs)

Last Week—Job

Today—Psalms

Validity of Christ in these poetic books

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. John 5:36 NKJV

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” Luke 24:44

Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” Luke 24:44 NKJV

About Psalms

- Hebrew Bible—title is Tehillim (praises)
- 150 in five books (1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150)
- Used in temple worship, early church
- David wrote 73 (almost half)
- Multiple types (hymns, declarative praise, descriptive praise, both individual and communal laments, enthronement, wisdom, Zion, pilgrimage or Song of Ascent, creation, penitential, hallel, imprecatory, messianic)

What about Christ in the Psalms?

- Jesus verified the validity
- How can we see and preach Him with integrity?

(ILL) Some see Him behind every allegorical bush—tree planted by streams of water (Psalm 1:3) is cross nourished by blood which flows from Emmanuel’s veins. BAD INTERPRETATION!
(Rightly divide the word of truth!)

NOTE: Jesus said they were about Him

Martin Luther—Book of Psalms—“a little Bible”

Bishop Horne—(English Protestant)—“The epitome of the Bible.” (*all the truths elsewhere elaborated and enforced are concentrated there*).

NOTE: One of the reasons—centrality of Christ in the Psalms—Psalms more often quoted in the New Testament than any other book. (New Testament directly quotes 79 Psalms, paraphrases 333 others)

I. How is Christ revealed in the Psalms?

A. Some suggest a Christocentric approach to the Psalms (Christ at the center)

1. Certainly true for Messianic Psalms

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning? 2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; And in the night season, and am not silent. Psalms 22:1-2 NKJV

- a. David wrote it but nothing in his life resembles this—prophetic—pointing to Christ—1000 years later.
- b. In Psalm—no confession or repentance—it is not a man—Son of God.

2. Psalm 110 also Messianic

*The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."
2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your
enemies! 3 Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of
holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. 4 The Lord has
sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."
5 The Lord is at Your right hand. Psalms 110:1-5 NKJV*

- a. Exaltation to God's right hand
- b. Perpetual priesthood (no predecessor or successor).
- B. Other Psalms reveal Christ in a typological way (primarily reference David but see a picture of Christ)
- C. From the Psalms—a biography of Christ

1. Eternal Sonship

*"I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten
You. Psalms 2:7 NKJV*

2. Title: "Son of Man" (8); "Son of God" and "Anointed One" (2) "Shepherd" 23
3. Moral beauty and spirit anointing

*You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has
blessed You forever. Psalms 45:2 NKJV*

4. Devotion to God's service

*Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You
have fallen on me. Psalms 69:9 NKJV*

5. His rejection

*Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Shame has covered my face. 8 I have become a
stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother's children. Psalms 69:7-8 NKJV*

6. His triumphal entry

Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord. Psalms 118:25-26 NKJV

7. Conspiracy against Him

For I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, They scheme to take away my life. Psalms 31:13 NKJV

8. Betrayal of a friend

Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me. Psalms 41:9 NKJV

9. Manner of death

For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet. Psalms 22:16 NKJV

They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. Psalms 22:16 NKJV

They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Psalms 69:21 NKJV

He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken. Psalms 34:20 NKJV

10. Resurrection

For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalms 16:10-11 NKJV

11. Coming Kingdom and ultimate triumph

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions. Psalms 45:6-7 NKJV

II. One powerful revelation of Christ

Great Truth: One day deity will dwell with man!

You take no delight in sacrifices or offerings. Now that you have made me listen, I finally understand—you don't require burnt offerings or sin offerings. 7 Then I said, "Look, I have come. As is written about me in the Scriptures: 8 I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart." 9 I have told all your people about your justice. I have not been afraid to speak out, as you, O Lord, well know. 10 I have not kept the good news of your justice hidden in my heart; I have talked about your faithfulness and saving power. I have told everyone in the great assembly of your unfailing love and faithfulness. Psalm 40:6-10 NIV

This is clearly Messianic

Four Important Truths

A. Inadequacy of Levitical Sacrifices

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—but my ears you have pierced—burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Psalm 40:6 NIV

1. Sacrifice has always been a way to appeal to deity (Cain/Abel)
 - a. God initiated with coverings for Adam and Eve
 - b. Faith was key, not sacrifice

2. Christ in the Old Testament sacrifice (4 terms)
 - a. Sacrifice—general term for all thriving sacrifices in the Old Testament
 - b. Offering—meal offering
 - c. Burnt offering (Leviticus 1)
 - Hands on animal
 - Identifying with sacrifices
 - Sins confessed—placed on animal
 - Acceptable sacrifice placed on worshipper
 - Symbolized Christ's voluntary surrender to the Father's will
 - Lamb of God—slain from the foundation of the world

d. Sin offerings (Leviticus 4)

— Substitute as atonement for sins

NOTE: They foreshadowed Jesus death on the cross

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? 3 But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Hebrews 10:1-4 ESV

They pointed to Jesus. They were educational and spiritual, but they became merely external performances.

So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 1 Samuel 15:22 NKJV

"I hate, I despise your feast days, And I do not savor your sacred assemblies. 22 Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. 23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs, For I will not bear the melody of your stringed instruments. 24 But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream. Amos 5:21-24 NKJV

5. Incarnation was always God's plan

B. Pierced ear of the servant

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire— but my ears you have pierced—burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Psalm 40:6 NIV

1. Speaks of Hebrew bondservant
2. Could sell themselves into slavery to pay debt—freed after 6 years

"Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: 2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. 3 If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' 6 then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever. Exodus 21:1-6 NKJV

3. Picture of Jesus—voluntarily being a servant

Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. Philippians 2:7 NIV

4. Completely obedient to the Father's will

C. Incarnation of God

Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. 8 I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart." Psalms 40:7-8 NKJV

1. Picture conversation between the Father and the Son

2. Incarnation is a profound mystery

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory. 1 Timothy 3:16 NKJV

“Word became flesh”

(ILL) Gregory of Naziansen

“Remaining what He was, He assumed what He was not.”

Totally God/Totally Man

(ILL) Charles Wesley

“Veiled in flesh the Godhead Seed, hail Incarnate Deity, pleased with us in flesh to dwell; Jesus our Immanuel.”

3. He was prepared to come
4. He came

Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. Psalms 40:7 NKJV

5. He fulfilled the prophecy

Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." John 6:14 NKJV

D. Proclamation of the Good News!

I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness In the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O Lord, You Yourself know. 10 I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth From the great assembly. Psalms 40:9-10 NKJV

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." Mark 1:14-15 NKJV

III. The God who came to rescue us.

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.² He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.³ He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him. Psalm 40:1-3 NIV

What is the lesson of incarnation?

A. We need not fear the slimy pit.

1. We don't know what his slimy pit was.
2. Probably on purpose
 - a. Sin
 - b. Defeat
 - c. Habit
3. He turned and heard my cry "inclined His ear"—stooped down!
4. He rescued

B. In the incarnation, Jesus experienced slimy pits Himself

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Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. Hebrews 2:17-18 NKJV

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV

C. Now He will rescue us!

Conclusion:

(ILL) Worship like a Healed Leper

In the Preaching Today illustration Mark Buchanan on Real Community, pastor and author Mark Buchanan shares the conversion story of an alcoholic named Wanda. In a 2008 article for Leadership journal, Mark was able to tell the rest of her story:

Wanda did well for about eight months—got into Alpha and a 12-step group, got her kids back. Then she didn't do well, in and out—mostly out—of rehab. Then she vanished.

Then one day she called again, sober, after a year in rehab in Vancouver. She was getting out the next week.

Could she come home?

Her first Sunday back, I initially didn't recognize her. She looked healthy. Dressed and in her right mind.

I was preaching on the ten lepers Jesus healed, and the one, a Samaritan, who returned to give thanks. I said that anyone who has been cleansed by Jesus, who wants to be made whole by him, worships at his feet in deep thankfulness, in utmost desperation. They have nowhere else they want to go. And then, to close, I reminded people we have a tradition at our church: anyone can come up to the front and pray with one of our prayer ministers.

Wanda came forward. But she didn't go to a prayer minister. She walked onto the platform, between the guitarist and the drummer, and stretched her hands heavenward. She worshiped like One Leper returning.

A woman who didn't know her, and who isn't on the prayer team, walked up, put her arm around her, and worshiped, too.

Then—you could hear it—all of us worshiped with deeper thankfulness, out of greater desperation. Out of the storeroom had come new treasures as well as old, and the Kingdom hovered very close.