

Bible Study for February 13, 2019
The Royal Psalms

Royal Psalms: Royal Psalms were first written about the actual kings of Israel and Judah. Over time, they came to be re-interpreted by Jews in a later period, and then by Christians. There are at least three ways these Psalms were interpreted: historically – that is, as relating to actual kings of Israel and Judah; nationalistically – that is, relating to God and his people (Israel); Messianically – that is, as relating to God (Christ) and his people (the church), and the future redemption of His people by the Messiah. This 3-fold method of interpretation gives us a window in how Christians have historically appropriated sacred texts in ways that depart from modern (science-oriented) approaches.

History

In the ancient world, temples were closely associated with the monarchy. The king was often the patron of the temple, and this was the case in Jerusalem. Consequently, the king figures prominently in the psalms. These psalms are important historical windows on the religion of Judah before the Babylonian exile, when there was still a king on the throne. These Psalms include 20, 21, 45, 72, 89, 110 and 132.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think are the historical conditions that would cause people to look for a mythological king rather than an actual king?
2. Is there anything we can learn as American Christians from these psalms, given that we do not serve a king?
3. Why is Jesus called the son of David? (see chart)

Study: Royal Psalms

Psalm 20-21

Psalm 20 was a prayer for the king's safety and success in battle, while Psalm 21 was a shout of praise for the victorious return of the king from battle.

- Psalm 20 is a prayer the people of Israel prayed, it's an expression of their faith, a song of trust in the power of God to protect the king and give His people victory. Most of us don't strap on weapons to go to work every day, but we still face a battle, spiritual attacks of Satan – temptation, lust, anger, etc.
- In Psalm 21 God empowered David to put down all of Israel's enemies on every side, which means this song was sung a lot. The song was a national anthem in honor of the king – and in worship of Israel's eternal king, the Lord God. David was not the only king who may have used these psalms at a time of war. Others include Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:21), Asa (2 Chronicles 14:8-15), and Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:3-8).

Psalm 72

This psalm was sung regularly as a prayer for the king.

- Psalm 72 has 3 meanings...
 - It is a prayer for Solomon and for the subsequent kings reigning over God's people. It's a prayer of prosperity and purity of God's anointed ruler.
 - It is a picture of the One who is greater than Solomon, Lord Jesus. He is the ultimate sovereign King, and in the future, Jesus will reign over a magnificent, earthly kingdom. His name and His fame will endure forever.



- It is a personal song because it shows us the conditions of life wherever Jesus reigns as King. Jesus now reigns in majesty, in heaven, and will return some day in power and glory to reign over earth. Human rule will give way to God's rule.

Psalm 89

Psalm 89 intertwines two themes: God's faithfulness and God's covenant promises to the family of David.

- God had promised that David's line of descendants would rule His people Israel forever. The difficult part was that even though God had made these very clear and specific promises to David's family, a king ruled over Judah who was NOT in David's line. The rightful king, Jehoiachin, had led a futile rebellion against his Babylonian overlords and suffered disastrous consequences. Jehoiachin, his family, and several thousand Jews were hauled off to Babylon. In Jehoiachin's place, the Babylonians had made his uncle, Zedekiah, king. SO, WHAT ABOUT THE PROMISE?
- 400 years would pass without a legitimate Davidic king on Israel's throne, until Jesus was born. Seven elements demonstrate God's faithfulness to His promise...
 - God CHOSE David to be king when he was a young man without any claim to Israel's throne (vv. 19-20)
 - God EQUIPPED David for his work as Israel's king (v. 21)
 - God PROTECTED David from his enemies (v. 22)
 - God GAVE David victory over the nations around Israel so Israel could live in peace (v. 23)
 - God GRANTED David an exalted place among the kings of the region (v. 27)
 - God had a special relationship with David (vv. 26-27)
 - God EXTENDED these blessings to David's sons (vv. 28-29)

Psalm 132

This psalm was sung the day Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem to the Lord.

- Verses 8-10 are quoted by Solomon in his dedication prayer in 2 Chronicles 6:41-42.
- When God fulfilled His promise of a descendant of David to rule, Jesus, the people rejected Him and wanted Him crucified. God's plan was NOT frustrated.
- God not only chose Israel to be His people and David's family to be His kings, but He also chose the hill of Zion in Jerusalem to be the place for His temple and the resting place for God's visible presence above the ark of the covenant. The ark was a small box that sat in the most holy section of the tabernacle, the worship center in Israel. When David became king, he wanted to move the ark to Jerusalem, but his first attempt was disastrous (2 Samuel 6:1-11). After careful consultation with the Lord, the ark was moved to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:12-19).
- When David's son Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem as a permanent worship center, the ark was moved to the temple and God's glory filled the house (1 Kings 8:1-11, 2). The Lord could now arise to His resting place after many years of wandering (v. 8).

Psalm 110

Psalm 110 is a royal psalm, but it speaks solely about David's greatest descendent, Jesus, who reigns forever. This sets it apart from all other royal Psalms, which talk about David and David's royal line first and then the Messiah.

(Fun fact: Psalm 110 is quoted in the New Testament more than any other passage in the old testament. 11 times: Matthew 22:43-45, Mark 12:36-37, Luke 20:42-44, Acts 2:34-36, Romans 2:5, 1 Corinthians 15:25, Ephesians 1:20-22, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 5:6-10, 6:20, 7:11-28, 8:1, 10:11-13, 12:2, 1 Peter 3:22, and Revelation 6:17, 1:18)

- We get three pictures of Jesus in these 7 verses.
 - First, Jesus is pictured as Divine King, seated at God's right hand in heaven. Near the end of Jesus's earthly ministry, some religious leaders asked Jesus a few trick questions designed to trap Him in doctrinal or political blunders. Jesus turned the tables on them by asking: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?"

They replied: “The Son of David.” Jesus then asked, “How then does David in the Spirit call him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”’ (Matthew 22:41-45, quoting Psalm 110:1). If David used the term Lord to refer to one of his own physical descendants, that could only mean that the descendant was more than a mere human. He would have to be the Messiah, God with us. The person David talked about in Psalm 110 is both the son of David AND the Son of God, Jesus, the promised Messiah, was fully human fully God.

- Second, Jesus is painted as Priest. The priests in Israel were all from the order of Levi, one of Jacob’s sons and the head of one of the extended families that made up the people of Israel. The priest in Psalm 110, however, is from a different priestly order. This priest will stand in Melchizedek’s order. Melchizedek appeared once in Genesis as part of the story of Abraham (Genesis 14:18), and he blessed Abraham. Abraham honored him by giving him a 10th of everything Abraham captured from his enemies. Melchizedek was not mentioned for a thousand more years until Psalm 110.
 - True kings were all descendants of David, members of the tribe/family of Judah.
 - Jesus was qualified to be king of Israel since he was born in that line.
 - Priests in Israel were descendants of Levi, not Judah. No priest could be king, and no king could be priest.
 - Psalm 110, however, predicted that the Messiah would be both King AND Priest. The solution to the problem was that Jesus was a Melchizedek-type priest, not a Levi-type priest.
 - Levi-type priests lived and then died. Jesus, a Melchizedek-type priest, lives forever (Learn more by reading Hebrews 5-7).
- Third, Jesus is portrayed as Judge of all humanity. Human history will come to a close not by human war, nuclear disaster, or biological attack but by the intervention of God’s appointed Judge. No one, other than Jesus is qualified to be King, Priest, AND Judge.

Psalm 45

A song that celebrates the king’s marriage. It originally was a secular song. It got into the Psalter only because it was subsequently interpreted as referring to the Messiah, the end-time king, and thus became an expression of the expectation of this future king who was to come.

- Psalm 45 can be interpreted on 3 levels
 - It was composed of a love song to exalt the love of King Solomon for his bride.
 - The author (the sons of Korah) looked beyond Solomon to the true King of Israel, Lord God.
 - We as Christians have come to know God as Jesus Christ, so this psalm is also a messianic psalm that pictures Israel’s future Messiah.
- The “bride” in the psalm can be viewed in 3 ways...
 - Originally the bride referred to one of Solomon’s wives, the wife of his youth and his heir.
 - The bride of the King can also be understood as the Old Testament nation of Israel. The Lord often refers to Himself as Israel’s husband.
 - The psalm can also be applied to the New Testament church, the bride of Christ.
- The psalm is a hymn about the majesty of Christ and His marriage to the bride. Four aspects of Jesus’s majesty are emphasized.
 - Christ the Man – The King in the psalm was a man (v. 2), but He was more than a man. He came to the world with a message of grace; He is blessed by God forever.
 - Christ the King – Jesus is King over all (v. 3). The Man, Christ Jesus, is the sovereign Ruler of the universe.
 - Christ the Lord – King is a title of majesty, Lord is a title of deity. This King, this man, is called God (vv. 6).
 - Christ Bridegroom – Christ has chosen a bride (vv. 13-15), and he has made the bride perfect and clothed her in the costliest garments. The day will soon come when Jesus will step out of the ivory palaces of heaven and claim the bride as His own. He’s not just the Lord of all; He’s also the Lover of our souls.