

The Messianic Psalms

When people think about Bible prophecy they don't usually consider the book of Psalms. However, the Psalms actually contain a great deal of prophecy. In this lesson we are going to take a look at a number of prophecies that can be found in the Psalms – prophecies that concern the Messiah.

Prophecies About The First Coming

The psalms contain two types of prophecies about the Messiah: prophecies about the first coming of Christ, and prophecies about the return of Christ and the advent of the Millennial Kingdom. We are going to start our lesson by examining some of the prophecies that concern Christ's first coming. It's really quite remarkable how much the Psalms had to say about the person and work of the Messiah.

Son of God and King of the Jews

Let's start at the beginning. The book of Psalms makes it clear that the Messiah was to be the Son of God:

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Psalm 2:7: “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

But Psalm 2 is just getting started. Not only was the Messiah going to be God's Son, but He was also going to reign over Israel:

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Psalm 2:6: “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.”

This psalm also tells us that the Messiah will reign over the Gentiles as well – but we'll cover that later in this lesson.

Cleansing the Temple

Psalm 69 (which was written by David) says that the Messiah would be very zealous for the temple of God:

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Psalm 69:9: “For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”

This passage may not seem that specific, but it has more meaning than it seems. It turns out that this very passage was later quoted in the book of John when Jesus cleansed the temple and threw out the money changers:

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John 2:16: “And [Jesus] said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.
17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”

Jesus was indeed very zealous for the temple of God and for purifying the corrupted worship of the day. He simply would not tolerate the wickedness that was going on. The Messiah put a stop to it, just as the Psalms had foretold.

Rejected by His People

Psalms 118 says that the coming Messiah would be rejected by His own people:

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Psalm 118:22: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.
23 This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.”

In the New Testament Jesus actually quoted this very passage and applied it to Himself. He told the Jews that it was talking about their rejection of Him:

[Slide 4]

Matthew 21:42: “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?
43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

Just as the Psalms foretold, the Jews rejected the Messiah – and so God brought judgment upon them for what they had done. There were severe consequences for rejecting the Savior.

Palm Sunday

Psalm 118 also contains this interesting reference to the one who would come in the name of the Lord:

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Psalm 118:26: “Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.”

It turns out that part of this verse is quoted in the New Testament. On Palm Sunday the people used that very phrase to praise the Messiah, who did indeed come in the name of the Lord:

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Matthew 21:9: “And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.”

Of course, the people of Israel did not praise Jesus for very long. The Messiah was soon betrayed by one of His own disciples and handed over to His enemies to be killed – which was also prophesied about in the Psalms.

Betrayed by a Friend

Psalm 41 (which was written by David) prophesies that the Messiah would be betrayed by one of His trusted friends:

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Psalm 41:9: “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”

As we know, Jesus was indeed betrayed by one of His disciples. Judas was the one who fulfilled this chilling prophecy. Interestingly, Jesus actually quoted this very verse and applied it to the betrayal of Judas:

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John 13:18: “I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel

against me.”

Jesus knew what Judas was going to do – and the Psalms foretold it long in advance.

He Would Suffer

The Psalms also foretold the suffering of the Messiah. We find this in Psalm 22 (which was written by David):

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Psalm 22:14: “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.”

These verses are very similar to Isaiah 52:14, which tells us that Jesus was horribly tortured. Christ suffered tremendously on our behalf. Pilate had the Messiah scourged until He was all but dead, and then our Lord was crucified. Jesus was indeed “poured out like water”, just as the psalms foretold.

Vinegar and Gall

Psalm 69 (which was written by David) prophesied that the Messiah would be offered vinegar and gall to drink:

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Psalm 69:21: “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”

The book of Matthew tells us that this is exactly what happened. When Christ was suffering on the cross, He was indeed offered vinegar and gall:

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Matthew 27:34: “They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.”

The psalms foretold all of this centuries in advance, and it came to pass exactly as it was written.

Casting Lots

Psalms 22 (which was written by David) said that people would cast lots for the Messiah's garments:

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Psalms 22:18: "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

The book of Matthew tells us that is exactly what happened. When Jesus was crucified the soldiers cast lots for His garments:

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Matthew 27:35: "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots."

Notice that Matthew 27 actually quotes the psalm and says that it was being fulfilled. It also says that the author of the psalm was a prophet. Most people don't think of King David as one of the prophets, but as we have seen in this lesson he actually wrote a number of prophetic psalms. In fact, no one else gave a clearer picture of the person and work of the Messiah until centuries later during the days of Isaiah. David's Messianic prophecies are some of the oldest ones found in the Bible.

"Let him deliver him"

Psalms 22 also says that the Messiah would be mocked in the day of His distress:

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Psalms 22:7: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
8 He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was crucified on the cross. Those who stood around and watched His terrible agony had this to say about Christ's sufferings:

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Matthew 27:43: "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God."

The crowd mocked the Messiah *using the very words that the psalms predicted centuries in advance.*

“Why hast thou forsaken me”

Psalms 22 also says that the Messiah would cry out that He had been forsaken:

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Psalm 22:1: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?”

This, too, came to pass. When the Messiah was crucified and approaching death that is exactly what Jesus cried out:

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Matthew 27:46: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

As you can see, Psalm 22 is rich in Messianic prophecy – and it was written by David.

No Broken Bones

Psalms 34 (which was also written by David) prophesied that none of the Messiah's bones would be broken:

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Psalm 34:20: “He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.”

That is exactly what happened – and there's an interesting story behind this. Jesus was crucified along with two other people on the day before the Sabbath. Normally it takes a number of days to die from crucifixion, but since the next day was the Sabbath the Romans wanted to hurry the process along. The way to do this was to break the legs of the prisoners so that they suffocate to death. The Romans did break the legs of the two people by Christ, but when they came to Him they discovered that He was already dead. Since He was dead they didn't break any of His bones:

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John 19:33: “But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: ...

36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."

As you can see, John actually quotes the psalm and specifically says that it was being fulfilled.

Rise From The Dead

Psalm 16 (which was also written by David) prophesied that, although the Messiah would die, He would not remain dead. The psalm said that He would rise again:

[Slide 13]

Psalm 16:10: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

As we know, that is exactly what happened. Jesus did indeed rise again on the third day – and He is still alive today. David prophesied of this centuries before Isaiah said the same thing.

We have seen that the Psalms prophesied about the identity of Christ, the rejection of Christ, the betrayal of Christ, the suffering of Christ, and the death and resurrection of Christ. But it does not stop there. The Psalms also speaks about the Second Coming and the Millennial Kingdom – and that is what we are going to study next.

Prophecies About The Second Coming

We began this lesson by talking about Psalm 2, which said that the Messiah was the Son of God and would reign over Israel. The psalm doesn't stop there, though. It also tells us that the Messiah will rule over all the nations with a rod of iron:

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Psalm 2:8: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

The New Testament teaches the very same thing. It also says that the Messiah will rule over the world with a rod of iron. For example, take a look at this verse from Revelation:

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Revelation 19:15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he

should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

This is not the only psalm that makes reference to the coming reign of Christ on Earth. The entirety of Psalm 72 (which was written by Solomon) is about the Millennial Kingdom and what life will be like during that amazing time. We are told it will be a time of tremendous righteousness and peace:

[Slide 16]

Psalm 72:7: “In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.”

That the Messiah will reign over the entire world:

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Psalm 72:8: “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.”

That all nations will bow down before Him and serve Him:

[Still slide 16]

Psalm 72:10: “The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.”

This is exactly how the rest of the Bible describes the Millennial Kingdom. The book of Isaiah says that it will be a time of great peace and righteousness:

[Slide 17]

Isaiah 11:9: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

The book of Revelation teaches that Christ will rule over all the kingdoms of the world – and that His reign will never end:

[Still slide 17]

Revelation 11:15: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

But there's more. Psalm 72 also tells us that the Messiah will receive the offerings and prayers

of the whole world:

[Slide 18]

Psalm 72:15: “And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.”

The book of Zechariah teaches the very same thing. It says that the whole world will gather together during the Millennium to worship the Lord:

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Zechariah 14:16: “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.”

The Psalms don't just talk about the Millennium. It also speaks of the terrible days of the Tribulation. Psalm 110 (which was written by David) prophesies about the day of the Lord's wrath:

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Psalm 110:5: “The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.”

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.”

Psalm 18 (which was also written by David) describes it like this:

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Psalm 18:7: “Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.”

This language is very similar to what we find written in the book of Revelation, which also speaks of the great and terrible day of God's wrath. In that day the earth will indeed shake and the kings of the world will tremble:

[Slide 20]

Revelation 6:12: “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely

figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Psalm 21 (which was written by David) tells us that God will use fire to judge the world and destroy the wicked:

[Slide 21]

Psalm 21:8: "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.

10 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men."

This is exactly what the New Testament teaches. Peter said that when the Day of the Lord comes, God will use fire to destroy the world and all of its works:

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2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

But this time of war and destruction will not last forever. Psalms 46 (which was written by the sons of Korah) says that one day God will put an end to war:

[Slide 22]

Psalm 46:8: "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire."

The book of Isaiah teaches the same thing. When the Millennial Kingdom arrives the Lord will put an end to war and usher in an age of great peace:

[Slide 22]

Isaiah 2:4: “And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

As you can see, Psalms is a remarkable prophetic book. Not only does it tell us about the coming of the Messiah, His death, and His resurrection, but it also tells us of things that are still to come. It says that God will pour out His wrath upon the world and destroy the wicked out of it, and will establish His Son as king over the entire planet. It says that the Messiah will usher in a tremendous age of peace, where nations no longer fight against each other. The psalms have a great deal to say about the Messiah – if only we will take the time to study them.