

Singing about the Messiah

The Song: Volume 2, Part 9

Psalm 69

There isn't anything quite like music to encourage your heart and literally sing how you feel and what you're glad about and what moves you to prayer and praise – and to repent and change as well.

For those of you who play an instrument, you know how that instrument is able to convey emotion and feeling and hope and anticipation like nothing else.

Someone told me once that no one would ever know your soul like the keys on a piano.

There isn't a more emotional set of chapters in all the Bible than the Hebrew hymnal, located in what we call the Book of Psalms.

We don't have the musical score from the ancient Hebrews, but we have the inspired lyrics.

And what emotion . . . what repentance . . . what hope . . . what tears and sorrow and what gladness and joy.

And what I've wanted to do in this session and our next and final session in this series, next Lord's Day, is go to the lyrics that express the heart of our own Lord and Savior.

What we call Messianic Psalms. Psalms where David wrote about himself, but then, clearly under the inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit, ended up writing lyrics about his greater Son – the coming Son of David, the Messiah.

It's simply miraculous to read things David wrote and saw them fulfilled in the life of our Lord.

So let's do that for a couple of sessions.

Turn to one of the clearest Messianic Psalms in the entire Hebrew Hymnal – Hymn Number 69. We're going to leave the lyrics at a couple of places and go to the New Testament texts where these things take place in the life of the Lord.

Now, before we start – James Montgomery Boice made a comment worth repeating, which you older believers in the faith know, but younger believers and Bible students may not know – there are three important and overlapping reference points to keep in mind as you study this Messianic Psalm.

First, keep in mind David's own situation – you're answering the question – what did this mean to him.

Secondly, keep in mind what David is actually writing about the person and life of Jesus Christ, the Messiah – you're going to see some wonderful things here that don't apply to David but clearly apply to the Son of David, Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, and lastly, keep in mind what this says about your own experiences and problems and needs and desires.

Now of those three reference points, I'm going to jump quickly into – and focus in our session – on the second reference point – what this says about the Jesus Christ.

And I'll tell you ahead of time, this Psalm is all about the suffering and dying and abandonment of the Son of David, our Savior.

What we'll see in the Gospels tonight – some of the texts – will give us the facts about what happened. What we have in Psalm 69 are the feelings of Jesus, when they were happening.

In other words, in the Gospels we observe the *facts* of His sufferings; in the Psalms we observe the *feelings* of His sufferings.

And my prayer is that we'll come to love our Lord and appreciate Him all the more – especially in this season of joy and thanksgiving.

Let me point out a couple of clear events in our Lord's life referenced in *Psalm 69* – they will immediately remind you of our Lord.

Notice verse 8. *I have become estranged from my brothers and an alien to my mother's sons.*

This is a reference to the fact that his own half-brothers and sisters – 6 of them – didn't believe whom Jesus claimed to be at first.

Matthew's gospel informs us that as Jesus began His ministry, none of his siblings believed His claim to be the Messiah. In fact, it was more than unbelief; they were *offended* by His claim.

When Jesus visited His hometown of Nazareth, the Jews responded with sarcasm and unbelief at Christ's claims. They said, ***Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? And His sisters, are they not all with us . . . and they all took offense at Him. (Matthew 13:53-57)***

Mark's gospel adds that when Christ's kinsman – His own siblings – heard that he had launched a public ministry and was calling disciples to follow Him, ***“they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, ‘he has lost His senses.’” (Mark 3:21)***

You could translate it, “they thought He was out of His mind.”ⁱⁱ

Imagine. They are interrupting the ministry of Christ with apologies to people, “We're really sorry about this . . . our brother has obviously lost His mind!”

John's Gospel adds, ***“For not even His brothers were believing in Him.” (John 7:5)***

Obviously, if you hold to the clear statements in these verses that Jesus had half-brothers and sisters, siblings born to Mary and Joseph, you have another issue that needs clearing up.

Matthew 13:55 we're given the names of Jesus Christ's half-brothers. In other words, they had the same mother but not the same father!

According to ancient customs of the day, children were introduced by order of age; **James** was first in the list, indicating he was Mary's second born son, followed by **Joseph and Simon and Judas – or Jude**. Matthew's gospel mentions **His sisters** without naming them.

So we're given the facts that Jesus had four half-brothers and at least two half-sisters. Given the common belief that Joseph died sometime before Christ's ministry, you can only appreciate Mary all

the more when you realize that she was a single mother raising, for at least several years, seven children.

In fact, if she and Joseph added a child to the family every two years, by the time Jesus Christ died in his early 30's, the youngest child would have still been a teenager.

By the way, my admiration for Mary isn't lessened by the facts of scripture, it is increased. Without falling into idolatry and false doctrine, we have every reason to appreciate Mary for her obedience and commitment to her Lord and Savior.

Add to that the heartbreaking reality that while *she* believed the claims of her firstborn Son, without fully understanding them, *none* of her other children believed.

In John's Gospel account, these half-brothers even accused Christ of trying to make a name for Himself and gather a following. (**John 7:1-5**).

So properly understood, the home of Mary and Joseph was eventually filled with turmoil over the claims of Christ. There wasn't a moment's peace.

Jesus knew nothing of his closest family members understanding Him and believing in Him. He would later be ostracized from his brothers and sisters who believed their brother had lost His grip on reality.

Listen, Jesus Christ was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief long before He hung on a cross.

Look again at **Psalm 69:8, *I have become estranged (painfully at odds) from my brothers; and an alien – a foreigner from another country – from my mother's sons.***

That's how He actually felt.

Let me show you another Messianic insight – and prophecy: look down at another key phrase that points to the Messiah – at **verse 9 – *For zeal for Thy house has consumed me.***

You could understand this to say, *“My passion for the God's house literally consumes me – it is of the greatest concern to me.”*

The incident is recorded for us in the Gospel by **John, chapter 2** – turn there if you would. This event occurred in the month of April, in the city of Jerusalem.

John 2:12. *After this He went down to Capernaum. He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days. 13. And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and*

Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Stop here for a moment.

The Passover was a seven day feast that commemorated the freeing of the slaves in Egypt and the sacrificial lamb which saved each household. This sacrifice would be re-enacted every Passover in honor of their deliverance.

And it was the dream of every Jew to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem at least once in their lifetime.

Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived in the first century, recorded that during Passover, AD 65, 255,600 lambs were offered. If there were as many as ten worshippers per lamb - that would mean that nearly 3 million people were celebrating in Jerusalem.

But as Jesus arrives, all is not well in the Temple:

14. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated.

Now, at first glance this may not seem to us to be out of order...but in reality, it reveals unbelievable corruption in, of all places, the house of worship.

Annas was the vile, corrupt high priest during the lifetime of Jesus; his son-in-law, Caiaphas, would lead the council against Jesus, which would lead to the crucifixion.

Annas had used his position as a means to personal power and wealth . . . in fact, the business enterprises in the temple court had become known as the “Bazaar of Annas – the Marketplace of Annas.”

He had created a temple system that was bringing in millions of dollars from relatively poor people. How? I’m glad you asked.

Every male who attended Passover in Jerusalem could not enter the temple court until they had paid a “temple tax” – today it would be around \$10.00.

By the time of Christ, this was around two-day’s wages – so this was no small sacrifice.

However, here’s where it got messy. In and around the city of Jerusalem, all kinds of currency were used. Silver coins from Rome and Greece and Egypt and Sidon were in circulation, and all of it was valid currency . . . except in the Temple.

Those currencies were considered unclean, and the Temple would only accept tax paid in Galilean shekels or what they called “shekels of the sanctuary.”

That’s where these good ole boy money changers come in – **look back at 14b. “and the moneychangers seated”.**

These supposedly religious men charged all sorts of fees that brought in lots of money.

There was a \$10 admission fee. Then there was a \$5 fee for exchanging currency. There was also a charge for receiving foreign money.

People had brought into the temple their Egyptian and Roman money . . . all of which was considered ceremonially unclean.

So they charged people for the fact that they had received “dirty” money and exchanged it for “clean” money. And that fee was another \$5 in today’s economy.

Jewish historians believe that in today’s economy, it would have cost an average of \$20.00 to get simply into the temple on Passover day.

Now if you multiply \$20 times a million or so visitors who’ve come to the city at Passover to worship – you can only imagine why the religious leaders got excited.

But that wasn’t all. Did you notice the strange verse – **verse 14** – go back there – **He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated.**

There all in there together.

God had originally instructed the people of Israel to bring from their flocks the best animals for sacrifice (Deut. 12). But the priests instituted a market for buying sacrificial animals – these made it more convenient for the travelers.

In fact, there is little doubt from OT scholars, that the shepherds in the fields during the birth of Christ were temple shepherds watching over paschal lambs – sacrificial sheep that would be brought to Jerusalem later for sacrifice.

And don’t miss the wonderful irony of that scene – Jesus, the Lamb of God, is born in a makeshift barn – as if he were livestock; and the first people to come in contact with Him were the shepherds guarding the temple lambs who would one day be sacrificed.

We don’t have time to get into that – let’s go back to the Temple system.

The law required that any animal offered in sacrifice must be unblemished. Therefore, the temple had to inspect the animal before it would be admissible for sacrifice.

By the time of Christ, the Temple had appointed inspectors – called, Mumcheh, who examined the animal.

It was widely known that the Mumcheh were dishonest and in league with the priesthood to basically reject the animals brought by the visitors.

So these travelers would have no other option but to buy their sacrificial animal from the Temple livestock.

There was one major problem - outside the Temple, a pair of doves would cost as little as \$20.00.

Inside the Temple, in the court of the Gentiles where they were being sold -they could cost as much as \$375 per family or adult.

This was worse than buying food inside Disney World – buying a hotdog and Coke at a ballgame. They know they have you!

Again, consider the fact that Jerusalem would swell with more than 2 million guests during Passover, and you're talking about bringing in around 300 to 400 million dollars.

Passover was a bonanza – and the Temple system was effectively extorting the worshippers . . . this was extortion in the name of religion.

Listen, religion has always created a way to charge people for access to God.

But let me tell you something – it's not for sale.

And it's not for sale because the price has already been paid in full.

This Temple scene evidently provoked Jesus. *verse 15 informs us that He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables 16. and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise." 17. His disciples remembered that it as written – Psalm 69 – Zeal for Thy house will consume me."*

Now you need to understand an even deeper implication of Jesus' actions:

During the Passover, it was the duty of each family to clean their homes - while they were especially to rid their homes of leaven (which most often represented corruption). The Jews cleaned house in the month of April in view of Passover – this was spring cleaning.

So here is Jesus Christ going into the temple and he calls it, "My Father's house!" . . . and what is he doing? He's cleaning His house – and ridding it of corruption.

We went the first hint of this when Jesus turned 12, and it was time for Pass over; they came to Jerusalem. And when everyone from their village caravanned home, unbeknown to them, Jesus stays behind in Jerusalem, and Mary and Joseph were well on their way home before they missed him.

Just like me one time when I left one of my kids at church that I was supposed to bring home. I got a call from someone saying, "Stephen, I've got one of your kids here at church." I said, "Well, would you mind giving them back after they graduate?"

Mary and Joseph hurry back to Jerusalem and after 3 days of looking for him they finally found him in the Temple surrounded by religious leaders and he said to them – Didn't you know that I had to be about my Father's business – you could render that – didn't you know I would be about my Father's House.

And so here He is, Jesus is declaring ownership and authority over the temple that was nothing short of declaring himself, Messiah!

These are but a few of the prophetic, Messianic implications that point us to the reason Christ was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 12/6/2015 by Stephen Davey.

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i Fritz Rienecker/Cleon Rogers, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament (Regency, 1976), p. 95