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A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

"Other Messianic Psalms of David: A Prologue to the New Testament"

by

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"Other Messianic Psalms of David: A Prologue to the New Testament" (Part One)²

by

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A Foreword on the Book of Psalms

Jesus Christ himself explained that his ministry had been prophesied in the Book of Psalms.³ The prophecy of Kind David is also recorded in the Book of Psalms. There are 150 psalms written in that book. It is not clear as to whether David wrote or contributed to the creation of all of these psalms. One position holds that David himself only wrote about 73 of these 150 psalms. While another position—that of Reformed theology—holds that David wrote all 150 of the psalms. For instance, Augustine of Hippo held this later position in *The City of God*, stating that:

But those seem to me to hold the more credible opinion, who ascribe to him the authorship of all these hundred and fifty psalms, and think that he prefixed to some of them the names even of other men, who prefigured something pertinent to the matter, but chose to have no man's name in the titles of the rest, just as God inspired him in the management of this variety, which, although dark, is not meaningless.⁴

Here, Augustine pointed out that "the Savior Himself" ascribed Psalm 110 to the authorship of David, even though the caption to this Psalm reads "Of David. A psalm."⁵

According to Augustine, King David's prophecies are contained within the 150 psalms.⁶ Augustine surmised that, given David's natural talents and musical gifts, his prophecies were naturally transmitted through psalms. "Now David was a man skill in songs, who clearly loved musical harmony, not with a vulgar delight, but with a believing disposition, and by it served his God, who is the true God, by the mystical representation of a great thing. For the rational and well-ordered

³ See, e.g., Luke 24:44 ("He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me** in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and **the Psalms**.")

⁴ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 595.

⁵ Ibid. See, also, Psalm 110.

⁶ Ibid., p. 602 ("...about the Psalms, that is, about King David's prophecy..."); p. 595 ("... almost all his prophecy is in psalms, of which a hundred and fifty are contained in what we call the Book of Psalms...")

concord of diverse sounds in harmonious variety suggests the compact unity of the well-ordered city."⁷

But Augustine's viewpoint ascribing the authorship of the entire 150 psalms to David is partly called into question by the historical record contained in I Chronicles, whereby King David is described as setting aside dozens of men for the ministry of prophesying through musical instruments, as follows:

David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals. Here is the list of the men who performed this service:

2 From the sons of *Asaph*:

Zakkur, Joseph, Nethaniah and Asarelah. The sons of Asaph were under the supervision of Asaph, who prophesied under the king's supervision.

3 As for *Jeduthun*, from his sons:

Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shimei,[a] Hashabiah and Mattithiah, six in all, under the supervision of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied, using the harp in thanking and praising the Lord.

4 As for *Heman*, from his sons:

Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael and Jerimoth; Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti and Romamti-Ezer; Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth.

5 (All these were sons of Heman the king's seer. They were given him through the promises of God to exalt him. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.)

6 All these men were under the supervision of their father for the music of the temple of the Lord, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the

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⁷ Ibid., p. 595.

ministry at the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman were under the supervision of the king.

7 Along with their relatives—all of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord—they numbered 288.8

But St. Augustine here explains that where Asaph, Jeduthun, Heman and others may have "prefigured something pertinent to the matter" of specific psalms, David "prefixed to some" of the psalms "the names even of other men." A careful review of the several inscriptions that are affixed to the Psalms seemingly support—or, at least, they do not refute— Augustine's position, because these inscriptions are not consistent or clear, and they give no clear indication as to authorship. ¹⁰

In Christian and Reformed hermeneutics, it has long been held that the Book of Psalms contains prophetic descriptions or predictions of Jesus Christ and his Church. This paper explores those prophetic descriptions and predictions that are contained within the book of Psalms.

⁸ I Chronicles 25: 1-7.

⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 595.

¹⁰ For example, in some the inscriptions which appear before the Psalms we find, e.g., "For the director of music. A psalm of David"; "Of David. A makil."; "Of David"; "For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD."; "A psalm of David. A petition."; "For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David."; "For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil."; "For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm."; "A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah."

Introduction

The Book of Psalms is, among other things, a prophecy of the **body or the church of Jesus Christ**—its nature, structure, objectives, and mission— especially as, among other things, the "**kingdom militant**."¹¹

The Book of Revelation and the Gospels describe the body or church of Jesus Christ as the "kingdom militant," as well as its present and future suffering. This the Book of Psalms also foretells prophetically, throughout its 150 chapters.

For instance, the Book of Psalms contains several verses which depict the suffering of righteous, oppressed souls. That suffering, in a broader sense, represents the past, present, and future suffering of the body or church of Jesus Christ, during its present-day pilgrimage up to war of Armageddon.

Hence, through the words of King David within the five books of the Book of Psalms, ¹³ we also find, in addition to the prophetic references to Christ's suffering, the deep, spiritual, and existential anxieties and concerns of the oppressed. Thus, contained within these five books of the Book of Psalms we find a sort of tacit admission that even the king of Israel— King David himself— was frequently in a state of anxiety, insecurity, and oppression.

When Jesus Christ walked upon the earth in human form, he certainly acknowledged that this *anxiety*, *oppression*, and *insecurity* was, and would continue to be, a fact of the Christian walk of faith for his saints, stating,

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that

enemy is still maintained....") In the United States of America, Christian civil magistrates, such as legislators, governors, judges, and lawyers, are a part of this "kingdom militant" because they especially play a vital role in the sacred duty "to do justice and judgment" (Gen. 18: 18-19), which is sin quo non and fundamental. See, also, Augustine, The City of God, supra, p. 577 ("[t]herefore to do justice and judgment is of God."). In English law, that duty was contained in the Chancery Court and in the Ecclesiastical courts. In the United States, the federal district and appellate courts retained jurisdiction over the old English Chancery Courts, and in the state courts, the English ecclesiastical courts came within their jurisdiction under the umbrella of the "common laws of England," often explicitly described in several state statutes as "the common law of England as they existed on July 4, 1776."

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See **Attachment A**. The King James Versions lists the following sections: BOOK I: Verses 1 through 41; BOOK II: Verses 42-72; BOOK III: Verses 73 through 89; BOOK IV: Verses 90 – 106; and BOOK V: Verses 107-150.

thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil." (John 17: 14-15)

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16: 33).

"The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." (John 15: 20).

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me...." (John 15: 26).

Stated differently, there is, as Augustine of Hippo has cogently explained in *The City of God*, conflict between Good and Evil in this world, owing in part to the fact that there are two broad types of human societies that are in conflict with each other:

And thus it has come to pass, that though there are very many and great nations all over the earth, whose rites and customs, speech, arms, and dress, are distinguished by marked differences, yet there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our Scriptures. The one consists of those who wish to live after the flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the spirit; and when they severally achieve what they wish, they live in peace, each after their kind.¹⁴

This race we have distributed into two parts, the one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God. And these we also mystically call the two cities, or the two communities of men, of which one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil.¹⁵

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¹⁴ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 441.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 480.

The former group, those who wish to live after the flesh, St. Augustine also calls "the earthly city, which, though it be mistress of the nations, is itself ruled by its lust of rule" and "to this earthly city belong the enemies against… the city of God." ¹⁷

The conflict between the Good (i.e., the "city of God") and Evil (i.e., the "city of Man") is reflected in St. Augustine's narrative in *The City of God* regarding the *jealousy* between Cain and Abel. Cain hated Abel for the very same reasons that evil persons generally hate good persons, to wit: "for no other reason than because they are good while themselves are evil... that which fell out between Cain and Abel illustrated the hatred that subsists between the two cities, that of God and that of men. The wicked war with the wicked; the good also war with the wicked."¹⁸

For it is this existential state of the saints— in the midst of envy and warfare— that they often find themselves in the state of danger, fear, uncertainty, anxiety, and insecurity. They are, in this troublesome world, in a constant state of conflict with the world, the city of Man.

For this existential state was prophetically anticipated in the Book of Psalms, where King David himself poignantly explained his own insecurities and need for the LORD God's reassurance and deliverance. This we find expressed throughout the entire Book of Psalms.

This paper does not analyze the entire five books of the Psalms, but rather it only looks at several verses of Scripture that are contained within "Book I" or in chapters 1 through 41 of the Book of Psalms. The same general principles, theological observations, and analysis that are made here can be applied to similar passages of Scripture that run throughout the entire Book of Psalms.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 482-483.

Chapter One:

"Book I of The Psalms- Petitions and Prayers in Times of Distress"

Chapter 4 of the Psalms requests a hearing before God whenever the speaker calls upon Him. This same plea is repeated in Chapter 5. Chapters 6 and 16 are statements of faith and trust; they both make solemn requests for deliverance and mercy, as if the soul of the speaker is in imminent threat of anguish and danger.

Chapters 10 and 13 mentions the insecurities of the soul amidst the treats and taunts of the wicked; here, the speaker is awaiting in anguish upon God's response. And Chapter 12 mentions the prevalence and predominant spirit of wickedness within the social order, and it too seeks God's deliverance.

Book of Psalms (KJV)	"Petitions to God in Time of Distress"
	[Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10]
Psalm 4:1	"Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer."
Psalm 5: 1-3	"Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."
Psalm 6:4	"Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake."
Psalm 7:1-2	"O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: "Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver."
Psalm 10:1-3	"Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?

	"The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. "For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth."
Psalm 12:1-2	"Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. "They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak."
Psalm 13: 1-4	"How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? "How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? "Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; "Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved."
Psalm 14:6	"Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge."
Psalm 16:1	"Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust."

In these chapters we see, first, the literal spiritual strivings and concerns of **King David** himself; and second, and perhaps more broadly, we see the present-day and future spiritual strivings and struggles of the **saints of the church of Jesus Christ**, for example, during the future period of the war of Armageddon that is mentioned on the Book of Revelation.

Chapter Two:

"Book I of The Psalms- Petitions and Prayers in Times of Distress"

The same general observations in Chapter One can be made here. In Chapters 17, 20, 22, 27, and 28 of the Book of Psalms, we find the speaker amidst conflict with the wicked, who are about to enclose upon him. The speaker is obviously in a state of exasperation, his petition requests God's protection and deliverance.

Book of Psalms (KJV)	"Petitions to God in Time of Distress"
	[Chapters 17, 18, 20, 22, 27 and 28]
Psalm 17:1, 8-15	"Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my
	prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips
	"Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,
	"From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.
	"They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.
	"They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;
	"Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.
	"Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:
	"From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.

	"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."
Psalm 18: 2-6	"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.
	"I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.
	"The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.
	"The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.
	"In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears."
Psalm 20:1-2	"The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of
	Jacob defend thee;
	"Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion"
Psalm 22:1-2	"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?
	"O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent."
Psalm 27: 12-14	"Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false
	witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.
	"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

	"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."
Psalm 28: 1-3	"Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. "Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle. "Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts."

These passages of Scripture that are contained within the Book of Psalms are to alert all true Christians that the present world in which we live is one of spiritual warfare between the just and the unjust, and the world shall remain in this state of misery, anxiety, and uncertainty until the time of the Final Judgment. During the meanwhile the true Church is in a state of warfare against evil and injustice; for, as Augustine of Hippo has written, "there also shall be **the camp of the saints** and the beloved city, and there **it shall be encompassed by the savage persecution of all its enemies**; for **they too shall exist** along with it **in all nations**—that is, it shall **be straitened**, and **hard pressed**, and **shut up in thee straits of tribulation**, but **shall not desert its military duty**, which is signified by the word 'camp.'" ¹⁹

Again, we find in these chapters, first, the literal spiritual strivings and concerns of **King David** himself; and second, and perhaps more broadly, we see the present-day and future **spiritual strivings** and **struggles** of the **saints of the church of Jesus Christ**, for example, during the future period of the war of Armageddon that is mentioned on the Book of Revelation.

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¹⁹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 730.

Chapter Three:

"Book I of The Psalms- Petitions and Prayers in Times of Distress"

The entire Chapter 31 of the Book of Psalms is a poetic expression of the existential state of the strivings of the saints amidst persecution in this world. This Psalm expresses trust and faith in God in a time of great trouble and uncertainty. It seeks deliverance from wicked persons who are threatening to do great harm. Hence, the existential state of the righteous, the saints, and the church of Jesus Christ are clearly set forth in this passage, viz:

Psalm 31:1-24 (KJV)

[Chapter 31]

- **1** In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.
- **2** Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.
- **3** For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.
- **4** Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.
- 5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.
- **6** I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.
- **7** I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;
- **8** And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.
- **9** Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.
- 10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

- 11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.
- 12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.
- 13 For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.
- **14** But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God.
- 15 My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.
- **16** Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.
- **17** Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.
- **18** Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.
- 19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!
- **20** Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.
- **21** Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.
- **22** For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.
- **23** O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.
- 24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

As previously mentioned, Chapter 31 of the Book of Psalms should alert all true Christians that the true Church is in a state of pilgrimage and warfare against evil and injustice. For, as Augustine of Hippo has written, "there also shall be the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the savage persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it in all

nations—that is, it shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and shut up in thee straits of tribulation, but shall not desert its military duty, which is signified by the word 'camp.'"20

²⁰ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 730.

Chapter Four:

"Book I of The Psalms- Petitions and Prayers in Times of Distress"

Finally, we close this paper with a review of the last several chapters in Book I of the Book of Psalms. These several Psalms continue the same theme that runs throughout the entire First Book of the Psalms, namely, that the righteous saints are in a state of warfare—as the "kingdom militant" – with the unrighteous wicked.²¹ In the midst of this warfare, the righteous saints need to trust in God, who shall deliver them.

Book of Psalms (KJV)	"Petitions to God in Time of Distress"
	[Chapters 33, 34, 35, 36, and 40]
Psalm 33:20	"Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield."
Psalm 34:6	"This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him
	out of all his troubles."
Psalm 35:1-2	"Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.
	"Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help."
Psalm 36: 11-12	"Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.
	"There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise."
Psalm 40:1	"I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and
1 Saint 40.1	heard my cry."

²¹ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 726 ("It is then of this **kingdom militant**, in which **conflict with the enemy** is still maintained....")

Again, as previously mentioned above, here, in these passages of Scripture, the existential state of the churches of Jesus Christ is prophetically expressed.

Furthermore, as Augustine has explained in *The City of God*, "the enemies of God... fiercely hate Christians with the most deadly malice," and this is the source of the pain, suffering, anxiety, mental oppression, and prayers of the saints of God.

²² Ibid., p. 609.

CONCLUSION

The Book of Psalms is, among other things, a prophecy of the **body or the church of Jesus Christ**—its nature, structure, objectives, and mission—as the "**kingdom militant**."

Theologically, the Book of Psalms explains the condition of mankind; it is divided spiritually and is in a state of warfare: Good versus Evil. The Good call upon God for deliverance and salvation, as expressed throughout the entire Book of Psalms.

What this means, ultimately, is that the entire body of Jesus Christ is in a state of spiritual warfare— as exemplified in the life and in the psalms of King David himself. This spiritual warfare is reflected in Augustine of Hippo's narrative within The City of God, whereby he described the *jealousy* of Cain that was directed against his brother Abel.

Augustine says that Cain hated Abel for the very same reasons that evil persons in this world generally hate good persons, to wit: "for no other reason than because they are good while themselves are evil... that which fell out between Cain and Abel illustrated the hatred that subsists between the two cities, that of God and that of men. The wicked war with the wicked; the good also war with the wicked."²³

And in this state, there is the "camp of the saints"; for "it shall be *straitened*, and *hard pressed*, and shut up in the *straits of tribulation*, but shall not desert its military duty."²⁴

Throughout Book I (chapters one through forty-two) of the Book of Psalms, there are dozens of references to this spiritual warfare of the saints and to the spiritual strivings of righteous souls for God's divine deliverance and salvation.

THE END

²³ Ibid., pp. 482-483.

²⁴ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 730.

APPENDIX

The Book of Psalms (150 Psalms)

Book I of the Book of Psalms consists of Chapters 1 through 41.

Book II of the Book of Psalms consists of Chapters 42 through 72.

Book III of the Book of Psalms consists of Chapters 73 through 89.

Book IV of the Book of Psalms consists of Chapters 90 through 106.

Book V of the Book of Psalms consists of Chapters 107 through 150.

