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A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“69th Psalm of David: A Prologue to the New Testament”¹

by

Roderick O. Ford, Litt.D., LL.D.

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¹ Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). www.roderickford.org.

“69th Psalm of David: A Prologue to the New Testament” (Part Five)²

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Roderick O. Ford, D.Litt. (Law & Religion)



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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 King 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 Romanti-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

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.”⁹ 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 Sixty-Ninth Psalm is a clear prophetic reference to a futuristic kingdom. This prophetic reference we find in the last three verses of that Psalm.

The substance and nature of that prophetic reference appears to have been adopted, expounded upon, and republished in several of the writings of the Old Testament prophets who spoke about a Messiah, a Restored Israel, and a future, eternal kingdom.

Reformed theologian John Calvin (1509- 1564)¹¹ and Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 AD)¹² agree on the prophetic meaning of Psalm 69. Hence, this paper concludes that the Christocentric interpretation of Psalm 69 is indeed the “Reformed” interpretation of that same Scripture. That is, that the suffering of Christ while he was on the cross; the taunting of His enemies; Christ’s ultimate triumph, etc., are referenced in this Scripture.

¹¹ John Calvin’s *Commentaries on the Bible* (Psalm 69).

¹² St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 602) (“Of the 69th Psalm...”)

Chapter One:

“A Prophecy of the Restored Israel”

We know that the 69th Psalm is some form of prophetic description of a future kingdom that transcends that temporal one of King David’s, because the last three verses of that Scripture states:

*Let heaven and earth praise him,
the seas and all that move in them,
For God will save Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah.
Then people will settle there and possess it;
the children of his servants will inherit it,
and those who love his name will dwell there.*

These words “will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah” have no historical saliency during the time period when David reigned.

The words the “people” may be tropically interpreted to mean “nations,” and not limited to Judah or Israel.¹³

¹³ See, e.g., John Calvin’s *Commentaries on the Bible* (Psalm 69), commenting on Verse 36.

And the seed of his servants shall inherit it. In this verse he declares that the blessing now mentioned would extend through a continued succession of ages -- that, the fathers would transmit to their children the possession which they had received, as from hand to hand, and the children to their children; and the enduring possession of **all good things depends upon Christ, of whom David was a type**. Yet the Psalmist at the same time briefly intimates, that **such only as are the legitimate children of Abraham shall inherit the land: They who love his name shall dwell in it**. It was needful to take away all grounds for self-glorification from hypocrites, who, looking to and depending solely upon the circumstances connected with the origin of their race, foolishly boasted that the land belonged to them by right of inheritance, notwithstanding of their having apostatised from the faith of their ancestors. **Although that land was given to the chosen people to be possessed until the advent of Christ, we should remember that it was a type of the heavenly inheritance, and that, therefore, what is here written concerning the protection of the Church, has received a more true and substantial fulfillment in our own day**. There is no reason to fear that the building of the spiritual temple, in which the celestial power of God has been manifested, will ever fall into ruins.

And the words “children of his servants” should not be restricted to the Jews or to the Hebrews, but these words are all-inclusive of all the “saints” from all nations upon the earth.¹⁴

Hence, these prophetic words of King David’s refer to *a future event*— a prophetic event that describes an eternal kingdom.

Almost all of the Old Testament prophets who lived after King David also described the same future prophetic event, that is the culmination of *ultimate Justice* in the affairs of humankind and among all nations:

Hence, Psalm 69: 34-36 is eerily reminiscent of the same prophetic messages of several of the Old Testament prophets who lived after King David, to wit:

PSALM 69: 34-36

(Zion (Judah)- The Future Inheritance of a Restored Israel)

Isaiah-- See, e.g., Isaiah 9:6-7; 52: 13-15; 53:1-12 (The Messiah)
Jeremiah-- See, e.g., Jeremiah 23: 5-6 (The righteous Branch; Messiah)
Ezekiel-- See, e.g., Ezekiel 37: 20-28 (Dry Bones; Restored Israel)
Micah-- See, e.g., Michah 4:1-5 (Restored Israel)
Amos-- See, e.g., Amos 9: 8- 11 (House of Israel among all Nations)
Haggai—See, e.g., Haggai 2: 6-9 (Rebuilt Temple is for all Nations)
Zechariah—See, e.g., Zechariah: 11:10 (One Covenant for all Nations)
Hosea-- See, e.g., Hosea 1:9-11; 2:5 (Restored Israel; One Head)
Daniel-- See, e.g., Daniel 9:3-19, 27 (70 weeks; Messiah)

Reformed theologian John Calvin has given these last three verses of Psalm 69 this prophetic interpretation as well. In his Commentary on Verses 34-35 of Psalm 69, Calvin writes:

From this we may conclude with the greater certainty, that, as I have touched upon above, David in the whole of this psalm spake in the

¹⁴ Ibid.

name of the whole Church; for he now transfers to the Church what he had spoken in particular concerning himself....

[T]here is no doubt that by the Spirit of prophecy he comprehended the whole of that period during which God would have the kingdom and priesthood continued among the ancient people of Israel. Yet he begins at the restoration of a new state of things....

He says, in the first place, that Zion shall be saved.... He farther teaches, that this change to the better would not be of short continuance; but that the people would be always preserved safe through the constant and enduring protection of God: And they shall dwell there, and possess it by inheritance. He therefore intimates, that the promise which God had so often made in the law, That they should inherit that land forever, was truly confirmed by the commencement of his reign.¹⁵

Therefore, having began our analysis of Psalm 69 with the last three verses—Verses 34 through 36—we are able to now place the remaining portion of this psalm into a “Christocentric” hermeneutical context.

¹⁵ John Calvin’s *Commentaries on the Bible* (Psalm 69); <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/calvin/psalms/69.htm>

Chapter Two:

“The Passion & Suffering of Christ”

Psalm 69 is, inter alia, a prophecy about the actual suffering of Jesus Christ while he was on the cross.

This we find in the following passages:

Psalm 69: 1- 3

Save me, O God,
for the waters have come up to my neck.

² I sink in the miry depths,
where there is no foothold.
I have come into the deep waters;
the floods engulf me.

³ I am worn out calling for help;
my throat is parched.
My eyes fail,
looking for my God.

Psalm 69: 7

For I endure scorn for your sake,
and shame covers my face.

Psalm 69: 20-21

Scorn has broken my heart
and has left me helpless;

I looked for sympathy, but there was none,
for comforters, but I found none.

²¹ They put gall in my food
and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

In Psalm 69: 21, the passage that states, “**They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst,**” is referenced as an actual historical event in the Gospels at Matthew 27:34-48; Mark 15:36; and John 19: 28-29.

In *The City of God*, Augustine of Hippo attributes this Verse to being proof of “the obstinate unbelief of the Jews,” who “will not in the least yield to the testimonies of this prophecy.”¹⁶

Psalm 69: 29

But as for me, afflicted and in pain—
may your salvation, God, protect me.

Here in Verse 29 we find a sort of summation of all of the agony of Christ, as he suffered on the Cross, to wit: “**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**” as referenced in Psalm 22:1 and in Matthew 27: 46.

¹⁶ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 602.

Chapter Three: **“The Mockers, Scoffers, and Enemies of Christ”**

Psalm 69 is also, inter alia, a prophetic description of the mockers, scoffers, and the enemies of Jesus Christ who thought that, during the time of his trial, sentence, and crucifixion, that they had prevailed over him.

This we find in the following passages:

Psalm 69: 4

Those who hate me without reason
outnumber the hairs of my head;
many are my enemies without cause,
those who seek to destroy me.
I am forced to restore
what I did not steal.

Psalm 69: 8-9

⁸ I am a foreigner to my own family,
a stranger to my own mother's children;
⁹ for zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.

Psalm 69: 10-12

[Empty box]

¹⁰ When I weep and fast,
I must endure scorn;

¹¹ when I put on sackcloth,
people make sport of me.

¹² Those who sit at the gate mock me,
and I am the song of the drunkards.

Psalm 69: 13-18

13 But I pray to you, LORD,
in the time of your favor;
in your great love, O God,
answer me with your sure salvation.

14 Rescue me from the mire,
do not let me sink;
deliver me from those who hate me,
from the deep waters.

15 Do not let the floodwaters engulf me
or the depths swallow me up
or the pit close its mouth over me.

16 Answer me, LORD, out of the goodness of your
love; in your great mercy turn to me.

17 Do not hide your face from your servant;
answer me quickly, for I am in trouble.

18 Come near and rescue me;
deliver me because of my foes.

Psalm 69: 19

You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed;
all my enemies are before you.

Psalm 69: 26

For they persecute those you wound
and talk about the pain of those you hurt.

Indeed, these several verses in Psalm 69 parallel similar verses on the same subject matter of Christ's Passion and Crucifixion were are contained within Psalms 3 and 41.

For instance, in Verses 1 and 2 of the 3rd Psalm, we find a description by King David of his enemies, stating:

“O LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!

Many are saying of me, ‘God will not deliver him.’”

And in Verses 7 through 9 of the 41st Psalm, we find the following similar description, to wit:

“All my enemies whisper together against me; they imagine the worst for me, saying ‘A vile disease has beset him; he will never get up from the place where he lies.’

Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared by bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”

Within Psalm 69, Verses 4, 8-12, 19, and 26 (as well as Psalms 3 and 41), we may readily observe being prophetically fulfilled in the Gospel of St. Matthew, to wit:

“[T]hey divided up his clothes by casting lots...”¹⁷

“Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads.”¹⁸

“[S]ave yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”¹⁹

“[T]he chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.... He’s the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”²⁰

“In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.”²¹

“They... mocked him. ‘Hail king of the Jews!’”²²

This prophetic reference to Christ, however, also applies to His body, the universal Church; such that the persecution and suffering mentioned here are to be rightfully understood to mean the prophesy of that *proverbial suffering* and *proverbial cross* to be borne by all Christians.

¹⁷ Matthew 27: 35.

¹⁸ Matthew 27: 39.

¹⁹ Matthew 27: 40.

²⁰ Matthew 27: 41-42.

²¹ Matthew 27: 43.

²² Matthew 27:29.

Chapter Four:

“The Resurrection and Triumphant Reign of Christ”

Finally, Psalm 69 is also, inter alia, a prophetic description of resurrection and triumphant reign of Christ.

This we find in the following passages:

Psalm 69: 22- 25

²² May the table set before them become a snare;
may it become retribution and^[b] a trap.

²³ May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent forever.

²⁴ Pour out your wrath on them;
let your fierce anger overtake them.

²⁵ May their place be deserted;
let there be no one to dwell in their tents.

In *The City of God*, Augustine of Hippo attributes this 22nd Verse— “May the table set before them become a snare....”— to being a prophetic condemnation and proof of “the obstinate unbelief of the Jews,” who “will not in the least yield to the testimonies of this prophecy.”²³

Psalm 69: 27- 28

²⁷ Charge them with crime upon crime;
do not let them share in your salvation.

²⁸ May they be blotted out of the book of life
and not be listed with the righteous.

²³ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 602.

Psalm 69: 30-31

³⁰ I will praise God's name in song
and glorify him with thanksgiving.

³¹ This will please the LORD more than an ox,
more than a bull with its horns and hooves.

Psalm 69: 32-33

³² The poor will see and be glad—
you who seek God, may your hearts live!

³³ The LORD hears the needy
and does not despise his captive people.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ represents God's Ultimate Justice upon the earth! This Justice is manifest in God's triumph over his enemies— a theme that is mentioned in the books of several of the Old Testament prophets, as well as in the Book of Revelation.

The Old Testament's recurring **social justice** themes are recognized in the 69th Psalm in Verses 32 and 33, where the words "**poor**," "**needy**," and "**captive people**" are mentioned.

Finally, throughout the Book of Psalms, most of the passages that mention "Praise" is a reference to this "Ultimate Judgment and Justice" of the LORD God as well as the eternal reign of the son of David, the Messiah.

CONCLUSION

The Book of Psalms is a prophecy— King David’s prophecy on the spiritual meaning of his own kingdom and of the future eternal kingdom of the Messiah.

Jesus of Nazareth has ascribed this Book of Psalms to be a prophetic foretelling of his own life and ministry. His passion and crucifixion being thus prophesied therein,²⁴ and no other king of Judah or Israel having fulfilled his prophecy.²⁵

In the 69th Psalm, we find a prophetic description of the passion and resurrection of the Lord, the Messiah, the Christ.

Christ’s suffering on the cross, and the words He spoke while suffering, are referenced in Psalm 69, Verses 1 through 3, 7, 13-15, 16-18, 20-29, and 29.

Christ’s mockers, scoffers, and enemies, who ridiculed Him during the crucifixion, are referenced in Psalm 69, Verses 4, 8-9, 10-12, 19, and 26.

And, finally, the resurrection and eternal reign of Christ are referenced in Psalm 69, Verses 22-25, 27-28, and 30 – 36.

THE END

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See Appendix, below.

Appendix

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Saul | 1050-1010 BC |
| David | 1010-970 |
| Solomon | 970-930 |

| Judah (and Benjamin) | | | | | Israel (Ten Northern Tribes) | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|------------------|
| King | Reign | | Character | Prophets | King | Reign | | Character | Prophets |
| 1. Rehoboam | 931-913 | 17 years | Bad | Shemaiah | 1. Jeroboam I | 931-910 | 22 years | Bad | Ahijah |
| 2. Abijah | 913-911 | 3 years | Bad | | 2. Nadab | 910-909 | 2 years | Bad | |
| 3. Asa | 911-870 | 41 years | Good | | 3. Baasha | 909-886 | 24 years | Bad | |
| | | | | | 4. Elah | 886-885 | 2 years | Bad | |
| | | | | | 5. Zimri | 885 | 7 days | Bad | |
| | | | | | 6. Omri | 885-874* | 12 years | Bad | Elijah Micaiah |
| 4. Jehoshaphat | 870-848* | 25 years | Good | | 7. Ahab | 874-853 | 22 years | Bad | |
| 5. Jehoram | 848-841* | 8 years | Bad | | 8. Ahaziah | 853-852 | 2 years | Bad | |
| 6. Ahaziah | 841 | 1 years | Bad | | 9. Joram | 852-841 | 12 years | Bad | Elisha |
| 7. Athaliah | 841-835 | 6 years | Bad | | 10. Jehu | 841-814 | 28 years | Bad | |
| 8. Joash | 835-796 | 40 years | Good | Joel | 11. Jehoahaz | 814-798 | 17 years | Bad | Jonah Amos Hosea |
| 9. Amaziah | 796-767 | 29 years | Good | | 12. Jehoash | 798-782 | 16 years | Bad | |
| 10. Uzziah (Azariah) | 767-740* | 52 years | Good | Isaiah Micah | 13. Jeroboam II | 782-753* | 41 years | Bad | |
| 11. Jotham | 740-732* | 16 years | Good | | 14. Zechariah | 753-752 | 6 mo | Bad | |
| 12. Ahaz | 732-716 | 16 years | Bad | | 15. Shallum | 752 | 1 mo | Bad | |
| 13. Hezekiah | 716-687 | 29 years | Good | | 16. Menahem | 752-742 | 10 years | Bad | |
| 14. Manasseh | 687-642* | 55 years | Bad/Repented | Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah | 17. Pekahiah | 742-740 | 2 years | Bad | |
| 15. Amon | 642-640 | 2 years | Bad | | 18. Pekah | 740-732* | 20 years | Bad | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|----------|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|-----|--|
| 16. Josiah | 640-608 | 31 years | Good | | 19. Hoshea | 732-712 | 9 years | Bad | |
| 17. Jehoahaz | 608 | 3 mo | Bad | | 722 BC Fall of Samaria to Assyria | | | | |
| 18. Jehoiakim | 608-597 | 11 years | Bad | Daniel Ezekiel Jeremiah | * Co-regency | | | | |
| 19. Jehoiachin | 597 | 3 mos | Bad | | | | | | |
| 20. Zedekiah | 597-586 | 11 years | Bad | | | | | | |
| Destruction of Jerusalem, 9th Av, 586 BC, Babylonian Captivity | | | | | | | | | |

The Last Five Kings of Judah

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Josiah Reigned 31 years (640-609 BC) | | |
| 2. Jehoahaz (Shallum) Reigned 3 months (609 BC) Taken prisoner to Egypt by Pharaoh Neco | 3. Jehoiakim (Eliakim) Reigned 11 years (609-598 BC) Died in Jerusalem | 5. Zedekiah Reigned 11 years (597--586 BC) Taken prisoner to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar |
| 4. Jehoichin (Jeconiah, Coniah) Reigned 3 months (December 9, 598 - March 16, 597 BC) Taken prisoner to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (with Ezekiel) | | |

