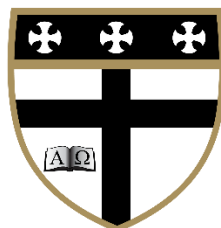


The Whitefield Seminary Papers

“Law & Religion Forum”

Volume 2, Apostolate Paper # 39



A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“45th Psalm of David: A Prologue to the New Testament”¹

by

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“45th Psalm of David: A Prologue to the New Testament” (Part One)²

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² Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022).
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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 maskil.”; “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 45th Psalm is clear proof that the spiritual essence of the Christian religion was contained within the messianic tendencies of the Jewish faith.

According to Augustine of Hippo, Christ had already established His Church or the “city of God,” “by the patriarchs and prophets,”¹¹ during the period of time “before He became man.”¹² Furthermore, Augustine held that amongst these Hebrews were “the true Israelite both by the flesh and by faith”¹³ and that the righteous Jews, too, were members of “the city of God.”¹⁴

This is evidenced in the 45th Psalm which sets forth a prophetic and spiritual interpretation as the meaning of the House of David. That interpretation is one of kingly perfection, excellence, and eternal rulership. The king who is described in the 45th Psalm far surpasses any of the kings who rules in Judah or Israel.¹⁵ In addition, we find in the 45th Psalms a description of a very elegant queen, who is joined to this king, that far surpasses any of the queens or wives of the kings of Israel or Judah. And in his *Commentaries* on the 45th Psalm, the renowned Reformed theologian John Calvin embraced this same hermeneutical interpretation.

For these reasons, Reformed theologians hold that this 45th Psalm is a Davidic prophecy of Jesus Christ and His Church.

¹¹ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 598.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 597-598. See, also, **Appendix**, below.

Chapter One:

“Psalm 45- Verses 1 through 7”

For one thing, the Psalms ascribes the most excellent, noble, and perfect descriptions of a “king,” which in Christian theology is deserving of no human being—not even the so-called “good” Kings of ancient Judah, including David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Amaziah, Jotham, Hezekiah or Josiah— except Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah.¹⁶ All of the kings of Judah and Israel were considered to be the “sons of David,”¹⁷ but most Christian theologians have concluded that none of these kings fit the description of the “king” or “messiah” who is often set forth in the Book of Psalms— only Christ fit that description.

For instance, in the first two verses of the 45th Psalms, we find the following words:

¹ My heart is stirred by a noble theme
as I recite my verses for **the king**;
my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.

² You are **the most excellent of men**
and your lips have been anointed with grace,
since **God has blessed you forever.**

¹⁶ The vast majority of the kings of Judah and Israel did “evil” in the eyes of the LORD. See Appendix 1, below.

¹⁷ The other Hebrew kings prophetically symbolized the “Christ,” because they were also known as the “Lord’s Anointed.” To this very point, Augustine of Hippo writes in *The City of God*, supra, p. 590, the following:

For **while all the kings are called His christs**, who were consecrated with the mystical chrism, not only **from king David downwards, but even from that Saul** who first was anointed king of that same people, David himself indeed calling him the Lord’s christ, **yet there was one true Christ, whose figure they bore by the prophetic unction**, who, according to the opinion of men, who thought he was to be understood as come in David or in Solomon, was long delayed, but who, according as God had disposed, was to come in His own time.

But because, as Augustine of Hippo has observed, these other kings were generally very earthly and sinful, within them “are scarcely found ... through certain enigmatic words or actions of theirs, what may pertain to Christ and the Church, either in Judah or Israel.” St. Augustine, *The City of God*, supra, p. 605. Therefore, instead of focusing on the whole like of Jewish and Israelitish kings, for the purpose of drawing a prophetic parallel between Jesus of Nazareth and the throne of the Jewish kings at Jerusalem, most Christian theologians focus mainly upon the reign of King David himself. Thus, Jesus is known as the “Son of David.”

We cannot say for sure if the writer of these verses had King David himself in mind, or whether he had King David in mind as *the prophetic shadow* of Messiah in mind.

However, because of the other descriptions of this “king,” which are also found in this 45th Psalms, the Christian theologians have been inclined to hold that only Jesus Christ (i.e., the messiah) is the only person who fit this description. For example, verse 6 and 7, states:

- ⁶ Your **throne**, O God, will **last for ever and ever**;
a **scepter of justice** will be the scepter of your kingdom.
⁷ You **love righteousness** and **hate wickedness**;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Here it says that the “throne” of this king will “last for ever and ever,” and that it will be a “scepter of justice,” and of “righteousness.” Only Christ’s throne is everlasting; however, because He inherited the same throne upon which David established and sat, we are talking about the same righteous, kingly throne, but, in Christian theology, the “king” whose throne is everlasting is the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth.

In his *Commentaries*, the Reformed theologian John Calvin certainly adopted this allegorical interpretation of the 45th Psalm, namely, that the “king” mentioned in verses 1 through 7 are references to Christ, to wit:

Hitherto, I have explained the text in the literal sense. But it is necessary that I should now proceed to illustrate somewhat more largely the comparison of Solomon with Christ, which I have only cursorily noticed. It would be quite sufficient for the pious and humble simply to state what is obvious, from the usual tenor of Scripture, **that the posterity of David typically represented Christ to the ancient people of God**; but as the Jews and other ungodly men refuse to submit cordially to the force of truth, **it is of importance to show briefly from the context itself, the principal reasons from which it appears that some of the things here spoken are not applicable fully and perfectly to Solomon**. As I intimated at the outset, the design of the prophet who composed this psalm was to confirm the hearts of the faithful, and to guard them against the terror and alarm with which the melancholy change that happened soon after might fill their minds. An everlasting duration, it might be said, had

been promised to this kingdom, and it fell into decay after the death of one man. To this objection, therefore, the prophet replies, that although Rehoboam, who was the first successor of that glorious and powerful king, had his sovereignty reduced within narrow limits, so that a great part of the people were cut off and placed beyond the bounds of his dominion, yet that was no reason why the faith of the Church should fail; for **in the kingdom of Solomon God had exhibited a type or figure of that everlasting kingdom which was still to be looked for and expected.** In the first place, **the name of king is ascribed to Solomon, simply by way of eminence, to teach us, that what is here said is not spoken of any common or ordinary king,** but of that illustrious sovereign, whose throne God had promised should endure as long as the sun and moon continued to shine in the heavens, (Psalms 72:5.) David certainly was king, and so were those who succeeded Solomon. It is necessary then to observe, that there is in this term some special significance, as if the Holy Spirit had selected this one man from all others, to distinguish him by the highest mark of sovereignty. Besides, how inconsistent would it be to commend very highly warlike valor in Solomon, who was a man of a meek and quiet disposition, and who having ascended the throne when the kingdom enjoyed tranquillity and peace, devoted himself only to the cultivation of those things that are suitable to a time of peace, and never distinguished himself by any action in battle? But, above all, no clearer testimony could be adduced of the application of this psalm to Christ, than what is here said of the eternal duration of the kingdom. There can be no doubt, that allusion is here made to the holy oracle of which I have already made mention, That as long as the sun and moon shall endure in the heavens the throne of David shall endure. **Even the Jews themselves are constrained to refer this to the Messiah.** Accordingly, although the prophet commenced his discourse concerning the son of David, there can be no doubt, that, guided by the Holy Spirit to a higher strain, he comprehended **the kingdom of the true and everlasting Messiah.** Besides, there is the name אלהים, Elohim, which it is proper to notice. It is no doubt also applied both to angels and men, but it cannot be applied to a mere man without qualification. **And, therefore, the divine majesty of Christ, beyond all question, is expressly denoted here.**¹⁸

¹⁸ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Bible* (Psalm 45)
(<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/cal/psalms-45.html>)

When we next turn to several other verses— 3, 4, and 5— within the 45th Psalm, we find the global dimensions of this “king” who shall subdue “the nations,” and this description fits none of the reigns of the kings of Judah or Israel, to wit:

³ Gird **your sword** on your side, you mighty one;
clothe yourself with **splendor** and **majesty**.

⁴ In your majesty ride forth victoriously
in the cause of **truth, humility** and **justice**;
let your **right hand** achieve **awesome deeds**.

⁵ Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king’s enemies;
let the nations fall beneath your feet.

But rather this is the description of a Jewish Messiah who was yet to come at the time when these verses were written¹⁹— one who will subdue all nations, as the “son of Man”²⁰ in the Book of Daniel, as the “Word of God”²¹ and “King of Kings and Lord of Lords,”²² recounted in the Book of Revelation, to wit:

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.²³

¹⁹ In 1 Chronicles 25:1, the psalms were described as “the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals.”

²⁰ Daniel 7:13 (“a son of man”).

²¹ Revelation 19:13

²² Revelation 19: 16.

²³ Revelation 19: 11-16.

Therefore, this 45th Psalm in the Book of Psalms prophetically predicts that current and ultimate sovereignty of the Christ, whose kingdom is everlasting.

Chapter Two:

“Psalm 45- Verses 8 through 17”

The last part of the 45th Psalm contains a mystical, prophetic description of a bride, as if to say that this “king,” whose kingdom in everlasting and whose warring justice shall subdue nations, will be joined in a wedding to this bride. Verses 8, 9, and 11-15 of this 45th Psalm thus states:

⁸ All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia;
from palaces adorned with ivory
the music of the strings makes you glad.

⁹ Daughters of kings are among your honored women;
at your right hand is **the royal bride in gold of Ophir**....

¹¹ Let the king be enthralled by your beauty;
honor him, for he is your lord.

¹² The city of Tyre will come with a gift,^[d]
people of wealth will seek your favor.

¹³ All glorious is the princess within her chamber;
her gown is interwoven with gold.

¹⁴ In embroidered garments she is led to the king;
her virgin companions follow her—
those brought to be with her.

¹⁵ Led in with joy and gladness,
they enter the palace of the king.

Is this a prophetic description of Bathsheba or one of David’s or Solomon’s or other Jewish king’s brides? Or is something else being prophesied here?

According to Augustine of Hippo, this passage of Scripture is an unquestioned reference to the future Church of Jesus Christ.²⁴ “[L]et him look upon His Church,” wrote Augustine, when describing these same verses, “joined to her so great Husband in spiritual marriage and divine love.... I do not think any one is so stupid as to believe that some poor woman is here praised and described, as the spouse.... For these are His fellows, out of the unity and concord of whom

²⁴ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 597.

in all nations that queen is formed, as it is said of her in another psalm, ‘The city of the great King.’”²⁵

Regarding this same Church, verses 10, 16 and 17 of this 45th Psalm goes on to state the following:

¹⁰ Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention:
Forget your people and your father’s house....

¹⁶ **Your sons will take the place of your fathers;**
you will make them **princes throughout the land.**

¹⁷ I will perpetuate your memory **through all generations;**
therefore **the nations will praise you** for ever and ever.

The words “forget your people” and “your father’s house” is spoken in reference to this proverbial “queen,” who will “forget” the worldly, earthly political communities of nations which, as Augustine writes, comprises of both the “Israelites only in the flesh” and the “impious city” that is amongst all nations.²⁶ This proverbial “queen” thus represents “the true Israelites both by the flesh and by faith... the city of God....”²⁷

Rather, this queen—this new Church of Jesus Christ or this “New Jerusalem”— shall bear sons who will “take the place of your fathers,”²⁸ as “princes throughout the land,”²⁹ so as to indicate the ultimate sovereignty and victory of Christ over the nations.

Similarly, in his *Commentaries*, Reformed theologian John Calvin certainly adopted this allegorical interpretation of that “sons” who will “take the place of your fathers,” to wit:

But at the coming of Christ, who appeared at the close of the ancient Church, and the beginning of the new dispensation, it is an undoubted truth, that children were begotten by him, who were inferior in no respect to their fathers, either in number or in excellence, and whom he set as rulers over the whole world. In the estimation of the world, the ignominy of the cross obscures the glory of the Church; but when

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 597 – 598.

²⁶ Ibid. 598.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Psalm 45:16.

²⁹ Ibid.

we consider how wonderfully it has increased, and how much it has been distinguished by spiritual gifts, we must confess that it is not without cause that her glory is in this passage celebrated in such sublime language. It ought, however, to be observed, that the sovereignty, of which mention is here made, consists not in the persons of men, but refers to the head. According to a frequent mode of expression in the Word of God, the dominion and power which belong properly to the head, and are applicable peculiarly to Christ alone, are in many places ascribed to his members. We know that those who occupy eminent stations in the Church, and who rule in the name of Christ, do not exercise a lordly dominion, but rather act as servants. As, however, Christ has committed to them his Gospel, which is the scepter of his kingdom, and intrusted it as it were to their keeping, they exercise, in some sort, his power. And, indeed, Christ, by his ministers, has subdued to his dominion the whole world, and has erected as many principalities under his authority as there have been churches gathered to him in divers nations by their preaching.³⁰

And by those words in the 45th Psalm pertaining to “the sons” who will “take the place of your fathers,” we find a direct connection to the Book of Revelation, which states:

Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.³¹

Thus, this 45th Psalm is a summation of the *spiritual meaning* of the throne of King David. There was the kingdom of Israel, the physical throne at Jerusalem, and the

³⁰ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Bible* (Psalm 45)
(<https://www.study-light.org/commentaries/eng/cal/psalms-45.html>)

³¹ Revelation 1: 4-6 (KJV).

queens (or many wives) of King David, but these were not the underlying subjects within the message of the 45th Psalm.

According to Reformed theology, this 45th Psalm is a prophecy of Jesus Christ and His Church.³²

³² This is the theological conclusion of Augustine of Hippo in *The City of God*, supra, pp. 597 – 598. According to Augustine, Christ had already established the Synagogue-Church “by the patriarchs and prophets,” during the period of time “before He became man.” Furthermore, Augustine held that amongst these Hebrews were “the **true Israelite both by the flesh and by faith**” and that they, too, were members of “the city of God.” The word “synagogue-church” is also appropriate, because “messianism” or the hope of Christ was nourished in the synagogues centuries before the birth of Christ and certain righteous Jews, such as rulers of synagogues, such as Nicodemus, accepted Christ. The first “churches” grew out of the “synagogues” and continued to be called by the same name “synagogue,” which semantically means “church,” and vice versa.

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.

In the 45th Psalm, we find a description of a most excellent king whom none of the kings of Judah or Israel characterized or personified— none except the future Messiah, the man Christ Jesus.

We find, too, in this 45th Psalm, a most excellent description of an elegant queen whom none of the wives of the kings of Judah or Israel characterized or personified— none except the future Synagogue-Church of Jesus Christ (i.e., the New Jerusalem).

THE END

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	
9. Amaziah	796-767	29 years	Good		12. Jehoash	798-782	16 years	Bad	Jonah Amos Hosea
10. Uzziah (Azariah)	767-740*	52 years	Good		13. Jeroboam II	782-753*	41 years	Bad	
11. Jotham	740-732*	16 years	Good	Isaiah Micah	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)		

