

Psalm 69

Introduction— *“Psalms 22 and 69...foretell about the divine cross and what great treachery the Savior submitted to on our behalf, and the number of things He suffered”* – Athanasius. We may be more used to Psalm 22 (especially vv16-18) as speaking of Christ. If you aren't careful, you might miss how many references to Christ and to His soul, leading up to and including His crucifixion, are to be found in Psalm 69. This Psalm is clearly Messianic, as we will see. Seven of its thirty-six verses are directly quoted in the New Testament, and many others reveal themes of Christ's work that are expanded in the Gospels.

Overview – The first section is the complaint and cry of the Psalm-singer to God (vv1-4). He has a particular affliction, but because we live in a fallen world, any number of us right now are going through various kinds of affliction, and this Psalm applies to all of them. But this particular affliction is brought on by a great number of enemies who despise him but can only bring wrongful charges. In vv5-12 we learn that the main reason for their hatred is the Psalm-singer's zeal for the house of God (v9). He prays that those who follow the Lord would not be ashamed because of him (v6), that even his own siblings have abandoned him, and that from those in high power to the drunkards in the street, his name is mocked (v12). In the third section (vv13-21) he pleads for help from the only One who can provide help, and in the fourth (vv22-28) he calls for justice to be meted out against those enemies, and he doesn't pull any punches. Verse 29 is a hinge of sorts, for the prayer is for salvation and an ascension, and what comes of it is an explosion of praise, thanksgiving, hearts brought to life, the heaven, earth, and the seas all praising Him, the salvation of Zion and the rebuilding of lost cities (vv30-36).

Orientation – There is much more here to biblically orient ourselves to this Psalm because of the frequent quotations in the New Testament (our inspired commentary on the Old). And so, this Bible Study will really help orient us to our text. Jesus echoes *“who hate me without cause”* (69:4) of himself in John 15:25. The disciples remember 69:9a in John 2:17 after Jesus cleansed the temple. And 69:9b refers to Christ, Paul teaches, in Rom 15:3. Jesus, like the Psalm-singer, sought in vain the comfort of His companions (69:20, Matt 26:40). References to gall (or poison) and to sour wine (69:21) are referenced in the crucifixion accounts (Matt 27:34, 48, Mark 15:36, Luke 23:36, John 19:28-29). The mockery of the Psalm-singer is fulfilled at the cross (v69:12, Matt 27:29). Verse 69:25 is used by Peter in Acts 1:16, 20, in the singular to point out Judas Iscariot's betrayal. The prayer of imprecation (69:22-23) is applied in the New Testament age against the enemies of Christ (Rom 11:9-10). The pouring out of God's wrath (69:24) is echoed in Rev 16:1 of the enemies of Christ. The blotting out of the names from the book of the living (69:28) is echoed in several verses in Revelation (i.e. Rev 21:27). *“Whatever else it is, Psalm 69 is above all about Christ”* – Ash.

Christ and Christ's Church – David, our Psalm-singer, is a type of Christ, The Psalm-Singer. But David also speaks as a type for all God's people in their sufferings. That is why we can sing vv1-4 and apply to our own, or to the church's, afflictions. Having laid out an overview and an orientation, let's take each phrase used in the New Testament, and similarly see how it applies to Christ and to His people.

They Hate Me Without Cause (v4)– There were no charges that could stick against Jesus. And in the most sober turn in His farewell discourse, Jesus told His disciples that the world was going to hate them just because the disciples loved Him (John 15:18 – 16:4). The world will hate you because you are a Christ-follower. The world will hate the church because we believe and proclaim the crown rights of King Jesus. And the gift of the Holy Spirit, a true and precious gift, will only exacerbate this hatred.

Zeal For Your House Has Eaten Me Up (v9a) – Connected to the previous section, when zeal consumes a servant of God, this creates a desire among the ungodly to consume the servant. Jesus, consumed with a zeal for the holiness and holy purposes of God's house, made a whip of cords and drove out the money changers (John 2:13-17). The holiness of God is not to be trifled with. At the second cleansing, Jesus condemned the house and departed from it; it was *Ichabod* – the glory had departed. Have a holy zeal for, and do not trifle with, the house of the Lord. In the New Covenant, the church is the house of the Lord (1 Cor 3:16), and you are the house of God (1 Cor 6:19).

The Reproaches...Have Fallen On Me (v9b) – This part of verse 9 is quoted in Rom 15:3, exhorting strong Christians to bear with those who are weaker. And this is striking for this phrase really cuts to the heart of the gospel. We do all fall short, and God's wrath upon those sins are fully just and terrible. And this Psalm, so horrible in one sense to sing, bears witness to what the gospel cost our dear Savior. Jesus did not have the experience of the pleasure of the Father's blessing as He hung on the cross. Rather, He experienced God's holy, infinite, and just wrath. God damned His Son to hell. While God was doing this, the scoffers were all before Christ mocking, and it broke His heart (vv19-20a). *“For He made Him Who knew no sin, to be sin for us...”* (1 Cor 5:21).

I Looked for Someone...But I Found None (v20b) – During His deep despair before His Father in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ found no one to comfort Him, to pray with Him, to watch with Him (Matt 27:29). And when He was arrested, they all forsook Him and fled (Mark 14:50). Most appeared to be in hiding while their Master hung on the cross. Like Jesus, you, or the church in general, may find yourself out of friends when you take a stand for righteousness, if that particular righteousness is out of vogue. Friends in high places, the cool kids, those who might defend you otherwise, may quietly step aside, not willing to pay the price. How shameful. Don't be one of those.

They Gave Me Gall...Vinegar To Drink (v21) – They offered Christ gall (possibly to reduce the pain, which He refused) at the beginning of His crucifixion, and a sour wine at the end. Again, exposing their horrific treatment and hatred of Christ, they turn that which is to be for celebration and joy (wine that makes the heart glad) to a mocking display of ironic hatred. Just before, they had “honored” the naked Christ with a scarlet robe, a crown of thorns, a staff made of a reed, bowing to Him and then striking Him (Matt 27:27-31). This is the hatred of love. When you hate God (Christ), you hate love. The false love of those who hate Christ always ends in a twisted destruction of life, relationships, and the blessings of the things of earth God gives to us (think of Cain and Abel).

Let Their Dwelling Place Be Desolate (v25) – Peter tells us that the hardening of many hearts against God, against David, against God's people, can be pictured for us in Judas (Acts 1:16-20). Judas knew Jesus, watched His miracles, joined with the disciples in healings and casting out demons. But Judas had his own motives, and when it appeared that Jesus wasn't going to be “that kind of Savior” and instead meddle in personal hearts, motives, and actions, he betrayed Him. Even then it may be that Judas did so to manipulate Jesus for his own agenda (overpower the Romans). But Jesus is more interested in us (overpower our sin, death, and the devil). People often turn away from Christ (and Christians even try to keep Him at bay) not because they don't want a powerful God to save, but because they want a god they can manipulate for their own ends, and god they can control while holding to their own agendas. In the end, it does not go well.

...Let Their Eyes Be Darkened... - (vv22-23) – These verses (and so this whole imprecatory prayer) is fulfilled in the darkening of unbelieving Israel in the first century. Which means such prayers are still offered and answered in this New Covenant administration. In Paul's discourse on the rejection of Israel by God because of their rejection of the Messiah and the gospel in the ministry of Paul, he cites these verses. The remnant/elect of Israel have obtained grace, but the rest have been blinded (Rom 11:7-8). Then these verses are quoted (Rom 11:9-10). But this has been prophesied so that salvation would come to the Gentiles (Rom 11:11), and if that fall brought such riches, how much more, Paul promises, will their fullness (Rom 11:12). This is why Paul's ministry was to the Gentiles and how God used the Jew's rejection; how He will in the future provoke them to a jealousy that leads them back to their Messiah (Rom 11:13-15). This is God's amazing and world-changing plan, mercy will fill the earth (Rom 11:25-36) which causes Paul to break into such a doxological praise.

And, this is nothing less than a fulfillment of the end of Psalm 69 (vv29-36). What has and will be the result of Christ's resurrection and ascension? His victory announces the victory through the church over the entire world. And never just now – “*also, the descendants of His servants shall inherit it...*” – v36.

And here we are...