

## The Messianic Psalms: Introduction and Incarnation Psalm 40 March 10, 2013

We are beginning a new series in the Messianic Psalms. Messiah means Anointed One. The king of Israel was anointed with oil, a picture of the Holy Spirit setting them apart for special service. We see this in Samuel's anointing David to take the place of King Saul. (1Samuel 16:13) This is why psalms referring to the Lord's anointed or to the king can have a meaning that overlaps with that of the Christ, the Greek term for anointed. Thus we refer to these special psalms as Messianic Psalms.

Both Jews and Christians see a number of the psalms as pointing to an eternal king. The Jewish list of Messianic Psalms is the almost the same as the Christian list, but with a few additional ones. While a few of the psalms seem to be speaking specifically of the Messiah, others have phrases which are referred to as types. They may be speaking of David or Solomon but ultimately be speaking of the Son of David, the Messiah. Since the Holy Spirit inspired the wording, though the author may have been speaking of the king or of themselves, the similarity with the life of Jesus is clear. The kings were a type of the Messiah to come. Sometimes their experience or feeling matches what the Messiah will experience.

Many of these passages are confirmed to be types of Jesus by the New Testament authors who quote them as referring to Jesus. But that does not mean the entire psalm relates to Jesus. One example of that is Psalm 69. Matthew tells us that when the psalmist says, "They gave me...gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (v. 21) we should apply the words to Christ. (Matthew 27:34, 48) But earlier in the same psalm David says, "O God, You know my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from You," obviously referring to himself not the Christ (v. 5). The Psalm we will look at today is one such psalm. Therefore, we must be careful and discerning when we interpret the entire psalm in reference to Jesus.

There is an even more important reason to look for Jesus in the psalms. He declared that we would read about Him there. *44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."* Luke 24:44 (ESV) "It is the profound Christian persuasion that Christ walks within the Psalms, and this is the reason that the Book of Psalms is the Old Testament book most often quoted in the New Testament." Do you recall how the pocket New Testaments often had the Psalms included? There is a reason. It is the most widely read Old Testament book. The Apostle Paul told us we are to speak to one another with quotes from the Psalms. (Ephesians 5:19)

### Commented [notes1]: 1 Samuel 16:13 (NIV)

<sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

### Commented [notes2]: Psalm 69:21 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

### Commented [notes3]: Matthew 27:34 (ESV)

<sup>34</sup> they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.

### Matthew 27:48 (ESV)

<sup>48</sup> And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.

### Commented [notes4]: Psalm 69:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.

### Commented [notes5]: Ephesians 5:19 (ESV)

<sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

Many years ago I went through a period of depression. The best counsel I received was to read the Psalms. They speak of real life experiences, real heartaches, and seeming defeat and then move on to trust in the Lord. Jesus would experience these Psalms in a most personal way, for the Spirit had moved the writers to speak of what He would experience during His earthly ministry. (Luke 24:27)

Instead of taking them in numerical order, I'm going to take them chronologically in reference to the life of Christ. So we will begin with the incarnation. The author of Hebrews tells us we can find the incarnation in Psalm 40. In Hebrews 10:5-9 he quotes Psalm 40:6-8. Let me read to you Hebrews 10:4-10 so you will get a feeling for the author's application. *<sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. <sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; <sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. <sup>7</sup> Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'"<sup>8</sup> When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup> And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* Hebrews 10:4-10 (ESV)

Most of Psalm 40 could be said to apply to Jesus' anguish upon the cross and the promise of resurrection. But in the midst of the psalm, as if reminiscing why He was in this condition, He refers to being incarnated. This is the portion that the author of Hebrews quoted. Listen to how it is worded in the Psalm in ESV. *<sup>6</sup> In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. <sup>7</sup> Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: <sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."* Psalm 40:6-8 (ESV) Did you notice the whole reason for the incarnation? God the Father was not satisfied with sacrifice and offerings. They were merely a shadow of what was to come. That is why in Hebrews it tells us that the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. The Old Testament believers were not saved from their sins by their sacrifices. Those sacrifices were an expression of their faith that though sin demands death, God would provide some means to atone for their sins. (Psalm 49:8)

David declared the same in his psalm of repentance. *<sup>16</sup> For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. <sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.* Psalm 51:16-17 (ESV) In Psalm 32 David declares the blessedness of forgiveness that comes when a person confesses their sins and seeks forgiveness from God. (Psalm 32:1) He knew very little of how that forgiveness would be possible,

**Commented [notes6]: Luke 24:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

**Commented [notes7]: Psalm 49:8 (KJV)**

<sup>8</sup> (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.)

**Commented [notes8]: Psalm 32:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

though his psalms tell of the details. He knew forgiveness involved repentance and faith in God.

That is why God was not satisfied with the sacrifices. They didn't do the job. If they made the giver perfect then he or she wouldn't have to come back to sacrifice year after year. They whole system was just a shadow of the good things to come. (Hebrews 10:1-3) The reality is Jesus. He declared Himself to be the ransom for sin. As John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." (John 1:29)

God did not delight in the sacrifices and offerings. Some people today abhor the thought of the millennia of animal sacrifices. God did not delight in it either, but **blood sacrifice was necessary to show the seriousness of sin and the need for a substitute.** Recognizing the seriousness of sin is one of our greatest needs today!

Now we get to the interesting part of the quotation. Instead of the sacrifice and offering, God gave to Jesus an open ear. But you will notice that the author of Hebrews writes instead, "A body you have prepared for me." The psalmist wasn't just trying to make the text point to Jesus; he was copying the Greek translation, the Septuagint. For some reason, this passage is mistranslated. Now, we need to give the translator a break because the Hebrew they took it from had no vowels. That made different readings possible.

Was this a mistake then, by the author of Hebrews, or is God in control of even these details? Let us consider the Hebrew text of the Psalm. To have one's ear opened was to be a slave by choice. When a Hebrew worked for seven years as a servant to pay off a debt, at the end of the period they could give up their freedom if they loved their master and wanted to continue to serve him. The book of Exodus tells us that the master would then pierce their right ear to the doorpost of his home. (Exodus 21:5-6) The symbolism declared that the person's ear was continually open to the master to serve him or her. They did their master's will and not their own. This describes Jesus' life in relation to the Father. He did nothing but what the Father instructed Him to do. (John 14:31)

The author of this Psalm is saying he is the LORD's servant for life. The only one that could ever truly say that is Jesus. So was the Septuagint translation a mistake? Or are both inspired by God? As a believer in the inspiration of Scripture I have to come to the conclusion that both are inspired. God prepared Jesus a body in the womb of Mary. He also opened Jesus' ear, making Him the Servant that Isaiah wrote of, the Suffering Servant. (Isaiah 52:10-11) It also means that Jesus listened to God and did only as instructed. So though this psalm was true of David in a limited way, it is even more applicable to Jesus, whose body was prepared in the womb of Mary to serve the Father

**Commented [notes9]: Hebrews 10:1-3 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. <sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

**Commented [notes10]: John 1:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

**Commented [notes11]: Exodus 21:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,'<sup>6</sup> then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever.

**Commented [notes12]: John 14:31 (ESV)**

<sup>31</sup> but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

**Commented [notes13]: Isaiah 53:10-11 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

<sup>11</sup> Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

and accomplish God's eternal plan of redeeming mankind by His own sinless blood. (Luke 1:35; 77)

This is the theme of Psalm 40. The first part of the psalm we could read as Jesus seeing the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2), the conversion of Jew and Gentile on hearing His victory over death. (Isaiah 49:6-7) *<sup>1</sup> I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. <sup>2</sup> He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. <sup>3</sup> He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.* Psalm 40:1-3 (ESV) The pit of destruction could be seen as the cross and the grave. The new song is "It is finished!" (John 19:30) We are among the billions that see and fear, and put our trust in the LORD.

*<sup>4</sup> Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie! <sup>5</sup> You have multiplied, O LORD my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.* Psalm 40:4-5 (ESV) The God man encourages Himself with the assurance that God blesses the ones that trust the Lord. Jesus didn't call twelve legions of angels as He could have. (Matthew 26:53) He humbly placed Himself in the Father's hands. He reminds Himself of God's wondrous deeds and thoughts toward man to bolster His faith in the hour of trial. We see but a tiny portion of what God does and we are in awe. In our times of trial we should remember what God has done and humbly place ourselves in His hands. (1Samuel 12:24)

Now in the midst of this testing, we come to the portion quoted in Hebrews. Jesus reminds Himself that this is the very purpose that He came into the world. He was incarnated to be the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. *<sup>6</sup> In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. <sup>7</sup> Then I said, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: <sup>8</sup> I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."* Psalm 40:6-8 (ESV) The sacrifices of the previous generations only pointed to this moment in time. As prophesied throughout the ages, the suffering servant was about to take our transgressions and bear our iniquities. (Isaiah 53:11) The head of the serpent was about to be crushed. (Genesis 3:15) Atonement was about to be accomplished according to all the prophesies and pictures throughout the history of man. And when we see this as taking place on Golgotha, we marvel at the statement, "I delight to do your will, O my God." He was incarnated to save us by His blood. That's why the angel insisted His name was the Salvation of God (Yeshua).

As He faced that torturous death, how could He say that? God's law is within His heart. (Psalm 37:31) It came from His lips on the cross as He quoted Psalm 22. (Psalm 22:1) His heart is surrendered to the Word of God. It is surrendered to this very passage as well. He is that Word incarnated. (John 1:14)

**Commented [notes14]: Luke 1:35 (ESV)**

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God.

**Luke 1:77 (ESV)**

<sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,

**Commented [notes15]: Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Commented [notes16]: Isaiah 49:6-7 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

**Commented [notes17]: John 19:30 (ESV)**

<sup>30</sup> When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

**Commented [notes18]: Matthew 26:53 (ESV)**

<sup>53</sup> Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?

**Commented [notes19]: 1 Samuel 12:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.

**Commented [notes20]: Isaiah 53:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

**Commented [notes21]: Genesis 3:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

**Commented [notes22]: Psalm 37:31 (KJV)**

<sup>31</sup> The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

**Commented [notes23]: Psalm 22:1 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

**Commented [notes24]: John 1:14 (KJV)**

<sup>14</sup> And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

*<sup>9</sup> I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation; behold, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O LORD. <sup>10</sup> I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation. <sup>11</sup> As for you, O LORD, you will not restrain your mercy from me; your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me!* Psalm 40:9-11 (ESV) Even though it would result in His execution, Jesus proclaimed the truth of the Word of God. He even told them of His death and resurrection. (Mark 8:31) He told the people He had come to be their ransom (Matthew 20:28), and encouraged them to accept persecution, like those of the prophets before them knowing their reward would be great. (Matthew 5:12) His love and faithfulness are the only things that can preserve us through death.

We have one word in the following verse that can't be put in the mouth of Jesus. David says, *<sup>12</sup> For evils have encompassed me beyond number; my iniquities have overtaken me, and I cannot see; they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart fails me.* Psalm 40:12 (ESV) Did you hear which word I referred to? It is the word "my". In Jesus' case it was not His own sin but our evils that encompassed Him beyond number. It was our iniquities that overcame Him. His heart was failing Him because of *our* sins. (2Corinthians 5:21)

*<sup>13</sup> Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me! O LORD, make haste to help me! <sup>14</sup> Let those be put to shame and disappointed altogether who seek to snatch away my life; let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt! <sup>15</sup> Let those be appalled because of their shame who say to me, "Aha, Aha!"* Psalm 40:13-15 (ESV) We see the mockers gathered around the cross hurling insults at Jesus. (Matthew 27:39-43) Let them be put to shame when God raises Jesus from the dead. Let their hearts be repentant and let them turn to the LORD.

*<sup>16</sup> But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation say continually, "Great is the LORD!" <sup>17</sup> As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!* Psalm 40:13-17 (ESV) Jesus was making our salvation possible. He exhorts us that love the salvation He paid for to say continually, "Great is the LORD!" Do you love His salvation? Then say, "Great is the LORD!"

Entering into the darkness of death, Jesus expressed His need for Almighty God to help and deliver Him from its bonds. He prayed that deliverance would come quickly. (Psalm 22:19)

You might ask if we can really see this psalm on the mind of Jesus on the cross. Remember, it is the Spirit of God that dwells outside of time who inspired David with these words. The author of Hebrews was inspired to say it was indeed about Jesus. Finally, the words match the situation on the cross. **The incarnation was for one**

**Commented [notes25]: Mark 8:31 (ESV)**

<sup>31</sup> And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

**Commented [notes26]: Matthew 20:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**Commented [notes27]: Matthew 5:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Commented [notes28]: 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Commented [notes29]: Matthew 27:39-43 (ESV)**

<sup>39</sup> And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." <sup>41</sup> So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, <sup>42</sup> "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup> He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

**Commented [notes30]: Psalm 22:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

**purpose, our redemption.** Jesus recalled the fact that He was incarnated to save us. That was God's will. Jesus delighted to do His will regardless of the cost. May we be among the many who see and put their trust in Him!

#### Questions

- 1 What is a Messianic Psalm?
- 2 What kinds of Messianic Psalms are there?
- 3 Why should we look for Jesus in the Psalms?
- 4 How were people in the Old Testament saved?
- 5 Discuss the difference in the texts.
- 6 Can both be inspired?
- 7 How can we read Psalm 40:1-3?
- 8 How would verses 4-5 and 9-11 have encouraged Jesus?
- 9 Does "I delight to do Your will!" now have a richer meaning to you?
- 10 How can we apply verse 12 to the cross?