

April 22

Psalm 61, 62, 64 and 69

Psalms 61, 62 and 64 are also "help" prayers. I hope you are taking note of how many "help" prayers we are reading. It may help you to realize that your prayer life is not so very different from that of King David. He prayed for help at least as often as you do! "Help me Lord, because I am faint." That's Psalm 61. The Psalmist may just be tired or maybe he is very sick, but he needs help and cries: "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

In Psalm 62, it is some kind of conspiracy that concerns King David, probably another palace coup. The family of King Saul was always available to cooperate with anyone who wanted to get rid of David. Someone was always plotting somewhere! "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone. My hope comes from Him. He alone is my Rock and my salvation. He is my fortress. I will not be shaken..." Trust Him at all times!

In 64, it is another enemy - again a conspirator - someone plotting an ambush. What should the intended victim do? "Rejoice in the Lord and take refuge in Him." That is all we can do and it is all we need to do! It will always be enough.

A few things especially stood out to me as I read these Psalms. One was the very familiar ways David refers to God. We have seen the same expressions over and over and over again in the Book of Psalms. For David, God is: "My place of shelter" - "The Rock that is higher than I" - "My refuge" - My strong tower" - "The one under whose wings I can find shelter" - "My salvation" - and "My Fortress". Those are all words that speak of strength and safety in the Book of Psalms and in the hymnology of the Christian church. "The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide; a shelter in the time of storm..."

Psalm 69 can be referred to as another "help me" or "save me" Psalm - a song that was written during difficult times by King David when he was being attacked or persecuted and he calls out to the Lord for help.

Psalm 69 seems to not only refer to King David and the circumstances of his life, but also to the coming Messiah and circumstances of His life. This Psalm is generally understood to be a Messianic Psalm. In fact, it is quoted by the writers of the New Testament with reference to Jesus more often than any other Psalm except for Psalm 22, which contains an explicit description of the crucifixion.

I am sure that you will have noted and recognized verse 9 as one of the Messianic pieces in Psalm 69. That is where David says, "...for zeal for your house consumes me..." Those are the words that we find in the New Testament on the lips of Jesus when He cleansed the Temple by driving out the money changers - and the words of verse 8 which precede it, as well as the words which follow it in verse 9, seem to equally well "fit" the Messianic identification: "I am a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother's sons; for zeal for your house consumes me and the insults

of those who insult you fall on me." David could certainly have written these words of himself, but they also "fit" Jesus.

You probably also saw a second verse that may foreshadow Christ in the words of verse 21: "They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst." That, of course, brings to mind the crucifixion when the Roman soldier did exactly that. Matthew's words in his account of the crucifixion are a direct reference to this Psalm.

In the end, this Psalm ends up being a little like some of those "double-edged" prophecies we found in Isaiah and Ezekiel - the ones that had both short-term and long-range parts to them; some things that came true in the prophet's own lifetime and some things that would not be fulfilled until much later, in the far-off future. Psalm 69 is "Messianic" in the same way. Some of what is said here is just about David and his experience, but because David is a "type" of Christ, some of the things said in this Psalm will be picked up by the writers of the New Testament and applied to Jesus as well!

It is there in 69 - "But I pray to you, O Lord, in the time of your favor; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation...". And at the very end of the Psalm in verse 34: "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..."