

# The Songs of the Passover

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'm going to sing now the God's praise from Psalm 30. Psalm 30 and from verse 6 to the end of the psalm.

Psalm 30 from verse 6. In my prosperity I said, nothing shall me move. O Lord, thou hast my mountain made to stand strong by thy love.

But when that thou, O gracious God, did hide thy face from me, then quickly was my prosperous state turned into misery. Wherefore unto the Lord my cry I caused to ascend, my humble supplication I to the Lord did send.

What profit is there in my blood when I go down to pit? Shall unto thee the dust give praise? Thy truth declare, shall it?

Hear, Lord, have mercy. Help me, Lord. Thou turned hast my sadness to dancing. Yea, my sackcloth loosed and girded me with gladness.

[ 1 : 14 ] Let's sing thy praise, my glory may, and never silent be. O Lord, my God, forevermore I will give thanks to thee.

Let us sing these verses. Verses 6 to 12, Psalm 30. In my prosperity I said, that nothing shall be moved. O Lord of all, my God, forevermore I will give thanks to thee.

O Lord of all, my God, forevermore I will give thanks to thee.

My God, forevermore I will give thanks to thee.

From the sublimation I do the Lord descend.

[ 3 : 20 ] What profit is there in my blood when I go down to Him?

Shout unto Thee, O God, I give praise Thy fruit, give praise the day.

Hear, O Lord, how mercy has made me, O Lord, the turn of God's mind's dance.

To not sing it, my song, O Lord, and girdeth me with loudness.

Thou sing Thy praise, my glory, this I'm never silent.

[ 4 : 45 ] O Lord, my God, forevermore, I will give thanks to Thee.

I'd like us to turn for a short time when together this evening to the words that we read in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 26.

And we can read there at verse 30. And when they had sung and hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

When they had sung and hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. God willing, over the next seven, well, six weeks, seven including this evening, I hope that we're going to consider six psalms.

And these psalms are found in the part of the psalm book, or the psalm, the book of psalms, psalm 113 to psalm 118.

[ 6 : 25 ] And we're going to look at each one of these psalms in turn. By way of introduction to this study, we're going to reflect on the place these psalms had in the worship, or in the liturgy, of the Old Testament church.

And see what significance we can attach to that. And try and ascertain if it is not just something that might be of interest to us, but of relevance to us.

As those who have an interest in the scripture, and in the psalms in particular. As a congregation whose only praise book is, what we use in public worship is the Metrical Psalms.

And the psalms that surely should be of import to us, what we sing, when we sing it. And we should always be careful that, however familiar we are with these words, that we don't overlook the place that they have in the scripture, and the place that they had within the worship of the Lord's people.

Now, we know that the psalms are important. They're important to ourselves for many reasons. Because I'm sure every one of us has experienced great blessing in the singing of the psalms, and in the psalms in the hand of the Spirit ministering to our souls.

[ 8 : 22 ] You're familiar with the name Rabbi Duncan. He once said that every emotion of the renewed heart, God words, finds an adequate or adequate expression in the book of Psalms.

It's interesting that he said every soul of the renewed heart.

There are many people, I suppose, that would get a blessing of sorts from the psalms being sung. And they've been stirred emotionally by what they've heard sung whenever their need corresponds to what the psalm says.

But it is always the case that the child of God is able to find the word of God, a son, speaking to us.

Now, as we all know, there are 150 psalms. And when we look at the psalm book as a whole, there are various divisions that we can make in the psalm book.

[ 9 : 42 ] These can be random divisions. For example, we can choose to study the book of Psalms looking at the person who composed the psalms.

I wouldn't say the author of the psalms. I believe that the first instance we authored is the Spirit of God. But he used the pen of men.

And there are many men listed as being the composers of the psalms. David probably composed most of the psalms.

We've got Moses listed amongst the composers. Asaph, Solomon, sons of Korah, various other ones who are lesser well known.

And there are also, when we study the psalms, different types of psalms. We can study the psalms as psalms that are celebratory.

[ 10 : 51 ] Or we can study the psalms as psalms that are more focused on lament. Sometimes the psalms can be categorized into psalms that emphasize the need for repentance.

Or the experience of repentance, like Psalm 51 or Psalm 32. Some psalms we understand are messianic.

That is, the weight of the content is focused upon the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ. And some of these topics come together.

Others we can glean from the book of psalms in its entirety. We can randomly pick individual psalms and make them into a collection. Or we can see clusters that follow some kind of teaching.

Now, the group that we're going to look at are six in the group. And from Psalm 113 to Psalm 118.

[ 12 : 15 ] These are called Egyptian Hallel psalms. They are praise psalms. Psalms sung in praise of God.

One of them is the shortest psalm in the psalm. And the others are slightly longer. But the purpose for looking at these psalms, it's not just random, but it is a reminder to us that, as we saw here in this passage, that the disciples were met together with the Lord and they celebrated the Passover meal and following the example of the tradition of the Old Testament, the Son of Man at the end or at that point in their observance of that.

And before we say anything about the actual psalms themselves, before we endeavour to think about what is contained within the psalms, I think it's important to remind ourselves of the place that the psalms had in the experience of the Lord Jesus.

In the passage we read, we are told that after they had partaken of the supper that they sang a hymn. I'm not going into the debate about psalms and spiritual songs.

I take it as right that that includes what we have in the book of psalms. And that what a hymn is spoken of here, it is referring to the book of psalms and the psalms that were sung.

[ 14 : 28 ] Now, I don't think there's any real knowledge about how the Church of the Old Testament sang the psalms, what format the psalms took, what form they took, what meter was used and so on.

But it is plain enough that the psalms were sung. And we often think about and reflect upon the worship of our Lord Jesus Christ with emphasis falling on prayer, that he was a man of prayer and that he spent time in the company of the disciples at prayer.

And that there were occasions when he went apart to pray. But we seldom think about the partaking of the worship of God through song, through singing.

And there isn't much information given to us about this activity. But for myself, I can't imagine that the Lord Jesus would not actively be involved in the worship of God in its fullness.

And I can't believe that that worship of God would not involve him in the singing of the psalms.

[ 16 : 12 ] When I was reading this, I was reminded, I probably read it a long time ago, but that in the Westerns, the confession, that there is not so much emphasis placed upon the singing of psalms within the worship.

Rather, it is emphasis placed on the written word, on the preaching of the word, and prayer, rather more than the singing of psalms as part of that worship.

But that's an unfortunate, I think, oversight, probably given, has to do with the context in which the confession was put together.

But if we think about the Old Testament church, one thing is plain, that Israel of old sang songs of praise.

And they were involved in the singing of these praises in all their major festivals and feasts and celebrations. For example, just chose one.

[ 17 : 26 ] Historically, when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, we read there in the account, they lifted up their voice with trumpets, cymbals, and instruments of music.

The singers were as one to make one sound, praising and thanking the Lord. And this is just one example of that worship of God bringing them before God with the singing of psalms.

The psalms themselves remind us of the need that is to come to God with singing. In Psalm 33, Ye righteous in the Lord rejoice, it comely is unright that upright men with thankful voice should praise the Lord of might.

The psalms that we were singing this evening are in that group of psalms. There is an encouragement, an invitation, even a requirement.

O come, let us sing to the Lord, come let us everyone, a joyful noise meet to the rock of our salvation. O sing a new song to the Lord, sing all the earth to God, to God sing, bless his name, show still the saving health abroad, and so on.

[ 18 : 56 ] Psalms that encouraged the worshipping people to worship God with the singing of psalms.

Prayer, praise, and thanksgiving come together. And all of these things feature in the psalms that we're going to be looking at.

And as has been frequently pointed out with regard to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as he approached the point at which he was going to offer the sacrifice for sin by which redemption was going to be accomplished by him, the words of the psalms were frequently upon his lips.

We're familiar with the words of Psalm 22 and Psalm 69 and so on. Harry Ubreaucher says in summary Christ is the anointed king of Psalm 2, the second Adam of Psalm 8, the dying victim of Psalm 22, the righteous sufferer of Psalm 69, the high priest of Psalm 110, the spiritual temple of Psalm 118.

Just a brief summary of the various Psalms and the presence of the Lord in these Psalms, the presence either prophetically or the fulfillment of prophecy.

[ 20 : 32 ] When you sing these Psalms, you are made aware of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And sometimes he referred to the Psalms, sometimes he quoted them, sometimes he interpreted them.

Sometimes these words came from his lips, Psalm 22, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And so on. So, as a background to the study, if you like, of these Psalms, we understand that these Psalms were important to the Lord because all the scripture was important to the Lord.

The Psalms were important because he spoke of himself, and they were important because he worshipped God as all his people worshipped God, with that desire to praise and magnify and come with thanksgiving to him.

And the singing of the Psalms featured, no doubt, within that. God. Now, looking specifically at the reason for our study of these Psalms, if we think of what these Psalms are about, it's important to remind ourselves that while there are Psalms that are specifically Messianic, specifically speaking about acts or actions or fulfilment of the actions of Christ.

There is a mystery, I suppose, surrounding the way that he had these words upon his lips at certain times. one of the authors that I'm looking at as a textbook, I suppose, has got this title, a man called Philip Ross, Philip S. Ross.

[ 22 : 42 ] He's got a book called Anthems for a Dying Lamb. And let me quote what he has to say. When we ask what it meant for Christ to sing those Psalms before he went to the Mount of Olives, we cannot answer that question without recourse to what we already believe about Jesus Christ.

When the time comes for Jesus to sing Psalms 113 to 118 at Passover, our spirit taught Saviour is near the peak of his human knowledge in a state of humiliation.

Yet he will learn more about his father and his will about himself and his task as he sings these songs with his disciples.

That's the irony, I suppose, because when our Lord with this passage here places the Lord in was a very specific time in his experience, a very specific occasion in his experience.

It was probably not the first time, but it certainly was the last time where he would be celebrating the Passover.

[ 24 : 11 ]    Passover. And if he has prior to this celebrated the Passover, it was more than likely that in that context these Psalms would have been the Psalms that were sung.

That is what is believed. The commentator on the Psalms, Derek Kidner, says, just for brevity, the Psalms known as the Egyptian Hallel, and are the only ones that speaks of the Exodus, make it an appropriate series to mark the salvation which began in Egypt.

There's only one Psalm out of the whole six that speaks specifically about the Exodus. But it makes an appropriate series to mark the salvation which began in Egypt and will spread to the nations.

And by custom the first two are sung before the Passover meal and the remaining four are sung once the meal has been eaten. Now remember the Psalms were also sung at various other festivals and occasions such as Pentecost, Tabernacles, the Feast of dedication.

And if we read the New Testament Gospels we find occasions where the Lord has to speak severely with the Pharisees and the Sadducees because of their man-made laws, laws that they have used to add to the burdens of those who are followers.

[ 26 : 05 ]    And Jesus differentiates between God-given laws, the Mosaic laws, and the laws under which he himself is obliged to pay homage to, to execute as a follower of God.

God. That's not to say that he didn't submit to the laws that man made as long as they were not at odds with the laws that God had put before us.

But here what we have are laws that God had placed before man through the prophets, through Moses, and the type, the worship that they engaged in on these occasions would have the songs on their lips.

Now, clearly there's difficulty if the Psalms were more recent and theologians are divided because, as you would imagine, with the development of theologies that were beyond the scripture, there would be requirements made that are not necessarily contained within the scripture, as we referred to before.

But it is plain that when the Passover was kept, the first Passover we know was kept when they left or prepared to leave Egypt.

[ 28 : 00 ]    And they sang to the Lord songs of praise. now, the Jewish theologians believe that the Psalms that we have here are the original Psalms, whether that is the case or not.

But we're not sure, it can't really be verified at what point these Psalms came to be adapted or adopted into the literature as we have it in New Testament times.

But plainly, it seems that it was a well-established activity on the part of the church that they would sing these Psalms at appropriate moments during the celebration.

And when we come to look at these Psalms, it is difficult for us to put ourselves into the shoes of our Lord.

When the Psalms that he is singing along with the worshippers are Psalms through which he is praising and thanking God.

[ 29 : 32 ]    For what God is going to establish and bring to fruition through the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you think about the Passover was a meal that God instituted, God instructed Moses and Moses gave a guidance to the church, to those who were in Egypt as to how they were to observe it.

It had a present reality for them. It also had a future lesson that they needed to observe and that they needed to understand.

Here in the New Testament during the observance of the Passover meal. Or following on from that there is the sacrament of the Lord Supper that is initiated by the Lord Jesus Christ.

And both of them point to a sacrifice. Both of them point to the role that the Lord Jesus was to fulfill.

[ 30 : 52 ] And as a worshipper he magnifies the name of God for that sacrifice while he himself is the subject of that sacrifice.

Stuart of Cromarty says like the feast of unlimited bread it is a feast upon a sacrifice.

Rome calls the Mass a sacrifice. Christ alone and Christ only is the one who gave himself a sacrifice for sin.

The Mass is not, the Lord's Supper is not, God, and it pointed to that one sacrifice through which peace with God was going to be accomplished.

How can we but praise God for what God has accomplished in the passion of his son Jesus Christ.

[ 32 : 01 ] If we are attentive to what the Psalms are saying, if our thoughts are opened out by the Spirit, the subject matter inevitably brings us to think about what the Lord is doing, what the Lord has done, what the Lord has yet to do.

And each one of these Psalms, Psalms that were part of the worship of God's people generations ago, and the focus of that worship, and here we have the person of the Lord Jesus Christ with these words upon his own lips along with his disciples, he himself praising God.

Now, there is difficulty, no doubt, in looking at this, thinking of this, because the early traditions of the Old Testament church were oral traditions, and because they were oral traditions, some of the detail may have been lost.

But the important part of it, what's of interest to us, is contained within the Psalms themselves, so that when we read these Psalms, if we read them with discernment and understanding, we are able to appreciate the person of whom they pre-eminently speak.

So that's the purpose of our reflecting on these Psalms, that whatever name is given to them, collectively, they form a part.

[ 33 : 49 ] Now some, as we will see, the Psalms are thought to have been sung as people made their way to Jerusalem at certain times, led by the priests and the Levites, and some Psalms had said that they would say part of it, and there would be a response on the part of the congregation.

But however that is understood, whatever opinions people have, as I said, these are but opinions. But the truth that the Psalms contain is not opinion, it's fact, it's the truth as it speaks about the work for which God is to be praised, the work that he has accomplished in the person of his son Jesus Christ, what is at the heart of your worship and my worship, sometimes our praise and our thanksgiving may be just losing impetus, if you like, because it's not focused, because it's not laying hold of the truth of the word of God, which is upon our lips, brings to our attention.

But when you think, go back to this verse again, when Jesus and the disciples, when they had accomplished this act, which was an act of worship, they sang a hymn, they sang a psalm that corresponded with the action that they were taking.

There was praise, which is what we're, you know, when you're celebrating the Lord's Supper, it was always the kiss, the liturgy, if you like, of our denomination, that we would rise from the table with his song in our heart, his praise on our lips, our words to that effect.

Where does that come from? It anchors us into the spirituality of the actions that we are partaking of, the praise of God and the reality of where that comes from is before us.

[ 36 : 36 ] I hope that we'll get to grips with some of that as we look at these Psalms. There are six Psalms and some of them are shorter than the others, but they all have something to say to us about the place that Christ ought to have in our worship and the Lord as the one who is a recipient of our thanksgiving.

May he bless to us these thoughts. Let us pray. O Lord of God, as we come to think of your word, we often overlook the fact that the scriptures of the Old Testament were the Bible that our Lord was steeped in.

and when he spoke a word of encouragement or a word of rebuke, he turned to the word that he himself was feeding upon spiritually.

When he was meeting the last adversary, the devil, about him seeking to destroy and devour him, it is to the word that he turned.

And we give thanks that even in the seven sayings that were on his lips on the cross, there are two of these that two of these are found within the Psalms.

[ 38 : 17 ] And we bless you and thank you that you encourage us to lay hold of your word with the same hunger and with the same desire to have it at the heart of our thanksgiving.

So bless us, we pray, and bless all we live in your care this evening. Any of our number who would wish to be with us, we heard, who cannot be with us, we pray for them.

Remember those who are grieving and sorrowful, sanctify every visitation in providence to us, and grant to us a sense of your presence wherever we are. In Jesus' name, amen.

The closing psalm would be verses in Gaelic from Psalm 98. Psalm 98, the beginning of the psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm, psalm.

Thank you. Oh, yes, my friend, say, God, I know.

[ 40 : 30 ] Oh, yes, my friend, say, God, I know.

Oh, yes, my friend, say, God, I know.

Oh, yes, my friend, say, God, I know.

Oh, yes, my friend, say, God, I know. Oh, yes, my friend, say, God, I know.

Thank you.

[ 42 : 30 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 45 : 00 ] Amen.