

Psalm 69

This is a psalm written by David. In many ways David becomes a model for the Messiah who is to come, a pattern for him. In Psalm 69, we see David as foreshadowing the ministry of Jesus.

Psalm 69 is the most frequently quoted imprecatory Psalm in the New Testament whereby David prays to God that his enemies and God's enemies would experience the full force of God's judgment.

Seven verses in psalm 69 are quoted explicitly in the New Testament, including the parts that are imprecatory. The New Testament writers did not shy away from imprecatory psalms. It seems in fact that they found them especially useful in explaining the work of Jesus and what it means for us.

Overview

In Psalm 69, we have King David, not a perfect man (v5), but a righteous man (v28). He is a man who loves the glory of God, who trusts God's mercy for ransom and redemption (v18), and who stands up for the cause of the humble (v32-33). And he is suffering undeserved persecution because he is standing with God. The enemies of God are making him an enemy as well. And in the middle of this lament and cry for help, seven verses are devoted to calling on God to punish these enemies.

Structure

- The Description of His situation (v1-3)
- The Reason for His Situation (v4-12)
- The Hope for His Situation (v13-18)
- The Reproach of His Situation (v19-21)
- The Revenge for His Situation (v22-28)
- The Promise of Salvation (v29-36)

How it relates to the New Testament

The New Testament quotes Psalm 69 in at least two important ways: it quotes the psalm as the words of **David** (See Romans 11:9-11), and it quotes the psalm as the words of **Jesus** (See John 2:16-17; John 15:24-25; John 19:28-30; Romans 15:2-3).

Jesus read this psalm and saw his own mission being lived out in advance. What happened to David, as God's royal anointed one, is a foreshadowing of Jesus, the final anointed one. What David experienced, Jesus will complete in greater ways in his own suffering and death. His suffering will be a saving and a condemning suffering. For those who accept it as their glory, it will save. But for those who are hardened by it, it will condemn.

This Psalm was on the lips of Jesus (v21) moments before he gave up his spirit on the cross and so it demands our careful attention. One of the last things Jesus did on earth was to visibly identify with this prayer.

Imprecations – How should we read them?

- The main thing to say is that we do not take the imprecations as encouragements or incentives to curse our enemies. In fact, in Paul's mind the psalm takes us in the exact opposite direction. Paul quotes the psalm in Romans 15:3 to encourage us to deny ourselves rather than to satisfy our desire for revenge. "For even Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.'" In other words, forgive.
- Until that day of judgment, we follow the words of Jesus: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." (Luke 6:27-29)
- Judgement is not our business to execute. The fact that God will do it and that it is right for him to do it, is the very means by which we are able to follow Jesus in suffering for the sake of others who have wronged us (Romans 12:19-21).

Suggested Bible study questions

- What does Psalm 69 leave you thinking or feeling?
- What is David making plain about God's judgement in this Psalm?
 - Paul quotes psalm 69:22-23 in Romans 11:9-10. In Paul's context, what does he interpret these words as meaning?
- Should Christians pray imprecatory prayers?
- How does this match up with Jesus teachings?
- How should Psalm 69 affect us when facing suffering?
 - How should we respond when we suffer undeserved persecution?
- How can we see David's words being fulfilled in Christ?