
Title: Psalm 69's "Turner of tables"

Text: Psalm 69

Speaker: Pastor Chad Bresson

Introduction

When the dawn broke there was no stirring in the bedchamber. The master of the house did not show up for the usual breakfast that morning. This wasn't completely unexpected. He and old friends had been up to the wee hours of the morning watching movies, laughing, and draining their favorite brew. And on this morning, no one dared wake him. They were under strict orders not to bother the man of the house under any circumstances. And so they waited and waited, not disturbing him throughout the day for fear of upsetting "The Boss". The late morning became afternoon became evening. Finally, late in the evening one trusted employee decided to take the daily mail to the owner's room. What he found changed the course of history for an entire nation. There on the floor, dying from a stroke, most likely brought on from rat poison, lay his boss, a man who not coincidentally had poisoned hundreds of others. It was revealed later that the one most suspected of the death of the owner of the vacation home was himself the subject of a murderous plot by the owner himself. Poisoned was one Joseph Stalin, killed in much the same manner as he himself had killed millions of others. The tables had been turned. A taste of his own medicine. A reversal of fortune.

The turning of the tables is a familiar plot device for anyone who is a fan of James Bond or Indiana Jones. The evil villain is done in by an ironic twist of fate, many times at his own hand. The turning of the tables turned Wile E. Coyote into a Saturday morning favorite. There's even an instance of this in the Scriptures – the Persian official who dastardly plotted to exterminate the Jews in the book of Esther is hung on the very same gallows he himself built for his genocidal plans.

This last instance is quite close to the kind of turning of the tables that we will be looking at tonight. The turning of the tables in Psalm 69 is not simply a plot device. Nor does it ride on the evil plans of an evil man an even eviler man. This is justice served on the enemies of God and his people.

Turn with me to Psalm 69. Passion week is only a week away. As we consider the movement of our Lord Jesus Christ toward a death that has given us life abundant, we are considering Psalm 69, a Psalm that helps shape our thoughts regarding The Passion.

Like we mentioned last week, Psalm 69 is a journey into the thoughts and emotions of a king and a people who are at the end of themselves. Life is dark. Life is hopeless. The Psalmist's world is in total upheaval. The outlook is bleak. The destiny of a people rides on a king whose life seems on the verge of being snuffed out. And as this king is being crushed by those who hate him and his God, there is a cry of desperation.

Again, we are going to read this Psalm as an assembly. While this is a Psalm of David, it was written to be sung in the tabernacle and temple by God's people assembled in God's presence. This was Israel's hymnbook. What is on the lips of David is on the lips of his people. The assembly identifies itself with the writer in corporate solidarity with the Psalmist. The plight of the writer represented the plight of the people.

Before we read this together, there are some things we need to keep in mind. The first is the theme of the Psalm. We briefly touched on this last week. The Psalmist moves from a declaration of God's covenantal blessing in chapter 68, Blessed be God! to Save me O God in chapter 69. In Psalm 69, the Psalmist is suffering unjustly at the hands of God's enemies. The righteous sufferer feels like he is about to die. We need to notice that this theme of salvation is the glue that holds this Psalm together. Verse 1: Save me O God is the desperate cry of a

drowning king. Verse 14 is another plea for God's salvation, this time in the context of a loving God being faithful to his covenant with his people. The Psalmist is moving from absolute desperation to an appeal to God's covenantal love and faithfulness. Verse 29 is the bookend. In the final appeal, the Psalmist has moved into a full confidence of God's salvation—so much so that salvation becomes the vehicle for the King's exaltation. This Psalm's story of salvation is moving from desperation to exaltation through the covenantal love and faithfulness of God for his people. Verse 1, verse 14, and verse 29 form the basic structure holding the Psalm in place, highlighting the work of God's salvation. And the addendum is in verse 33: God will save Zion. The Psalmist's desperate cry for salvation ends with an affirmation that God will indeed save His people.

And as we read this Psalm again together as an assembly, again there are some other things I want us to keep in mind. This is a Psalm of Lament. The Lament Psalms are songs sung in distress, distress that is both physical and fundamentally spiritual. In the Psalm of lament, the Psalmist's world is in chaos. All is not right with the world. The enemies of the Psalmist and his people seem to have the upper hand. The righteous are unjustly suffering the fate of a covenant breaker. Most Psalms of Lament move from the cry for help and a sense of hopelessness to a declaration of hope and praise in a God who does not forsake his people. We need to see that in this Psalm.

One other thing we need to keep in mind as we read this Psalm. There's a reason why Psalm 69 is not familiar to us. Even though this Psalm is quoted as much or more than any other Psalm in the New Testament, it's true Psalm 22 gets all the press when it comes to Messianic Psalms. But Psalm 69 has something else that makes it a Psalm many commentators and preachers these days won't touch. It is not only a Psalm of Lament, it is a Psalm of imprecation. That fancy term is simply a term that means a Psalm that calls down God's damnation on the Psalmist's enemies. These kinds of Psalms in which the Psalmist prays for all sorts of bad things to happen to his enemies defies our politically correct sensibilities. In Psalm 69, it's not enough for the Psalmist to cry out for help in facing what seems to be certain death. His faith and trust in God moves him to express confidence that God will save him, but also moves him to beg for God to judge his enemies.

Let's stand as God's people and read it aloud together as an assembly. This is what God's Word says:

1 Save me, O God!

For the waters have come up to my neck.

2 I sink in deep mire,

where there is no foothold;

I have come into deep waters,

and the flood sweeps over me.

3 I am weary with my crying out;

my throat is parched.

My eyes grow dim

with waiting for my God.

4 More in number than the hairs of my head

are those who hate me without cause;

mighty are those who would destroy me,

those who attack me with lies.

What I did not steal
must I now restore?

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

6 Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me,
O Lord God of hosts;
let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me,
O God of Israel.

7 For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach,
that dishonor has covered my face.

8 I have become a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my mother's sons.

9 For zeal for your house has consumed me,
and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.

10 When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting,
it became my reproach.

11 When I made sackcloth my clothing,
I became a byword to them.

12 I am the talk of those who sit in the gate,
and the drunkards make songs about me.

13 But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord.
At an acceptable time, O God,
in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness.

14 Deliver me
from sinking in the mire;
let me be delivered from my enemies
and from the deep waters.

15 Let not the flood sweep over me,
or the deep swallow me up,
or the pit close its mouth over me.

16 Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good;
according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.

17 Hide not your face from your servant;
for I am in distress; make haste to answer me.

18 Draw near to my soul, redeem me;

ransom me because of my enemies!

19 You know my reproach,
and my shame and my dishonor;
my foes are all known to you.

20 Reproaches have broken my heart,
so that I am in despair.

I looked for pity, but there was none,
and for comforters, but I found none.

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

22 Let their own table before them become a snare;
and when they are at peace, let it become a trap.

23 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see,
and make their loins tremble continually.

24 Pour out your indignation upon them,
and let your burning anger overtake them.

25 May their camp be a desolation;
let no one dwell in their tents.

26 For they persecute him whom you have struck down,
and they recount the pain of those you have wounded.

27 Add to them punishment upon punishment;
may they have no acquittal from you.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living;
let them not be enrolled among the righteous.

29 But I am afflicted and in pain;
let your salvation, O God, set me on high!

30 I will praise the name of God with a song;
I will magnify him with thanksgiving.

31 This will please the Lord more than an ox
or a bull with horns and hoofs.

32 When the humble see it they will be glad;
you who seek God, let your hearts revive.

33 For the Lord hears the needy
and does not despise his own people who are prisoners.

34 Let heaven and earth praise him,
the seas and everything that moves in them.

35 For God will save Zion
and build up the cities of Judah,
and people shall dwell there and possess it;
36 the offspring of his servants shall inherit it,
and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

A Psalm of David

As we noted last week, this song is written in eight discernable movements, successively alternating between cries for help (vs. 1, 6, 13b-18, 22-29) and statements of plight (vs. 2-5, 7-13a, 19-21), with the final statement being a statement of praise (30-36). The statements of plight function as the reasons for the cries for salvation and deliverance, and as one moves through the Psalm, the lament increases in its intensity resolving the complaint and expression of trust in a chorus of praise.

David is facing the fight of his life. It looks as though his life will soon be snuffed out. He is drowning, overwhelmed by those who hate him and hate Israel because they hate God. David's passion for God's glory and His people, represented by the shekinah glory cloud hovering over the tabernacle, is literally killing him. David is dying in shame and humiliation on behalf of God's name. Falsehoods are being spread.

David's appeal for salvation isn't simply for his own personal vengeance. David's appeal is for God's vindication not only of those who love him, but for His own sake. Save me O God. Don't allow this shame to spread to your people. I'm bearing your reproach. David's enemies sing their blasphemous drunkard's song, but David is undeterred! his appeal is to the only One who can save him from an infamous demise.

Salvation as an attribute of God

When we get to verse 13b, the desperate plea "Save me O God" is beginning a wonderful transformation in the heart of the Psalmist. In fact, the centerpiece of this Psalm is verse 13b. If we were going to write a thesis statement for this Psalm, this would be it! "At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me in your saving faithfulness."

The salvation of the King and people is grounded in God's personal and intimate covenant with Israel. Sometime go through the Psalms and count all of the times that the Psalmist highlights or praises God for his steadfast love and faithfulness. Steadfast love and faithfulness are understood by the Psalmist to be at the heart of God's promises to Israel as God's people. If there are two characteristics that set God as the unique God above all others, the two characteristics that declare God's unique relationship to Israel and identify them as His people, it is a love for His people that never wavers and never quits and a zealous loyalty that never, ever falters. And here the Psalmist notes that these two characteristics that speak to God's never ending covenant with his people are grounds for hope. Why? These aren't simply nice, moral attributes. No. This steadfast love and faithfulness are actually, and really *saving* His people. The Psalmist cries out "Save me O God" because in the very being of God, the very *morality* of God isn't static, but is active on behalf of His people. There is the hope when the King is drowning. When it looks as though the destiny of the King and His people will disappear into the dustbin of history, there is still a flicker of hope based not on what David can do for himself, but what he knows God has done and is doing for His people. God is characterized by a love and *saving* faithfulness for his people! so much so that He is not God if He fails to do so.

Answer me

Not only has the initial appeal "Save me O God" laid hold of God's covenantal love and faithfulness, it has become resolute in its appeal. It does not give up. Notice here that the appeal is no longer "save me", but "answer me." In fact, "answer me" is repeated 3 times in this section. Even as God's covenant with Israel becomes the basis for the appeal, the desperation in the plea has increased threefold. Hope begins to appear on the lips of the Psalmist, but the initial cry for salvation has been met with silence. Answer me. Answer me. Answer me. All the Psalmist can hear is the mocking song of the drunkard.

The initial descriptions of David's plight of "drowning in water up to the neck" and "sinking in the mire" are now attached to the increasing intensity of David's plea. Answer me. Deliver me from sinking in the mire. Let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters. Let not the flood sweep over me. The king's enemies threaten to overrun him and extinguish him and with him his people. And at stake is God's covenant with King and people.

And if God didn't hear the first time, or the second time, this plea is repeated, and again, David in his desperation is appeal to the very covenant that was the basis of Israel becoming a nation: Answer me for your steadfast love is good, according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. Answer me. Deliver me. Let me be delivered. Let not the flood sweep. Answer me. Turn to me. Hide not your face. Make haste to answer me. Draw near. Redeem me. Ransom me. O God, where are You? If anything, things are so desperate for the Psalmist in the midst of great suffering and great pain, suffering that is unjust, suffering that is because of who God is for His people, that he is now reminding himself and reminding himself and reminding himself of God's love and his mercy and his saving faithfulness. When life is at its bleakest, David is preaching the gospel to himself and to His people. Again and again. Over and over. Answer me because you are a saving God. Answer me because you love us. Answer me because you are great in mercy.

Answer me. Do not abandon us! and oh, is that thought here. Mingled with hope that begins to appear on the Psalmist's lips is an appeal to not abandon. And if there is any thought that is darker than dark in a moment like this, "Save Me O God, I'm drowning. Answer me. Answer me. Don't turn from me, Hide not your face", it's the thought of a faithful and loving covenanting God who saves his people turning from His king and people and hiding his face. If there is anything worse than bearing reproach for the sake of God's name and His presence among His people it's the withdrawing of that presence from His people. If there's anything worse than the thought over being overrun by God's enemies, it's being abandoned by God himself.

These thoughts here are the barest of a soul hanging on by a thread in the face of death. "Turn to me" suggests that the Psalmist has already begun to believe that the prospect is there that God indeed has abandoned his anointed one, the chosen one of Israel. And if God has abandoned his anointed one he has abandoned his people. The fate of the people rides on the fate of the king. "Turn to me, hide not your face" is the inner motivation behind "Save me O God". In fact, it's simply amazing that "Save me O God" has been uttered at all. Even though there is the prospect of abandonment, even though David a righteous sufferer, enduring the agony of reproach for God's name and God's people, David's faith and trust in God's love and faithfulness is so resolute he makes the appeal anyway. Answer me out of your love and your mercy and your faithfulness to your people. Deliver me from being overrun by your enemies. Turn to me, hide not your face. Do not abandon me. I need your redemption.

You know my reproach

This third set of appeals is followed by a third set of explanation of David's plight. And again, notice how there is an increase in the intensity of David's plight. Reproach, shame, dishonor, and reproaches reinforce David's plight, but this time, David intimately ties this plight to God himself. "You know" my reproach. My shame and dishonor are "known to you." This shame and humiliation isn't faceless. These are known enemies. Reproach and shame have names and addresses.

David's plight is increasing personal. The metaphors of "drowning" and "sinking" are being replaced with David looking for pity and finding no pity and no comfort. David is looking for relief from his plight and not finding any. The spiritual suffering and torment are taking a very real physical toll. David's life is in danger. The shame and reproach are reinforced with physical discomfort and suffering. It's one thing to suffer shame and humiliation in a posh palace or the comfort of home. But David is homeless. David's internal agony finds no relief in physical comfort. There's nothing to alleviate the internal disintegration.

In fact, not only did David find no pity and no comfort, he found the opposite. Instead of pity, they gave him poison for food. Instead of comfort in the quenching of thirst, his enemies gave him sour wine to drink. David isn't simply cut off from comfort, but cut off from life's sustenance in a way that simply adds to the mockery. In our language we talk about "pouring it on," "kicking him while he's down," "piling on," "pouring salt in the wounds." David's fingers are on the ledge, he hangs by the fingernails, and his enemies are stepping on them. Food and water run to the very essence of what it means to be human. Life itself is carried on bread and water. David is not only being deprived of that which would give him life, but he's being given that which would drive life from him in a way that makes a mockery of David's plight. One can hear the mocking laughter of David's enemies as the king's table is no longer a place that gives sustenance but is a table that would actually kill you.

It is here that shame and the humiliation is complete. It is here that the drunkard's song is the loudest. It is here that David's alienation has run its course into complete isolation. The bread and the wine upon which David depends for his life are actually killing him. Save me O God. Answer me. Answer me. Turn to me. Hide not your face from me. Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. And David has neither. There is no bread, only poison. There is no water, only undrinkable wine. There is no answer. Only silence.

Turn the tables

What happens next is uncharted territory for the Psalmist. With an outlook so bleak, even the basic necessities of life are no longer providing the sustenance necessary to live, there is a startling shift—a jolt—in David's appeal. David's last appeal is simply stunning. Having made his desperate plea, having appealed to God's abundant love and faithfulness and mercy, his appeal moves from the salvation that he desires from a loving and faithful God to justice that he desires from a God who rights all wrongs. The focus shifts from the Psalmist to his enemies, those who are the cause of the suffering of the righteous. The petition moves from what the Psalmist wants God to do for himself and His people to what the Psalmist wants God to do *to* his enemies.

Verse 22 begins a series of the imprecatory appeals, appeals invoking God's justice and judgment on the enemies of king and people, covenant breakers who mock the very presence of God in the shekinah glory of the tabernacle.

This Psalmist doesn't simply call down God's judgment on his enemies. Note the dramatic shift between verses 21 and 22. They poisoned my food. They gave me sour wine to drink.

Let their own table before them become snares. Even within an inch of his life, about to be overwhelmed, the Psalmist's view of God's holiness and justice are so acute his prayer is that God's justice will be meted in a manner loaded with the irony that to this point has been all his. He appeals to a divine retribution whose chief characteristic is that we reap what we sow. And it is an appeal for justice to right the ironic wrong. This is the righteous sufferer who suffers having done no wrong. This is the one who suffers the reproach of those who reproach. This is David so passionate for God's presence and people that he is about to lose his life because of that passion. David's enemies mock him. His prayer is for God to have the last laugh. There is, in David's view of divine retribution, a sense that one's actions become their own consequences.

This prayer for the table to become a snare is the first of five curses invoked on behalf of the Psalmist and God's people and all five are the inverse of details that speak to David's plight:

They poison my food and give me sour wine to drink. Let their own idolatrous table before them become a snare. My eyes grow dim waiting on God to save me. Let their eyes be darkened. I am drowning and I cannot keep my feet. Let their loins be so shaky in the wake of God's judgment they cannot stand up. Zeal for your house where your presence glows has consumed me. Rain down your righteous anger and let your glowing and burning anger consume them. I am alienated from my family and homeless. May their camp be a desolation and let no one dwell in their tents. The reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. Add to them punishment upon punishment. They defame me and recount my stories in the city gates and in song. Blot their names out of the book of the living and do not allow them to be recounted among the righteous.

Save me O God and be my reverser of fortune. Save me O God and turn the tables on your enemies. Answer me out of your steadfast love and saving faithfulness. We want your love and mercy. Strike down your enemies with justice and holiness.

And as we make our way to the final section, it becomes quite evident that such is the Psalmist's view of God's majesty and glory, such is his confidence in God's salvation of his people that one must notice that the turning of the tables involves a trade of the temporary for the eternal, a physical for the spiritual, an earthly for the heavenly. I desire some comfort. I have looked for pity. Show your enemies your divine wrath in which there will never be comfort. I am suffering humiliation and shame. In the halls of divine justice, declare them guilty and eternally damned. My life is about to be extinguished. Banish them from the Book of life.

As bleak as it looks, the Psalmist has not taken his eye off of the big picture. He is about to be overwhelmed by those who hate Him and his God. Yet David knows that any suffering in this life is temporary. The worst that can happen to him is that he dies. But his desire is to see God's justice satisfied and God's name vindicated. He is afflicted and in pain, verse 29, but he fully expects, even as hopeless as it seems for God's salvation to exalt him in his suffering. Let your salvation set me on high. David doesn't simply want saved from his temporary predicament. David has higher purposes and aims. David is the Anointed One. God's saving activity in history won't be content to simply pull David out of the flood. Divine salvation doesn't simply restore. Salvation acting on behalf of people and king is incomplete if all it does is save David from his enemies. David's final appeal here shows the full measure of his faith and trust in the God who acts on behalf of his people. This divine salvation involves the rightful exaltation of the Anointed One. This isn't simply restoration, but a new creation.

It is here that the transformation of David's appeal is at its highest and fullest end. It begins with Save Me O God, I am being overwhelmed. It ends with Let your Salvation set me on

high. From the hellish pit to the glorious throne. This is David's appeal that has been transformed by seeing God in his love and mercy and justice and holiness. David fully expects the Covenanting God of Israel to act in love and mercy toward His Anointed One and justice and retribution toward his enemies and as a result that very same salvation will result in the exaltation of the righteous one.

I will praise

The final section of this Psalm moves from the lament to an expression of praise and trust and assurance in the God who vindicates his people and his name. And notice the reversal of fortunes continues. The drunkards are defaming my name with their blasphemous song. I will praise the name of God with a song. Let not those who seek God be brought to dishonor. You who seek God let your hearts revive. Zeal for your house has consumed me. God will save Zion. I am homeless. God's people will dwell in Zion and possess it and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

The anticipation of David's exaltation gives way to the crescendo of a Psalm that began in the blackest of nights. "Save me O God" has moved through an appeal for Israel's covenanting God to work on the Anointed One's behalf and to the salvation of the Anointed One in his exaltation. The appeal for exaltation of the Anointed One places both the vision and desire for the Psalmist squarely in the heavens. There has been a reorientation of perspective. That reminder of God's love and faithfulness, working toward David's exaltation, orchestrates praise and thanksgiving in the Psalmist, a praise and thanksgiving that God values more than sacrifice. The danger is still present. God hasn't yet answered. David, mind you, is still drowning. What has changed is his inner orientation and disposition. God hasn't answered, but he has already answered in what he has done for His people and what he will do. David has been reminded of the gospel in the promises of the covenant. He cries "Save Me O God" because salvation promised will be salvation accomplished both in God's love and mercy and his justice. While the danger is still present, God will indeed reward the wicked for their treatment of the righteous sufferer. When all is said and done, the tables will be turned and those who reproach God and his people will "get theirs".

And when those who, like David, find themselves drowning in a sea of God's enemies see the pleasure of the Lord in the glory presence of the shekinah cloud of the tabernacle, they "like David" will be glad. Those who are half-dead, seeing God's pleasure at the praise and thanksgiving of his people, will find themselves resurrected. God's salvation brings to life those who have been raised from the mire and the pit. The cry "Save Me O God" has as its end the salvation of God in His dwelling with His people forever. Salvation cannot and will not come from David. It must come from outside of himself and is found in the all-loving, all-merciful, all-faithful saving God of Israel's covenant promises.

Any feeling of God's distance and abandonment, in light of God's final salvation of his people, is short-lived and in the final analysis is simply the true mirage. God will exalt his Anointed One and God will save His people and dwell with them forever – such a thought sustains David when he is drowning in a sea of God's enemies and being consumed because of God's house and God's people.

The voice of the Messiah

This of course, isn't all about David, is it? New Testament writers do not allow us to read this Psalm without making the connection between David and Messiah, the Messiah named Jesus. Some of these lines are oh so familiar to us and we are reminded of them around this time of year. Virtually every one of these curses, and there are between 7 and 11 of them, are found

somewhere in the New Testament. One line is so familiar, not only does it function as a swing point in this Psalm, but it pulls the entire Passion story into this text.

This Psalm is a window into what Jesus is thinking as he redeems for himself a people in the suffering of the garden and the cross. Let me be delivered from my enemies. Let this cup pass from me. Let not the flood sweep over me. Let this cup pass from me.

There on the cross, zeal for God's house is consuming him. He came bearing witness to the Father and now those who hate the Father have crucified the Son. Christ bears the reproach of those who have reproached God.

But there is a fundamental difference between David, God's anointed to lead Israel, and Christ God's Anointed to not only rule Israel, but save His people from their enemies. David suffers as one who is righteous, even though he has done wrong. Christ suffers as one who is righteous, even though he has done no wrong. David's cry of desperation, Save Me O God is grounded in God's love and faithfulness. David anticipates exaltation in God's salvation. But horror of horrors, Christ's cry "Save Me O God" really does go unanswered. Christ cries, answer me, for your steadfast love is good and there is no answer. Christ's desperation on the cross is evident as the Father abandons the Son. "Hide not your face from me" has no response in the heavens. "Turn to me" is met with stone cold silence.. The worst of all possible scenarios is that God would curse the innocent and abandon his people falls like a reproach on the One who had a zeal for God's presence and His people like no other. How could this be?

Christ will not be saved. The tables will not be turned. The curses will not be reversed. The wicked will not get theirs in fact, they kick Christ when he is down. Christ is the reproach instead of those who reproach God. The swing point of this Psalm becomes the climax of the suffering on the cross. John 19:28

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the Scripture, "I thirst." 29A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. 30When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

We often read this part of the crucifixion story as if the soldiers are finally feeling sorry for Jesus. But that's not the context of Psalm 69:21 which is the allusion here. The context in Psalm 69 is mockery. Kicking the anointed one who is down. Stepping on the fingers of Christ who is hanging on to the ledge by his fingers to save his life. They are singing the drunkard's song. Christ dies the death of one mocked. Instead of being exalted, the Anointed One dies the death of the shamed, the humiliated, the dishonored. The one who was abandoned by his fathers, fills up the meaning of Psalm 69 to its fullest and drowns in the sea of his enemies. The suffering of the righteous sufferer is complete. In the end the Righteous Sufferer of Psalm 69 will die. The Righteous Sufferer will not be saved. Because it is God's intent to save his people. Christ cries out "it is finished". Not only is the king dead, so is the destiny of the people whose fate is tied to his. "Save me O God" has gone unanswered. All foreshadowed in the suffering the anointed one in Psalm 69 is complete. The tables will not be turned. Or will they?

If those at the foot of the cross, or even the disciples on the road to Emmaus had bothered to finish reading Psalm 69 they would have known that all was not lost. You see even as Christ's "Save Me O God" is going unanswered, Christ is saving Zion. Even as Christ is abandoned, he is securing intimate communion with His people forever. And yes, even as Christ is dying with life quenching wine on his lips he is turning the tables on his enemies. Oh how foolish that kind of vindication. Even as Christ is suffering the curses raining down from a jealous God whose covenant has been broken, Christ is providing the ratification of a New

Covenant with his blood. As Christ dies, Christ reverses the fortunes of His people and gives those who are covenant breakers the covenantal blessings instead.

But then there is also this dire reality. Luke, in writing Acts, cites Psalm 69 in providing details of the death of Judas, the one who was an enemy of Christ, one who persecuted the Anointed One. As the one most directly responsible for securing the death of the Messiah, Judas becomes representative of those who hate Jesus. Indeed the tables were turned on Judas. In dying as if he hated God, Christ turns tables on those who hate Him and His people. The covenant curses have fallen on Christ. Christ subjected himself to the curses as a covenant-breaker, became God's enemy and experienced the judgment of God's enemies. But in taking the curses and dying the death of the damned, Christ secured the the damnation of those who are the enemies of his people. Even as Christ's heel is being bruised, the head of the serpent is being crushed in the ultimate turning of the tables.

The Righteous Sufferer dies. But before the Psalm is over, the Righteous Sufferer lives, dwelling among his people. Hearts revive in the last part of the passage because the King has been revived. Having turned the table on his enemies, having been consumed by his passion for God's dwelling presence with His people, having died in shame and humiliation, having died the death due both his people and his enemies, the Anointed One Himself has been revived and exalted to Save His people and become their dwelling place. Yes, there was a death, but in the end, there is a resurrection. In the resurrection, the turning of the tables is complete. Having eaten of the poisoned food and drunk of the bitter wine, Christ is raised from the dead in vindication of God's name and the purchase of a people. The Righteous Sufferer of Psalm 69 dies in order to be set on high.

And what joy awaits the Righteous Sufferer and his people. "Save Me O God" has become "Christ has saved Zion". He Himself is the people's house, the new temple of God. He himself becomes the people's possession. He himself becomes His people's inheritance. The salvation of the Righteous sufferer was lost so that in the end salvation would be found for those who love Jesus' name.

Conclusion:

Where does life find you this passion season? Are you looking for vindication in all of the wrong places? Are you looking to turn the tables on those you don't like? Never mind if they aren't necessarily God's enemies? Are you drowning in a sea of doubt? Does all seem lost? Do you feel abandoned? Ashamed? Humiliated? Is your life in crisis? Is there any fallen human condition that couldn't be plugged in here? Even if we were to never say it? Do we as a people get a smug satisfaction when someone we don't like gets theirs?

Come to the pages of Psalm 69. Even as life like a flood threatens to carry you away, come gaze at the One who died as a Righteous Sufferer on your behalf. Even as you long for vindication, come gaze at the one who will some day fully and completely turn the tables on his enemies and exalt and vindicate his people. Even as you feel shame and humiliation, come gaze at a Savior who suffered the shame and humiliation you richly deserved, dying the death of one who was blotted out of the Book of Life, in order to secure your name in that very volume. Even as you feel as though you are drowning in sorrows, come to Psalm 69 and gaze at the Man of Sorrows who fed on poisoned food and drank the bitter wine so that you could taste of the Bread of Life and drink of the Living Water.

- Allen, L. (1986). The Value of Rhetorical Criticism in Psalm 69. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 577-598.
- Beale, G., & Carson, D. (2007). *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Bonar, A. (1978). *Christ and His Church in the Book of Psalms: 150 Inspirational Studies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel.
- Daly-Denton, M. (2004). The Psalms in John's Gospel. In S. Moyise, & M. Menken, *The Psalms in the New Testament* (pp. 119-137). London - New York: T&T Clark.
- Groenewald, A. (2003). *Psalm 69: Its structure, redaction, and composition*. Munster: Lit Verlag.
- Lindars, B. (1961). *New Testament Apologetic*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- Ryken, L., & Ryken, P. G. (2007). *The Literary Study Bible: ESV*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway.
- Tate, M. (1990). *Psalms 51-100 (Word Biblical Commentary)*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
- Vos, G. (1994). Eschatology of the Psalter. In G. Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (pp. 323-365). Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing.