

Pselect Psalms 4 - Psalms about Christ

Preparation:

Familiarize yourself with the “answers” section so you can relate them more naturally instead of just reading.

Check-in

Spend a few minutes to see how everyone is doing and how their week has been.

Intro

Ask: Who knows where the prophecies about Christ are in the Old Testament?
(Don't say whether people are right or not yet)

Say: Let's read what Jesus said in Luke 24:44, when He was with His disciples after He'd risen...

Have someone read Luke 24:44 (while everyone follows along in Bibles)

Ask: Where did Jesus say prophecies were written about Him?
(Prophecies about Christ are throughout books of the Old Testament - even in the Psalms.)

Psalm 22:1-22

Read Psalm 22:1-22, a few verses at a time, using the outline below (while everyone follows along in Bibles)

- After each set of verses is read, ask: What from these verses seems to relate to Jesus and how?
- Share the notes in italics, if teens don't come up with those thoughts themselves:

- **Verses 1-5**

*Jesus said "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" while He was being crucified (Matt. 27:46).
(When He said this, He may have had the whole Psalm in mind. This Psalm goes on to ask for God's help and ultimately shows a confident attitude toward God.)*

- **6-11**

Verses 7-8 - People wagged their heads at Jesus and the Jewish leaders mocked Jesus with some really similar words (Matt 27:39-43)

- **12-17**

Verses 14-17 sound a lot like Jesus' crucifixion - especially piercing his hands and feet.

- **18-22**

Verse 18 is explicitly mentioned as fulfilled prophecy in John 19:24. It says: "so they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.'" This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things," (The other examples we talked about from Psalm 22 may not be referred to explicitly by the New Testament writers as fulfilled prophecies, but they seem to closely relate to Jesus!)

Say:

- Here are just two other examples of verses from Psalms that are said to be fulfilled by Jesus:
- John 13:18 says "I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'" This quotes Psalm 41:9.
- And John 15:24-25 says: "If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'" This quotes Psalm 69:4.

The "Problem"

Say:

- As Christians, it's pretty easy to see how these verses in Psalms relate to Jesus.
- But, let's look at a question a college freshman wrote to a guy named Glenn Miller...

"I am a Christian freshman at XXX. I really enjoy your homepage, and I have printed out a lot of it to share with friends. One difficulty that I am encountering, and that I wish you would spend some more time on, is the question of whether Jesus was a failure as the Messiah of the Old Testament. I have several friends with whom I have taken up the discussion, and I showed them your answer to the question. However, one girl said that it was untrue that many Jews of Jesus' day saw him as the Messiah. She maintains that Jews of the day were really not expecting a Messiah, and that we Christians in retrospect have interpreted much of the OT as containing prophecies of a Messiah. She even says that the Gospel writers went back and created stories to fulfill "prophecy", such as when Jesus tells the people that the scroll of Isaiah has been fulfilled in him. She has a deep sympathy with the Jews, and seems to think that someone came in and falsely interpreted the Hebrew Bible as having prophecies of a messiah, and then attributing these to Jesus. I would really appreciate it if you would go into more depth on the topic, from the perspective of a first century Jew." (*Miller, Messianic Expectations, cited below*)

- Christians say a lot about the importance of Jesus fulfilling prophecies and about how many prophecies Jesus fulfilled to show He was the Messiah.
- But, did the Jews even think the Old Testament prophesied about a Messiah?.. Or, did Jesus and His followers just find Old Testament verses and interpret them as prophecies?...

Ask: Have any of you ever had questions like this? Or do questions like this make sense to you?

Answers

Explain:

- Here are some facts (much of them from Glen Miller's answers to this and another question)...
- Many Jews did interpret Old Testament verses as referring to a Messiah.
- Actually, Jewish Rabbis (teachers) came up with more total verses about a Messiah than the New Testament has. There are possibly over 352 recorded verses or passages from the Old Testament that Jewish Rabbis interpreted as Messianic.
- According to the writings from Jewish Rabbis that we have, several Jewish Rabbis interpreted many verses in the Psalms - including some of the same verses Jesus and His followers did - as being Messianic.

- We can also see that many Jews expected a Messiah because:
- The Apocrypha has explicit Messianic references. (The Apocrypha includes books written before Jesus came that the Catholic church includes with their Bible.)
- The Qumran religious community that was around during Jesus' time had Messianic expectations. (This group is who left behind the Dead Sea scrolls.)
- If we believe the New Testament at all, it shows that people were looking toward a Messiah.
- In the New Testament, we see the disciples and many Jews were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.
- Writers of the New Testament books saw that many of the things written in the Old Testament, including many verses in Psalms, were fulfilled in Jesus!
- And like we read at the beginning, Jesus, Himself, said that all that was written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms about Himself must be fulfilled.

Closing

Ask:

- What do you think about all this?
- What's something important you learned or were reminded about today?

Say: If you have other questions or want to learn more about having Jesus as your Savior, talk to one of the leaders or someone you feel comfortable talking to who's a Christian.

Prayer Time

Have volunteers share prayer requests and praises and allow volunteers to pray for those things.

References:

- "Debate about claims of prophecy fulfilment in the New Testament" section from "Claimed Messianic Prophecies of Jesus," Wikipedia.org (accessed on 10/25/07 @ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messianic_prophecy_in_Christianity#Debate_about_claims_of_prophecy_fulfilment_in_the_New_Testament)
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- Joel Kalvesmaki, "Table of Old Testament quotes in the New Testament, in English translation," From Kalvesmaki.com (accessed on 10/31/07 @ <http://www.kalvesmaki.com/LXX/NTChart.htm>)
- George Konig, "Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus" and "More Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus" at www.konig.com website (accessed on 10/31/07 @ <http://www.konig.org/page6.htm>, <http://www.konig.org/page7.htm>)
- "Messiah Revealed: Psalms," website founded by Bill Gordon (accessed on 10/31/07 @ <http://www.messiahrevealed.org/psalms.html>)
- Glenn Miller, "Good question.....did the Messianic Jewish Believers use the OT deceitfully or ignorantly in the New Testament?" (April 1998, accessed via Jews for Jesus Website on 10/25/07 at <http://www.christian-thinktank.com/baduseot.html>)
- Glenn Miller, "Messianic Expectations in 1st Century Judaism --Documentation From Non-Christian Sources" (8/98, accessed via Jews for Jesus website on 10/25/07 at <http://www.christian-thinktank.com/messiah.html>)
- DH Wallace, "Messiah," Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, Gen Ed Walter A Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, Sept 1997 printing).

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