

Psalm 16: Messianic Psalms (Psalm 16)

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Abstract

In this lecture, Dr. Bruce Waltke explores the Messianic approach to interpreting the Psalms, emphasizing reading the Psalter with reference to the ideal King, Jesus Christ. He traces the historical and theological development of Messianism from the Protoevangelium in Genesis through the Davidic Covenant, royal coronation liturgies, and post-exilic expectation. Furthermore, Dr. Waltke outlines how the New Testament authors and Jesus Himself utilize the Psalms through direct prophecy, typology, and apostolic doctrine. Finally, he classifies Messianic Psalms into four distinct categories—indirect/typical, typical-prophetic, purely prophetic, and enthronement—demonstrating how the complete Psalter finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ's two advents.

Outline

I. Introduction and Context

- A. Review of Previous Hermeneutical Approaches
 - 1. Spiritual approach
 - 2. Historical approach
 - 3. Form criticism and its branches
 - 4. Rhetorical approach
- B. Definition of the Messianic Approach
 - 1. Reading the Psalms with explicit reference to the Messiah
 - 2. Amira's dual perspective: Left eye on the historical king, right eye on the ideal king
- C. Opening Prayer and Focus on Psalm 16

II. Definition and Etymology of Messiah

- A. Linguistic Origins
 - 1. Hebrew root: mashach (to paint, smear, daub, anoint)
 - 2. Hebrew noun: Mashiach (Anointed One)
- B. Threefold Significance of Anointing
 - 1. Sets the king apart as God's exclusive property
 - 2. Validates the king as God's chosen and appointed leader
 - 3. Imparts divine empowerment upon the king

C. Theological Definition of Messiah

1. Realization of God's promise to give Israel an ideal king
2. Establishment of a universal rule of righteousness and peace at the end of the ages

III. Historical Development of Messianism

A. Origins in the Garden of Eden (Protoevangelium - Genesis 3:15)

1. Sovereign grace in placing enmity between the woman and the serpent
2. The seed of the woman crushing the serpent's head through suffering (crushed heel)

B. Tracing the Messianic Seed through Genesis

1. Rejection of Cain; election of Seth
2. Lineage through Noah and Shem (excluding Ham and Japheth)
3. Selection of Abraham, Isaac (not Ishmael), and Jacob (not Esau)
4. Scepter promised to the tribe of Judah

C. The Davidic Covenant

1. Anointing of David and covenant assurance of an eternal house, kingdom, and throne
2. Satanic attempts to extinguish the Davidic line (e.g., preservation of Joash)
3. Jesus Christ as the ultimate, eternal Son of David
4. Temporary loss of the earthly throne vs. Christ's permanent heavenly throne (Lionel train analogy)

IV. The Psalter's Contribution to Messianic Hope

A. Idealized Royal Psalms (e.g., Psalm 2, Psalm 110)

1. Universal reign extending from 'sea to sea and shore to shore'
2. Expansion of the original geographic boundaries of the Abrahamic covenant

B. Scholarly Perspectives on Royal Psalms

1. Hermann Gunkel: Hofstil (court hyperbole/poetic exaggeration)
2. Sigmund Mowinckel: Genuine Messianic expectation (He That Cometh)

C. Post-Exilic Reinterpretation

1. Absence of a historical king during and after the exile
2. Historical royal Psalms reinterpreted as future expectations draped upon the coming Messiah

V. Messianism in Intertestamental Apocalyptic Literature

A. Radical Dualism of Two Ages

1. Present age: Characterized by sin, death, evil, and Satanic rule
2. Future age: Characterized by righteousness, peace, and Messianic rule

B. Role of the Messiah and John the Baptist

1. Messiah (Son of Man) as pre-existent agent of cataclysmic transformation
2. John the Baptist's call to repentance and baptism with the Spirit and fire

VI. New Testament Fulfillment in Jesus Christ

A. The Two Advents of Messiah

1. First Advent: Sufferings for sin, death, and inaugural setup of the kingdom
2. Second Advent: Consummation of the universal righteous rule

B. Model of Inaugurated / Realized Eschatology

1. Mystery form of the kingdom (wheat and tares growing together until the end)
2. Overcoming Satanic power while awaiting final judgment

C. Function and Citation of Psalms in the New Testament

1. Statistical significance: 116 out of 283 Old Testament quotes in NT come from Psalms (41%)
2. Three primary NT uses of the Psalter:
 - a. Proof-texting prophetic fulfillment (e.g., rejected cornerstone in Ps 118; Judas' betrayal in Ps 41)
 - b. Teaching doctrine (e.g., universal human sinfulness in Romans 3 citing Ps 14/53)
 - c. Liturgical confession (e.g., Christ seated at God's right hand)
3. Jesus' explicit instruction that Psalms testify of Him (Luke 24:44)

D. Four Categories of Messianic Psalms (following Franz Delitzsch)

1. Indirect and Typical: Historical Davidic king foreshadows the heavenly King
2. Typical-Prophetic: David's experience uses language transcending his life, literally fulfilled in Christ (e.g., Ps 22)
3. Purely Prophetic: Direct predictive prophecy fulfilled uniquely in Christ (e.g., Ps 110)
4. Enthronement Psalms: Divine kingship celebrated and applied to Christ's reign (e.g., Ps 93, 99)

VII. Theological Discussion and Conclusion

A. Nature of Biblical Typology

1. Definition: Divinely intended pictures of greater future events
2. Distinction between legitimate typology and arbitrary allegorizing

B. Application for Modern Psalm Interpretation

1. Exhortation to read the Psalter in the light of Jesus Christ as commanded in scripture