

## PSALM 69

Concerning the reality of the temptation of our Lord and of His humanity, and of the urgency of His prayer and His sufferings, the 15th verse of the 4th chapter of Hebrews tells us:

*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin.*

Verse 7 of chapter 5 enlarges on that somewhat:

*Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.*

We remind you that this is the God-Man praying, and the Bible tells us that this was strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death. Christ praying to the Father to save Him from *death!*

When our Lord went into the garden and prayed, and as the scripture says, **His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground** (Luke 22:44); when He asked His disciples to watch and to pray with Him, what was He doing? Why this agony in the garden? He wasn't at the Cross yet. He was facing the Cross.

The only explanation is, that this wasn't something that Jesus - adequate, infinite, able, all-knowing, wise God - had simply to go through and get done; but as a man, the Captain of our salvation, He was a real human facing what you and I would face. He didn't just die on the cross. He faced *personally* all that sin, and hell, and Satan, and darkness, and emptiness, and gloom, and despair, and hopelessness, and everything that the psycho-babblers tell us that they can cure in humanity; everything that is the reality of living in this death-camp in which you and I are born and must sojourn our appointed days. These things that come upon us are not uncommon, they're not strange; but we must know our Lord faced them, and He faced them alone, the same way you're going to have to face yours alone, and He triumphed over them.

The 69th Psalm describes some of those strong cryings. **Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto [my] soul.** It's past the psychological, mental aspect of the suffering; it's gone past the emotional part; it's transcended the physical pain: now He says the sorrow has come into My very soul. He felt Himself threatened, about to be utterly destroyed and cast out into blackness and emptiness and despair, from which there was no hope, and no return. This is His language: **I sink in deep mire where there is no footing. There is none to help. I am weary with crying; my throat is dried. Mine eyes fail while I wait for My God.** He says that again in verse 14: **Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink; let me be delivered from them that hate me out of the deep waters. Let not the water flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.**

This can mean nothing unless it means this: that our Saviour, Christ, the Creator of the earth, felt Himself, sensed Himself about to be utterly cast out into nonexistence from which there could be no return: hopelessness, despair and blackness. It's the only thing that makes any sense. He hadn't read some of these smart alec fellows' books, who said, "You know, the Saviour's temptations weren't real; He couldn't have died, and He couldn't have sinned." Apparently He wasn't counting on that here. The child of God can't fall; he can't perish: but you don't know that when you come to these places. *Deliver me.*

Now, I want us to carry this a step further, lest we think our Saviour was simply just thinking of Himself in that time. **Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of Hosts, be ashamed for my sake. Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel** (vs. 6). What is He saying here? "Down through time there are going to be people who seek Your face; There will be people who will wait on God and cry out to God. If I fail . . ." and this is His prayer; when He cries to be saved from death, He's praying that He shall not fail in His mission. "If I fail, no one can ever find rest in God."

Now you and I know that there are none that seeketh God, but here He is saying, "These who will come to seek Your face and come to trust in You - don't let that be in vain because I have dropped the ball here. Let Me not let them down." You see, friend, it wasn't just His survival; it was yours and mine. Now, He *felt* that. You and I know that's hypothetical, but let us put it hypothetically: If the Saviour had utterly died; if the pit had closed her mouth upon Him; if He had not risen from the dead, what would it mean? It would mean that He did not offer an acceptable sacrifice: that He failed. *It would also mean that it would be utterly hopeless forever - FOREVER - for any one person of the human race to find any hope!* Now, you think about that.

He fully appreciated the weight of what was put upon Him, and realized it was put upon *none but Him*. We see that in verse 9, "**the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.**" You find that quoted in John 2:17, unless you have any problems thinking this is messianic: **And the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen on me.** The answer to that riddle, that statement is this: all the sins of those who have sinned against You; the consequences of those sins of all of these who have sinned against You have fallen upon Me. He felt the burden of reconciling, propitiating God for all of our sins, our reproaches, and our blasphemies against God; the consequences of all of those rested on Him, and Him alone: no one else.

That theme is expanded in Isaiah 63, where the prophet sets forth a dialogue. Verse 1: "*Who [is] this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this [that is] glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?*" The answer: "*I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.*" *That's Who I am. "Wherefore [art thou] red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?"* The answer: "*I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people [there was] none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance [is] in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and [there was] none to help; and I wondered that [there was] none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.*" Alone, our Lord fully faced those testings, that trial. The weighty consequences were upon Him that if He failed to offer this acceptable sacrifice, not only would He be gone; but there would be none to help us. This tells us that our Lord fought - personally faced - deep anguish, sorrow, desolation, hopelessness and despair. When you feel it, you realize that He's already been there and conquered that for us. He *did* rise from the dead. The pit did not close its mouth upon Him. He was heard, and therefore we live.

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God.  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

Isaac Watts