**TO KNOW JESUS – KNOW THE PSALMS**

**Quick. Name the most quoted prophet of the Old Testament. Is it Isaiah? Jeremiah? Moses? Samuel? Daniel? Of course, I probably gave the answer away by the title above. David, and the other Psalm writers, are the correct answer. By a long shot! It might be stunning to learn that there are about 283 verbatim Old Testament quotations in the New Testament. Of these there are 116 from the Psalms. But if you include allusions, which is simply a reference to the original source using the key words or thoughts but not giving verbatim quotes, then there are about 400 such Psalms found in the New Testament. In other words, if you want to know Christ, and the New Testament, you must spend a lot of time studying the Psalms.**

**Jesus was a student of the Psalms, using it to prove His own identity. He quoted Psalm 110:1 to His enemies,** *“How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? Now David himself said in the* ***Book of Psalms****: The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” Therefore David calls Him ‘Lord’; how is He then his Son?”* (Lk. 20:42).

**Jesus told the fearful apostles huddled in a closed-door meeting after His resurrection:** *“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and* ***the Psalms*** *concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures”* (Lk. 24:44-45).

**Matthew’s gospel had a theme of proving Jesus was the Messiah of the Old Testament. To document that proposition he quoted from the Psalms 15 times!**

**Mark quoted the Psalms 10 times.**

**Luke quoted the Psalms over and over again! Mary’s song (1:46-55); Zacharias’ praise (1:68-79); Satan even quoted Psalm 91 (4:10-11). Jesus repeatedly quotes Psalms (13:19,27,35; 20:17,42-43; 23:46; 24:27). The multitudes quoted Psalms (19:38; 23:34,35,36).**

**John turned to the Psalms to quote them 15 times in both his gospel and Revelation.**

**Luke again quotes the Psalms throughout his history of the church in Acts. Peter refers to Psalms in choosing Judas’ replacement (1:20) and in his famous Pentecost sermon (2:25-28, 30-31, 34-35), then in his defense before the Sanhedrin (4:11).**

**Paul, in his 13 epistles, made great use of the Psalms over and over again, quoting from it at least 28 times! For instance read Acts 13:33-35 in his first recorded sermon. Paul’s life as a Pharisee before his conversion was steeped in memorization of the Old Testament. He shows that education by using the Psalms to prove Christ’s true identity. Just look at all these quotes: Rom 2:6; 3:4 (2x); 3:10-18 (6x); 4:7; 8:36; 10:18; 11:1,9; 15:3, 9, 11; I Cor. 3:8, 20; 10:3, 8; 15:3 (2x); 15:4, 25, 27; 2 Cor. 4:13; 9:9; Gal. 2:16; 6:7; Eph. 4:8, 26; Phil. 4:5; I Tim. 6:7.**

**The author of Hebrews makes prolific use of the Psalms, quoting it at least 19 times.**

**Peter quotes the Psalms in his two epistles at least 6 times (I Pet 2:3, 4, 7; 3:10-12; 5:7; 2 Pet. 3:8, 10).**

**Now do you see what I mean when I said you cannot possibly understand the full meaning of the New Testament without a thorough study of the Psalms? To know Jesus, both His person and His work, demands knowing the Messianic prophecies about Him. The early Christians looked first to the Psalms to check, then double-check, the identity of the Lord. If 40% of the Messianic claims are found in those 150 Psalms, then we need to read them for more than just their beauty and emotion. Christ is on every page of that Psalter.**

**Think of how much Jesus loved the Psalms. For instance, when He was riding into Jerusalem in His triumphal entry He heard the crowd chanting the familiar Songs of Ascent, with emphasis on Psalm 118. Then, when He ate the last Passover, and the first Lord’s Supper, with the apostles in that upper room, He sang the centuries old hymns from Psalm 113-118.**

**When the church began after Pentecost in Acts 2 we learn through Paul’s writings that they sang in their assemblies “*Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*” (I Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). They also quoted Psalms in their prayers (Acts 4:25-26). It also seems likely that both Paul (Phil. 2:6-11) and John (Rev. 4-5,7,11,12,15,16,19) record new Christian psalms that exalt Christ Jesus as Lord. In fact, it seems from those who study church history that until the rise of Christian hymnbooks in the 18th and 19th centuries most churches simply used the ancient Psalms as their hymnbook for public worship.**

**Let me encourage the readers to make the book of Psalms a regular go-to devotional for your life. I know some who make it a habit to read five Psalms a day for an entire month. That means if you do that for 30 days you will have read the 150 Psalms each month (30 x 5 = 150). That’s 12 times per year! It will be more, far more, than listening to beautiful Hebrew poetry, it will be a deep study of the life of Christ.**

**If David, the author of so many of the Psalms, was called “*a man after God’s own heart*,” then perhaps by studying his words you will soon have God’s heart too.**

**Here… I’ll get you started in Psalm 1.**

*​1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the
 path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.*

**I love you. – Rick**