

# The Song of Zion

## Beacon Lights Staff

### A Psalter-Psalm Devotional of Praise to Our Sovereign Covenant God

#### Devotionals for September 1-9 by Mike Feenstra

##### September 1 Read Psalm 69:1-12; Psalm 69:1-2

“With the exception of Psalm 22, there is no other psalm that is quoted so often by the Holy Ghost than this one to describe the suffering of Jesus.” Such were the words of the late Rev. Gerrit Vos in *O Taste and See* (211). Considering that this Psalm was written by David in the Old Testament, we can surely see that the Scriptures are the Holy Spirit’s work to testify of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, as Rev. Vos states, “David suffered something like (Christ’s suffering), and I tremble when I write this last sentence down. The similarity is so insignificant. It may refer to the throne of Israel which he gave up to Absalom, fleeing the while. That entailed much for David: his house, his peace, his wives, his household stuff, his people. But when we look first at David when writing this pitiful tale in Psalm 69, and then at Jesus in Gethsemane or at the cross—words fail us. The first instance is but a shadow, the latter is reality” (215). Sing Psalter #184:1.

##### September 2 Read Matt. 27:39-49, Ps. 22; Ps. 69:1-3

O, the suffering of our Lord was an intense suffering; like unto (and even worse than) a weary man caught in deep waters that penetrate the soul so that his only hope is to cry for help between each overwhelming wave and each draining cough. This suffering by way of the insults and condemning words of the world was terrible and wounding to our Lord, but the thought that He was forsaken of God hurt the most and caused Him to cry out the words of Matthew 27:46, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” These words spoken by David in Psalm 22:1 also illustrate David’s wearisome crying in Psalm 69. There he beseeches God to deliver him from his deep affliction: “My constant calling wearies me, My throat is parched and dried; My eyes grow dim while for my God Still waiting I abide.” While on this earth below, this is also our state because we belong to Christ. In our suffering let us learn to call upon our sympathetic Savior Who sustained the highest suffering possible—the wrath of the Almighty God. Sing Psalter #184:1-2.

##### September 3 Read John 15:25, I Peter 2:23, Isaiah 53; Psalm 69:4

For today we cite an excerpt of “Absolute Abnegation” from *O Taste and See* by Rev. Vos on the powerful words of Psalm 69:4b:

“Then I restored that which I took not away!

Properly translated from the Hebrew it should read: that which I did not rob!

Jesus never robbed anyone of anything. It was rightfully His.

But as soon as He appeared among us the howling mob of creditors came upon Him. And they never left off demanding from Him. They finally demanded the very heart beat of Jesus. They asked and got His blood. His blessed body, His clothes, His natural modesty, nailing Him naked on the accursed tree, His life, the few square feet of terra firma: He hung suspended between heaven and earth.

And though He could have destroyed all His enemies, men, and devils, He gave and restored, He returned and surrendered all His possessions” (213). What did He restore that He did not take away? He restored righteousness and life to us, His elect, who are so undeserving (Heidel. Cat. Q&A 17). What a powerful verse! Sing Psalter #184:3. (If you would like *O Taste and See: Meditations from the Psalms* please write the Reformed Book Outlet, 3505 Kelly, Hudsonville MI 49426.)

#### **September 4 Read Psalm 139; Psalm 69:5-6a**

Young People, are we making the same confession as David does in Psalm 69:5? Are we searching our souls to see whether there is any sin in them? Or are we deceiving ourselves into thinking that God cannot hear our immoral fantasies or our murderous thoughts? While in deep affliction, David thinks the opposite. He proclaims before God that wherever he flees (See Psalm 139), God is there because God is the All-knowing God. He does not try to cover his sins as Adam tried in the garden of Eden, but he confesses them before God. In that confession, he beseeches God for deliverance from his present distress because he knows that he cannot cover his own sin. That covering can only come in David's Anti-type, our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him, our sins are hid forevermore from God's eyes so that we may be reconciled to Him. Sing Psalter #184:4.

#### **September 5 Read Psalm 69:6**

David's petition in the verse for today is that God would save His people from shame. While King David bore reproach at the hands of his enemies (See Verse 7), the temptation to despair and feel ashamed surely came to David's subjects. "Why do you confess God's Name when you can see that it will be unrewarded? Look at your King, he is defeated!" must have been the Devil's temptation to the children of Israel. Knowing well that this temptation was before God's people, David prayed that he might be delivered from his enemies and vindicated before the world so that God's people would not be ashamed for their confession. Therefore, we must see that David was concerned not about himself, but with those that wait on the Lord God of Hosts. His prayer was for the elect alone. His prayer was that God glorify Himself through the vindication of the elect in Israel by saving him. For, "If the king of believers shall find his faith unrewarded, how will the feeble ones hold on their way" (Spurgeon). Praise God that our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, has His reward! Because He has been exalted at God's right hand forevermore, we shall never be ashamed! Sing Psalter#184:5.

#### **September 6 Read Romans 15:3; Psalm 69:7-8**

Today is the Sabbath day, the day when we go up to God's house chiefly to worship Him. But, we also go to God's house because we desire to, "bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please ourselves." We are commanded to do this, "for even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproachest thee fell on me" (See verses Psalm 69:7, 9) What an incentive to live a life that promotes the other members of the congregation! Jesus came into this world as God's Christ in order to give His life for us! His zeal for the holiness of God's house and God's glory caused Him to be rejected of all His fellow men. This rejection culminated in his shameful sacrifice on the cross. There He despised the shame (Heb 12:2) and rose victorious. Out of thanksgiving to God, let us follow after Christ by giving God all the glory even though we may be persecuted. Sing Psalter#184:6.

#### **September 7 Read John 2; Psalm 69:9**

"For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." These were the passionate words of David. The passion that burned in David's heart was remembered by our Lord's disciples when they saw our Lord cleansing the temple in John 2. What was that zeal? David's and especially Jesus' zeal was exactly for the glory of God and the holiness of God's house. Calvin says that Christ, "burned with such zeal, that this single feeling swallowed up every other." This zeal would not allow any pollution in the house of God for God's House is to be holy, that is, separated from sin. In the New Testament reality, this means that God's Church, which the OT temple typified, must also be characterized by holiness. Therefore, we must also have this zeal to keep God's house holy by insisting that our churches proclaim that great Reformation theme: Soli Deo Gloria. This zeal only flows from God, the God Who will glorify His Name in His church. "For though God is sufficient for Himself, and needs not the services of any, yet He wishes that His glory should be displayed in the Church. In this way He gives a remarkable proof of

His love towards us, because He unites His glory—as it were, by an indissoluble link—with our salvation” (Calvin). Sing Psalter #184:7.

### **September 8 Read Heb. 4:14-18; 5:7-10; Ps. 69:10-11**

Earlier in our treatment of Psalm 69 we said that Jesus is our Sympathetic Savior. Young People do you know what that means? Have you experienced what that means? It means that Christ can sympathize with our troubles because he has experienced and endured every sorrow, every pain, and every temptation that we may face in this life. He knows what it means to lose a loved one. He knows what it means to suffer at the hands of wicked men when He bowed His soul with fasting. He has endured every temptation that we have in our life. And those temptations to Christ were severe and very serious. Just think of the temptations which our Lord endured at the hands of the Devil in Luke 4:1-13. If this is so, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Sing Psalter #184:8.

### **September 9 Read Psalm 69:12**

If we would describe an upright young man in this world according to the Scriptures, how would we describe him? Would he be one that gets drunk at a wild beer party on the weekend? In his car on a Friday night, would he be listening to ungodly rock music on the radio while he cruises the circuit? Or, would he be a young man whom everybody mocks at the local hangout because he reproves the sin of his fellow men (See Eph. 5:11)? How about a godly young woman? Would she be a woman that seeks to entice men by what she wears? Would you find her at a friend’s house watching the latest movie on video? Or, would she be a young woman who is outcast because she desires to walk modestly and humbly with her God (See Micah 6:8)? Young People, what description do we fit? David was made the song of the drunkards (Psalm 69:12). The same was ultimately true of Christ. If we are called to imitate Christ, will not our walk in this world yield the same results? It surely will. The truth of the antithesis demands this. If this is true, let us therefore walk not to seek the approval of the wicked of this world (See Luke 6:26, Eph. 5:11), but let us seek the approval of God. And if the world makes us their proverb, let us realize they do so because we belong to Christ (See John 15:18-25; Psalm 69:4, 12). Sing Psalter #184:9.

### **Devotionals for Sept. 10-30 by John Huizenga**

### **September 10 Read I Peter 2:18-23; Psalm 69:13**

Today we find a sharp contrast between the believer and the unbeliever, another dimension of the antithesis, a dimension that often breaks down in the weakness of our sinful flesh under the great pressure of wicked men. What do you do when men revile you? What do you do when you suffer wrongfully at the hands of men? The unbeliever will not be able to cool the burning coal of hurt and injustice and will seek revenge sooner or later. He will speak out, protest, revile back, and have no rest until the wrong is corrected according to his own satisfaction. But the child of God is different. While the wicked reviled David, he turned to God in prayer. He prays not on the basis that he deserves to be heard, but on the basis of God’s mercy and saving grace. Our Savior Jesus Christ also is an example for us in such times. We read that He also committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. May we also learn to bear injustice with quiet patience and turn to God in prayer. Sing Psalter 185 verse 1.

### **September 11 Read Mark 14:26-26; Psalm 69:14-15**

Despair and depression can be described as sinking down into mud that is very sticky and dark and bottomless. The harder one struggles, the deeper he sinks and the more hopeless he becomes. The grave itself slowly smothers all life. Such despair is death. Christ our Lord experienced this sorrow in the garden while he prayed. He said His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. That was the

weight of our sins pressing Him down as He stood before the righteous and holy God. No matter what the immediate cause of our despair is, all despair ultimately is the result of sin and there is only one way to get out of the mire. No man can pull us out with his own strength, only God is able to deliver. He is the only source of hope and life. He breaks the bondage of sin by the work of Christ crucified. He pulls us out by the power of His grace. Sing Psalter 185 vs. 2.

### **September 12 Read Titus 3:1-7; Psalm 69:16**

Why does God look upon the sinner with love and favor? So many who call themselves Christians say He smiles upon those that do good things and frowns upon those who do bad things. Such is a very simplistic, human, and therefore false idea of God. David did not ask God to deliver him because he had done this and that good work. He asked God in prayer to deliver him because of something in God: His mercy. Mercy is the will of God for the weak and helpless sinner to be perfectly blessed in Him; and what God wills, He accomplishes in sovereign power. The believer knows that God wills to save and is powerful to save because God reveals it in His word and therefore the believer comes to God on the basis of His mercy, that's all! Further revelation of God makes known to the believer that this mercy and power to save is accomplished in the believer through Christ. This truth is clearly taught in Titus 3 as well as all of Scripture. Sing Psalter 185:3.

### **September 13 Read Matt. 29:39-46; Psalm 104:29, 30; Psalm 69:17, 18**

The face of God is a matter of life or death for the creature. The showing of God's face to the creature is the revelation of His favor and grace. The hiding of God's face is the revelation of His wrath. Apart from the favor and grace of God all is hopelessness and death. The believer, knowing the greatness of His sin and misery, is immediately plunged into darkness when he loses sight of the face of God. The face of God communicates His love for us and forgiveness in Christ. The face of God is the word of God. May God never remove His word from us. It is not enough just to have the Bible in your house. Neither is it enough to read the Bible every day. God must show unto us His face in the reading of His word. We see His face only by faith. Let us also pray that He hide not His face. Sing Psalter 185:4.

### **September 14 Read Isaiah 53; Heb. 12:1-2; Psalm 69:19**

Reproach is when one puts you to shame. Those reproaching appear to have the upper hand while the one reproached wallows at their feet in shame. David comes before God knowing that He sees the condition in which he is in. Not only does God see His people being reproached, He knows reproach Himself. Christ was despised of men and suffered the reproach of the cross. While He hung on the cross, His enemies surrounded him appearing to have the upper hand as they mocked One Who could save the life of another but would not save His own life. But the enemies of God are absolutely wrong. Christ would not be destroyed in shame; He despised shame and now sits on the right hand of God. The way of the cross was the way for the destruction of the power of sin and death. When wallowing in the reproach of men we come to God where we see and know life eternal. Then the reproach of men means nothing and becomes the way to our salvation. Sing Psalter 185 verse 5.

### **September 15 Read Mark 14:35-50; Psalm 69:20**

In this life filled with sorrow and tears, we learn the beautiful truth found in these verses: God will never forsake His people. In our day to day life and interactions with people we may come to learn that even the best of friends can forsake us. It may even be that God sends you through a time when everyone forsakes you and you are completely alone and despised. This is when God opens our eyes to the truth that He will never forsake us. Then this truth will fill us with awe and reverence for God unknown to those who have never been forsaken by men. In the way of despair before men we are brought into closer covenant fellowship with God. We will never be forsaken because Christ was

forsaken for us. He took upon Himself the curse due unto us as he languished, forsaken by God upon the cross. Sing Psalter 185 verse 6.

**September 16 Read Matthew 27:33-50, Psalm 69:21**

These words from Psalm 69 are prophetic of the suffering and events surrounding Christ's death on the cross. The wicked fill up the cup of God's wrath when they trample upon that virtue of God so fundamental to His being: His mercy. Sin is essentially a turning opposite to the way of God and opposing Him. The wicked tormentors of Christ mocked mercy itself as they pretended to be merciful only to torment Christ further. May we see the great wickedness of man for what it is that we may be humbled before our holy God. Every sin of ours is worthy of the wrath of God. Every sin of ours was put upon the shoulders of Christ as he bore the suffering there on the cross for us. Sing Psalter 185 verse 7.

**September 17 Read Romans 11:1-13; Psalm 69:22-25**

Our God is sovereign in election and reprobation. This truth is denied by most today. While many claim to believe God chooses the elect, they deny the logical conclusion that therefore He also reprobates the others. We need not conclude the doctrine of reprobation by logic alone, for God plainly teaches this in these passages. We also are made to understand by this word of God that reprobation serves election, for it was in the way of the reprobation of ungodly Israel that the gospel went out to the Gentiles. As we saw yesterday, verse 21 is prophetic of Christ dying on the cross. The words of verses 22-25 are also the words of Christ. As He hung there to pay the price for the sins of His people, He also condemned all others to hell. These are the words of our God, if you deny these words, then you deny the God Who also saves by sovereign election. Sing Psalter 185:8.

**September 18 Read Isaiah 53; Psalm 69: 26-28**

We read Isaiah 53 again because we read here the truth that God is the one that sends affliction. David hesitates not to confess that it is God that has afflicted and smitten him. While man by nature stands up in shock and ridicule when he hears that God, Who is supposed to care for and protect His people beats upon them with afflictions, David finds no contradiction or offense. The child of God knows the holiness of God and therefore the wickedness of his sin. He would gladly suffer a life of beatings from God when he comes to realize the terribleness of his sin. The God of the Scriptures is a just God. Sin must be punished. To this God Himself in Christ laid down His life for His people. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Sing Psalter 185 verse 9.

**September 19 Read II Corinthians 8:1-9; Psalm 69:29**

Are you poor and sorrowful? God does not address the problem of earthly poverty of goods here, but rather the problem of spiritual poverty of knowing God. In comparison to life in heaven with God, our whole earthly life is one of spiritual poverty. In His loving kindness God gives to us faithful preaching and the Holy Spirit to lift us up and give us a taste of those heavenly riches, but we all the more long for life in heaven. Let us bring these needs before the Lord in prayer. He knows our poverty for He also became poor for us. God came down from heavenly glory, put aside the riches of that glory and took upon himself the flesh of man that we might be brought to God in Him. In our deliverance from poverty we come to know the mercy and love of God. Sing Psalter 186:1 & 187:1, 2.

**September 20 Read Eph. 13:1-15; Psalm 69:30, 31**

The Lord loves nothing more than the song of praise that wells up in the thankful heart of a forgiven sinner. A song of praise from the heart of His children is the goal and purpose of all the work of God since the beginning of creation. It is the fruit of His work. A song of praise is so simple, yet so profound. A little child and an old man can sing the same song over and over again, and yet bring new praise to God each time. A song of praise is the melting and fusing together of all your sorrows and experiences from the day of your birth and transformed by the power of God's word into a song of praise. This is a wonder that we will more fully comprehend when we are taken into heaven for an eternity of praise. Let us sing Psalter 186:2 in the knowledge of our wondrous salvation.

**September 21 Read Zech. 9:11, 12; Ephesians 3:1-7; Psalm 69:29-31.**

From the moment Adam fell into sin, every man woman and child is a prisoner of Satan. By nature we serve Satan and can do nothing but sin. Many of these prisoners belong to Satan, but not all. Some belong to God; they are God's prisoners. Unlike those who are not God's prisoners, those who belong to God are prisoners of hope. God opens our eyes, He makes us alive, He shows us the Door and by the power of His grace He brings us out of prison. So powerful and complete is this deliverance, that we can never return to that prison. But because the prison of Satan is so big, essentially covering the whole earth, and the child of God is separated from it, it is as though we now enter the prison of God that prevents us forever from ever living freely in the world of sin. Paul gives expression to this wonderful truth when he confesses that he is a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Does this truth make you glad? Sing Psalter 186:3 & 187:3.

**September 22 Read Isaiah 44:21-23; 49:13; 55:8-12; Psalm 69:32, 33**

When we meditate upon the garden of Eden and the wonderful life of Adam and Eve with God, it is easy for us to give praise to God, but when we see the corruption of this world it is not so easy to see the wonder in the unfolding of God's plan for a new heavens and new earth. The salvation of God's people is far more wonderful even than the garden of Eden. The accomplishment of God's purpose is reason for all creation to rejoice because then every part of creation will have served the purpose for which it was created. All things work together for the salvation of God's people. Everything that moves from the stars to the jellyfish to the vibrating atom is called to sing praise unto God. He has created each one, He upholds the existence and life of each one, and He directs each one to serve His purpose in salvation. In all His works, God reveals His wisdom and glory. Let us join the creation and sing Psalter 186:4 & 187:4.

**September 23 Read Acts 2:29-40; Psalm 69:36**

The institution of the family is an integral part of God's plan of salvation. God does not randomly choose individuals from the earth as though it were just one big group of people and then bring them into the church to be instructed in the knowledge of God. He does pluck individuals out of non-Christian backgrounds at times, but then He begins to work with them as a graft that can grow and become a family. He is pleased to use the family to provide a godly atmosphere and instruction for elect children who become firmly rooted in the truth from an early age. He is also pleased to give the joy to parents of seeing covenant children grow up in the fear the Lord. This does not mean there are not branches that are reprobate and eventually pruned off. This brings extreme sorrow, but the joy of our salvation and the faithfulness of God to save His people will overcome all sorrow. Sing Psalter 186:5 with the hope of the Psalmist.

**September 24 Read II Samuel 17:1-24; Psalm 70:1**

The history recorded in II Samuel 17:1-24 is an answer to David's prayer recorded in Psalm 70:1. That David's prayer was answered does not mean that he was free from all his troubles. Absalom continued to pursue him and it may have appeared to David that God did not answer his prayer.

Through it all, God did preserve David and eventually established His throne as a picture of the coming reign of Christ. Christ also prayed to God in the times of His great distress, and God confounded Satan by giving Christ the victory over death. Here too the way was not easy. When we pray for deliverance, we must not expect an answer that makes our life easy. God will always hear our prayer: He will never let His elect slip into the hands of Satan. He will make every attempt of wicked men to harm or lead us astray turn to their destruction and our salvation. Let us sing this prayer with Psalter 189:1 & 190:1.

**September 25 Read Isa. 41:1-14; Jn. 18:1-6; Ps. 70:2, 3**

The pride which lifts a man against God will always be met with shame and confusion because pride against God is absolute foolishness. This pride is manifest every time we sin. Sin is the willful stepping off the path to which God has directed our steps. Though we all sin and fall in shame and confusion, there is a difference between the reprobate and the elect. The reprobate can be smashed down in shame and confusion, but they get up again and persist in sin to an even greater shame and ultimate destruction. The elect are pricked in their heart and repent. In Christ they are washed clean and made precious in God's sight. They are taken within the covenant fellowship of God so that God brings shame and confusion to those who rise up against His people. The church is gathered for the glory of God, and anyone who would rise up against this work of God will be destroyed. Sing Psalter 188:2 & 189:2.

**September 26 Read John 16:20-28; Psalm 70:4**

In the midst of great distress, David does not only pray for the destruction of his enemies, but he also prays for all believers asking that they may rejoice and be glad. Here again, among other things, we see the great theme that runs through all Scripture, of joy and salvation in the way of sin and misery. We may not always see why it must be this way, but this is the will of God. In this way, and in no other way, is the love of God manifest fully to His people. In heaven we will understand this truth which we now see but dimly. Christ directs our attention to the picture of this great theme in the birth of a child. The joy of receiving a new child can only come in the way of pain and travail. Our minds forget the pain and suffering of childbirth, but the experience is intertwined forever in the love and joy that we have in the child. May we never forget that our puny created minds will never fathom the depths of the wisdom of the eternal God. Sing Psalter 188:3 & 189:3.

**September 27 Read Hebrews 10:1-37; Psalm 70:5**

We know God does not delay His return to deliver His people, and yet we pray "make haste." We also pray for the forgiveness of sins knowing that Christ has already blotted them out. We pray knowing that God knows everything we need. Would we not be better off keeping quiet and trusting that God will come, that our sins are forgiven, and our needs will be met? Some would have us believe that prayer will cause God to do certain things. We must hold steadfast to the truth that God is in complete sovereign control and unchangeable, yet we must also pray without ceasing because God is a covenant God and we are covenant people. The covenant is a bond of friendship, and there is no friendship without fellowship. In the friendship between the sovereign God of heaven and earth and frail, created, sinful man, such a fellowship in prayer is necessary and pleasing to God. God wills to come quickly, God wills to forgive our sins, God wills to supply our every need, and we confess that our will is knit with His when we ask for these very things. Sing Psalter 188:4 & 189:4.

**September 28 Read I Peter 2:1-10; Psalm 71:1, 2**

We have seen in the Psalms a number of times now where the Psalmist prays for confidence and steadfastness on the basis of his faith and trust in God. Knowing our God to be unchangeable and faithful, like a solid rock that can never be moved, we also pray that God sets us firmly upon that rock. What exactly is that rock? The Old Testament saints had only the promise of salvation as their rock.

They prayed for faith to believe that promise. The Rock is Christ. We are delivered from sin on the basis of His death and resurrection. He is the only way to renewed fellowship with God. We are saved in His righteousness which is imputed unto us. He is our only hope. All other ways will only lead to confusion and death. In him we will never be confounded. Sing Psalter 190:1.

**September 29 Read Revelation 7; Psalm 71:3**

Today we focus our attention upon the words “thou hast given commandment to save me.” These words are very personal and reassuring. The God Who commanded the world to come into existence also commands our salvation. Nothing can hinder this commandment. It is a command that has been given from all eternity. The passage from Revelation teaches us that God sends His angels into the world to gather His people in time. The elect are sealed with a seal that distinguishes them from all other and guarantees their entrance into heaven. In this connection God gives to us the reassuring picture of Himself as a strong rock. Not only does He command our salvation, He also gives to us His word to comfort and shield us all our life until we are gathered into heaven. Let us put our trust in God our Rock. Sing Psalter 190:2.

**September 30 Read Romans 15:1-13; Psalm 71:4, 5**

Hope is expectancy or expectation. It is a thing that one longs for with expectation. Hope is not a wish. You might wish that you would find a new car in the garage in place of your old one, but there is no expectancy and therefore no hope. Hope is based on something known for certain. David expected God to deliver him from his enemies because God had done it before and He knew God is a God Who saves. Today we might hope for rain on the basis of a weather prediction for rain, and the fact that it has rained in the past, but we can't be certain because God also sends drought. Hope in God has an absolutely certain basis. God is unchangeable. He reveals Himself as “the God of hope.” We are filled up with the hope of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, and in His hope we have peace and joy. May you be filled with the hope of God. Sing Psalter 190:3.

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