

Christ in Prophecy
Jesus in the Old Testament 26
Then Sings My Soul (Psalms)
Key Verse: Psalm 150:6

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Opening

Tim Moore: Welcome to Christ in Prophecy! I'm your host, Tim Moore, and I'm joined by my co-host, Nathan Jones. Our Jesus in the Old Testament series is spending a second week in the book of Psalms, a book that could be the focus of many episodes. In fact, we have dedicated entire episodes of Christ in Prophecy and published pamphlets to focus on single chapters of this wonderful book.

Nathan Jones: The Psalms capture the confession and adoration that is at the heart of Jewish worship. We lose some of the cadence and flow of the original Hebrew poetry in translation, but thankfully the gifted men and women who translated God's Word into English endeavored to capture its beauty and musical quality in our own language.

Tim Moore: Several Psalms have obvious Messianic overtones. Psalm 2 says that God laughs as the kings of the earth take their stand against Him and His anointed and warns us all to "do homage to the Son" lest we perish in the way when His wrath is kindled.

Nathan Jones: As Jesus hung on the cross, He cited Psalm 22, from the opening anguished lament "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" To the final verse "He has performed it" or "It is finished." And when the Jewish people ascended to Jerusalem to observe the Passover each year, they sang the Pilgrim Songs of Ascent, which is Psalm 120-134.

Tim Moore: Many of the Psalms were written by David, while others were written by Solomon, Asaph, the sons of Korah, and other named authors. Several are anonymous. But whether they express adoration of God, confession of a contrite heart, or the pain of suffering and desperation, all the songs are expressive of a heart wholly devoted to the Lord. Which is why we can rightfully say when our hearts are full, "Then sings my soul."

Part 1: Interview at Southwestern Seminary with Dr. Joe Crider

Tim Moore: There are many gifted singers whose voices make a truly joyful noise to the Lord. And others who are anointed writers who can put into words what our hearts can hardly convey. And yet, it takes a special gift to lead people into worship, taking them into the very throne-room of God

Several years ago, I met a very gifted worship leader who was serving at a church in Louisville, Kentucky. Joe Crider was the lead worship pastor there at Highview Baptist Church, and he now is here at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Joe is the dean and professor of the School of Church Music and Worship and I'm delighted to sit down with him. Joe, you truly do have a gift and I'm so glad you could join us today.

Dr. Crider: Thanks, Tim it is an honor to be here with you.

Tim Moore: Well, I'll tell you what, your ability to lead, not only individuals but corporate bodies of Christ into the throne-room of God was such a tremendous blessing to me and my family. I'm reminded of the power of music. And I even found a quote from 1697, an author by the name of William Congreve penned a famous line in an almost forgotten poem. He said, "Music has charms to soothe a savage breast." And a lot of people now days think it is to soothe the savage beast, but really the idea that music can convey emotions, and ideas, and beauty that sometimes we can hardly put into words.

Dr. Crider: Yeah, that is exactly right. And the power of music, it is hard to overstate the power of music. And while that is absolutely core in realizing music's power. I think its also an interesting reality, and it is unusual for the dean of a school of music to say something like this, but I don't think the triune God of the universe ever intended for us to gather specifically around music, because music changes so frequency with culture. Music changes so much with people's individual tastes. And unfortunately, that is where the church has begun to separate herself within congregations, based on styles of music. I think God called us to gather around Jesus Christ who never changes, and His Word that never returns void. And when we do that, and we sing together, the music, I think becomes even that more important because it is pointing people to Jesus. It is pointing people to His Word.

Tim Moore: Amen. And it becomes a vehicle. Just recently in our Jesus in the Old Testament series of course we went through the book of Job. And many of you were a part of that. And in one of the earliest books of the Bible, in terms of the historical narrative of this man's life, God asks: Where were you when I laid the foundation of the world? And He said when that occurred, when He laid the foundations of the heavens and the earth, the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The idea that lyrical praise bursts from our hearts at moments of worship is absolutely biblical.

Dr. Crider: That's exactly right. And the amazing aspect of this is, that music, God's gift to us through the gift of music is what affords our congregations that one voice of response, not to a particular sound, or not to a particular leader, or not to a particular instrument, but it affords us the ability to articular together, in one moment, at one time in a beautiful way our response to Jesus in worship. And when that happens we begin to realize the power of music. Because I will tell you Tim, people don't usually leave Sunday mornings singing the sermon.

Tim Moore: No.

Dr. Crider: But boy, they leave singing the songs.

Tim Moore: Yes, sir.

Dr. Crider: That's why music is so important because the truths of the Word of God, the truths of who Christ is and who we are, really are lifted into the congregation on the wings of music into the minds and the hearts of believers, for them to respond to Jesus.

Tim Moore: Amen.

Dr. Crider: That is a great thing.

Tim Moore: I think also, you mentioned something about the harmony that happens. And so, God, being triune, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit they are in perfect harmony. And so, when

our voices blend together and harmonize, and let's face it some of us are gifted, and some of us have to get a bucket to try to catch and carry a tune, but when we blend our voices together then I think we are capturing the very essence of where we should be in that relationship with God, which is focused on Him, worshipping Christ and doing it corporately.

You know the title that we have given to this episode is Then Sings my Soul, a phrase that acts as a bridge in the great hymn, "How Great Thou Art." And that hymn was made famous by George Beverly Shea who sang at every Billy Graham Crusade for many, many years. But the song itself, the hymn, actually came to America from Sweden by way of Germany and Russia. And the famous third verse, which I love, and we'll put on the screen was written by Stuart Hine, but it was transcribed quite frankly and literally from the heartfelt confessions of Ukrainian Christians as they praised the Lord. So, even this great hymn comes from a variety of backgrounds and sources, and it touches my heart every time I sing that great hymn.

Dr. Crider: Amen. Amen. That is an incredible story, and incredibly appropriate for today, isn't it?

Tim Moore: Yes, sir.

Dr. Crider: As we think about the Ukrainian believers. And another thing you just said, Tim that I think is so powerful when you talked about the idea of our triune God, there is a wonderful theologian and philosopher and musician, professional musician named Jeremy Begbie. And Jeremy Begbie, one of the things that he does is he uses, as he talks about the deep truths of theology, he'll use music to help explain theology. Music to help enlighten our understanding of theology. And even the idea of the Trinity, the art of music is perhaps one of the few places in the arts where you see the idea of the Trinity, that three notes can take the same space, retain their individuality, but join into a beautiful cord.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Dr. Crider: And you can't do that with colors because you combine yellow, and red and you get a different color, but in music it is different. There is something very powerful about music.

Tim Moore: I've never thought about the cord as a demonstration of the beauty and the wonder of God. That is a great illustration, Joe, I appreciate that. I will use that again. I don't know if I will remember to give you credit.

Dr. Crider: Give Jeremy Begbie credit.

Tim Moore: Okay, I'll give the Lord God credit.

Dr. Crider: There you go, that's good.

Tim Moore: Because the Holy Spirit probably laid it on his heart.

You know many Christians today, you mentioned styles of music and taste, but there is a reality that many Christians have expressed concern over preaching that is shallow, too often, and avoids the full counsel of God. That is something we talk about. We talk from Genesis from Revelation it is all the Word of God. But similarly, too sometimes Christian worship has devolved to trite repetitive choruses devoid of real biblical truth. And so, there are hymn writers, you mentioned one who is still conveying deep truths in their songs, in their music, like Keith and Kristyn Getty, they have truly a gift. How can we ensure that our churches are not only raising a

joyful noise before the Lord, but they are teaching new generations of Christians the doctrine of the faith even as we exalt our soon-returning King?

Dr. Crider: Yeah, that is a great question, Tim, and it's a question that we are constantly putting in front of our students because of the absolute necessity. At the end of the day our times of worship are really, if you ask the question: What is at stake on Sunday mornings? And I think the answer to that question in a simplistic way is people's view of who God is. People's understanding of who Jesus is and people's understanding of who they are. And in a world that is mediated and saturated by social media and all of the other ways that people get views of God that are not accurate, we don't have time on Sunday mornings other than to be expressively biblical in what we do.

And we tell our worship students, we tell our majors who are going to be worship leaders, and worship pastors, their role is to facilitate a potentially life changing dialogue between the triune God of the universe and His redeemed. And as God reveals Himself to us, He reveals Himself most specifically through the Word of God. And therefore, as we sing, as we pray, as we even make transition statements between songs, what we are doing is forming and shaping people's ideas of who God is, and their ideas of how they view themselves. It is spiritual formation. And therefore, the text of our hymns absolutely must be clearly, and devotedly committed to the accuracy of the Word of God and to using the rubric of Scripture so that we are singing right doctrine and right theology.

And there are some wonderful new hymn writers. They are the Gettys, Matt Boswell, Matt Papa, City of Light, David Aubrey with Stored in my Heart Ministries, they are just wonderful groups now that are taking seriously, Shane and Shane, taking seriously the authority of the Word of God in their song writing.

Tim Moore: I absolutely agree, and amen. I'm grateful for folks like that who have been anointed with a gift of music. And you know there is something beautiful about music getting deep into our spirit, our soul. I think about Miss Ann Reagan, Dr. Reagan's wife who has since gone to be with the Lord, but she had a form of dementia, and yet when I would visit her with Dr. Reagan I could sing hymns and it would pull her back out because she had a deep recollection of how that music had impacted her. And hymns that reflect biblical truth and are set to anointed music have the ability, again, to pierce our heart and touch our spirits. Joe, what are some of your favorite songs that tend to do that?

Dr. Crider: You know I think that so many hymn writers, and especially Isaac Watts, basically, as we sometimes say, Christianized the Psalms in his hymns in the ways he brought Christ to the forefront in the Psalms. But we realize that even in the early days of the Reformation somebody like John Calvin had the entire Psalter set metrically to songs. And because he felt like the only thing that was worthy of God's praise in the congregation was the Word of God itself. So, for many, many, many years the Psalter is what was sung. And we are finding I think a resurgence in Psalm singing. And it is a powerful thing because we realize that what we are singing is wonderfully clear, it is wonderfully accurate. And not only the Psalms that are Psalms of praise, like Psalm 150, but even Psalms that are Psalms more of a lament.

There is a rather modern song that is based on Psalm 13. And if you look at Psalm 13 it has the question: How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face? And at the end of this, at the end of this psalm, "But I have trusted in Your faithful love; My heart will rejoice in Your deliverance. I will sing to the Lord because He has treated me generously."

Because the Psalms give us the language of our praise. They give us the vocabulary of our praise. They give us the grammar of our praise. And great song writers, great hymn writers are the ones that dive deeply into the Psalms because the Psalms are so much not only the fabric, but also in a wonderful way the resource for such great hymnody. And what a joy that must be to be able to sing the Psalms.

Tim Moore: Well, Psalm 13 fits so beautifully even with our ministries because one of our daily prayers is maranatha. So, one of the questions is: How long, O Lord? How long do we have to wait? And yet even as He carries the concluding verse or verses, "While I wait I will trust in You." And so, it really captures so much of what my own personal praise would be about. Joe, I've mentioned already, and you have, so many of the songs in the Psalms that were written by David, and Asaph, and Solomon, the sons of Korah and others.

Dr. Crider: And Moses.

Tim Moore: Yes, and Moses are purely worshipful, while others are as you said confessional. And scholars like yourself I know would categorize them into seven major types: lament, thanksgiving, enthronement, pilgrimage, royal, wisdom, and imprecatory those that seek justice by calling down God's judgment on His enemies. I wish I had the gift of writing music. I tried to write. I've done a little poetry. But I think it is a special gift. But within the sweep of human emotion, where do you see in the Psalms signposts that point to the Messiah, or even evidence of Jesus Himself within the Psalms?

Dr. Crider: You know that is a great question as well. And I think--I was having a conversation with Dr. Wills one day, the Dean of the School of Theology here. And he made a comment, he was being funny but he was saying that the Psalms are really a New Testament book. Now, we understand what he was meaning by that.

Tim Moore: Sure.

Dr. Crider: But Jesus, Jesus is throughout the entire Psalter. You know I just think of Psalm 22. "My God, my God why have you abandoned me? Why are You so far from my deliverance?" The words that Jesus used on the cross. Right?

Tim Moore: Amen.

Dr. Crider: And there are as we look at the Psalms through the lens of Christ, through the lens of who He is, I think the Psalter becomes alive. I think the Psalter has even more connection to our own lives. But here is the interesting thing, the early patristic fathers Athanasius and others, they wrote prolifically about the power of the Psalms. That there is not a human emotion, there is not a human activity, there is not anything in human life that we face or that we go through, that in some way is not articulated beautifully in the Psalms.

Tim Moore: Amen.

Dr. Crider: And I am hoping that more and more, our churches will allow the Word of God to penetrate and saturate their services by simply reading the Psalms and singing the Psalms, because they do connect with people in ways that we could never have orchestrated. That only the Spirit of God through His perfect Word does that.

Tim Moore: He certainly does. And I advocate not only praying the Psalms, singing the Psalms, but using them as a source of daily Bible study and devotion.

Dr. Crider: Amen.

Tim Moore: You know Joe during the Covid Pandemic, as some call it, over the last couple of years some very heavy handed governors and government officials sought to specially silence Christian congregations. But as our title suggests the very heart of a Christian is tuned to the Lord in a way that we cannot help but burst out in song. So, how really nefarious was that effort to try to undermine corporate Christian worship?

Dr. Crider: Yeah, you know it is interesting that you mentioned that. I have a Chinese student, a Th.M. student right now and her father worked specifically with the persecuted house church in China. And she is doing her Th.M. thesis utilizing the book of Hebrews as a guide for persecuted churches in China to sing through and worship through persecution.

Tim Moore: Wow.

Dr. Crider: And to gather through persecution. And the essential nature of the corporate gathering is vital to the life of the believer. And I can't think of anything that is more important for us to gather on the Lord's Day to recalibrate our minds and our hearts to what is really real, and that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And we do that intentionally. And that is why the Word is so important. And I'm so grateful that before the foundations of the world were laid that God knew in our rhythms of life every seven days we would need to gather. We would need to encourage one another. We would need to hear the Word. We would need to hear each other sing. Sing the truths of the Word.

Tim Moore: Yes, and I've heard people say, "Well, I can just study at home." And I tell them, "Really? How can you encourage others if you don't go and be a part?"

Dr. Crider: That's right.

Tim Moore: Someone needs the encouragement you would have to offer, and to lean on one another. Well, Joe what song do you think, or songs, I don't know, best captures the joy of anticipating Jesus' soon return.

Dr. Crider: Oh, boy. I have people ask me questions of that. "How Great Thou Art," I think is a powerful reality of that. I'm also impressed with newer hymn writers who are looking forward to that day of Christ's return as well. We sing a newer hymn, "Yet Not I But Christ in Me," and there is a looking forward to that day. "In Christ Alone" the great Getty hymn, there is a looking forward to that day. And I could go through several older hymns as well, because you see the progression of thought in those of the reality that, yes, He will return. And I'm grateful for the hymn writers that look forward. They realize Christ's presence in our lives now, they look at the past and see His faithfulness, but we also look forward to the future.

Tim Moore: Always looking forward.

Dr. Crider: That's right.

Tim Moore: I think of great hymns like, "Joy to the World" or the "Hallelujah Chorus," you know that harken to the First Advent, but really in both cases are pointing to the glorious Second Coming.

Dr. Crider: Absolutely.

Tim Moore: Well, Joe your heart of worship is one that has touched my life, my family's life, countless others, now students, so Dr. Joe Crider thank you for taking the time to sit down with us. I pray the Lord's blessing continues to flow, not just on you, but through you to lives that will impact the kingdom of God.

Dr. Crider: Thank you, Tim. And may the same be said for your ministry. I'm so grateful for you.

Tim Moore: Thank you, sir. Godspeed.

Part 2: How Then Shall We Live?

Tim Moore: David was called "a man after God's own heart." In spite of his shortcomings, he was tuned to worship the Lord, which is why Jesus said that the "mouth of a good man speaks from that which fills his heart." Lest the very rocks cry out, how better to express our praise than in joyful song?

Joe Crider has written a wonderful book called "Scripture-Guided Worship." It "calls for readers to think rightfully about God based on what He has revealed about Himself in His Word, the Bible." Since worship is the act and activity of responding to, praising, and glorifying God, it is vital that we worship in spirit and in truth.

With that in mind, I'd encourage you to utilize the Psalms as a means of prayerful worship. Dr. Donald Whitney offers this helpful suggestion in his book, "Praying The Bible," on each day of the month, consider the Psalm corresponding to that day. So, on the first of the month, go to Psalm 1. If that Psalm does not resonate at that moment, go to Psalm 31, or 61, or 91, or 121. I've done that for many months and can testify that one of the Psalms corresponding to a given day of the month always touches my heart, and offers me words to raise up in prayerful worship to the Lord.

If you know a tune, sing the Psalm. If you don't, allow the Holy-Spirit inspired words of David and the other Psalmists to usher your spirit into the courts of the Almighty.

This method of praying through the Bible will offer a new way for the Psalms to bless your heart and allow you to glorify God with words He first revealed in the hearts of men inspired to write the very Word of God.

Closing

Nathan Jones: Well, Tim, there is so much that could be said, and sung about the Psalms.

Tim Moore: You're absolutely right. But thankfully, God has raised up Christian men and women who have been able to put His Word to music. And others who have written beautiful hymns that reflect biblical truths.

Nathan Jones: Well, I love the idea of worshipping the Lord, in song and in prayer, by reciting His own Word back to Him.

Tim Moore: You know, on that note, can you imagine me writing 150 songs or poems about me and giving it to my wife as a gift, and saying, “Go ahead and recite these to me and it will bless your heart.” She’d think I was a complete narcissist. But because God is God, His 150 Psalms are an absolutely blessing to us because they allow us to rightfully express praise to Him.

Nathan Jones: We could spend a week on each of the Psalms, offering 150 episodes to unpack the significance of each one. Well, in our application segment, Tim implied that different Psalms resonate in our individual hearts differently. And we know that is true, and that at different times various Psalms express our own thoughts and emotions as we seek to worship the Lord.

Tim Moore: Several of the Psalms are particularly Messianic, as we mentioned in our introduction. With that in mind, we have a special offer today: a combination of both a DVD and a wonderful Insights publication focusing on Psalm 2. For a gift of \$15 or more, we’ll be glad to ship these powerful resources to you. You’ll be richly blessed as Dr. David Reagan explains the messianic significance of this prophetic Psalm. In the words of the last verse in Psalm 2, you’ll be inspired to “Do homage to the Son...for His wrath may soon be kindled” and come to understand “How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!”

Nathan Jones: We will return to the Psalms in future episodes of Christ in Prophecy, because there are so many gems to be mined in this rich book. We’d encourage you to select a key verse or two as you reflect on the Psalms that have been special to you. Ours for today is the last verse in the book, Psalm 150:6, “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!” Well, until next week, this is Nathan Jones.

Tim Moore: And Tim Moore, saying, “Look up, and be watchful, for our LORD who is worthy to be praised is drawing near!”

End of Program