

REFLECTION JUNE 1ST 2025

PSALM 97 & REVELATION 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

Our thoughts on Psalms and Revelation continue through our readings and reflection for this week and our focus on the Psalms and Revelation draws to a close this week. This week we hear through Revelation a proclamation that Jesus is coming back soon. This is ascension Sunday the day when we celebrate Jesus' ascension into the heavens which is accompanied by the promise of His return on a day which only God knows. Peter, Paul, John and the other disciples who gave us the New Testament lived with the belief that the return of Jesus would be soon and obviously that played a huge part influencing their writing about God, Jesus and Holy Spirit. Like them we also believe he will return – there's no walking back from this. This thought is reflected in Psalm 97 as a celebration of God's coming to earth. Albeit I don't think they envisaged it the same way. This leads us to ponder on just how we see God's involvement in earthly activities, back in David's era and now ours. We could also consider what God's reign of justice, peace and love looks like.

The apostle John's anticipation of Jesus' return, in our Revelation reading and the OT Psalm read on the same morning is an invitation for us to rediscover the close relationship between Jesus, his lineage, and the Psalms, while also considering the main theme being God's love is universal. With the possible exception of Luke, we have New Testament from the perspective of the Jewish tradition, which perceived the coming of Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecies tracing all the way back to people like David whose kingship was anointed by God and whose legacy shaped and informed their understanding of messianic hope. Jesus as Messiah.

In Revelation 22:16 John puts a particular emphasis on Jesus being the "root and descendant of David the bright morning star". In this verse we see Jesus as both divine and human.

From the Jewish perspective, David is represented as a model of what an ideal kingship would look like. Ideal in ways that bring unification of the various tribes of Israel rather than behaving in ways that bring division across the Israelite nation. He gave the people military victories, and he established centralised worship in Jerusalem he says 'the Spirit and the bride say *'Come'*, everyone whose hears say *'come'*, everyone who is thirsty *come*. Let anyone who wishes takes the water of life as a gift'.

Through identifying Jesus with David, in the New Testament we can Jesus embodying these same ideals, elevated and redefined. Jesus is more than a descendant of David, he is also the root, the one who brings joy and the light of life to those whose heart is right with God. From this we can confidently believe that the essence of Davidic kingship is found in Jesus. This duality captures our firmly held belief that the nature of Jesus is both divine and human, connecting the heavenly and earthly realms.

It's generally understood that David is the author of most of psalms which serves as a diversly rich source of worship, lament, and hope throughout the Jewish faith as well as our faith in Christ. They express a deep longing for justice, mercy, and God's intervention in our history. When we look at the Psalms in the light of Jesus, we can see the threads where Jesus fulfills the prophetic and poetic messages. As we see in our chosen Psalm 97 where it has captured God's sovereignty and righteousness, in the words, 'You Lord are

Most High over all the earth,' and 'you are superior to all other gods', they're clearly, identifying Jesus with the Psalm placing an emphasis on an expectation of God's reign, through Jesus in his miracles, teaching and ultimately his sacrificial death on the cross followed by his resurrection.

The intertwining of Jesus and the Psalms encourages us to see a continuity in God's plan for our redemption. Jesus himself often quoted the psalms, framing his mission and identity through the words and truths found in the psalms.

One example of this Psalm 22, where his words from the cross can be found in the psalm, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' linking Jesus' suffering to the cries of the psalms, where we can put them side by side linking his relationship to life, death and the struggles depicted throughout the ancient writings. Through these ancient songs and poems in the Psalms we are enabled to turn to them and find encouragement, and understanding amid our own challenges, as well as communal challenges.

The threads of justice, peace, and love which we receive from Jesus' teachings resonate strongly with the emotions that arise when we read through the Psalms. Jesus' ministry can be witnessed as a fulfillment of the longing for the Kingdom of God where broken hearts are healed, captives are liberated, and a place where hate has no place or space because love rules over all. This divine involvement of hope can be read all through Psalms. In this sense, understanding Jesus through the lens of David and the Psalms should encourage us to reflect on just how much God continues to engage with and in today's world.

The promise of the return of Jesus serves as compelling reminder of hope, encouraging all of us who believe in him to participate in bringing the peace and justice that Jesus calls from us to be a strong part of the present.

Revelations of the last days don't signify a particular event, instead they invite us to be continually engaging with God's purpose. From that we are compelled to question what it means to live in anticipation of Christ return. What does it look like to embody values of justice, love and peace, as written by David in the Psalms and exemplified by Christ? The expectation of Jesus' imminent return inspires action which we are familiar with already; encouraging communities of faith to advocate for righteousness, mirror the character of Jesus, and ultimately realise the vision of a world made beautiful through justice, love and peace.

The relationship between Jesus, his close relationship to the line of David, read in the Psalms, Matthew and Luke's gospels, creates a deep and colourful tapestry of faith, hope and divine intervention. Through understanding these connections, in our era we are enabled to deeply contemplate God's engagement in our lives and go forward accepting the overflowing cup of life-giving water and the grace of the Lord Jesus who is yet to come.

Amen