

Jesus, the Early Years

It would seem that we know very little about Jesus from His birth to the beginning of His ministry at age 30. Perhaps from the viewpoint of His purpose for entering the world that He Himself created, this may seem of little relevance. However, for those of us for whom He came, those who have accepted Him as our Lord and Savior, we cannot help but crave to know all there is to know about our Blessed Redeemer. Hebrew 10:7 quotes Isaiah 4:7 authenticating that the first volume of the Book, that is, the Old Testament, is written of Him. And indeed it is, if we read it through the eyeglasses that the Holy Spirit gives to those who are of the faith. However, without the benefit of the revelations provided by the New Testament, a clear recognition of this fact is difficult. That is why it is said that the New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, while the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed. The Old Testament contains many prophecies and allusions that are difficult or even impossible to understand, as they stand alone. The New Testament illuminates and brings to understanding all that seems to have been hidden, or left obscure in that first blessed Word of God. In the Old Testament there are many prophecies and promises that were not yet fulfilled at the time of the completion of that portion of God's Word. Therefore, for over 400 years, God seemed to have stopped speaking to His people, and provided no evidence that He would ever keep His promises or cause a fulfillment of His prophecies. The advent of Jesus was the fulfillment of over three hundred prophecies. However, for several reasons the vast majority of those who should have recognized this, did not. The Old Testament predicted, from the very beginning, of a Messiah, an Anointed one from God, the Son of God. He would be both a suffering servant and the King of Kings, who would rule the world from David's throne. Unfortunately the common belief was that there would be two individual Messiahs rather than One, who would come twice.

Because they had already been continuously under the yoke of foreign rulers for about seven hundred years, they seemed blinded to the coming first of the suffering servant Messiah, and could only look for and hope for the One who would remove this yoke and

conquer the world for them. Although Jesus met every prerequisite to identify Himself as the Messiah, including fulfillment of every relevant prophecy, His conduct during His 3 ½ year ministry showed them no evidence of having the kind of kingly nature that they expect of a conquering king. Therefore He was rejected by Hebrew officialdom. However, because of His great following, because of His sermons, His miracles, and healings, the leadership decided to kill Him before He so inspired the people that the wrath of Rome would crack down on them. In doing so they were unknowing agents of God's preordained plan for the suffering Servant and Savior.

Thus through Old Testament prophecies and covenants as they have been explained in the New Testament, we know a great deal about who Jesus was / is and why He came, and what His role is and will be to the end of this world. Do we find Him in the Old Testament as a living, breathing, functioning and influencing manifestation of an earthly presence prior to becoming the Son of Man? Yes, we do! Who walked with Enoch, and with Noah? Jesus did! Was He not with Abraham at his tent near Sodom? Did He not wrestle with Jacob at Jabbok? Was He not the warrior who fought the battle of Jericho, to name a few more of His "stage performances" here on earth in the flesh long before He became the Son of Man?

In Psalm 2 we find Him, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, looking down from heaven talking to each other about the final days and Jesus' end times' role. In Psalm 22, seven hundred years before they would take place, we are given the details of His intimate thoughts and observations He would experience on the cross. In Isaiah 52 and 53 we are given previews of other details of His earthly sufferings and exactly why He had to, that is chose to, allow Himself to be so treated.

From the New Testament we know much about His birth in Bethlehem, after which the family returned to Nazareth, then fled to Egypt, and later returned to dwell permanently in Nazareth. We next get the snapshot of Him at age 12 in the Temple, and finally Scripture is full of details of His 3 ½ year's ministry from age 30 until His death and

resurrection. The last we learn about Jesus is in the Book of Revelation where He “reveals” His post-resurrection Self, and the whole saga of His end times plan.

But again, what about those early years? If you are like me, you probably didn’t think too deeply about it. Knowing what was available from the Gospels, the vague picture I chose to settle on was that of a normal boy happily growing up helping His dad in the carpenter shop. I saw Him as certainly being different, that is being especially saintly and super intelligent, but also I saw Him as being loved by His parents, respected by their neighbors, and looked up to as the older brother by His siblings. This would have been seen by others as a very happy, pious, strongly religious and honorable pillar of the community, blessed with an outstanding first-born Son. Is that at all representative of your image of our Savior’s early years? If it is, get ready for a reality check, because if you stop to really think about it, with but a very little divine guidance, a much different picture will begin to emerge. A powerful clue from which one might develop some compelling questions regarding this idealized image of His early years can be found in John 8:41. Here the Pharisees reveal to us that they were certain that Jesus was “born of fornication.” Wouldn’t this “brand” have been public knowledge since His birth and had probably influenced the attitudes toward Him among the town folk where He grew up? Is there anything else in Scripture, which may shed some real light on those years? Yes, I believe there is, but it appears to be so concealed and obscure that it has, for the most part, remained unnoticed, or at least, not sufficiently examined until now. It is Psalm 69 where a considerable amount of light is shed on those early years. It was Dr. Chuck Missler, my original biblical mentor and a world class Bible teacher, from whom I learned of the inner meaning of this Psalm.

However, before we jump directly into the text, I believe it is necessary to step back for just a moment. Because of its esoteric nature, this Psalm deserves an introduction, a setting of the stage, in order that it be better understood and appreciated. Without this I believe that much of the substance, tone and impact of its message cannot be appreciated. So please stay with me as I try to briefly establish the background and circumstances under which it probably was Authored. This setting I’ll try to present is less a figment of

my imagination then it is of a loving emotion-filled attempt to put form and color to a duly recorded real life situation through which our Lord and Saviour suffered, and with which I can strongly identify as a part of my own “early years.”

Picture if you will this little village of Nazareth during the earliest part of the first century AD. Here was a typical all Jewish society steeped in well-established tradition, and a belief system strongly influenced by the Sanhedrin, the ruling religious authority of that day. According to them, that “aberration” that was rumored to have occurred two or three years earlier, had by then been completely discredited by these authorities who contrived a far more believable scenario than that rumored to have occurred in Bethlehem. The people were told that it was a myth, that there were no supernatural events. The star, the shepherds, the Magi, the virgin birth, all could be explained naturally. And especially this absurdity of a “virgin birth” which was merely a stupid effort to cover up the fact that this promiscuous girl had allowed herself to be seduced by a Roman soldier, and then claimed that “God did it.” To add even greater shame to this brazen, reprehensible act, it happened while she was betrothed to this saintly man, Joseph, who rather than having her stoned to death, as she should have been, and as was their law, he accepted her as his wife and even took in this illegitimate son of hers! Illegitimacy was a rare thing in that culture. Because she was already espoused to Joseph, this was considered adultery, and rarely was a child born of such a union, because the potential mother was stoned to death before such a birth could be possible. However, under the then current Roman law, the Jews did not have their former authority for capital punishment. Nevertheless, stoning to death was still widely practiced. Of course, we know that she was under God’s protection. But from a secular perspective, she may have been spared because of their respect for Joseph. Nevertheless, she was thus known as a despicable scarlet woman, and He was her equally despicable bastard son. No amount of repentance pious living or prayer could ever erase that fact from their eyes, nor bring about a softening of attitudes toward either of them.

After giving birth to Jesus in Bethlehem, the family returned to Nazareth but soon, because of Herod's decree, they fled to Egypt where they remained for some time, several months to a year or more, until Herod died. It is likely the local folks in Nazareth may have believed that they left in order to get away from the intense ridicule and hate that Mary and the little toddler, Jesus, were by then being subjected to. When they returned, however, the community hadn't had a change of heart. In their eyes, Mary was still a scarlet woman, and her Son was even more despised, being the illegitimate son of a Roman! Drunks made up dirty songs about Mary and her Son, and whenever they passed the gate, the elders, the leaders of the village who congregated there, made them the topic of their scathing remarks and sordid conversation. Having been merely ostracized by the community would have been a blessing compared to their daily menu of slanders, curses, jokes, and perhaps even an occasional stone being thrown at them.

But let us picture some of the other aspects of this Boy's life as He grew into adolescence, teens and manhood. All we know directly from the Gospels is found in Luke 2:46, 50 where we learn that by age 12 He was already a Bible Scholar and had a firm, accurate understanding of just who His real Father was. How He must have suffered from the taunts and threats and attacks by the neighborhood bullies. Here was the ideal kid to pick on! Well, almost anyway, remember He is the Son of God incarnate, and even then had qualities unlike any child who ever lived! When they mocked Him and cursed Him for His perceived faulty lineage and strangeness, when they spit on Him, even hit Him and tore His clothes, what could He do? He couldn't get angry or strike back, although He probably was strong enough. He couldn't swear or spit back. No such responses were in Him. His response was hurt, sorrow, pity, tears, and prayers for them so that the Father would forgive them because they didn't know what they were doing. When they hurt Him, He probably only asked why they did this without any cause. When they hit Him, He turned the other cheek. When they tore off His clothes, He offered them as gifts. Eventually this response may have generated some guilt so they may have backed off. But there was a never-ending supply of new bullies to keep up the attack. Although He never argued or fought back because of the attacks on Himself, in later years, when they blasphemed His real Father God, there would be scathing

outpourings of petitions to the Father to punish those who were so wicked. Could there ever have been any joy and happiness for this little boy? Certainly not out in the neighborhood where only bullying and hatred could be found. Throughout His life these cursed things were with Him. Perhaps in the very early years He already knew He was different. He knew there was something about Him, something in Him that caused Him to see and feel everything differently than anyone else. No doubt His mother and Joseph had told Him the truth, but He also knew that the perceived absurdity of the fact could not be uttered without causing an amplification of the already painful situation, especially for His mother.

And what about His family? By then, Jesus probably had several half brothers and sisters; we know of 6 at least. These, of course, were children of His mother and Joseph, not of His Father. What was family life like for Him? Scripture assures us that there is no doubt that Mary and Joseph knew who He really was. But who would believe them? They had long since given up telling the truth, because no one anywhere would believe them, not even their other children, not until His resurrection! Mary and Joseph who knew the truth were His only refuge. But even there, it was not all that it should have been, because to treat Him much differently would have been to show partiality and that would have made it worse for Him. The others would have seen it as favoritism toward the weirdo, and the one who wasn't even a whole brother! They must also have had reservations about Mary if they believed the "party line" which they probably did. Otherwise they would have believed in His deity. What about Him? Externally, He was most evidently quite different from every one else and growing more so every day. He prayed a great deal of the time, was a passionate student of the Bible, which at some point He must have realized He had written! He even wore sackcloth as an expression of humbleness before His Father to whom He prayed so often. He shed many, many tears as a result of His loneliness, His treatment by the world, and by His family, as well as because of what He early on perceived was to be His life and His fate. No doubt Mary and Joseph told Him in confidence quite early just who He was. But being who He was, most certainly His intimacy with the Father, while in prayer, told Him a great deal more about Himself and what He was on earth to accomplish. As He matured, some of His

prayers became precatory, as He felt even more indignant over the blasphemous conduct and the blatant lack of respect and reverence for the Father, His Father. By then it would seem He was fully and painfully aware of the whole picture and His involvement in it.

There is no doubt that our blessed Lord's entire life was one of pain and sorrow. Due to condemnation without cause, it was that way from His very beginning as a child. Before His incarnation, as He sat in heaven from eternity past, He knew even before He created the universe, exactly what He would suffer not only on the cross and during His ministry, but also throughout His entire life, even during these early years. But, nevertheless, He gladly chose to suffer all of this just for that precious few who would truly believe on Him. Doesn't this add in your heart an additional dimension of gratitude and understanding as to the quality and intensity of His love for us?

Now let us go to Psalm 69 and see if this preparatory picture I have tried to present is distorted, or is a reasonable likeness of our Lord's early years as the psalmist recorded them. As we read and examine each verse, we should remain aware that the order of verse does not necessarily progress chronologically with the thoughts or events as they may have taken place. We find this throughout many of the prophetic books such as in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Revelation. In this Psalm, I believe we see Jesus' thoughts as He looks forward and also as He at times looks back from different points in His early life. We will find some verses where He looks back to events past and also to events future, which at that moment have not yet been made clear to Him. Also in reading the first few verses it may seem difficult to accept the fact that the Psalm is speaking of Jesus' early years. But patience here is sure to reward the reader as subsequent verses begin to point most compellingly to that conclusion.

Psalm 69

Verses 1-3 *"Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God."*

The person speaking to His God is overwhelmed with sorrow and troubles. It's as if He is about to drown. He is in deep mire, like quicksand. It's not even possible to swim and He can't find a spot to stand on as He feels Himself sinking deeper and deeper. This is obviously an analogy describing a person who is suffering with great stress, resulting from some prolonged conditions from which relief seems impossible. The Author of these verses is a person who has cried so much and so long that His throat is very dry and His eyes so swollen that He can barely see. He is speaking to God, His God, pleading to be rescued, waiting with confidence that eventually God will rescue Him. This must be a young boy, because such tears would never come from a grown man, certainly to this degree, if at all, no matter how frightened or painful the circumstances.

Verse 4 *"They that hate Me without cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away."*

Verse four tells us that there is no valid reason why they hate Him so, and those who do are large in number, probably the whole town or region. Our dear Lord Jesus during His ministry quotes this verse in John 15:25, about Himself as it relates to His ministry! But as a child, why should this have been? We already know, based on our preparatory musing regarding His childhood. It is John 15:25 that tells us *"But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, they hated Me without a cause."* Psalm 69 is prophecy fulfilled, one thousand years later, but with a fulfillment of even more hate, and hate of a much longer duration, a hate that Jesus endured from His blessed birth to His atoning death on the cross. Let us wring a little more out of this. Romans 3:24 says *"being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"* What is justified freely? It's the same as justified without a cause, without any basis or merit. They hated Him without cause so that we could be justified without cause. His darkness gave us light, His suffering and death gives us peace and eternal life.

They would have killed Him if it had been possible under Roman law. They were enemies without cause. The last phrase of this verse suggests that perhaps they sometimes extracted something from Him, in some perverted way, considering it as payment for something that He didn't owe. This would certainly be consistent with advice He gave in His sermon on the mount (Luke 6:29) *"if they taketh away thy cloak forbid them not to take thy coats also."*

Verse 5 *"O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee."*

How could this possibly apply to Jesus? He was holy undefiled and sinless every moment of His life, right? Well, not quite. In the last hours of His life He had been made sin. He contained the summation of any and all sins ever committed or to be committed by every human being for which He died! This of course occurred only hours before He died. However, as He grew toward manhood, the Father was revealing more and more about the fullness of who He was, His purpose and His mission of taking on the sins of the entire world. Knowing that this was the state in which His earthly life would end, must have weighed increasingly more heavily on Him as the years following it having been revealed to Him. We know that the night before it happened He perspired blood, so horrible was the thought of it. The word "foolish" is a translation of the Hebrew word "evyit (ev-cel') that can also mean perverse. This is one of those sentence structures so common, especially in the Psalms, called "comparative or synonymous parallelism" where the same thing is said twice, each in a different way. Here foolishness or perversion is expressed as the equivalent of sin. Notice He calls them "my" sins. He had no sins of His own doing, but at the recording of these thoughts, He had conceptually accepted them as His, as He had to in order to deal with them as had been preordained.

Verse 6 and 7 *"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. Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face."*

Here is that “illegitimate” child and His sufferings from that image being revealed. In verse seven, He reminds the Father that He has borne all those years of reproach (rebuke, shame, disgrace Hebrew word “cherpah”) for the Father’s sake as the One ordained to so suffer. He realized the necessity of it, for how else could it be. The people would never believe the truth, it was too preposterous. Thus, He had to pay the physical consequences for their local carnal unbelief, just as He would later pay for the spiritual violations of God’s word for all the world. Jesus here is not blaming the Father, merely explaining why in verse six He asks the Father, again in synonymous parallelism, to let not those who put their trust in you be ashamed or stumble in their faith because of what they perceive of Him. In other words, He asks that no one lessen their faith in the Father because of the perceived problems of the son. Notice that in the King James Version, first God is God of hosts, that’s the military powerful aspect of God, then it’s the God of Israel, the creator God. What else could this be alluding to, but that vicious, unwarranted ostracism He and His mother suffered throughout His early years?

Verse 8 *“I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children.”*

The theme that He was hated without cause as articulated in verse four is again pointedly expressed here. Notice it’s *“my mother’s children.”* Who else but a person in such a genealogical condition as was Jesus would express His family status this way? This is carefully worded to express the fact that they were not His Father’s children nor was their father His father. Again, it is synonymous parallelism with the essence of the second part of the eighth verse the same as the first part of the verse, but with a little added punch. Alien is a little stronger and distancing than stranger, and mother’s children also adds distance not sensed in “brethren.” This was not a happy household for Him. This Boy had at least four half brothers and two half sisters. They knew who their father was. But Jesus was not one of them in this respect, and they knew it. Regardless of Mary’s and Joseph’s attempts to dissuade them, it is likely that the “street” knowledge of Jesus’ origin, along with His strange demeanor and ways, caused them to treat Him as an alien. This God-is-My-Father thing that their parents may have originally mentioned was way

too difficult to swallow, given the “vast” majority of contrary belief so deeply imbedded in, and professed by, the world around them. That stigma, along with His “strangeness,” followed Him all of His precious life. Clearly He was an outcast wherever He went, even within His family. How greatly this must have hurt Him is vividly expressed one way or another between the lines in every verse of this Psalm.

Verse 9 *“For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”*

The zeal of thine house. That would be the zealous priests and Pharisees functioning in apostasy and with reproach against God. (Reproach: disgrace, rebuke, shame, blaspheme, rail, uplaid, defame). This hurt Him deeply. How could they possibly blaspheme and rail against His Father, the Almighty God, their Creator from whom good things come. He took this very personally, knowing by then that He and the Father were one, although not necessarily yet knowing the fullness of His integral relationship within the Godhead. The blaspheming of the Father by this point in His life hurt Him very deeply, adding another unbearable layer of anguish to His troubled soul. Just how strongly He felt about the world’s attitude about His Fathers will become clear in subsequent verses. Look at John 2:17 where it tells us *“and His disciples remembered that it was written, the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”* They remembered Jesus’ words as He spoke them during His ministry, and knew well from where He had quoted, for this was among singing Psalms, a hymn which they well recognized, for they had probably sung it many times. Now the Apostles saw that it had been a specific prediction of one of His great burdens He carried throughout His life. The strength of that zeal did not begin with His ministry, but had been instituted by the “official” verdict that publically established His so-called tarnished parenthood at the very beginning of His life.

Verse 10, 11 *“When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.”*

Weeping was not an acceptable male characteristic. But Jesus' sensitivities, because of who He was, were no doubt set at a very young age. There is no reason to believe under the circumstances, that weeping wasn't a big part of His life as verse 3 also tells us. He fasted and put on sackcloth, these being expressions of devotion, humbleness and submission, as part of His prayerful honoring of His Father God. These were pretty weird goings on for a young kid, or anyone at any age, who was not a temple priest. It is difficult to imagine His siblings not poking fun at Him, accusing Him of play acting, ridiculing, and reproaching Him at almost every opportunity. Is there any doubt that this ridicule continued one way or another over the whole 30 years before He began His ministry? How especially cruel and hurtful this mocking and zinging must have been to this highly sensitive misunderstood boy as He grew to Manhood. There was not even the slightest bit of spite, anger, hate, or any other possible imperfection or sin in Him. There was only pain and sadness as He here expressed it. What explanation could He use? "I am the son of God." Hardly! What defense of Himself could He use? As the ultimate of righteousness, purity and sinlessness, He had none of our earthly, naturally human defenses and offenses that any of us would surely have used to protect ourselves. "Chastened" is not in the original text, but seems an appropriate fill-in to make the thought into a sentence. It means to punish, make right, to correct; to justify, judge, reason, rebuke, prove, etc. He became a proverb to them. A proverb is an enigmatic or fictitious expression. He must have frequently dressed in sackcloth, which empathized His weirdness to both His siblings and the public. They made sport, or made fun of Him, or He became a by-word, as the NIV and NLV and NASV respectively have translated the word "proverb." Sackcloth, a harsh uncomfortable material, was used as a garment primarily by the priests during times of extreme bereavement. It symbolized humbleness, grief and total submission to God. What a weird Kid He was, going around in such ridiculous attire. This must have only further infuriated all who were around Him, except Mary and Joseph, who probably tried to tone Him down to "go along in order to get along." Clearly this was never Jesus' way, neither as a Child or ever after.

Verse 12 *They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.*

They that sat at the gate were the leaders, the mayor and city council of that day. The gate was “City Hall” of those days. Picture Jesus, this obviously strange as well as “evilly mongrelized” Kid, walking in and out of the city gate on errands for Joseph or Mary, and sometimes with Mary. These people would never miss an opportunity to mock, ridicule, swear or otherwise verbally degrade Him. Even the gatherings of drunks would join in on this sport, making up dirty songs about Him and probably also His mother. Who would dispute them? He was fair game for everyone. The base nature of much of humanity seems to need some kind of “whipping boys” and our dear Jesus was perfect for that role. If you are old enough, as I am, and lived in a very small rural town as I did, you may remember such attitudes, as I do. Where I moved to and grew up, you were not accepted socially, or any other way, but were automatically disliked and viewed with suspicion unless your family had lived there at least three generations. If you were Italian, Jewish, or spoke with an accent, you remained a total outcast. If you made any waves, or economically competed with a “towney” you might come home one night and find a pile of ashes where your home had been. For a person of color, it was best to never pass through, let alone consider staying. If I can remember such an environment such a short time ago, think of what our dear Jesus must have suffered, in a far more bigoted society, due to His great uniqueness. We probably have only a small hint of this recorded here.

Why did He have to endure all of this regarding His alleged illegitimacy? So that You and I could be made legitimate sons and daughters of His Father. Our Savior began this payment for our sins, even as a Child!

Verse 13 *“But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.”*

Paul quotes this verse in 2Corinthians 6:2. The Gospels tell us that He prayed much, but seldom tell us what He prayed. Here is what He prayed, as the Psalmist continues. How

nicely this all fits together! The word salvation comes from the Hebrew “yasha” which can also be translated as “deliverance,” “liberty” or “safety.” One of these choices may have been more appropriate here in as much as what we see as salvation is something our Lord and Savior provided, but surely didn’t need. Carnal safety or liberty from the bondage of the environment are perhaps more appropriate expressions of what He was dealing with.

Verse 14 and 15 “Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.”

This echoes the opening phrases of this Psalm, but also amplifies the dark shadow being cast by the analogy. Here we see Jesus, perhaps as He begins to understand the role He must play, and the horrible conditions He is to face. He is first praying deliverance from the mire and to not sink or be overwhelmed by it. The mire here is the painful filth of those who hate Him, for they have no cause. This circumstance then expands to “deep waters,” and is immediately followed by the image of being “swallowed up” within these deep waters. Here we have a thought preview of what Jesus articulated in Matthew 12:40 when Jesus gives His detractors the “sign of Jonah.” From this verse, here in Psalm 69, we may be seeing the early part of Jesus’ understanding of what was coming. First it is likened to Jonah’s predicament in the depths of the sea. Then He sees this profound extension of the being-swallowed-up image transferred to the “pit.” He prays that His Father God will not let the pit close its mouth on Him. That this appears to be the early part of the Father’s revelation to Him of His divine destiny seems to be evidenced by the fact that he doesn’t quite yet have the whole picture, or else He would not have had the concern that the pit would close up around Him and prevent His return. Could this be a “premonition” of that day when He would descend in to the deep, the belly of the earth, to shoel? Could He, as a youth, already have had a foreboding sense of that coming event, but not yet having a complete understanding of the purpose or outcome, and, therefore, felt a vulnerability and need to petition His Father for assurance of rescue?

He most likely had already read the story of Jonah and realized that somehow Jonah was a proto-type for what He was to face. Jonah 2:1-6 tells us that Jonah actually died physically, and that his soul descended to Shoel before he was resurrected and cast out on the beach. This young Boy Jesus was being given the knowledge that His would be a similar journey, but He hadn't yet the fullness of the revelation that would have assured His rescue and divine eternal future.

Verse 16 through 19 *“Hear me O Lord; for thy loving-kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitudes of thy tender mercies. And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies. Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor: mine adversaries are all before thee.”*

Here we may be receiving some insight as to His thoughts as His awareness grew of what was coming. In verse 19 His adversaries are all around Him. Was it simply the hating neighborhood, or could it have been also the “bulls of Bushan” even at this early age? We know that the demons knew Him, from Mark 5:6-17 and they feared Him when He was a grown Man/God with powers over them. But we see in Psalm 22 when He is seemingly powerless and dying on the cross, they become brave and *“they gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.”* Might they have also have recognized Him when He was but a child? Could these hating, evil demon-spirits have been threatening Him even then, when He was equally helpless against them? We read of a great deal of pain and suffering and fears throughout these early verses of this Psalm. It was perhaps something more than man alone could cause.

In verse 16 He prays to the Father for His loving kindness and tender mercies. He prays that the Father not turn His face, that is, not fail to see all He is suffering. In verse 18 he asks that His soul be “redeemed” and delivered from His enemies. The word “redeemed” as used here is the Hebrew word “gaal” which can also mean “revenge” as well as “redeem,” “purchase,” “ransomed,” etc. The more common word in Hebrew which is translated as redeemed is “padah” which is limited to “ransom,” “redeem” or “deliver,”

with no connotations as to vengeance. Therefore, could this petition to the Father be more on the idea of avenging, along with redeeming? The word “deliver” in verse 18 is the same Hebrew word used here also as “redeem.” However, in verse 14 where He asks to be delivered from the mire, the Hebrew word for “delivered” is “natsal” which means firstly, to be “snatched away.” How I wish that I could read and think in Hebrew and Greek so that I could more fully savor and apprehend the full, complete meaning of every nuance of God’s Holy Word, and not miss even a “jot or tittle” of His glorious message! Verse 19 also seems to confirm the existence of the illegitimacy label with which He had been branded and carried throughout His life. He reminds His Father that He knows of His “reproach and shame and dishonor.” What else could it be? This sinless perfect Boy could not have had a speck of reproach, shame or dishonor anywhere in Him. These were perceived imperfections in the minds of those who bought the lie. This petition is surely that of the younger Jesus rather than during His ministry years, when He certainly had at least the recognized stature of a great teacher and healer.

Verse 20 and 21 *“Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”*

Again the same theme. The reproach has broken His heart; He is full of heaviness. This continuing life of humiliation, shame, disgrace and rebuke is wearing on this very young Man because it never ends but continues day after day with every encounter with every person, except Mary and Joseph. (Reproach is the translation of the Hebrew word “cherpah” which can mean “shame,” “disgrace,” “rebuke,” etc.) He seeks pity, but there is none. Perhaps not even His mother had the pity He sought because she knew that this was but a tiny “blip” in His glorious eternity, and that He was foreordained to suffer as the Savior she knew Him to be. Perhaps at this stage of His young physical life, this did not yet have the great significance that it would have later.

What could it mean, gall to eat and vinegar to drink? This seems to echo of the only other place where we read of this in Scripture, that is, in Matthew 27:34 when Jesus is on the cross and it says, “*they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall, and when he tasted thereof He would not drink.*” Is Jesus now able to look into the future and recognize this to be something He will experience at the end, or did this also occur somehow as part of the abuse He suffered at the hands of His neighbors, or even His siblings? It may be of interest to note that “gall” translated from the Hebrew is “poison,” “hemlock,” “venom.” It kills. When translated from the Greek as in Matthew 27:34, the word can also mean an “anodyne” that is, a pain reliever. But here as He speaks of it from the Hebrew, it surely was poison. Were there two such events, or only the one on the cross? Probably this is a recording of a vision regarding His future.

Verses 22 – 25 *“Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.”*

These verses are imprecatory as are many of David’s Psalms. Here Jesus is asking the Father to punish, to pour out His indignation on those who torture Him. This appears to some extent to be the eruption of the pent up indignation He had felt as noted in verse nine. It is a response to His indignation having to do with how the world railed against both Him and His Father without cause. Missler recalls that C.S. Lewis called these verses “a refinement of malice.” Lewis, however, did not recognize that it was Jesus who was speaking through David. Paul, in Romans 11:9, 10 quoted these words of verse 22 as he condemned the Jews who would not hear, see and obey. Are we shocked that our gentle, humble, forgiving, loving Jesus would speak such words? Why should we be? This was a righteous wrath and condemnation against those who blasphemed His Father and condemned Him for the message that by now, He knew would be His mission to reveal. This message would include the acknowledgment of who He was. He was merely calling down the judgment that was just, and would one day be decreed just, as

He requested it. In verse 20 and 21 and beyond, Jesus may be foreseeing His hours on the cross, as He certainly did when He spoke from the cross in Psalm 22. Verse 25 curses them to empty desolate homes. This verse is quoted by Peter in Acts 1:20 as applying to Judas Iscariot. Here the words seem to have a broader context. However, because all of Scripture is the inerrant Word of God, we should accept the fact that if Peter applied this as he did, then here in Psalm 69 it is a prophetic announcement of this curse on Judas. These later verses in this Psalm suggest that at this time during His youth, He was beginning to get an even clearer picture of His coming ministry and final earthly fate. That He should have by then known of Judas and his foul deed, is more than likely, and that when He thought these words, Judas was among those He had in mind.

Verse 26 For they persecute him who thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou has wounded.”

From here on, it is clear that the Boy Jesus is seeing ahead to the end of His earthly life, and is addressing certain of those future events. In saying “they persecute him whom thou hast smitten,” Jesus is indicating that He is well aware of what had been prophesized of Him in Isaiah 53, where God the Father with a single stripe would inflict that ultimate complete and final punishment for the sins of the world. Notice that He speaks in the past tense, as if it had already happened. This could cause confusion in the context of this “early years” chronology of Jesus were it not for the fact that we see God often speaking in this manner. As One who sees the past, present and future from outside of time, these time categories have no relevance. All things were foreknown, and from the moment God thought them into being they were to Him all past tense. He sits on high simply watching as “time catches up,” as it will when Revelation 22 becomes the “here and now.” It’s all a done deal, according to His “timeless” time. These allusions to gall, vinegar, being smitten by God, the zeal of the Temple, etc. make it clear, to me at least, that Jesus is seeing with increasing clarity what was ahead for Him during, and at the end of His glorious ministry.

Notice that verse 26 is not another example of synonymous parallelism, but instead is called antithetic parallelism. In the first part of the verse, “they persecute him (Jesus) who thou hast smitten.” In the second half, “they talk to grief those whom thou has wounded.” In other words, they justified and amplified God’s action toward the innocent Jesus by adding their own persecution of Him, and they grieve (feel pain and sorrow) for those others whom God justly punished by wounding, (Killing, slaying, profaning) and who deserve such treatment.

Verse 27 and 28 *“Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.”*

Again young Jesus is seeing the future and what has already been ordained and recorded elsewhere, that God will punish the faithless, and they will not be named in the Book of Life. This indeed is a scathing charge and punishment for which the young Jesus is petitioning. He has seen and heard all that has gone on around Him, and by now also sees all of the future horrible iniquities of which mankind will be guilty. With His reference to the Book of the living, we can see that at this point our young Jesus knows much of what we might call “advanced eschatology.” This is the only place I find in the Bible where the “book of the living” is mentioned. We don’t see it again until Phillipians 4:3 where it is called the “book of life.” Then finally, the term appears seven times in Revelation. Bible scholars attach considerable significance to the first time a word or idea appears in the Bible. They call it the “principal of first mention,” and they seek to extract from it its underlying significance, believing that this will help to better explain its subsequent usage. Isn’t it appropriate that our blessed Lord Jesus would have first used it in His youthful lamentations?

Verse 29, 30 and 31 *But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*

The young Jesus is yet lamenting over His poor and sorrowful state, and is asking His Father for salvation and to be set up on high. Here the Hebrew word for salvation is a different one than translated as salvation in verse 13. There its definition expressed “liberty” and “safety.” Here the Hebrew word translated as salvation leans more toward “victory” and “deliverance.” This is consistent with the next part of this verse 29 where He asks God to set Him on high. Being “set on high” seems to be a fairly exclusive term for Jesus’ ultimate position at the right hand of the Father, the position “on high” which He temporarily left to fulfill His earthly mission. Here it almost seems that He is asking to skip what the next few years will bring, and be brought home now. Next Jesus is expressing what most pleases His and our Father God, namely praise and thanksgiving, rather than symbolic works such as animal sacrifice, provided by hollow hearted so-called worshipers.

Verse 32 and 33 *“The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God. For the Lord hearth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.*

Perhaps now, having come to full knowledge as to His earthly purpose, His thoughts move toward that purpose, and the emphasis He will place on humbleness along with the advantages of the poor who are most likely to see, and to seek God. It seems as though He may be already rehearsing, or perhaps planning out His Sermon on the Mount! Then He mentions as part of this collection of thoughts, that God does not hate the prisoners, that is, the in venerate sinners who are prisoners of their sins, but loves them and would want *“that all should come to repentance.”* (2Peter 3:9).

Verse 34 *“Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.”*

This continues Jesus’ expressions of love and praise for His Father where He calls on the heavens and the earth and the seas and all things to praise Him. This clearly is a vision He sees which will be realized in the very end times with the new heaven and earth.

Verse 35 and 36 *“For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.”*

It now seems with these last three verses that Jesus has fully matured into the Man /God who will now enter His ministry. Here He is seeing and predicting, as a sort of sneak preview of what He will later reveal to John from His seat in heaven, as described in the Book of Revelation. God saves the remnant Jews, “they that love His name” and His covenant promises to them will be fulfilled. For He will restore these cities when He returns to earth to sit on the throne of David as their sovereign King. How fitting that this Psalm, which depicts the early years of Jesus’ life, should end with this reference to the end times prophecy. This symbolized His having reached full maturity of body, mind and spirit, for only then would He have known all things such as this.

Perhaps as you have labored through this, you may have concluded that I have been too passionate, too repetitive, too verbose, and that I may have projected somewhat beyond what the Psalmist actually had intended. Too passionate? Perhaps, but this was a deeply moving and passionate involvement for me. I felt as if I could put myself where He was as a boy, could actually feel His pain and I shed my own tears along with Him. Too repetitive and too verbose? Probably. But I claim justification by the “rule of synonymous parallelism.” If the Psalmist can claim this right in order to better express His point, may I not also claim it in order to express my views on the Psalm? To me this Psalm is so very important and revealing, that in writing about it, I chose to forego any attempt toward conciseness or word efficiency. Too much projection? Perhaps, but as I projected myself completely into His home and His little town, I could actually see Him and feel the great suffering of this precious Boy. I could hear the wagging snake-like tongues yapping at Him; I could see and feel what I believe He felt as the bullies and His siblings ridiculed Him. I felt that I could understand His confusion, His fears, and the strange goings on within His soul and mind as the fullness of His precious being manifested itself. One may believe that I stretched the Psalmist’s words too far, but the fact is that this paper only scratches the surface of what was in my heart and mind as I

was there and walked with Him through town, ate dinner with His family, prayed with Him, and wished to God that I could have actually been there to be His one friend who understood and loved Him, and who would have fought off both the bullies and the “Bulls of Bashan,” offering my life for His, if I could have. Instead, He gave His life for me, for all believers, that we might spend eternity with Him. He did it all!! All He asks in return is that we believe on Him, and that we express out gratitude for all He did with the love, which can only come from a repentant heart, and with obedience to His Holy Word. This can only come through His strength working in a redeemed soul.