

addressed in the Psalms to God. The Pharisees thought that the application of this to Jesus was blasphemy. Jesus declared that the children spoke the truth (Luke 19:10).

Another example of an OT passage which is generally important and yet is applicable to the days of Christ is the use made of Ps 69:25 in Acts 1:20. In the OT the Psalmist speaks of his great troubles and especially of those who persecute him. Parts of the Psalms are imprecatory. The section praying for vengeance concludes with v2, "May they be blotted out of the book of the righteous." Among these imprecations is v25, "May their place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in their tents." Peter quotes this verse in Acts 1:20 and applies it to Judas, but to do so he has to change the reference from plural to singular: "May his place be deserted." Obviously the Psalmist was not directly predicting Judas and his activity, but he was speaking of wicked men like Judas who opposed the righteous sufferer. It is not so easy to say whether the one who suffers in Ps 69 is David or whether the Psalms speaks directly of Christ. Verse 5 speaks of his folly and "guilt" (NIV) -- אָשָׁם |'asham. Those who claim a direct Messianic reference say that this is imputed guilt, not sin creditable to the sufferer. And indeed he is hated "without reason" (v4). Verses 4, 9, and 21, as well as 25, are cited in the NT and applied to Christ. The change in tone from v29 to v30 is notable and is very like that in Ps 22:22. Psalm 69:32 is, in fact, quite like Ps 22:26. But Ps 69 does not envisage the prolonged, public, shameful suffering ending in death which characterizes Ps 22 and which makes Ps 22 inapplicable to David or any known OT martyr. Caution may suggest that Ps 69 is a general Psalm of suffering of which there are a number in the Psalms and which are very applicable to the sufferings of Christ and to the enemies who opposed him. It is from this background that David spoke in Ps 22 concerning the One who would suffer unto death and save us from our suffering. An alternative treatment of Ps 69 and 22 (and also Isa 53) would argue that these are Lament Psalms parallels -- Ps 10, 13, 31 and others. All these Psalms referred to Israel, according to this view, but were aptly applied to Christ in the NT. The question: Does the OT ever rise above the general and specifically speak of the One who suffers supremely? The case is similar with Psalms which mention the king of Israel as especially blessed by the Lord. Does the OT ever rise above praise to the king of Jerusalem and directly speak of the King of kings who will inaugurate a new and different kingdom? As argued above, we believe that the promises of a dynasty to King David included, and were understood by the prophets to include, promises which could only be applied to Christ. The same arguments can be applied to the problem of the Psalms of suffering. The deeper revelation to David, Isaiah and others was that God would send one who would solve the problem of suffering by bearing our sins and our sorrows himself. This deeper interpretation of the guilt offerings of Israel we believe is taught in the OT (Ps 22, Isa 53, etc.) and supported in the New. On the very clear prediction of Isa 53, see the treatment in another connection below.

At this point we should consider this question: If the NT uses the OT in these various ways, how can we tell which OT verses were truly prophetic and which were illustrations or applications? The answer does not seem to