

Learning to Love the Psalms (V)

Book One (Psalms 1–41) Confrontation and The King's Confidence in God's Care

Both Book One and Book Two refer to personal struggles of faith as well as to the corporate importance of God's king, His kingdom, and His great city.

- A pervasive concern of Book One is the various kinds of distress that can be experienced by the king and the people of God. The dominant cause of distress in Book One is the opposition of God's people by their enemies or the wicked (also, sin/sickness/death). More often, the enemies are the wicked in Israel who despise God and His covenant, His king, and His faithful people.

2 Timothy 3:12, John 15:18–20b, and Ephesians 6:12

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God "this world, with devils filled" that "threaten[s] to undo us."

- In the Psalms and in Christian experience, underneath all our distress is the haunting fear:

Has God forgotten and abandoned His own? (Pss. 10:1; 13:2; 22:1–2)

In response to the reality of our distress, Book One shows us how we can express our confidence in God.

First, confidence in God's _____ (Pss. 1:2; 12:6; 18:30; 19:7).

Second, confidence in the _____ that God _____ and _____ the prayers of His people.

*The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous
and his ears toward their cry* (Ps. 34:15)

(Pss. 4:3; 6:8–9; 32:5–6; 34:15) (See also, 5:3; 9:10; 10:17; 18:6; 21:2; 22:5, 24; 30:2; 31:22; 34:4, 6, 17)

Third, God's people grow in confidence as they _____ that He is now their refuge and protection (Pss. 9:9; 18:2; 27:5; 34:8).

Finally, these psalms contain the repeated _____ that God will destroy the wicked and give the righteous perfect blessedness (Pss. 31:19; 9:17–18; 4:7).

"Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you . . ." (Ps. 31:19)

- In the center of this book, we find a remarkable collection of psalms that seem peculiarly related to history of redemption in Christ.

| | |
|-----------|------------------|
| Psalm 20: | Advent of Christ |
| Psalm 21: | Triumphal entry |
| Psalm 22: | Crucifixion |
| Psalm 23: | Resurrection |
| Psalm 24: | Ascension |

They remind us in a special way that the Psalter points beyond David to Christ.

PSALM 1

WICKET GATE TO THE PSALTER

- “Stitched” together by contrasting positive and negative ideas:
– (v. 1), + (v.2), + (v.3), – (v.4), – (v.5a), + (v. 5b), + (v. 6a), – (v. 6b)

| <i>Verses</i> | <i>Subject</i> | <i>Characterization</i> | <i>Focus</i> | <i>Like</i> | <i>Fate</i> |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1:1–3 | | | | | |
| 1:4–6 | | | | | |

- “blessed”

The Hebrew word usually refers to the future and indicates a blessed destiny based on your relationship with God and his favor [the Beatitudes of Jesus in Matthew 5].

“Blessed is the one whom God reproves;
therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty.
For he wounds, but he binds up;
he shatters, but his hands heal.” (Job 5:17–18)

“happy” is inadequate and relatively trite. Perhaps “How rewarding” or “How favored” is closer.

- The way in 1:1 and 1:6 brackets Psalm 1 (an inclusion), and by this metaphor life is pictured as journey.

“Way” connotes the context, conduct, and consequences of a particular direction taken in life.

In 1:1, “does not stand in the way of sinners”

“does not interfere with sinners in their course of sin” ???

“does not . . . stand in the way that sinners take” (NIV) [does not “go the same way” as sinners]

- 1:1 reflects a sense of progression

- “the law of the LORD “(1:2) “Law” here is Torah, instruction for living.

“delight”

(Why?)

“meditate”

(How?)

“yield its fruit”

(So what?)

- “therefore “ in 1:5

Unlike Psalm 73, this psalm turns a blind eye to the present prosperity of the wicked; it looks only the end of the way, how it turns out. Perish!

The two ways (1:1-2) → The two ways pictured (1:3-4) → The two ends (1:5-6)

Psalm 2 is a psalm of the messianic King.

Along with Psalm 1, Psalm 2 completes the “gateway” to the Psalter.

- Significant verbal links between Psalm 1 and Psalm 2

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

- **Psalm 1 is about the law, and Psalm 2 is prophecy— law and prophecy, the twin “foci around which the whole of the Old Testament moves.”**

Psalm 1 law

the King’s

Psalm 2 prophecy

the King in his royal rule

- Psalm 1:3 makes unmistakable allusion to Joshua 1:8:

Joshua’s prosperity and success is _____, while that of the blessed man of Psalm 1:3 is _____.

In this way the “prosperous” man of Psalm 1:3 is parallel to the one in Psalm 2 who is enthroned and brings God’s kingdom to full realization.

“While Psalm 1 provides us with insight into the purpose of the book of Psalms, Psalm 2 provides us a window on the message of the whole”

the purpose

Instruction for blessedness and Instruction for

the message

Our God is King!

Our Destiny is

Our King is