

## **BEFORE YOU PRAY: THE PRE-PRAYER PSALMS**

Psalms 1-2

### **SOME OBSERVATIONS BEFORE OPENING TO PSALM ONE**

Christians tend to love the Psalms . . . but perhaps not all of them.

Psalm 23, *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...”*

Psalm 46 *“God is our refuge and strength...”*

Psalms 139 *“I have been fearfully and wonderfully made.”*

Imprecatory Psalms. Imprecatory means “to invoke a curse upon.”

Psalm 3:7 *“Arise, O Lord, save me, O God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked.”*

Psalm 69:23 *“May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.  
<sup>24</sup>Pour out your wrath on them; let your fierce anger overtake them.”*

Psalm 137:9 *“Happy is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.”*

### **WELCOME TO THE COUNTER-WORLD OF THE PSALMS**

*The Psalmists write as if they’ve become certain of something.*

### **PSALMS 1 AND 2: TWO PILLARS FORMING THE GATEWAY INTO PRAYER**

Pillar #1: Delighting In What God Has Done: The Torah-Teaching Of God

*“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; <sup>2</sup>but his delight is in the law (Torah) of the Lord, and on his law he meditates (hagah) day and night.*

*The word Torah comes from a verb, “yarah”, which means to throw something, like a javelin, so that it hits its mark. The aim of God’s Torah is to hit us where we live.*

Pillar #2: Placing Our Hope In The One To Come: The Messiah King

*“Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot (hagah) in vain? <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed.”*

*The Hebrew word that dominates the action in Psalms 1 and 2 is, “hagah”, which is translated as “meditate” in Psalm 1, but as “plot” in Psalm 2. Hagah means “an absorbed, engrossed interest”*

### **WE’RE TO ENTER INTO PRAYER WITH THANKSGIVING AND HOPE**

### Psalm 1 as Pillar #1: Delighting In What God Has Done: The Torah-Teaching Of God

*“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; <sup>2</sup>but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup>He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. <sup>4</sup>The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; <sup>6</sup>for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”*

### Psalm 2 as Pillar #2: Placing Our Hope In The One To Come: The Messiah King

*“Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup>“Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”*

*<sup>4</sup>He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. <sup>5</sup>Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, <sup>6</sup>“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”*

*<sup>7</sup>I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. <sup>8</sup>Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. <sup>9</sup>You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”*

*<sup>10</sup>Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. <sup>11</sup>Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup>Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”*

### Compare to Psalm 3:

*O LORD, how many are my foes!*

*Many are rising against me;*

*<sup>2</sup> many are saying of my soul,*

*“There is no salvation for him in God.” Selah*

*<sup>3</sup> But you, O LORD, are a shield about me,  
my glory, and the lifter of my head.*

*<sup>4</sup> I cried aloud to the LORD,  
and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah*

*<sup>5</sup> I lay down and slept;  
I woke again, for the LORD sustained me.*

*<sup>6</sup> I will not be afraid of many thousands of people  
who have set themselves against me all around.*

*<sup>7</sup> Arise, O LORD!*

*Save me, O my God!*

*For you strike all my enemies on the cheek;  
you break the teeth of the wicked.*

*<sup>8</sup> Salvation belongs to the LORD;  
your blessing be on your people! Selah*