

### *The Path to Life*

**Intro:** We begin a study in the Psalms to highlight the introductory sections to each of the 5 Books into which the collection of Psalms is organized. You may have noticed Roman numeral headings in your Bible at Psalms 1, 43, 73, 90 and 107. Though most of us have favorite go-to Psalms like 23, 46, and 100 to name a few, there are indications of the arrangement of the Psalms as something more than merely random Psalms. Our purpose for the next few weeks is to highlight the psalms introducing each of the 5 books, hopefully giving us a beginning sense of the flow of the whole.

As a quick overview, Book I leans toward the foundations of faith, and particularly from the perspectives and struggles of King David. Book II broadens the faith mission to the nations trending into more conflict. Book III reflects the lowest phase of the OT kingdom struggles, and Book IV begins moving upward toward the Grand Finale Hallelujahs of Book V.

I've titled this series *Psalms: Prayer & Praise* because the Psalter is the Bible's prayerbook and hymnbook. Each of the 150 Psalms draws us to the glory of God and Jesus who is King of Kings. Every psalm leads into prayer and praise, through divinely inspired poetry taking us into the presence of God. We begin with the introduction to Book I, Psalms 1 & 2. We will read these psalms and see what each has to offer to draw us to the Lord, and then we will end up with a comparison and contrast of them to show how they are in fact foundational to our faith.

#### **Psalm 1, A Torah Psalm: Law, teaching, practical, revealing character of God and His people.**

- Structure: three balanced sections: Contrast wicked and righteous, Illustration, Judgment of wicked & righteous.
- Blessed = happy, well-being, goal of life (1-2)
  - Negatively expressed: scorn, arrogance, cynicism, etc.
  - Positively expressed
    - Delight in the Word of God
    - Meditation in His law day and night.
- Illustrated (3-4)
  - Positive: Tree planted by streams of water bearing fruit in season, leaf not wither, prospering . . .
  - Negative: Chaff which wind drives away
- Judgment (5-6)
  - Wicked: Not stand in judgment, nor in assembly of righteous . . . perish. (Last word of this psalm)
  - Righteous: *For Yaweh knows the way of the righteous..*
    - Practical psalm, focus on man (generic, individual),
    - Justice and mercy expressed clearly yet somewhat indirectly, leading us to Psalm 2.

#### **Psalm 2, A Messianic Psalm: more directly proclaiming the sovereign mission of the Son of God.**

- Structure: linear, story progression, declaring and proclaiming, focus on divine perspective 4 sections:
- Rebellion (1-3)
  - Nations/peoples (corporate/social), especially kings and rulers:
  - Against LORD & His Anointed. *Tear their fetters apart...*
- Divine Response: Laughs and scoffs—not the least intimidated! (4-6)
  - Speak in anger, terrify them in His fury
  - *Installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.*
- The Mission of the Son to rule the nations as His inheritance/possession. (7-9)
  - Rule His divine mission.
  - Rule of iron, shattering opposition
- Warning & Offer of Mercy (10-12)
  - Offer to kings and judges (cmpr with vs. 2 kings and rulers), still includes peoples.
  - Worship with reverence, do homage to the Son, else perish!
  - *Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.*

#### **Conclusion:** Compare and Contrast

- Man's perspective & God's perspective; Individual & Peoples, nations, rulers; Personal & Social; Daily living & Eternal life; Blessing begins & blessing concludes.
- Application: Pray with these foundational psalms: confession, instruction, praise and thanksgiving.