

April 17

Scriptures: Read Psalms 1, 2 & 3

Key Verse: “Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.” (Psalm 2:12b)

Overview

Psalm 1 serves as an introduction to the whole book of Psalms, as it clearly expounds the book’s basic underlying message: happiness, blessedness, and life come to the righteous who walk in the ways of the Lord; sadness, destruction, and death come to the ungodly who do not know the Lord. This first psalm contrasts these two very different ways of life, leading to two opposite destinies. The book of Psalms begins with a beatitude, “blessed is the man”, and firstly describes the negative side — what the righteous man does not do. He does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, meaning he does not adopt their standards or principles of life. He does not stand in the path of sinners, meaning he does not practice their evil deeds. He does not sit in the seat of the scornful, meaning he does not fellowship with those who scorn God. The righteous man’s life, then, is one of total separation from that which is worldly and is a life of no compromise.

On the positive side, what the righteous man does do is continually delight in and meditate on the law of the Lord, that is the whole divinely revealed Word of God (1:2). To meditate on it is not only to read it but to ponder upon and discuss it. Pondering takes time, and it pleases God when we take time with Him and His Holy Word. It is like our daily food; we need it regularly to keep strong. As a result, the righteous man becomes like a tree that God has planted for the purpose of bearing fruit and blessing others. If a believer wants to have a more productive and consistent life, a life of bringing others into the kingdom of God (bearing fruit), his roots must be tapped into the Source of strength by meditating daily on God’s Word (cf. Jeremiah 17:8; Isaiah 58:11). The godly are firmly rooted, watched over, and cared for by God (He “knows the way of the righteous”), but the ungodly are blown away like chaff, having no part in the vindication of the righteous, and destruction awaits them (1:6).

Psalm 2 deals with the two different destinies of nations and ends with a beatitude (a blessing) for those who put their trust in the Lord. It is the first of the Messianic psalms, for although the immediate context was likely an actual historical uprising against the coronation of David or Solomon as Israel’s divinely anointed king, divine inspiration revealed that it is in essence about God’s Anointed Messiah Jesus. The words of this psalm affirm Christ’s deity (2:7) and foretell of the opposition to His Kingship, as well as foretelling of His triumph and millennial reign (cf. Acts 4:25-27).

The nations, in deliberate enmity, rise up against God’s Anointed (the Messiah), and conspire together to overthrow Him. It is futile and absolute foolishness to attempt to overthrow God’s plan and purpose, and God Himself laughs at man’s ridiculous folly and ignorance. Soon, however, His laughter turns to wrath, and He puts them in derision and distress. He proclaims that the Anointed One is His begotten Son whose kingdom will indeed be established. He will conquer, have universal reign, and bring justice to the whole earth (cf. Romans 1:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-13; Hebrews 1:2-3). God issues a warning to the rebellious nations, for it is not His desire that they perish (cf. Ezekiel 33:11), but unless they repent, “be wise”, “serve the

Lord with fear”, and “kiss the Son” (pay Him homage and give the respect and honour due Him, which includes obedience and submission), they will indeed come to national destruction (2:10-11). Righteousness, however, exalts a nation, and blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.

Psalms 3 illustrates well the peaceful trust one can have in the Lord, even in the face of adversity. It was this kind of trust that brought David through the very difficult and painful situation of his son Absalom rebelling against Him (2 Samuel 15:13-14, 30). The people had gossiped that David did not have the help of God (3:2), likely because of his sin with Bathsheba, but David had sincerely repented and God accepted his supplication (3:4). His faith and confidence could not be shaken, for God was his “shield” of protection, his “glory” to restore his dignity, and the “One who lifts up” his head to give him courage and strength (3:3). David was confident that the Lord had heard his prayer of faith. At this point in the psalm, we read the word “selah”, a musical notation which is likely a pause for the sake of meditation, possibly during a musical interlude.

God did indeed hear and intervene in this seemingly hopeless situation. David’s trust in God was based upon God’s faithfulness. He knew that God had chosen him as the anointed king and had promised him an eternal dynasty. His knowledge of God’s lovingkindness and mercy caused him to sleep in peace, even though his enemies were seeking his death. He awoke like a new man; God had sustained him, and he had no fear. With faith, David could speak as though the salvation of the Lord had already been accomplished, for he knew that God would bless his people.

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for Your Word which encourages our hearts as we meditate on it day and night. What a blessing it is to place our trust in You, as did David, Oh for grace to trust You more!