



**Planted by streams of water:
Part Three
Psalms 1 and 2**

Prayer in the Biblical Context

In the Ancient Near East the King was also the Priest who prayed at the deity's shrine on behalf of the people. The Temple is the king's sanctuary. In Hebrew, the word "hachal" is the word used for the King's palace and the Temple of the God.

We must keep Biblical Prayer in its ancient near Eastern context and not read back into the Scriptures our contemporary ideas. For example in our modern world prayer is formulated to "God" ad hoc by any individual at any moment and in anyplace of one's choosing. We would be benefitted by rethinking our thinking about prayer in order to conform our thinking to the Scriptures.

Even those who are not royalty pray kingly prayers at the King's sanctuary.

For example Hannah, who after the blessing of having her son Samuel, prayed a *kingly prayer* at the *deity's shrine*.

1 Samuel 2:1-10 (compare with Mary's prayer in Luke 1:46-55)

And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. ² "There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. ³ Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. ⁴ The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. ⁵ Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. ⁶ The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷ The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. ⁸ He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world. ⁹ "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. ¹⁰ The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed."

Psalms 1 and 2 as intro to the whole Book of Psalms
From individual to universal concerns

Psalm 1:1 “Blessed is the man who . . .”

Psalm 1:2 The individual and “The Law” (i.e. The Teaching to which we are bound. Here we have *devotion*.

“meditate”
Hebrew: *hagah*
Greek: *meletao*

Psalm 2:3 the nations casting off the “bonds and “cords” of the Lord and his anointed (i.e. the king). Here we have *rebellion*.

“plot”
Hebrew: *hagah*
Greek: *meletao*

Psalm 2:11b “Blessed are all who take refuge in him”

Psalm 1

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; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ 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. ⁴ The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶ for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 2

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his anointed, saying, ³ "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." ⁷ I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² 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.

“Yoke” and “cords” as God’s teaching

Jeremiah 5:4-6

⁴ Then I said, "These are only the poor; they have no sense; for they do not know the way of the LORD, the justice of their God. ⁵ I will go to the great and will speak to them, for they know the way of the LORD, the justice of their God." But they all alike had broken the **yoke**; they had burst the **bonds**. ⁶ Therefore a lion from the forest shall strike them down; a wolf from the desert shall devastate them. A leopard is watching their cities; everyone who goes out of them shall be torn in pieces, because their transgressions are many, their apostasies are great.

Matthew 11:29-30

²⁹ Take my **yoke** upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my **yoke** is easy, and my burden is light."

Psalm 1:1

“Blessed is the man who walks not”

“Blessed” in Hebrew *ashre*. Greek: *makarios*

This word is related to walking i.e. the manner of thinking, willing and living of life according to God’s will and wisdom. Consider the “Beatitudes” from the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:3-10

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Psalm 1

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Matthew 6:9-13

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.