

# Introduction to the Psalms Series, and Psalm 1

## Expository Lessons from the Psalms

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### I. A Few Words Regarding This New Series

- a. Most of our teaching on Sundays is expository, taking one book at a time.
- b. We try to balance New Testament with Old Testament.
  - i. We just finished **1 Peter** and **2 Peter**.
  - ii. Before that, we taught through **Exodus**.
  - iii. We haven't decided which book to tackle next (probably something from the Old Testament).
  - iv. In the meantime, I have been studying the book of **Psalms** in my personal study and have been learning a lot from that.
  - v. The idea of teaching through all of the psalms is overwhelming. If we covered one psalm per week, that would take us about three years! However, we thought it might be good to tackle a few psalms from time to time, in between other books.
    1. Not sure how many we will do at this time.
    2. We may take them all in order or may skip some.
    3. **Warning:** If I am able to live long enough to teach through all the psalms, I may be teaching the last one in my nineties from a nursing home!

### II. Introduction to the Psalms

- a. My earliest recollection of the **Psalms** was from my childhood; in public school there was a Bible in the front of the classroom. The teacher would sometimes read **Psalm 23** from the King James Version of the Bible at the beginning of the day.
  - i. That practice only lasted through the first few years of grammar school for me. The U.S. Supreme Court banned Bible reading and prayer in public schools in an 8-1 decision on June 17, 1963.
  - ii. Even today, most Americans my age or older know **Psalm 23** by memory, having heard it so many times in school, from childhood.
- b. In my late twenties, I became part of a church that strongly emphasized personal Bible reading.

- i. I noticed that some of the Christians in that church had Bibles with both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Some others carried thinner Bibles, which had only the New Testament. Still, others had Bibles with the New Testament *plus the Psalms*.
  1. I wondered: why New Testament plus (just) the **Psalms**, but none of the other Old Testament books?
    - a. Were the **Psalms** considered, for some reason, to be *more important* for Christians than any other part of the Old Testament?
    - b. Was it possible that this was the one part of the Old Testament that was *not superseded* by the New Testament?
  2. I found that many Christians focused on the **Psalms** for their personal *devotional* reading.
    - a. When I asked someone what they were reading in their personal time of Bible study, if they answered, "I am reading in the **Psalms**", I tended to assume that the person was having a tough time and was struggling in some personal way. Christians often turn to the **Psalms** for emotional comfort and security from God during a time of personal challenge or distress.
    - b. Many turn to the **Psalms** to find greater personal, emotional connection with God.
    - c. Many of the **Psalms** can provide great comfort when Christians are feeling overwhelmed.
      - i. For example, from **Psalm 23** where it says, "the Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want...even though I travel through the valley of the shadow of death".
      - ii. Or places like **Psalm 57** where it says, "hide in the shadow of your wings."
    - d. They can help us express praise and thanks to God.
      - i. For example, **Psalms 103-107**.
    - e. They can help us to appreciate God's mercy when we fall into sin.

- i. For example, in **Psalm 51**, after David sinned with Bathsheba: “Have mercy on me according to your great mercy...a broken and humbled heart you will not despise.”
- ii. For multiple reasons, I neglected serious study of the **Psalms** for much of the earlier part of my Christian life.
  1. I was reacting to how I saw people using them.
    - a. It seemed that this was the favorite part of Scripture to the more emotionally based, “feeler” types.
    - b. In contrast, I was more interested in understanding who God really is, what He wants from me, how the pieces fit together. Also, I wanted to become better equipped to persuade others to follow Christ.
  2. I tended to focus on studying parts of the Bible that most Christians were ignoring so that I could become better equipped to help the church in things that were lacking (the other 2/3 to 3/4 of the Bible).
- c. However, consider *how the apostle Peter used the **Psalms*** from our recent study through **1 and 2 Peter**; also consider what Peter preached in the first half of **Acts**.
  - i. After the resurrection of Jesus, Peter goes to two of the **Psalms** to understand what had just happened regarding one of the twelve apostles (Judas) killing himself and what they had to do next (appoint a successor).
    1. Read **Acts 1:15-22**.
    2. Peter quotes from **Psalm 69** (designated **Psalm 68** in the LXX) regarding the crucifixion of Jesus and the demise of Judas.
    3. He then quotes from **Psalm 109** (designated **Psalm 108** in the LXX) regarding the need to fill the void left by Judas by appointing another apostle.
  - ii. On the Day of Pentecost, once Peter has the attention of the Jews, he preaches that Jesus has been raised from the dead, in fulfillment of the prophecies.
    1. In **Acts 2:25-28**, he gives an extended quote from **Psalm 16** (designated **Psalm 15** in the LXX) regarding the Christ, that his

soul would not be left in Hades, nor would his body see decay.  
His body would be resurrected from the dead.

- iii. Then Peter explains how God had “sworn with an oath” to David that one of his descendants would be raised to sit on his throne.
  - 1. This refers to the prophecy of **2 Samuel 7**, also found in the parallel account in **1 Chronicles 17**. This prophecy, which the Spirit gave to David through Nathan, speaks of the great king who would descend from David, who would reign on his throne forever, and who would build the temple that would last forever.
  - 2. However, the statement Peter makes in **Acts 2** about the Lord “swearing an oath” regarding this promise comes from two of the **Psalms**.
    - a. **Psalm 89:3-4** (designated **Psalm 88:4** in the LXX) says, “I swore to David my servant, I shall prepare your seed forever, and I shall build your throne from generation to generation”.
    - b. **Psalm 89:35-36** (designated **Psalm 88:36** in the LXX) says, “Once for all I swore in my holy place, That I would not lie to David: His seed shall remain forever, And his throne as the sun before me.”
    - c. **Psalm 132:11** (designated **Psalm 131:11** in the LXX) again speaks of the Lord “swearing” to place one of the descendants of David on his throne, to reign forever.
- iv. Next, Peter explains that the promised son of David has now ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
  - 1. In **Acts 2:34-35**, Peter quotes from **Psalm 110:1** (designated **Psalm 109:1** in the LXX). There it speaks of David’s Lord (the Christ) sitting at the right hand of God.
- v. When Peter is threatened by the Jewish leaders, after healing the lame man in the temple courtyard, he again turns to the **Psalms**.
  - 1. Read **Acts 4:5-13**.
  - 2. Here Peter quotes from **Psalm 118** (designated **Psalm 117** in the LXX), and makes it personal, boldly applying it to the Jewish leaders: “the stone which *you builders* have rejected...”

3. Peter quotes from this passage again in his first letter, in **1 Peter 2:7**.
- vi. After being threatened, Peter and John gather with the other apostles and pray, quoting from the **Psalms** to strengthen their faith as they pray for boldness.
  1. Read **Acts 4:23-31**.
  2. Here Peter and the other apostles are quoting from **Psalm 2:1-2**, a prophecy about the leaders conspiring against the Christ.
- vii. In **1 Peter**, the apostle Peter quotes from the psalms twice. The longest Old Testament quote that he gives in this letter, and what I would consider the 'anchor quote' of the entire letter, supporting his main point, is from **Psalm 34** (designated **Psalm 33** in the LXX).
  1. The point Peter is making from this passage: God listens to the prayers of the righteous.
  2. Therefore, we need to be living righteous lives.
  3. This buttresses all of Peter's prior arguments about why we need to be living righteously in the midst of challenges and afflictions (slaves to masters, subjects to kings, wives to husbands, etc.)
  4. Husbands: God will not listen to you if you are treating your wives in a dishonoring way.
- viii. Summarizing from Peter's use of the **Psalms**:
  1. I count *nine different Psalms* he quotes from or refers to **Psalms 2, 15, 34, 69, 89, 109, 110, 118** (twice) and **132**.
  2. Consider how Peter uses the **Psalms**. He uses them for a wide range of practical purposes, including:
    - a. Figure out what to do in a challenging situation (in this case, the loss of one of the twelve apostles).
    - b. Find reassurance and courage in the face of opposition from leaders.
    - c. To directly confront hypocritical, corrupt religious leaders.
    - d. As evidence to convince unbelievers that Jesus rose from the dead.

- e. To explain how Jesus fulfilled an oath the Lord had sworn to David regarding the king who would reign over the eternal kingdom.
  - f. To reveal where Jesus is now: seated at the right hand of God.
  - g. To hold up Jesus as the great stone which is now the cornerstone upon which we are built.
  - h. To give an extremely practical lesson to all Christians regarding the importance of living righteous lives.
    - i. God will listen to us and hear our prayers *only if we are living righteous lives*. He will oppose us if we persist in doing evil.
3. **Question:** In how many cases did Peter use the **Psalms** the way most Christians do today (to gain a closer emotional connection with God)?
- a. He used the **Psalms** for evangelism.
    - i. This is what Jesus taught Peter.
    - ii. “Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the **Law of Moses** and the **Prophets** and the **Psalms** concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” (**Luke 24:44–45**, NKJV)
  - b. Also, for direction in terms of what to do next and to convict Christians of the importance of living righteous lives.
- ix. May this open our eyes to the wonderful power and variety of *practical applications* from the **Psalms**.
- 1. While they are wonderful resources to help us find comfort and to draw closer to God emotionally, there are so many additional ways that we can make use of the **Psalms**!
- d. Note that the **Psalms** were written as songs meant to be sung.
- i. Likely that made them much easier to remember.

- ii. The **Psalms** have been referred to as “the original songbook for the church” and have been used in that way in many churches over the centuries.
  - 1. Relying on the **Psalms** for the songs we sing certainly eliminates the problem of false doctrinal teaching that can creep into our minds through songs, especially through popular spiritual songs and hymns written over the past few hundred years!

### III. The First Psalm

- a. The first three verses of **Psalm 1** are carved into the grave marker stone of Chris Traganos, a member of our fellowship who died last year.
  - i. This **Psalm** was Chris’s favorite passage from the Scriptures and is one of mine as well.
  - ii. I found this simple gravestone for Chris, recently placed, to be much more meaningful and inspiring than any of the ornate markers and monuments at the more famous local Mount Auburn cemetery!
- b. Read **Psalm 1**.
- c. In this simple first **Psalm**, we find one of the most important lessons for Christians.
  - i. While the main points of the remainder of this lesson may be familiar to many who are listening, this could be life-changing for some.
  - ii. Here we will find graphic illustrations, mental pictures that we can remember for the rest of our lives.
- d. First point: Be careful in selecting your advisors!
  - i. If you go to the wrong person for advice or randomly seek advice from anyone you encounter, it could end very badly for you. Do not go to the ungodly for advice.
    - 1. Recall the words of Jesus: “ ...Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?” (**Luke 6:39**, NKJV)
  - ii. **Sirach 6:6** “Let those who live at peace with you be many, but *let your counselors be one in a thousand.*”
    - 1. Note that **Wisdom of Sirach**, by some called **Ecclesiasticus** (not to be confused with **Ecclesiastes**) was respected by the early Church, was in the original KJV, and is still found in Catholic and Orthodox Bibles.

2. Regardless of whether one considers **Wisdom of Sirach** (also called **Ecclesiasticus**) to be inspired Scripture or merely good counsel, this strikes me as an undeniably wise and useful statement.
  - a. This makes sense in every field, whether professional advice or spiritual things are involved.
- e. Second point: Those you spend time with will have an enormous influence on the person you become.
  - i. We are influenced by those we are around, whether we like it or not. Accept that, and modify your path accordingly.
    1. “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals.’” (1 **Corinthians 15:33**, ESV)
      - a. Do not fool yourself. The people you spend time with will influence you!
    2. “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.” (**Proverbs 13:20**, NKJV)
    3. I refer to this as ‘The Chicken Marbella Principle’.
      - a. My wife makes a chicken dish called ‘Chicken Marbella’.
      - b. It involves making a sauce that combines bitter and sweet ingredients (vinegar, capers, other spices), and marinating the chicken in that for a long time prior to baking it.
      - c. Over time, the flavor of the marinade seeps into the chicken, imparting an unusual flavor to meat that is otherwise relatively bland.
      - d. In the same way, I believe that those we spend time with are like the marinade for the chicken. Their influence will seep into us over time and change us as well!
        - i. Therefore, choose carefully the ‘marinade’ you are placing yourself in: those who are influencing you.
    4. **Question:** What are the influences that you have been basting yourself in?
      - a. The people you spend time with.



- b. The books and articles you read.
  - c. Things you watch on the internet, on TV, movies, etc.
  - d. **Challenge:** Take inventory, and be deliberate in evaluating the influences that you are allowing into your life. Be selective. Cut out the ungodly ones that will tend to corrupt you.
- f. Third point: Devotion to the Word of God - meditating on the Scriptures day and night.
  - i. This is much more than just reading the Bible for a few minutes in the morning. This also involves meditating on what you have read, throughout the day and night.
    - 1. If you marinate yourself in the Word of God and combine that with putting what you are reading into practice, it will transform your life. It will re-wire your mind.
    - 2. When I listen to a Bible preacher or teacher, I believe I can tell quickly whether the speaker has been meditating on the Word for a few decades; versus just being a talented public speaker.
  - ii. Consider the example of the apostle Peter regarding his devotion to the written Word of God.
    - 1. He was considered an “uneducated and untrained” man (**Acts 4:13**).
    - 2. He was a ‘blue-collar’ tradesman, a fisherman. He was not a scribe, a scholar, a priest, nor a Levite.
    - 3. However, Peter had a deep practical knowledge of the Scriptures.
      - a. I am amazed at how much I continue to learn from Peter after all these years.
      - b. He knew the Scriptures; it appeared to come out of every pore of him naturally, whenever he spoke or wrote.
    - 4. I find it easy to tell whether a preacher or teacher has been meditating on the Scriptures for years faithfully.
      - a. You don’t need to be a scholar nor go to seminary.
      - b. The fruit of devotion to the Scriptures includes:

- i. having natural, very practical applications;
  - ii. spiritual wisdom;
  - iii. understanding the overarching Biblical principles; and
  - iv. making connections between different passages of Scripture.
- 5. Peter, in his two short letters, discusses the importance of the Scriptures themselves, for us, at least three times.
  - a. He speaks of the prophecies that were inspired by the Holy Spirit. (**1 Peter 1**)
  - b. He reminds us that all man's glory is like the grass and flowers that wither and fall, but the Word of the Lord remains forever. He calls us to crave "the pure milk of the word" as a newborn baby craves its mother's milk. (**1 Peter 1 & 2**)
  - c. He admonishes all Christians to pay attention to the Scriptures, as *a light shining in a dark place*, as the church is threatened by false teachers. (**2 Peter 1**)

#### IV. More on Devotion to the Word of God

- a. The lesson of the manna in the Wilderness, from **Deuteronomy 8:3**.
  - i. "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."  
(**Deuteronomy 8:3**, NKJV)
  - ii. The people gathered manna six days per week, every morning, and ate it every day. The Lord required them to do this, for forty years, to teach the people an important lesson.
  - iii. The Scriptures, the written word of God, are the daily spiritual bread on our own spiritual journey through this Wilderness, our time of temptation/testing, as we travel on the way to our own 'Promised Land'.
- b. The lesson of the clean vs. unclean animals, from **Leviticus 11**.

- i. It is *much harder work* to meditate on the word of God day and night (to work on it to pull out the spiritual nourishment and wisdom) than to simply have a daily time of Bible reading.
  - 1. This is hard work.
  - 2. Most of us are lazy and would much rather have the truth delivered to us pre-digested, all sorted out, on a silver platter.
  - 3. After discerning the spiritual principles contained in the Word of God, we then have the wisdom to know how to apply these things in our own lives, practically.
    - a. Again, many Christians would rather have someone just tell them what to do!
- ii. In **Leviticus 11** the Lord told the Israelites that there were *two types* of animals.
  - 1. The Israelites were allowed to eat only the *clean animals* (which had split hooves and chewed the cud).
    - a. Animals that chew the cud, such as cows and sheep, are called *ruminants*.
    - b. After eating grass, they later spit it up (moving it from their stomach back into their mouth) so that they can chew it further. They do this all day, to extract more of the nutrients from the grass.
  - 2. The unclean animals, on the other hand, included pigs, which eat almost anything (even garbage) and do not ruminate.
- iii. Several early Christian writers pointed to this example of the clean animals from **Leviticus 11** as pointing to how the Lord wants us to live, to be 'clean'.
  - 1. Like the ruminants who feed only on grass (and do not eat garbage), we must feed on the pure Word of God.
  - 2. Like the ruminants who chew the cud, we must meditate on the Word of God day and night.
  - 3. Irenaeus also pointed out that while the Jews (like the Christians) meditated on the Word of God daily, they were like the single-hooved animals that chew the cud but do not have split hooves (like the camel). They are still unclean. In order to be sure-footed, like the sheep and goats, which are able to climb on rocky mountain terrain, they needed to have the

double-hooves. Irenaeus saw that as pointing to the importance of trusting in *both* the Father and the Son (not just the Father).

c. **Psalm 119** (designated **Psalm 118** in the LXX).

- i. This **Psalm** is focused on devotion to the word of God (the Scriptures).
- ii. Based on what is written, it appears that the author of this **Psalm** went through some very hard times in his own life!

1. The author says he was hated, persecuted and threatened.

- a. "This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life. *The proud have me in great derision*, Yet I do not turn aside from Your law." (**Psalm 119:50–51**, NKJV)
- b. "*The cords of the wicked have bound me*, But I have not forgotten Your law." (**Psalm 119:61**, NKJV)
- c. "*The proud have forged a lie against me*, But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart." (**Psalm 119:69**, NKJV)
- d. "*The proud have dug pits for me*, Which is not according to Your law. All Your commandments are faithful; *They persecute me wrongfully*; Help me!" (**Psalm 119:85–86**, NKJV)
- e. "*The wicked wait for me to destroy me*, But I will consider Your testimonies." (**Psalm 119:95**, NKJV)
- f. "*The wicked have laid a snare for me*, Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts." (**Psalm 119:110**, NKJV)

2. He had many enemies.

- a. "*Many are my persecutors and my enemies*, Yet I do not turn from Your testimonies." (**Psalm 119:157**, NKJV)

3. However, affliction (even within the church), can drive us closer to His word.

- a. "*It is good for me that I have been afflicted*, That I may learn Your statutes." (**Psalm 119:71**, NKJV)

- b. Times of affliction will refine us. Depending on how we respond, this can drive us either closer to the Lord or farther from Him!

## V. Early Christian Insights

- a. There are two paths. We have the ability (through free will) to choose which one we will take.
  - i. In **Psalm 1**, it says we have a choice between two paths.
    - 1. One path (which involves avoiding evil influences and meditating on the law of the Lord day and night) leads to blessings from God.
    - 2. In contrast, those who follow the other path, the way of wicked, will be like dust blown away by the wind. They will not last.
  - ii. This is similar to what Moses said in **Deuteronomy 30**, in his call to the Israelites to choose between the spiritual two paths before them.
    - 1. "See, I set before you today life and death, good and evil... I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you: I set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live and love the Lord your God, obey His voice and cling to Him..." (**Deuteronomy 30:15-20**, LXX, OSB)
  - iii. This also is similar to what Jesus said in **Matthew 7**, at the close of the Sermon on the Mount, regarding the two ways.
    - 1. "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (**Matthew 7:13-14**, NKJV)
- b. Early Christian writer Tertullian (from Carthage, in North Africa, writing c. 197 AD) saw in **Psalm 1** a very practical lesson for Christian living.
  - i. Some Christians in his day thought it was acceptable to participate in worldly entertainment of his day, the shows or spectacles that were full of violence and immorality. They tried to justify their position by claiming there was no *specific prohibition* in Scripture regarding those forms of entertainment.

- ii. However, Tertullian pointed back to **Psalm 1**, where it tells us not to “sit in the seat of plagues (*or scorners*)” (**Psalm 1:1**). Tertullian equated this with sitting and watching the performances at the theater and the shows. He wrote:
  - 1. “Fortified by this knowledge against heathen views, let us rather turn to the unworthy reasonings of our own people; for the faith of some, either too simple or too scrupulous, demands direct authority from Scripture for giving up the shows, and holds out that the matter is a doubtful one, because such abstinence is not clearly and in words imposed upon God’s servants.
  - 2. “Well, we never find it expressed with the same precision, ‘Thou shalt not enter circus or theatre, thou shalt not look on combat or show;’ as it is plainly laid down, ‘Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not worship an idol; thou shalt not commit adultery or fraud.’ But we find that that first word of David bears on this very sort of thing: ‘Blessed,’ he says, ‘is the man who has not gone into the assembly of the impious, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of scorners.’ (**Psalm 1:1**)
  - 3. “Though he seems to have predicted beforehand of that just man, that he took no part in the meetings and deliberations of the Jews, taking counsel about the slaying of our Lord, yet divine Scripture has ever far-reaching applications: after the immediate sense has been exhausted, in all directions it fortifies the practice of the religious life, so that here also you have an utterance which is not far from a plain interdicting of the shows. If he called those few Jews an assembly of the wicked, how much more will he so designate so vast a gathering of heathens! Are the heathens less impious, less sinners, less enemies of Christ, than the Jews were then?”
    - a. (Source: Tertullian, *The Shows, or De Spectaculis*, chapter 3; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 3, pp. 80–81)
- iii. **Challenge for Us:** What are the *modern equivalents* to the worldly entertainment that Tertullian was addressing in his day, which Christians today make excuses about participating in?
  - 1. All kinds of modern worldly entertainment come to mind: via worldly live concert performances, violent sports contests, television, worldly books and magazines, TV and especially many sites on the internet.

2. Are you effectively “sitting in the seat of plagues/mockers,” “walking in the counsel of the wicked” or “standing with sinners”?
  3. Take inventory of your life and how you spend your time, the worldly influences you are allowing to come into your heart and mind; and repent now!
- c. One more thing some early Christian writers saw in **Psalm 1**: a wood/water connection that foreshadowed things that were to come.
- i. Some early Christian writers saw that when “water” was mentioned in the Old Testament, it often foreshadowed Christian baptism.
    1. Examples include:
      - a. the water of Noah’s Flood (**1 Peter 3:19-21**);
      - b. the water of the Red Sea (**1 Corinthians 10:1-2**); and
      - c. the water of the Jordan River in which Naaman was told to immerse himself, in order to be healed of leprosy (**2 Kings 5**; see Tertullian in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 3, p. 356).
    - ii. Likewise, some early Christian writers saw that when “wood” is mentioned, it often foreshadowed the cross of Christ.
      1. Examples include:
        - a. The wood which Isaac carried to the place where he would be sacrificed and upon which he was placed (**Genesis 22**). See also
          - i. Irenaeus in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1 p. 467,
          - ii. Tertullian in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 3, pp. 170 & 336, and
          - iii. Melito of Sardis in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 8, pp. 759-760.
        - b. The staff which Moses held up all day long, in order to defeat the Amalekites, while being stationed between two men (**Exodus 17:8-16**). See also:
          - i. Justin Martyr in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 254, and

- ii. Tertullian in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 3, pp. 165–166.
- iii. When we see something extraordinary happening in the Old Testament where BOTH water and wood are involved.
  - 1. From *The Epistle of Barnabas*, written c. 70-100 AD:
    - a. “CHAPTER XI.—BAPTISM AND THE CROSS PREFIGURED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
    - b. “Let us further inquire whether the Lord took any care to foreshadow the water [of baptism] and the cross...
    - c. “And again He says in another prophet, ‘The man who does these things shall be like a tree planted by the courses of waters, which shall yield its fruit in due season; and his leaf shall not fade, and all that he does shall prosper. Not so are the ungodly, not so, but even as chaff, which the wind sweeps away from the face of the earth. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the counsel of the just; for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.’ (**Psalm 1:3-6**)
    - d. “Mark how He has described at once both the water and the cross. For these words imply, Blessed are they who, placing their trust in the cross, have gone down into the water; for, says He, they shall receive their reward in due time: then He declares, I will recompense them. But now He says, ‘Their leaves shall not fade.’ This means that every word which proceeds out of your mouth in faith and love shall tend to bring conversion and hope to many.’
    - e. “...Further, what says He? ‘And there was a river flowing on the right, and from it arose beautiful trees; and whosoever shall eat of them shall live for ever.’ (**Ezekiel 47:12**) This means that we indeed descend into the water full of sins and defilement, but come up, bearing fruit in our heart, having the fear [of God] and trust in Jesus in our spirit. ‘And whosoever shall eat of these shall live for ever.’ This means: Whosoever, He declares, shall hear you speaking, and believe, shall live for ever.”
      - i. (Source: *Epistle of Barnabas*, chapter 11; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 144)