

# The Morning Star

*Wycliffe College Community Newsletter*



## On Seeing Christ in the Psalms

*By Glen Taylor*

My family and I live in a Victorian house in downtown Toronto. One of the things that drew us to buy this old home was the entrance, which consists of two nicely sculpted wooden doors with stained glass panels that make up the upper half of each door.

The first door is attractive, but mostly utilitarian; it has aesthetic features, but mostly it just keeps out old man winter. The second door is especially lovely; people often comment on the bevelled glass and on the round, ruby-like glass buttons that form an inner frame to a cluster of diamond-and-square-shaped glass pieces. It provides visitors with the same favorable impression of the house that it provided my wife and me when we first saw it.

Over the past 25 years, Old Testament scholars have come to reflect on the beauty and significance of a similar set of double doors that leads to a haven of spiritual refreshment and solace within the Bible itself.

The spiritual home is the Book of Psalms and the two doors that elegantly lead into it are Psalms 1 and 2.

Simply put, Psalms 1 and 2, in addition to having their own particular roles, are also “The Introduction” to the Psalms by virtue of their placement at the beginning of the book.

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT WYCLIFFE?

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### **Important clues**

As with any other Introduction to a book, Psalms 1 and 2 provide important clues about how the Psalms as a whole are to be read, prayed, and also preached.

Psalm 1 concerns the value of meditating on God's "law." And to what does "the law" in Ps. 1:2 refer? The context of Psalm 1, including its placement at the beginning of the Psalms, provides a likely answer. The "law" refers to the five-book structure of the Book of Psalms as a whole (Psalms 1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150). These "Five Books" echo the five-book Torah (or law book) of Moses, the Pentateuch, suggesting that the Psalms are, like the Pentateuch, a sort of law-book upon which one can meditate for spiritual benefit.

Psalm 1 is thus like a sign hanging on the first entryway door. It says something like: "Ponder the things in this house to your joy and benefit; neglect them to your peril."

But Psalm 2 also opens a door (quite literally given our analogy) for reading the whole Book of Psalms as a book about God's Messiah.

We ought to think of entering the two front doors of the Psalter independently, as if entering one of two doors that stand side by side. On this understanding the double Introduction provides the reader with the option of reading the Psalms from the perspective of either Psalm 1 or Psalm 2. The person who enters through Psalm 1 is to faithfully meditate on the Book of Psalms for the purpose of growing into a deeply rooted and spiritually productive person who follows the way of life and avoids the path of evildoers. Alternatively, the one who enters through Psalm

2 is invited to read the Psalter as a book that deals with God's plan to exercise sovereignty over the entire world through his begotten Davidic son, the Messiah. In either case, the Christian reader stands to benefit immensely from meditating on the Psalms.

We ought also to think of entering these two doors as if they existed in relation to each other, as if one led to the other in a single narrow hallway such that one must first go through one door and then the next. From this perspective the reader cannot encounter one psalm without the other. To read the psalms for the purpose of personal spiritual growth (the way of Psalm 1) is thus to be told in the very next psalm that the Messiah's reign is the means by which God executes his plan to bring salvation or judgment. So too, to read the psalms as messianic (the way of Psalm 2), one must first "sign on" to the plan of personal growth and the avoidance of evil advocated by Psalm 1. Indeed, given the placement of Psalm 1 prior to Psalm 2, the Messiah cannot be the subject matter of the entire Psalter independently of the call of Psalm 1 for dedication to God's law.

### **How to Read the Psalter Messianically**

Most present-day Christians will agree: It is more difficult to read the Book of Psalms as a whole from a messianic perspective (the way of Psalm 2) than from a devotional perspective (the way of Psalm 1)...

*To read the rest of Professor Taylor's musing on Christ in the Psalms, visit our Wycliffe Blog online:*

[wycliffecollege.ca/blog](http://wycliffecollege.ca/blog)



## Upcoming Events

**Has Bethsaida-Julias Finally Been Found? — Feb 5** Do not miss the opportunity to hear about the latest archaeological discoveries that point to a different leading candidate for Bethsaida-Julias, the hometown of Jesus' disciples Philip, Andrew, and Peter! The presentation will be given by Steven Notley who has been a leading scholar of the excavation project at el-Araj. You may even have a chance to be part of the dig! Learn more: [www.wycliffecollege.ca/about/events/has-bethsaida-julias-finally-been-found](http://www.wycliffecollege.ca/about/events/has-bethsaida-julias-finally-been-found)

**UofT's Research Ethics Board Review Process Info Session — Feb 12 Tuesday** The DMin Program will be hosting a half-day information session on UofT's Research Ethics Board review process from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. This session is open to all DMin, conjoint PhD, ThD, ThM and conjoint MA students who are using human subjects in their research. TST faculty supervising students in these programs are also encouraged to attend. The session is free and will be held in the Toronto School of Theology building. Register for the session: <https://www.facebook.com/events/795839930808455/>

**Preaching Day — Feb 19** This year Dr. Joseph Mangina and the Rev. Dr. Annette Brownlee will be looking at the gospel of the beloved disciple, the book of John. Dr. Mangina is close to completing a new book on John's gospel while Dr. Brownlee's recently released book *Preaching Jesus Christ Today* provides a constructive approach for the busy preacher who seeks to be faithful to the text. Get tickets: [wycliffecollege.ca/preachingday](http://wycliffecollege.ca/preachingday)

## News & Announcements

### Job Opportunity at Wycliffe

**Hiring Program Assistant for Indigenous Leadership Week 2019** – Want to engage with Indigenous church leaders? The Program Assistant will coordinate pre-program details, then assist onsite during the program. Required: cross-cultural sensitivity; administrative competence; willingness to listen/learn; empathetic people skills; team orientation; creativity/flexibility toward planning. Starts 1 March. 240 hours; majority in May. Apply by 12 February to Rev. Julie Golding Page, Director of Indigenous Training Programs: [jgoldingpage@wycliffe.utoronto.ca](mailto:jgoldingpage@wycliffe.utoronto.ca).

### From the Registrar

**Tax Time** – we are coming up to tax time and if you have been issued a bursary from Wycliffe, a T4A tax form will be automatically mailed out to the mailing address listed on ROSI. Please make sure that the address listed on ROSI is your current Toronto mailing address! Conjoint students are able to download the form from ACORN.



## More News & Announcements

### This Wednesday

#### Wednesday Event: Kim Beard on Opportunities for International Internships

Thinking globally? Thinking mission? The Rev Canon Kim Beard, adjunct professor at Wycliffe College and Canon of both St. James Cathedral (Toronto) and Diocese of Tarime (Tanzania), coordinates International Internships for Wycliffe Students. He will be speaking on opportunities for International Summer Internships. Join us at the Principal's Lodge on Wednesday at 3 p.m.!

This event will be followed by Eucharist at 4:45 p.m. in the Chapel! Karen Isaacs will be our homilist.

And don't forget to sign up for the 6:00 p.m. community dinner at the front desk before 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday!

### Chapel Services

Morning Prayer  
Mon-Fri, 8:30 a.m.

Wine Before Breakfast  
Tue, 7:22 a.m.

Taize Evening Prayer  
Mon, 5:30 p.m.

Sung Evensong  
Tue, 5:30 p.m.

Community Eucharist  
Wed, 4:45 p.m.

Prayer & Praise  
Thu, 5:00 p.m.

Informal Evening Prayer  
Fri, 5:30 p.m.

### More From the Registrar

**A timely reminder to check your utoronto email regularly!**

According to the student handbooks:

*Students in Degree programs awarded by both Wycliffe and the U of T*

*The TST, the colleges, faculty members, and the libraries use the University of Toronto email system to communicate with students in conjoint degree programs about enrolment, course registration, academic and non-academic discipline, course requirements, fees, and progress in program, among other matters, and such communication may include essential time-sensitive information, or may require a timely response from the student.*

***A student who fails to monitor his or her UofT email account as recorded on ROSI for such correspondence incurs many risks which may include financial penalties, lost credits, and jeopardy to his or her program.***

*TST and college offices and faculty members are not required to open an email message from a student in a conjoint degree which is not sent from a University of Toronto account and are not required to reply to a student at a non-University email account.*

**Reading Week is Feb 18–22. There will be no classes during that week.**

## STAY CONNECTED!



### THE WORD @ WYCLIFFE

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[wycliffecollege.ca/wordatwycliffe](http://wycliffecollege.ca/wordatwycliffe)

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