

# “The Way”

## Psalm 1

The book of Psalms is divided into five separate books as they were historically assembled (most likely by Ezra the scribe). The reason for this is unknown, although many believe it was to emulate the five books of Moses (the Torah). The divisions are book one: 1-41; book two: 42-72; book three: 73-89; book four: 90-106; and book five: 107-150. They are not divided by authorship or chronology so, outside of some very speculative rendering, the simple answer for purpose of the divisions is that of methodical reading, coupled with the methodical reading of the Torah.

Each of the five books ends with a doxology of praise to God that gives a clear indication of the division. The fifth book lacks this doxology, but then the whole of the Psalm is that of praise so it wouldn't need to be added.

### Psalm 41:13

**13** Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

### Psalm 72:19

**19** And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

### Psalm 89:52

**52** Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

### Psalm 106:48

**48** Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

### Psalm 150:6

<sup>6</sup> Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD.  
Praise ye the LORD.

The first two Psalms are “usually considered to be a prologue to the Book of Psalms as a whole and not part of the collection that constitutes the first book of Psalms” (Alter).

The first Psalm serves, in a very short form, as an introduction to the entirety of the book of Psalms.

In this Psalm, we find two ways in which man may go on this earth – “the way of the righteous,” which leads to eternal life, and “the way of the ungodly,” which leads to an eternity without hope, without true life. Of these two ways, Jesus said this in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:13–14

**13** Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

**14** Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

This Psalm gives us the reason for going the right way, and the result of going the wrong way.

## **I. “THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS” – VS. 1-3**

The Hebrew word for “blessed” – אֲשֶׁר, אֲשֶׁר־י – always refers to people and is never used of God, showing that blessing comes from Him to mankind. It is always plural, showing that what we have been blessed with is simply more than a singular use of a word could describe. “May denote fullness and variety” (J-F-B).

The word means to be happy, to be in a state of bliss; to be prosperous (spiritually prosperous here). “Literally, ‘oh, the happiness’ – an exclamation of strong emotion, as if resulting

from reflecting on the subject" (J-F-B).

2 Chronicles 9:7 (Queen of Sheba speaking of Solomon)

<sup>7</sup> Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.

There are three areas of the life of the righteous (the Christian, if you would) mentioned here in which we are prosperous, in which we are happy, if we follow verse one (1).

### ***A. Prosperity in happiness – vs. 1***

This happiness comes from recognizing the three steps to backsliding and refraining from them (these same three steps are seen in the life of Lot in Genesis 19, and in 1 John 2:16):

1. "Walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" – this means that a Christian will not be at ease in the presence of, nor consider the advice of, the ungodly – a man void of peace in his soul. He will not, in any way, walk with the ungodly.

This is not to say we are not to converse with, or be friendly to them in hopes of reaching them with the gospel, but we need to be very cautious how close we get to them in that endeavor.

2. "Nor standeth in the way of sinners"
  - a) The words "ungodly," "sinners," and "scornful" are progressive stages of the lost. "Ungodly" (עֲשֵׂר) is the least offensive of the words, meaning one who is in the early stages of sin. "Sinners" (חַטָּאִים) is a

word which means one has established a habit of sin, and "scornful" (לִיָּצֵן) is one who knows what he is doing is wrong and yet continues in doing it and **takes pleasure in the fact that it is wrong.**

This is not speaking of believers but rather the unbelievers. We are all sinners – this is speaking of those who are unregenerate and take pleasure in that fact.

#### Romans 1:32

<sup>32</sup> Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

- b) The godly man will not "stand around," habitually, in the way, or environment, of the morally and ethically lawless one. The reason we don't want to be seen for too long with the sinners is we don't want to be thought of as one of them. The old adage, "You are the company you keep" applies here.

#### Romans 12:2

<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

3. "Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" – the saved man will not be seen habitually sitting in or keeping company with those that deride God, holy things, and holy people. There is no way a true child of God could do that and be at peace. If they do, they will be miserable.

#### Jeremiah 15:17

<sup>17</sup> I sat not in the assembly of the mockers,  
nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand:  
for thou hast filled me with indignation.

4. "Blessed is he who does not walk in the state of mind which the ungodly cherish, much less that he should associate with the vicious life of sinners, or even delight in the company of those who scoff at religion." (K&D Commentary)

## ***B. Prosperity in spiritualness – vs. 2***

The righteous man's spiritualness is related to how far from the world he stays. If Christians follow verse one (1) then we will have more of a desire to follow verse two (2), and we will be prosperous in our spirituality. This prosperity is seen in our relation to the Word of God:

1. Delight in it – this word (שָׂדָה) means we take pleasure in the law alone, regardless of what its outcomes or benefits may be. Simply put, the very Word of God is a pleasure to us.

Psalm 40:8

<sup>8</sup> I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Psalm 112:1

<sup>1</sup> Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

1 John 5:3

<sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Meditate on it day and night – The word for “meditate” – הָגָה – means, in its use here, “to speak with oneself, murmuring in a low voice, as is often done by those who are musing” (GHCLOT).

"Meditating on the Word of God is a parallel to digesting food that has been eaten. As digestion of the food feeds the body with gradual nourishing, so meditation on the Word of God nourishes, refreshes, and empowers the soul of man, to a fruitful life" (The Baptist Commentary, Psalms).

#### Joshua 1:8

<sup>8</sup> This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

#### 1 Timothy 4:15

<sup>15</sup> Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

Some years ago, respected Christian leader D. J. De Pree of Zeeland, Michigan, addressed the annual Gideon convention in Washington, D. C. In his message he pointed out that we must engage in ten important spiritual activities if we are to realize fully the revitalizing power of the Word. We must read it (1 Tim. 4:13); eat it – that is, take it into our very being (Job 23:12; Jer. 15:16); bathe in it for spiritual cleansing (John 15:3); look into it as a mirror to see our true self

(James 1:23-25); meditate on it (Psalm 1:2; 1 Tim. 4:15); memorize it (Deut. 11:18; Psalm 119:11); study it (2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12-14); teach it to others (Deut. 11:19; Col 3:16); talk about it (Josh. 1:8); and sow its seeds of truth in the field of the world (Matt. 13:3-9; Luke 8:11).

The daily practice of these scriptural admonitions will keep you in a state of perpetual revival.

### **C. Prosperity in fruitfulness – vs. 3**

If we are in God's will (vs. 1), doing what God wants (vs. 2), then we will be fruitful (vs. 3). This fruitfulness is speaking primarily of our increase in the things of the Lord – our testimony. If we are obedient to God, then our whole Christian life will be fruitful. This doesn't mean we won't have any trials but when they come, we will be able to trust the Lord through them.

#### **Galatians 5:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

<sup>23</sup> Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Fruitfulness comes by being:

1. "Planted" – שָׁתַל – this is not speaking of something that grows up in a wild state, but something that was planted with purpose and intent (literally, to transplant). It is considered as property and cultivated as such.
2. Watered – על־פְּלָגֵי מַיִם – "rivers of water"

is a word order that means even if one river dries up there is another – it is speaking of a never-ending source of water. For the Christian, that never ending source of water is the Holy Spirit within us speaking to us through the Word of God.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

<sup>7</sup> Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

<sup>8</sup> For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

## **II. "THE WAY OF THE UNGODLY" – vs. 4-6**

This way is that which is opposed to the way of righteousness. This is talking about the lost, those outside of Christ who are still such when eternity begins.

### **A. *Brings the wrath of God* – vs. 4**

1. Brought on by their character, seen in the words "like the chaff" – the husk and other materials separated from the kernel of grain during the threshing or winnowing process. It blew away in the wind (Hos. 13:3) or was burned up as worthless (Isa. 5:24; Luke 3:17) – intrinsically worthless, dead, unserviceable, without substance, and easily carried away.
2. Seen in their doom – "which the wind driveth away" – this shows the vehement tempest of death, which sweeps away the

soul of the ungodly.

## ***B. Brings separation from God and His people – vs. 5***

1. When God judges them, they will not be left standing there, but will be cast away from His presence. (see Rev. 20:11-14)

### Revelation 20:11-14

<sup>11</sup> And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

<sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

<sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

<sup>14</sup> And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

With the word for “therefore” (עַל־כֵּן) an inference is drawn from this moral characteristic of the ungodly: just on account of their inner worthlessness and instability they do not stand בַּמִּשְׁפָּט (“in the judgment”). This is the word for the judgment of just recompense to which God brings each individual man and all without exception with all their words (Eccl. 12:14), - His righteous government, which takes cognizance of the whole life of each

individual and the history of nations and recompenses according to desert. In this judgment the ungodly cannot stand (קום) to continue to stand... (K&D)

2. There will be none but the righteous in heaven – "nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

Matthew 25:41

**41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Matthew 25:46

**46** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

### **C. Leads to hell – vs. 6**

"The way of the righteous" is known by the Lord, which means that the Lord is continually watching and caring for His own.

"But the way of the ungodly shall perish" – "for his way is a wicked way, the way of sinners, Psalm 1:1; it leads to destruction and death, and all that walk in it shall perish; for his is a way the Lord knows not, does not approve of, he abhors it; wherefore the man that continues in it will be unhappy, wretched, and miserable to all eternity. These last words therefore show the reason of the happiness of one sort of men, and the unhappiness of the other; and prove and confirm the same: the Lord knows, approves of, loves, and delights in the one; he does not approve of and delight in the other." (Gill)

Conclusion: In our walk as a believer, consider the path on which we tread. We are on the right way, the way of the righteous. Then consider those about us who are not on the right path but are on the way of the ungodly. If we are not walking the path straight, if we are not living a prosperous, Christian life then our influence and ability to show the ungodly that they are on the wrong path will be limited.

Remember, then, that the road we travel is not an easy one, nor is it overcrowded, but it is one of joyfulness and blessing beyond compare.