

Psalm 1

Introduction—Book of Psalms in General

1. Collection of 150 psalms written over a period of 1000 years
2. Authors:
 - a. David: 73 (almost half)
 - b. Asaph: 12
 - c. Descendants of Korah: 10
 - d. Solomon: 2
 - e. Moses: 1
 - f. Herman and Ethan: each 1
3. Often referred to as lyric poems which refers to poems that display the inner feelings and emotions of the writer as God reveals Himself to the author
4. Psalms can be categorized:
 - a. **Praise Psalms**: i.e. Psalm 19
 - b. **Personal Lament**
 - c. **Historical Psalms**: over 20 of these; Psalm 105 is one of the most famous
 - d. **Ethical Psalms**: stress man's moral responsibility and accountability to God; Psalm 1 is a great example
 - e. **Penitent Psalms**: reflect on the sin of man compared to the holiness of God; Psalm 6 and 32
 - f. **Imprecatory Psalm**: prayer for the destruction of one's enemies; Psalm 35 and 69
 - g. **Messianic Psalms**: i.e. Psalm 22, 110:1-7
 - h. **Ceremonial Psalms**: written for a ceremonial purpose like Psalm 90 to dedicate the temple and Psalm 90 to celebrate the Sabbath
5. Almost two thirds of the Psalms have superscriptions that give important historical information about the psalm. While not inspired they are considered to be historically accurate

Introduction—Psalm 1

1. Author: there is no superscript so the author is unknown
2. Category: Ethical psalm
3. General Outline: two sections
 - a. The Blessed Man (1-3)
 - b. The Wicked (4-6)
4. Poetic Elements:
 - a. Parallelism:
 - 1) Synonymous (in each one of the verses)
 - 2) Antithetic (first three verses vs. the last three)
 - b. Word Pictures:
 - 1) Walk-Stand-Sit (1)
 - 2) Tree and Streams of Water (3)
 - 3) Chaff (4)

- c. Simile (i.e. like or as):
 - 1) Blessed man being like a tree, bearing fruit
 - 2) Wicked man being like chaff

A. The Blessed Man (1-3)

**We are going to use some alliteration here...

1. The **PATH** of the blessed man (1)—this describes his manner of life: **“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!”**
 - a. Notice the second word: **“Blessed”**—refers to happiness or joy, but can also reference general well being
 - b. This first verse focuses on what the blessed man avoids, or doesn’t do: **“does not”**
 - c. Notice the word picture: walk, stand, sit
 - 1) He does not **“walk in the counsel of the wicked”**:
 - a) The word counsel here indicates that the emphasis is on how one thinks, or one’s world view—what drives one’s behavior
 - b) The wicked are driven by their flesh, their own imaginations, their own wicked desires
 - c) The Godly man doesn’t think like the wicked/worldly think
 - 2) He does not **“stand in the path of sinners”**:
 - a) It appears here that the emphasis might be on one’s behavior
 - b) Sinner here is describing the unsaved and the one who continually acts contrary to God’s laws
 - c) The imagery of standing in the path or way of sinners is one that describes doing what the sinners do, behaving like sinners behave
 - d) In other words, the blessed man does now behave or act like the unsaved
 - 3) He does not **“sit in the seat of scoffers”**:
 - a) A scoffer is one who has contempt, scorn or hatred for God
 - b) It goes beyond how he feels, however, because he speaks in a derisive or mocking way about God
 - c) According to Proverbs, a scoffer is one who is proud (21:29), incorrigible (9:7), resistant to reproof (9:8), hate rebuke (13:1) and lacks wisdom (14:6)
 - d) The picture of sitting with such men indicates that one is joining in with their scoffing or mockery of God
 - e) A blessed man will have nothing to do with such people
 - 4) The three phrases above are a good example of something called synonymous parallelism which is saying the same thing two or more different ways:
 - a) In some cases it simply repeats the concept with different words for emphasis
 - b) At other times, the second or third phrase serves to clarify the first
 - 5) Did you notice the progression presented by the word picture?
 - a) He begins by seeking or walking in the counsel of the wicked

- b) He then stops to stand in their presence
 - c) He then sits down to join them
2. The **PLEASURE** of the blessed man (2)—this describes what he values and desires
- a. According to the psalmist, blessedness is not simply the result of avoiding the wrong things; it also involves the pursuit of the right things
 - b. The psalmist now goes on to explain the AFFECTION and ATTENTION of the blessed man
 - 1) He has an AFFECTION for the Word of God: **“But his delight is in the law of the LORD,”**:
 - a) The Hebrew word for delight here is one that describes great emotional delight; it’s actually emphasizes more emotional involvement than most other Hebrew words for delight
 - b) In addition, when this word is used it often implies that there is some intrinsic quality in the object being desired that causes it to be favored and desired
 - c) So when read that way, here the blessed man has a strong emotional affection for the Word of God because there is something about the Word that draws him to it (see Psalm 19:1-7)
 - d) And for this reason, the blessed man finds great delight in it!
 - 2) He gives it his full ATTENTION: **“And in His law he meditates day and night”**
 - a) The Hebrew word for meditates here is also interesting in that it is the same word used to describe the sounds a dove makes, or a lion as he growls quietly while eating his prey
 - b) It’s another great word pictures: mediating on the Word of God as one sits and quietly repeats them to oneself
 - c) Notice that the blessed man does this **“day and night”** which is a reference to “all the time”
 - d)
 - c. We have two more examples of parallelism here:
 - 1) Synonymous: the first phrase adds depth or further explains the first phrase
 - 2) Antithetical: all of verse 1 is in contract to all of verse 2
3. The **PROSPERITY** of the blessed man (3)—this describes his reward
- a. Because of the above, the blessed man is described being like a tree, but not just any tree, a healthy, vibrant one: **“He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither”**
 - 1) It’s planted by not just water, but **“streams of water”**
 - 2) It doesn’t just yield fruit, but it does so **“in its season”** (when it’s supposed to)
 - 3) It’s foliage is thick and lush: **“its leaf does not wither”**
 - 4) These are all signs of a healthy, vibrant, abundant fruit bearing tree
 - b. In other words, **“And in whatever he does, he prospers”**—this is in the Hiphil stem which means **he is made to prosper** (by God)
 - c. We have another great word picture here, this time using simile to portray the reward and prosperity of one who chooses to not walk in the counsel of the wicked, but rather seek after and meditate on God’s counsel

B. The Wicked (4-6)

**We are going to also use some alliteration here as well...

1. He is **DRIVEN AWAY** from God (4):
 - a. **“The wicked are not so...”**—the “not so” refers to everything in v. 3
 - 1) The wicked will not be like trees planted by abundant water
 - 2) They will not yield fruit in season
 - 3) It’s leaves will not be healthy and vibrant
 - 4) And, they will not be made to prosper by God
 - b. Instead, they **“are like chaff which the wind drives away.”**
 - 1) We have another word picture here
 - 2) Chaff refers to the husks, hulls and other debris that is separated from the edible grass or grain during the threshing or winnowing process—it’s worthless, trash
 - 3) The wicked are compared to chaff elsewhere:
 - a) Isaiah 17:13: **“The nations rumble on like the rumbling of many waters, but he will rebuke them and they will flee far way, and be chased like chaff in the mountains before the wind, or like whirling dust before a gale.”**
 - b) In speaking of the wicked, Job says, **“Are they as straw before the wind, and like chaff which the storm carries away?”** (Job 21:17-18)
 - c) David also refers to the wicked as chaff: **“Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them on”** (Psalm 35:5)
 - 4) What becomes clear in the verses above is that being blown away like chaff is actually the rebuke and judgment of God
2. He is **DOOMED** before God (5):
 - a. **“Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous”**
 - b. Here you have the contrast between those who will be able to **“stand in the judgment “** and in **“the assembly of the righteous”** and those who will not—the wicked and sinners vs. the righteous
 - c. To be able to stand is a euphemism to being found worthy
 - d. There is a bit of eschatological foreshadowing here : The judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:31-40 (sheep and goats)
3. He is **DAMNED** by God (6):
 - a. To be damned means to be condemned
 - b. The author closes this psalm with a final statement regarding the fate of both the righteous and the wicked
 - 1) **“For the LORD knows the way of the righteous”**
 - a) Some of your translations may have a note that indicates this might be understood or read as **“the LORD approves of”** or **“has regard for”** the way of the righteous
 - b) That would be appropriate because the author is indicating that God is intimately familiar with the life of the righteous, and thus approves
 - 2) This is not the case with the wicked: **“but the way of the wicked will perish”**

Conclusion

The righteous will be blessed by God, but the wicked will perish.