

# The Book Of Psalms

## Psalm 1 - The Truly Happy Man

### OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS PSALM

- 1) To examine the blessedness of the righteous, in stark contrast to the desperation of the wicked
- 2) To note both the negative and positive elements that lead to the truly happy life
- 3) To note four examples of parallelism that are indicative of Hebrew poetry

### SUMMARY

The first psalm, didactic in style, serves as an appropriate preface to the entire collection of psalms. Its theme can be described as **“The Truly Happy Man”** as it depicts the blessedness, or happiness, of the righteous man in contrast to the wicked.

The blessedness of the righteous man is described first from a negative perspective, in what he will not do. With the aid of stair-like progressive parallelism, the truly happy man is depicted as not allowing himself to be in the presence or under the influence of the wicked. Instead, he finds delight in meditating day and night on the law of the Lord. His blessedness is pictured as a healthy, fruitful tree, nourished by rivers of water. Whatever he does, he prospers (**1-3**).

The wicked, in stark contrast, are not so blessed. They are like chaff driven by the wind. In the judgment, they shall not be able to stand. Nor shall they be blessed to be in the congregation of the righteous (**4-5**).

The psalm ends with a contrast between the two “ways.” The way of the righteous is known (blessed, providentially cared for) by the Lord. The way of the ungodly shall perish, like a trail leading into a swamp that eventually disappears (**6**).

### OUTLINE

#### I. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN (1:1-3)

##### A. HIS CHARACTER (1-2)

1. Described from a negative point of view
  - a. Walks not in the counsel of the ungodly
  - b. Nor stands in the path of sinners - **Pro 4:14-15**
  - c. Nor sits in the seat of the scornful - **Psa 26:4-5**
2. Described from a positive perspective
  - a. His delight is in the law of the Lord - **Psa 40:8; 119:47,48; Jer 15:16**
  - b. In God's law he meditates day and night - **Psa 119:97-99**

##### B. HIS PROSPERITY (3)

1. Like a tree planted by rivers of water - **Psa 92:12-15; Jer 17:7-8**
  - a. That brings forth fruit in its season
  - b. Whose leaf shall not wither
2. Whatever he does shall prosper - **Josh 1:7-8**

## **II. THE DESPERATION OF THE WICKED (1:4-5)**

### **A. NOTHING LIKE THE RIGHTEOUS (4)**

1. The ungodly are not so (lit., “Not so, are the ungodly!”)
2. They are like the chaff which the wind drives away - **Job 21:17-18**

### **B. THEIR SORRY END (5)**

1. The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment
2. The sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous

## **III. A FINAL CONTRAST BETWEEN THEIR TWO WAYS (1:6)**

### **A. THE LORD KNOWS THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS (6a)**

### **B. THE WAY OF THE UNGODLY SHALL PERISH (6b)**

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PSALM**

- 1) **What are the main points of this psalm?**
  - The blessedness of the righteous man (1-3)
  - The desperation of the wicked (4-5)
  - A final contrast between their two ways (6)
- 2) **What is the theme of this psalm?**
  - The truly happy man
- 3) **What is the style of this psalm?**
  - Didactic, i.e., designed to teach or instruct
- 4) **What does the blessed man not do, as described in this psalm? (1)**
  - Does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly
  - Does not stand in the path of sinners
  - Does not sit in the seat of the scornful
- 5) **What example of parallelism, or thought rhyme, do we find in verse one?**
  - Stair-like progressive parallelism
- 6) **What is the source of delight for the one who is blessed? (2)**
  - The law of the Lord
- 7) **What does the blessed man do to experience such delight? (2)**
  - Meditates in the law of the Lord day and night

- 8) What example of parallelism, or thought rhyme, do we find in verse two?**  
- Synonymous parallelism
- 9) What will such a blessed person be like? (3)**  
- A tree planted by rivers of water  
- That brings forth fruit in its season, and whose leaf shall not wither
- 10) What example of parallelism, or thought rhyme, do we find in verse three?**  
- Synthetic parallelism
- 11) What else is said about this blessed man? (3)**  
- Whatever he does shall prosper
- 12) What are the ungodly like? (4)**  
- The chaff driven away by the wind
- 13) What will not happen to the ungodly and sinners? (5)**  
- They shall not stand in the judgment  
- They shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous
- 14) How are the righteous and the wicked contrasted at the end of this psalm? (6)**  
- The Lord knows the way of the righteous  
- The way of the wicked shall perish
- 15) What example of parallelism, or thought rhyme, do we find in verse six?**  
- Antithetical parallelism