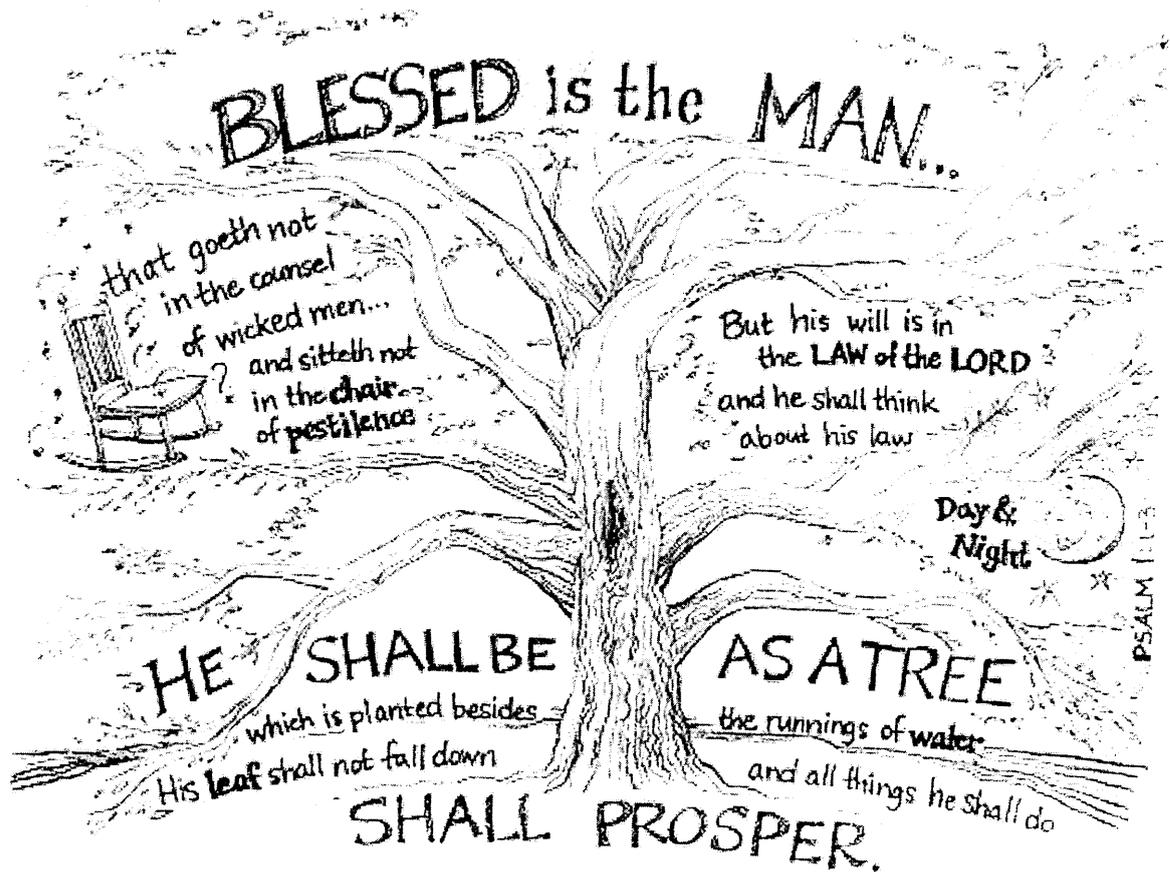


PSALM 1—TWO PORTRAITS OF MAN



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



## PSALM 1—TWO PORTRAITS OF MAN

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Psalm 1, a psalm of wisdom, appears to set the tone for the rest of the psalter by contrasting the righteous with the misery of the wicked.
2. Psalm 2, another psalm, also seems to be an introductory psalm. There is likely a connection between human rebellion and the righteous monarch (Acts 13:33, “the second psalm”).
3. Psalm 1 begins by reminding the reader that those who order their life by the Word of God are truly happy in this life and in the next.
4. Psalm 2 demonstrates the futility of man and nations rebelling against God’s order and indicates what doom would ensue for those who fail to place their trust in their Savior/King.
5. Perowne has helped with this question for the usage of the psalm:  
If as appears probable, Solomon made a collection of his father’s poetry for the service of the Temple. He might have prefixed this Psalm by way of preface, and this circumstance would account for the absence of any inscription (J. J. Baker Stewart, Perowne, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. 1, 108).
6. The lessons of Psalm 1 and 2 provide fitting conclusions: the way of the righteous is the way of salvation; the way of the ungodly is the way of doom.
7. The psalm can be summarized in these words: The righteous are blessed and the wicked are cursed.

### 1A. THE GODLY MAN 1-3

The subject of the godly man is covered with the introductory phrase, “Oh, how very happy! . . .”

- 1b. Negatively: He rejects the way of the ungodly.

Verse 1: **Blessed is the man  
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,  
Nor stands in the path of sinners,  
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;**

Three triplets indicate what the righteous man will not do. There will be no successive steps in the career of the ungodly and leads to a climax. These words describe the wicked, their conduct and the fellowship with them.

## THE WICKEDNESS OF UNGODLINESS IN PSALM 1

<b>WALK</b> Casual Association	<b>Ungodly</b>	Casting off fear of God Living in neglect of God	Ignores the Law of God
<b>STAND</b> Close Intimacy	<b>Sinner</b>	Follows his depraved nature rather than God's declared will	Violates the Law of God
<b>SIT</b> Permanent Connection	<b>Scornful</b>	Sets his mouth against heaven	Reviles the Law of God

--Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

- Walking:** the righteous does not believe like that
- Standing:** the righteous does not behave like that
- Sitting:** the righteous does not belong to this group

2b. Positively: He rejoices in the Word of God

Verse 2: **But his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
and in His law he meditates day and night.**

The Word of God is the righteous man's hallmark of faith and practice. Hiding God's Word requires a full understanding of it.

Unger shows the application of this verse to the Old Testament and New Testament saint:

The righteous man also denotes a person in any age who, believing he is an utterly lost sinner shut up to God's grace for salvation, trusted God for that salvation (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:1-5). Such faith, resting in types and shadows in the Old Testament, was perspective with respect to the cross in the case of the Old Testament believer and is retrospective in the case of the New Testament believers (Rom. 3:25) (Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, 749).

1c. He delights in God's Word

Illuminates: (Josh 1:8)

"The law of the Lord" refers to the divine revelation beginning with the Law.

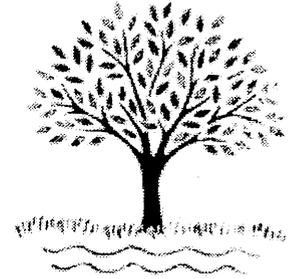
2c. The believer meditates on God's Word.

As someone has said, "The true Christian is a Bible Christian."

Perowne: "The very expression, '*his delight*,' '*meditates day and night*,' show clearly enough that the law to such a man is more than a mere rule after which he is to bring his outward life, that it was the food and aliment of the spirit" (*The Book of Psalms*, Vol. 1, 110).

3b. Metaphorically: He flourishes in the things of God

Verse 3: **He shall be like a tree  
Planted by the rivers of water,  
That brings forth its fruit in its season,  
Whose leaf also shall not wither;  
And whatever he does shall prosper.**



Blessed is the man...

1c. The picture of a tree:

2c. The prosperity:  
The simile of a tree represents a person who is flourishing and fruitful.  
Scroggie suggests the beautiful symbolism:

1d. Vitality  
"A tree"

2d. Security  
--planted

3d. Capacity  
--channels of water represents the word fertility

4d. Fertility  
--the tree produces fruit in its season—not all the time, but when it is supposed to bear fruit.

5d. Propriety  
--in its season

6d. Perpetuity  
--"Whose leaf also shall not wither"

7d. Prosperity  
--"whatever he does shall prosper"

Prospering is not a blanket statement promising unlimited success. The context itself restricts the application. If the righteous meditate on God's Word, they will live in obedience. Doing the will of God is what will succeed.

(Scroggie, *The Psalms*, 39)

**The fruitful tree** is a lovely picture of a person who lives by divine revelation.  
Psa. 92:12-14; Jer. 17:8; Ez. 19

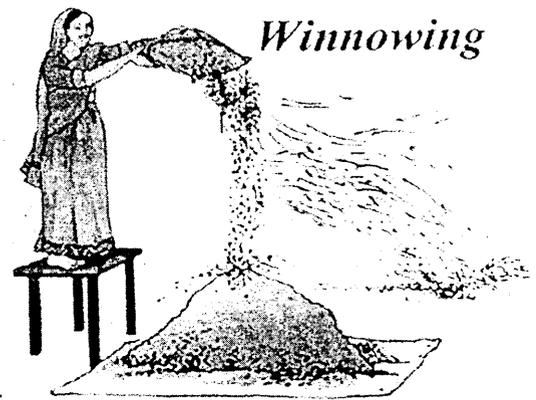
## 2A. THE PICTURE OF THE WICKED MAN: 4-6

Verse 4 **The ungodly are not so,  
But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.**

1b. The picture of chaff:

Matthew has a helpful depiction of the meaning of chaff:

The psalmist compares the unbeliever to chaff, the worthless husks that have to be separated from the grain. First the wheat is crushed with the rushing sledge and then thrown into the air in a breezy location so that the little flakes of chaff could be thrown away and the heavier grain fall to the ground. The figure shows that the ungodly are not only of no value, but also will eventually be removed. This imagery of winnowing at the harvest provided biblical writers with a vivid picture of judgment (E. G., Matthew, *Commentary on the Psalms*, I, 191).



While the unsaved may be charitable in a kind and altruistic way, the Bible testifies that unless good works are done by faith and to the glory of God, they are works worthless to God and of no merit. (Psa. 127:1,2)

2b. The problem of the ungodly related to the picture of chaff  
Verses 5, 6: **Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,  
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.  
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,  
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.**

1c. The ungodly will not survive the judgment, unlike the righteous who will be blessed and rewarded.

2c. The sinners will have no part in the righteous and will perish.

3c. The righteous are known by God, "**The Lord knows the way of the righteous.**" Here it stands in parallel construction to the sinner who perishes. The knowledge which God has of the believer is the knowledge of living intimacy, a relationship that God has to the believer.

3b. The perdition of the ungodly:

The resurrection of the Old Testament saint will be at the Second Advent. The resurrection of all the unbelievers of all the ages will be at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:15).

Sinners (the unsaved) do not stand in the congregation of the righteous (the saved), and anticipate, as Unger correctly notes,

The New Testament revelation that the first resurrection (in stages) is exclusively for the saved and is unto eternal life, while the second resurrection (exclusively for the unsaved) is unto judgment (condemnation and eternal death). (Op. cit., 749).

## CONCLUSION:

1. The righteous, like a tree, defies the storm. The ungodly, like chaff, is driven before it.
2. The central message of the Psalm is that the righteous will live an untarnished and prosperous life in harmony with scripture, will be delivered from God's judgment on the ungodly.
3. The introductory phrase to the Psalm is as well as an introduction to the entire psalter: "**Oh how happy is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly.**" The promise is not just one of blessing but of absolute joy as the believer studies the Word of God in order to live an untarnished and productive life for God.
4. The psalmist instructs the believer not to live the way of the world, not to take spiritual, moral or ethical advice from unbelievers.
5. To unbelievers, there is an urgent message; they must come to faith in the Lord, progressively live their lives for God, faith in Him and His Word. They will not survive judgment. As the psalmist writes in Psalm 2:12.

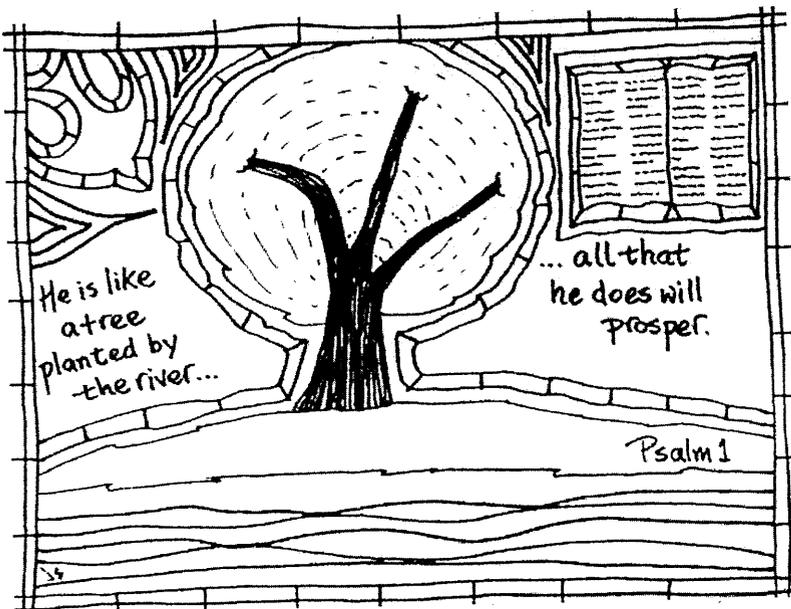
*Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.*

## Psalm 1

Words: Isaac Watts

♪ S.M.

- 1 The man is ever bless'd  
Who shuns the sinners' ways,  
Among their councils never stands,  
Nor takes the scorner's place;
- 2 But makes the law of God  
His study and delight,  
Amidst the labours of the day,  
And watches of the night.
- 3 He like a tree shall thrive,  
With waters near the root;  
Fresh as the leaf his name shall live;  
His works are heav'nly fruit.
- 4 Not so the ungodly race,  
They no such blessings find;  
Their hopes shall flee, like empty chaff  
Before the driving wind.
- 5 How will they bear to stand  
Before that judgement-seat,  
When all the saints, at Christ's right hand,  
In full assembly meet.
- 6 He knows, and he approves,  
The way the righteous go;  
But sinners and their works shall meet  
A dreadful overthrow.



# PSALM 1

*The difference between the righteous and the wicked.*

Happy the man whose cautious feet  
Shun the broad way that sinners go,  
Who hates the place where atheists meet,  
And fears to talk as scoffers do.

He loves t' employ the morning light  
Amongst the statutes of the Lord;  
And spends the wakeful hours of night,  
With pleasure, pondering o'er his word.

He, like a plant by gentle streams,  
Shall flourish in immortal green.  
And heav'n will shine with kindest beams  
On every work his hands begin.

But sinners find their counsels crossed:  
As chaff before the tempest flies,  
So shall their hopes be blown and lost,  
When the last trumpet shakes the skies.

In vain the rebel seeks to stand  
In judgment with the pious race;  
The dreadful Judge, with stern command,  
Divides him to a different place.

"Straight is the way my saints have trod;  
I blessed the path, and drew it plain;  
But you would choose the crooked road,  
And down it leads to endless pain."



## Ps.1. Psalm 1

### Full Text

Blest is the man who shuns the place  
Where sinners love to meet;  
Who fears to tread their wicked ways,  
And hates the scoffer's seat:

But in the statutes of the Lord  
Has placed his chief delight;  
By day he reads or hears the word,  
And meditates by night.

[He, like a plant of gen'rous kind,  
By living waters set,  
Safe from the storms and blasting wind,  
Enjoys a peaceful state.]

Green as the leaf, and ever fair,  
Shall his profession shine  
While fruits of holiness appear  
Like clusters on the vine.

Not so the impious and unjust;  
What vain designs they form!  
Their hopes are blown away like dust,  
Or chaff before the storm.

Sinners in judgment shall not stand  
Amongst the sons of grace,  
When Christ, the Judge, at his right hand  
Appoints his saints a place.

His eye beholds the path they tread,  
His heart approves it well  
But crooked ways of sinners lead  
Down to the gates of hell.

## תהלים Chapter 1 Psalms

- א** אֲשֶׁרִי הָאִישׁ-- אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִלְךְ,  
בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים;  
וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים, לֹא עָמַד, וּבְמוֹשֵׁב  
לְצִים, לֹא יֵשֵׁב.
- ב** כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה, חִפְצוֹ;  
וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה, יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה.
- ג** וְהָיָה-- כָּעֵץ, שָׁתוּל עַל-פְּלִגֵי-מַיִם:  
אֲשֶׁר פֵּרִיו, יִתֵּן בְּעִתּוֹ--וְעָלְהוּ לֹא-יִבּוֹל;  
וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ.
- ד** לֹא-כֵן הֶרְשָׁעִים: כִּי אִם-כַּמֶּץ,  
אֲשֶׁר-תִּדְפְּנוּ רוּחַ.
- ה** עַל-כֵּן, לֹא-יִקְמוּ רְשָׁעִים--בְּמִשְׁפָּט;  
וְחַטָּאִים, בְּעֵדַת צְדִיקִים.
- ו** כִּי-יִזְדַּע יְהוָה, דֶּרֶךְ צְדִיקִים; וְדֶרֶךְ  
רְשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד.
- 1** Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked, {N} nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful.
- 2** But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.
- 3** And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, {N} that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf doth not wither; and in whatsoever he doeth he shall prosper.
- 4** Not so the wicked; but they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
- 5** Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
- 6** For the LORD regardeth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish. {P}