

# THE FRUITFUL PATH RIGHT THINKING IN PSALM ONE

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. A Famous Passage

As the book of the Canticles is called the Song of Songs by a Hebraism, it being the most excellent, so this Psalm may not unfitly be entitled, the Psalm of Psalms, for it contains in it the very pith and quintessence of Christianity. What Jerome saith on St. Paul's epistles, the same may I say of this Psalm; it is short as to the composure, but full of length and strength as to the matter. This Psalm carries blessedness in the frontispiece; it begins where we all hope to end: it may well be called a Christian's Guide, for it discovers the quicksands where the wicked sink down in perdition, and the firm ground on which the saints tread to glory.

—Thomas Watson's *Saints' Spiritual Delight*, 1660.

### B. An Unusual Psalm

1. Instructional
  - a. Akin to the Proverbs
  - b. "Torah" Psalm (v. 2)
    - (1) *Torah* > law
    - (2) *Torah* = instruction
2. Anonymous
  - a. An "Orphaned" Psalm
  - b. Parallels Jeremiah 17:7-8
  - c. Possibly from the 500's BC

<b>PSALM 1</b> <small>© M. Scott Bashoor 2020</small>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE BLESSED CHARACTER OF THE GODLY MAN</b> vv. 1-3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Godly Man's Character Detailed</b> vv. 1-2</p> <p>His Refusal to Conform to Wicked Counsel v. 1</p> <p>His Daily Devotion to Yahweh's Torah v. 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Godly Man's Blessing Likened to a Fruitful Tree</b> v. 3</p> <p>Cultivated by Yahweh v. 3a</p> <p>Fruitful in Life v. 3b</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE DEGRADED CONDITION OF WICKED PERSONS</b> vv. 4-5</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Fate of Wicked Persons Likened to Useless Chaff</b> v. 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Exclusion of Wicked Persons in the Age to Come</b> v. 5</p> <p>No Legal Standing in God's Final Judgment v. 5a</p> <p>No Permanent Presence with God's People v. 5b</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONCLUDING COUNSEL ABOUT THE TWO PATHS</b> v. 6</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Yahweh's Presence on the Path of Righteous People</b> v. 6a</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Judgment as the Final Destiny of the Wicked Path</b> v. 6b</p>
<p><b>Type:</b> Wisdom Psalm  <b>Author:</b> Unknown <b>Date:</b> Unknown  <b>Note:</b> Serves as an Introduction to the Psalter perhaps in conjunction with Psalm 2</p>		

## II. ORIGINAL INTENTIONS

- A. **Literary:** To Introduce the Psalms
- B. **Canonical:** To Connect with the Torah (cf. Josh 1:8-9)
- C. **Practical:** To Instruct Israelites in Torah Keeping & Godliness
- D. **Theological:** To Typecast Messianic Perfection
  - 1. The perfect embodiment of this blessed man is Messiah.
  - 2. Psalm 1 is intentionally placed with Psalm 2 which foresees the victorious Messiah.
    - a. Ps 1 begins with a blessing, & Ps 2 ends with a blessing.
    - b. Ps 1 outlines perfect conformity to God's Word, while Ps 2 outlines the complete conquest of God's kingdom.

## III. THEMES

- A. **The Two Ways**
- B. **The Multiplicity of Wickedness**
  - 1. The "wicked" are always in the plural
  - 2. The variety of postures in v. 1 implies evil variety.
- C. **The Garden of the Soul**
- D. **The Judgment & Blessing to Come**

## IV. STRUCTURE

- A. **Features to Consider**
  - 1. Recurring Contrasts (vv. 1-2, 3-4, 5, 6)
  - 2. Similarities & Asymmetries
    - a. Use of Negatives
      - (1) v. 1 – three times regarding the righteous
      - (2) vv. 4-5 – three times [1 implied] about the wicked

- b. Recurring Terms & Related Images
  - (1) The Wicked and the Righteous (vv. 1, 4, 5, 6)
  - (2) Counsel and Instruction (vv. 1, 2)
  - (3) Walking & Standing (vv. 1, 5, 6)
  - (4) Sitting & Congregating (vv. 1, 5)
  - (5) Tree and Chaff (vv. 3-4)

## B. Two Similar but Asymmetrical Movements

- 1. vv. 1-3 & vv. 4-5.
- 2. Both have negative descriptions of the righteous & wicked, but the description of the righteous is more developed.

## C. One Concluding Contrast

- 1. The concluding verse is intentionally cryptic.
- 2. Both lines employ *ellipsis*, the leaving out of connecting thoughts that forces the reader to meditate.

## V. CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

- A. God's instruction is not limited to the Books of Moses but extends into the NT. For the wellness of our souls, we do well to meditate on all the God has revealed. The fullness of God's revelation is found in knowing Christ.
- B. Christians should not be surprised by the plethora of errors that present themselves, nor with the vehemence with which they are sometimes presented. There are endless varieties of pressure to conform to the world.
- C. While we await our eternal replanting in the age to come, we can know something of restored garden life within our hearts as we remain rooted and nourished in God's Word.
- D. The righteous person may feel outnumbered in many circumstances, but he should remember there is a great everlasting gathering where wickedness will have no place.