

Psalm 1

Title: The Way of the Righteous and Wicked Contrasted

Author and Date: Unknown

Key Verse: Psalm 1:6

Outline

- A. The way of the righteous: prospering (verses 1-3).
- B. The way of the wicked: perishing (verse 4).
- C. The destiny of both (verses 5-6).

Notes

Verse 1: “Blessed” in verse 1 means “happy”.

Verse 1: Note the progression of the verbs in verse 1: “walks ... stands ... sits”. The righteous will not “stand” with sinners now (verse 1) and sinners will not “stand” with the righteous later (verse 5).

Verse 1: “Scoffers” openly mock, criticize, and scorn all that is right and good.

Verse 2: The word “but” in verses 2, 4, and 6 point to a contrast between the righteous and the wicked.

Verse 3: Hebrew poetry uses many figures of speech. Simile, where one thing is made “like” another (a comparison), is found in verse 3 and 4.

Verse 3: A fruitful tree is used in scripture to represent the one who trusts and obeys the Lord (see Psa. 92:12-14; Jer. 17:7-8).

Verse 4: “Chaff” is the dry, protective casing around the head of grain (the husk) that blows away in the wind during the process of threshing (see Dan. 2:35; Hos. 13:3).

Verse 5-6: The word “Therefore” at the beginning of verse 5 and the word “For” at the beginning of verse 6 point to a conclusion for the whole psalm: prospering for the righteous and perishing for the wicked. The two ways of righteousness and wickedness mentioned here show that Psalm 1 is an appropriate introductory psalm to begin all the psalms.

Questions

1. What three things do the righteous not do that causes them to be blessed (verse 1)?

2. What attitude does the righteous one have toward the Lord's law and what does he do with the law (verse 2)?
3. What are the righteous compared to and what is said of their prosperity (verse 3)?
4. What are the wicked compared to (verse 4)?
5. What will be the ultimate outcome or destiny of the wicked (verse 5)?
6. What will ultimately happen to the righteous and the wicked (verse 6)?

Applications for Today

1. True happiness ("blessed") and delight in life is found in avoiding sin and following God's law (verses 1-2). Where is the "blessed" life found according to Jesus (Mt. 5:3-12; Jn. 13:17)? What other things are associated with the "blessed" life of the Christian (Rom. 4:8; Jas. 1:12; Rev. 14:13; 22:14)?
2. It takes knowledge and discernment to avoid the sinner's way (verse 1). What admonition does the author of Hebrews give to Christians concerning discernment (Heb. 5:11-14)?
3. The righteous are not to have fellowship with the words and ways of the wicked (verse 1). What does Solomon say about avoiding the sinners (Prov. 1:10)? What do Paul, James, and Peter write concerning wicked ways (1 Cor. 5:13; Eph. 5:11; Jas. 4:4; 1 Pet. 4:3-4)?
4. Sin is often progressive and takes the downward path to ruin (verse 1). How is this principle illustrated in the life of Achan (Josh. 7:21) and David (2 Sam. 11:2-4)? What does James write about the progression of sin (Jas. 1:14-15)?

5. We must do more than just hear or read God's law. We must "delight" in it and we must "meditate" (ponder, reflect) on it (verse 2). What is Joshua told to do with God's word (Josh. 1:8)? What attitude does David have toward God's law (Psa. 119:14-16, 23-24, 27, 47-48, 77-78, 143, 148)? What does Paul write concerning God's word (Rom. 7:22; 1 Tim. 4:15)? How does John describe God's commandments (1 Jn. 5:3)?

6. The righteous will bear "fruit" and "prosper" according to God's will (verse 3). What does Jesus want his disciples to do (Jn. 15:2-4)? What are Christians to produce (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:9; Col. 1:6, 10)? What kind of prosperity does the righteous one have (Psa. 35:27; 3 Jn. 2)?

7. The wicked are separated from the righteous through God's judgment (verses 4-5). What will happen to the wicked in the judgment day (Mt. 3:12; 13:40-42, 49; 25:32, 41, 46; 1 Pet. 3:12; Jude 15)?

8. There are only two ways to travel in life: the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked (verse 6). Which way does the Lord love (Prov. 15:9)? How does Jesus describe the two ways (Mt. 7:13-14)?

9. The Lord knows those righteous who belong to him and will reward them (verse 6). What do Jesus and Paul say about the righteous (Jn. 10:14, 27; 2 Tim. 2:19)? The Lord will ultimately punish the wicked and they will perish (verse 6). What do Paul and Peter say about the end of the wicked (1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15; 2 Thess. 2:10; 2 Pet. 2:12; 3:6, 9)?