

# Psalm 1

Today we're going to go through Psalm 1 verses 1 and 2.

Now, as I've been reading through the Bible, I've talked about how each time I come to the book of Psalms, I just see this amazing prophecy in it. As I read through the Psalms I just see the story of Christ's first coming and his second coming being told over and over again.

And so as we go through Psalms that is something that I'm going to bring out for you, because I know some of you haven't really seen that.

Now I know most people, when we think of the book of Psalms, we think of it as a book of praise, and prayers. Kind of a devotional book. A book of poetry. We don't generally think of it as a doctrinal book, or as a prophetic book.

Now we all know that there are some prophecies scattered in the book here and there. Most of us could probably name one or two Psalms that are prophetic, like 22, or 118, or Psalm 2, that we're going to look at probably next time.

But it kind of sounds strange to say that the book of Psalms, as a whole, is a prophetic book. Yet that's exactly what I've come to see.

The entire book of Psalms, from one end to the other, is prophetic. And not only that, but each Psalm generally builds on the one before it. So we don't just see a smorgasbord of prophecies of Christ's first and second comings just all scattered together, but what we're going to find is the story of Christ being unfolded in order, over and over and over again.

And so you're going to see that, you're going to see the interconnectedness of the Psalms, like you've never seen it before.

Now, I know that may sound strange, to talk about the Psalms as if each Psalm relates to the ones next to it. We don't generally think of it that way. Because the book of Psalms isn't a book that God inspired somebody to sit down and write, and then later we came along and broke it down into chapters, like the book of Romans, or so many other books in the Bible.

The book of Psalms is really a collection of different Psalms, written by different people, at different times. But what you're going to see, as we go through this, is that God has these Psalms arranged in here in exactly the order that he wants them. That each often builds on the one before it.

Now, I don't just want you to take my word for it that Psalms is a prophetic book, and that it's valid to expound it that way. So what I did this week, in preparation for this, was go through the entire NT, and compile a quick list of every time that it quotes from the OT.

I might have missed a few, but I think I got most of them.

Now I did that, because I wanted to see how each of the OT books was quoted in the NT. Was it quoted as history? As prophecy? As doctrine? As a prayer? As praise to God?

So as I went through I determined what OT passage was being quoted, and I also wrote down what sort of genre it was being quoted as, how it was being used. Which one of these things.

So in total I found about 250 direct quotes from the OT throughout the NT. And of those about 150 of them were quoted as prophecy. The rest were history, and referencing OT doctrine, and other things.

And my expectation was that the most quoted book would be the book of Isaiah. I mean, that is the major OT prophetic book. It's a big one, and it's quoted a lot. And it has passages about Christ, like chapter 53. So I definitely expected that Isaiah was going to come out on top, both in terms of the most times being quoted, and also in terms of the most times being quotes as prophecy, since just about every time would be prophecy.

And I found that the book of Isaiah was quoted 54 times. Out of 250 that's over one fifth of the total.

And of those 54 times, 47 were prophecy, and the other 7 were passages from Isaiah that were quoted for other doctrine that they contained, and not as prophecy. But 47 out of 150, that's almost one third of all of the OT prophecy quoted in the NT.

So that was pretty good.

But you know what?

Isaiah wasn't the most quoted book. It was not the most quoted on prophecy. Not even close.

You know what beat it out?

The book of Psalms.

The book of Psalm was quoted 75 times. Out of 250 total, that's between a quarter and a third.

And of those 75 times, only 7 were quoted as prayer or praise. Less than 10%. And even of those, all but two or three of them were still being quoted in a prophetic context, so I could have counted them as prophecy as well.

So only 7 times quoted as praise. What were the others? Once as history, 9 times as doctrine, and the other 58 times, as prophecy. 58 times. More than the total number of quotes from the book of Isaiah, both prophecy and other doctrine, which was only 54.

Out of about 150 prophetic quotes in the NT total, that means the book of Psalms makes up over one third of them. About 40%. The book of Isaiah was only a little less than one third.

So the book of Psalms wins the title of the most quoted prophetic book of the OT. It is quoted in the NT as prophecy more than any other book in the Bible, including the book of Isaiah. And if you don't count the book of Isaiah, the book of Psalms is quoted as prophecy more than all of the other OT books, combined.

So when I say that the book of Psalms is a book of prophecy, you understand now where I get that. I didn't just make that up off the top of my head. Paul, Peter, John, and Christ, all happen to agree, based on their quoting of it, that the book of Psalms is just filled to overflowing with prophecies of Christ.

Now obviously they focused on some of the most prominent ones. Like Psalm 2, or Psalm 118, like we mentioned above. But we're going to see that that wasn't because those were the only prophetic Psalms. That was just because those were the most clear and the most related to the particular points that they wanted to make at the time.

So what we're going to do, is go back, and look through all of the Psalms, and fill in the blanks, and find where the prophecy is, in the rest of the parts of those Psalms, and in the other Psalms, that isn't all as obvious. Some of it is, but not all of it, and we're going to look at that, and we're going to get to see how those are just some of the high points in a big picture that really encompasses the entire book.

So I'm excited to get to study this.

Now, I say that the book of Psalms is a prophetic book, but obviously it isn't just a prophetic book. There are other aspects to it as well. Those things that we are maybe more familiar with. Really, the book of Psalms has several layers to it.

On the surface you have that beautiful poetry, and passionate prayer and praise that we all know that they contain. And that's just wonderful.

And beneath that layer we know that many of them relate to different historical events in the life of David, or things that were happening in the lives of these other authors or in Israel at the times that they were written.

And so you have that beautiful poetry and then you have the story that often goes along with them, and is sometimes partly unfolded within the Psalm.

And we're going to see that sometimes there is some doctrine being propounded there as well.

And then beneath all of that, when you know to look, you'll find amazing prophecy of Christ, of his work on the cross, of his work in the church, of his second coming, and of his eternal kingdom. And you're going to see that as we go through this.

And so the book of Psalms really has these different layers to it. And so because of that, I think that it is too much to expound all of those different aspects of each verse all at once. We'd get lost, and miss a lot of it.

So what we're going to do is just peel it back a layer at a time. We're going to go through each Psalm, and first look at the historical aspect of it, and see how it related to the people that it was written by and written to, at the time that it was written.

And then once we understand that, we'll go back and look at that same Psalm, from the prophetic prospective, and expound that. And we'll see how those historical aspects of the Psalm also have a dual-meaning, and how God was revealing prophecy of Christ to them through that.

And so we'll be going through each Psalm twice, once for the history and doctrine, and then again for the prophecy.

And we'll start in Psalm 1.

Now, many of the Psalms will include a title that tells us something about who wrote it, and maybe even when they wrote it.

Psalm 1 does not. And Psalm 2, that we'll be looking at in a little while, doesn't either.

So maybe we don't know for sure who wrote these Psalms. But I suspect that it might have been David.

And here's why.

Now we generally tend to think that the Psalms are just kind of all thrown in here together in whatever way they fit, if we think about it at all, but that's actually not true. They are organized here, more or less, by author. You may have noticed when you read through the book of Psalms that most all the ones from David are grouped together, and most of the ones from Asaph are grouped together, and most of the ones from Korah are grouped together. So there is some organization there.

And the first group is a bunch of Psalms written by David. Psalm 3 tells us specifically that it was written by David, and even when he wrote it. And many of the ones following it do as well.

And so if we look ahead, we don't find all of them explicitly attributed to David, but we do find that a lot of them are, and that the first one that's actually attributed to somebody else other than David is Psalm 42. Psalm 42 was written instead for the sons of Korah. And that's the first one that says anything about anybody other than David, specifically.

So this first group of Psalms here, seem to have been mostly written by David. Possibly all of them were, some just don't say specifically that they were, like these first two that we're going to begin looking at today.

But I think probably that it is David that wrote them.

## PSALM

One more thing before we start, I want to go over what exactly a Psalm is.

I think we'll probably look at this more later on, but just to give you some background on what Psalms are, how they were used historically, and all that.

And there is actually a passage in the Bible where David talks about Psalms, and what they are, what message God wanted to convey through them.

**2 Samuel 23:1** Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet **psalmist** of Israel, said,

2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

And so we find that one thing a Psalm is, is its the word of God. These Psalms that are contained here in this book of Psalms, were spoken by the Spirit of the LORD, and so they are inspired scripture. They aren't just something that somebody wrote because they liked poetry.

3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

And so it describes here some of the things that God said to David through these Psalms. Now some of this is going to be surprising to you, but look carefully at what he says, because we're going to start seeing some of this stuff today, and just in these first two Psalms you're going to see most all of this.

"The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

So what God was telling David in these Psalms, was partly wisdom about how to govern a nation.

Now I know that seems strange, but we're going to see this as we go through these Psalms, and so I want you to see this straight from the Bible, that this is what the Psalms are about.

"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

So it's going to talk about justice and the fear of God.

4 And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

And it is going to talk about how such a man will be blessed.

We're going to see that in the first Psalm.

5 Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

So David acknowledges that his house is not perfect, but that God has made a covenant with him. An everlasting covenant, that is sure, that cannot be changed.

And he describes how this has become all his desire, all his salvation. So much so, that even though he knows his house is not worthy of it, and God has no reason to do it, and would be justified in just decided not to do it, and not to make it to grow, it is *still* all his desire. Even if it doesn't happen.

And so the wisdom that God revealed to David in these Psalms made him want to set his desire on something, his whole desire, as his salvation, even if it didn't come.

That's a powerful desire, a powerful message, that can make you want something so bad that you desire it and hope in it even if it never comes.

Now, we're going to see all this, as we go through these Psalms. You'll look back at this and think, "man, that was right on."

Hey, this is God's word, after all! God knows what the Psalms are about.

6 But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:

7 But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.

And so David also was assured by God's word to him in these Psalms that the wicked would be destroyed. That you need to be fenced with iron to deal with them, and that their end is to be burned.

And we're going to see that as well. You're going to start to see just about all of this just in these first two Psalms.

OK, so that's one thing that these Psalms are, they are inspired scripture, that revealed this kind of wisdom, and stirred this kind of desire in David.

But they also had a more utilitarian purpose.

**1 Chronicles 16:9** Sing unto him, sing **psalms** unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.

And so the Psalms were to be used to sing praise unto God. And so we'll see later, I think, more about how that was ordained as part of their temple worship, some of the authors of those later Psalms like Asaph and Jeduthun and the sons of Korah, they were some of the people who were ordained to praise God in the temple.

And so that is another thing that the Psalms were for: they were for praise, both formal praise ordained as part of the temple worship, and also just to use to praise God at any time.

**Psalms 81:2** Take a **psalm**, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the **psaltery**.

And so they would play music, and they did that in the temple, when they would praise God with the Psalms. So they were also something that was sung. They even had instruments made specifically for that, called psalteries. Psalm, psaltry.

So they didn't just  *speak*  the psalms to praise God, they would also sing them, with musical accompaniment.

So the Psalms are multipurpose. Just as we've talked about there being several layers to them, we see that they were made to give wisdom to David and stir the desire of salvation in him, and they were also made to praise God, and to eventually be ordained as a part of the temple worship.

So that's what these Psalms are for. That's what they meant to them back then. That's the way that they were to be used at the time that they were given.

And then we'll also look at the prophetic aspects of them, that that's how they are used in the NT.

And in that way they are still important for us today.

And I just want to give you a couple of examples of that.

**Luke 24:44** And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the **psalms**, concerning me.

And so Jesus told his disciples about things that were written in the psalms concerning him. Prophecy that had to be fulfilled.

And so later the disciples would preach those scriptures to the Jews, pointing out how Christ had fulfilled those things:

**Acts 13:33** God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second **psalm**, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

And so they would preach out of the book of Psalms.

And note there that the portion he quotes that he says is from the second Psalm, is indeed part of Psalm 2. Which just shows that the Psalms are still arranged in the same order here today that they were back then. Because that's the way God wants them.

So they preached to Israel from the Psalms.

But the Psalms aren't just for Israel. The church is told to use them for teaching and admonition as well:

**Colossians 3:16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in **psalms** and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

So he tells the church to teach one another the word of Christ, using Psalms.

Now, he may be talking about psalms and songs that you make up yourself as well, but certainly the Psalms found in scripture would have to be first and foremost there. And they present the pattern that we should follow.

And so that's what we're going to do here. We're going to preach Christ from these Psalms, through the prophecy that they contain, and teach and admonish one another with them.

## Verse 1

Alright, so Psalm 1. Here we go.

"Blessed be the LORD God of Abraham for ever and ever..." Oh, is that not right? What does it say there? Blessed be the, blessed by the what? Blessed be the MAN?

Uh oh. It's not supposed to say that is it? This is supposed to be a book of praise isn't it? But this can't be a Psalm of praise. Not with a beginning like that. Obviously we're not praising man.

So what is this? History? No.

Well, what does that leave? Doctrine? Prophecy?

Yep.

What we're seeing here, right from the very first Psalm, from the very first verse, from the very first word, is doctrine.

It's giving us wisdom here about how a man can be blessed.

Now you know, sometimes when we divide up the OT into different groups we do lump Psalms with Proverbs and Job and Ecclesiastes, as the books of wisdom.

But I guess we forget that if Psalms is a book of wisdom, that makes it a book of doctrine.

That means that it isn't just descriptive, it's also prescriptive.

And that's exactly what we see here. It doesn't just contain praise describing the glories of God and the lowliness of man, but it actually contains prescriptive doctrine. Wisdom about what is right and wrong, and good and evil.

And so here we see that. It is going to tell us what a man ought to do, if he wants to be blessed. "Blessed is the man."

## NOT

Now, there's a very important word in this first verse, that is easy to gloss over and not really think about very much.

But when we take time to think about it it is really quite significant.

And that's the word "not".

"Blessed is the man that walketh **not** in the counsel of the ungodly, **nor** standeth in the way of sinners, **nor** sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

So do you realize what it is saying here? It's going to tell us what a man must do in order to be blessed. But the first thing that it tells us, is actually what he has to *not* do.

There is something that you have to not do, in order to be blessed. Before you even do anything.

Now, that can seem very simple or obvious once you think about it, but I think that often we don't really think about it.

I mean, sometimes people think that they will be blessed as long as they do certain things, and whatever else they do won't matter. Just follow these simple steps and you'll be OK. That's sometimes what the religious "Christian" boils it down to. And its just not true.

According to this Psalm, there is nothing that you can just do, on its own, that will bless you. First you have to also *not* do something.

So what is it that you need to not do?

Well, there's three things.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

Don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful.

So let's look at each of those.

## COUNSEL

Now the first thing it says is, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." And so whether a man is blessed, depends on what counsel he walks in.

Now what exactly does it mean by that? What is it talking about when it is talking about counsel?

Now, I could just guess, and make something up, and tell you what I thought it meant. But that wouldn't really benefit you at all. I mean, I'm not an authority on what God means when he says something. I don't get to decide that. You might as well just make something up yourself.

But we don't have to wonder what God means when he says something.

In daily life, when we wonder what somebody meant when they said something, we just go and ask them. And that's really the same thing that we need to do here.

Except, we can't just walk up to God and ask him what he meant by this.

But you know, that's sometimes true with other things as well. Sometimes when we want to know what somebody meant by something, they are dead and gone, or aren't available to answer any questions about it.

Sometimes when you're looking at a document that you need to fill out, or you're reading an old letter, and you're not sure what something means, the person isn't just standing right there so that you can ask them.

And so what do we do? Well, we look for clues. We scan over the document in question to see if it mentions anything else relevant. See if it talks about the same thing somewhere else. If it uses the same word or phrase somewhere that might give us a clue as to exactly what was meant by it.

A good supreme court justice, when he's interpreting the Constitution, doesn't just guess what a particular word means. He'll look that same term up in the Federalist Papers and other old documents and letters written by the founders, to see how they used that word or phrase and what they meant by that.

And so we can do the same thing with the Bible. That's how you expound scripture, you let the Bible expound itself. Don't just guess what God said, look and see what he said, and use that to understand what he is saying in the passage in question.

So if we want to understand what God was talking about here when he was talking about counsel, the counsel of the ungodly, all we have to do is look up other places in the Bible that it talks about counsel. And that will provide us with some more context on exactly how that word is used.

So let's do that.

Now what I do, is I take a computer program, that lets me search the Bible. You could use an exhaustive concordance, but I usually just use the computer since its easier.

And so I do a search on whatever word or phrase I want to understand better. And I read over all of the different verses where it is used.

Now I'm not going to go over all of them here, but I pick out a few that are representative of how the word is used, that will help you to understand it.

So let's look at a few examples of how the word counsel is used in the Bible.

Now the first passage I have here is 2 Samuel 16 and 17. And that's where it talks about the counsel that Ahithophel and Hushai gave to Absalom the son of David when he was rebelling against his father.

Do you remember that story, how Hushai was actually on David's side and he was kind of a spy for him, and he gave Absalom bad counsel?

Well we're not going to go through all of that whole story, we'll just look at a few verses, after Absalom comes into Jerusalem. And he asks for counsel:

**2 Samuel 16:20** Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give **counsel** among you what we shall do.

**23** And the **counsel** of Ahithophel, which he **counselled** in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so was all the **counsel** of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

So then Ahithophel gives his counsel to Absalom, how he thinks they should go out to war against David. And then:

**2 Samuel 17:5** Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.

So then they asked Hushai, that he also would give counsel as to what they should do.



6 And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying? if not; speak thou.

7 And Hushai said unto Absalom, The **counsel** that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time.

So then Hushai fools them into doing something else, thinking that he has a better idea than what Ahithophel had said.

**2 Samuel 17:14** And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The **counsel** of Hushai the Archite is better than the **counsel** of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good **counsel** of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel **counsel** Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I **counselled**.

And so then Hushai sent to tell David what had happened, what counsel he had given, and what they decided to do.

OK, so that story gives us an idea of what it means to counsel somebody. In this case these men were the king's counsellors. They served in a semi-official capacity.

He would ask them for their advice, what they thought he should do. And they'd give him counsel.

And in so the counsel they're giving is advice on how the kingdom should be run. In this case it was how they should make war and pursue rebellion.

And you'll note that what counsel he took was the difference between life and death for him. It was the difference between whether his government would prosper or be destroyed.

1 Kings 12 is another passage that we can look at that talks a lot about counsel and counsellors.

If you remember the story, that's when Solomon's son Rehoboam took the throne, and the people came to him asking him to lighten their workload.

**1 Kings 12:6** And king Rehoboam **consulted** with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye *advise* that I may answer this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But he forsook the **counsel** of the old men, which they had given him, and **consulted** with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

9 And he said unto them, What **counsel** give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

So it said that he asked the old men's counsel, and they gave their advice. But he didn't like that so he asked counsel of the young men.

And so again we see counsellors serving in a semi-official capacity, and giving advice to the king. In this case, about a domestic issue.

And you'll note again that what counsel he took was the difference between whether his kingdom was held together or fell apart.

And because he took the young men's counsel, the 10 northern tribes rebelled. And so his kingdom fell apart.

But it isn't only kings who take counsel in the Bible.

**2 Chronicles 30:23** And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept other seven days with gladness.

So when all Israel had gotten together for a feast, after it was over they weren't ready to leave, so they all got together and said, "Hey, let's extend this feast another seven days."

And so it says they took counsel. They said, "Hey, we think we ought to do this, what do you think?" And so they asked what everybody thought, and decided they'd do just that.

And so taking counsel is when people share and compare their ideas and advice, and decide to take some action based on that.

Now here's a few verses that parallel the word counsel with some other words, so that we can see what some synonyms of that would be:

**Job 12:13** With him is *wisdom* and *strength*, he hath **counsel** and *understanding*.

So wisdom, strength, understanding, these are things like counsel, or that go along with counsel. When you give counsel you give wisdom, you draw on your understanding. And it mentions strength in regard to that, because counsel helps you determine how to use your strength. It's how you decide what to do.

If you're like Absalom and you are strong, like strong for war, and yet you take bad counsel, it doesn't do you much good.

But of course, God doesn't just have strength, he is also infinitely wise in counsel of how to use it.

So counsel is like wisdom and understanding, knowing how to use your strength to good effect.

**Psalms 16:7** I will bless the LORD, who hath given me **counsel**: my reins also *instruct* me in the night seasons.

So there in that verse it compares counsel to instruction. Being instructed in what to do and how to do it. That's receiving counsel.

**Proverbs 1:30** They would none of my **counsel**: they despised all my *reproof*.

And so that can also be in a negative sense, saying, "Hey, you're doing the wrong thing, you're doing something you shouldn't."

So you can have counsel of what to do, or what not to do.

And really, he's giving us both kinds in this Psalm, isn't he? "Blessed is the man that doesn't do this but does that."

**Proverbs 8:14** **Counsel** is mine, and *sound wisdom*: I am *understanding*; I have *strength*.

So there again we see some of those same things. Understanding, being strong, being able to put that strength to use well, by wisdom. And it says there sound wisdom. So that's wisdom that is good, that's informed, that is given with understanding of the situation. That's good counsel.

And then finally:

**Isaiah 36:5** I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have **counsel** and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

And so do you understand why strength and counsel are together so much? Because you need both of those to defeat an enemy. The strongest guy doesn't always win if he isn't aware of the enemy's movements and employs bad strategy.

That's why you have to have understanding, to know what's going on and what can be done about it, that's important. And then you have to have wisdom to know how best to act on that understanding and use your strength.

So you need to have good counsellors, who can tell you that.

So to make war, you need both counsel and strength. And in that passage the captain of the armies of Assyria didn't think that the king of Israel did have counsel and strength for war. And so he was mocking him.

And so that should give you a good understanding of what counsel is in the Bible. It is giving advice on what ought to be done.

And that's often much the way that we use that word in daily use. We talk about seeking counsel from somebody that we look up to about what we ought to do about this or that.

And so that's part of what it is talking about here. But do you see how what it is talking about here is a very practical thing? Not that we don't seek practical counsel today, but this isn't often about personal stuff, that we see people seeking counsel about here. This is much more general, like what should we do in this war, or how should we respond to this or that domestic issue, what should be done in regard to this constituency, etc.

It is kind of a political thing. Now it's not just that, but that's a significant part of it. That's usually what the Bible is talking about when it is talking about counsel. And so we see various examples of people giving that counsel in an official or semi-official capacity.

## UNGODLY

Alright, so now that we've got a better understanding of that, let's look at what it said here again. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly."

So its telling us here that in order for a man to be blessed, the first thing that he needs to do, is to not take certain counsel. There is some counsel that he needs to avoid, that he needs to not walk in, if he wants to be blessed.

And that is, the counsel of the ungodly.

Now, the ungodly, are people who are unlike God.

So to be blessed you need to not walk in the counsel of the ungodly.

Now, notice two things here.

First, he hasn't yet told us whose counsel we *should* walk in. He's only telling us whose counsel we should *not* walk in.

He's going to get to that in a moment. But he hasn't said here, that we should walk in the counsel of people who are godly, just that we shouldn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly, if we want to be blessed.

## WALKETH

Now notice also, how he didn't say "blessed is the man who doesn't *take* counsel *with* the ungodly," or, "blessed is the man who doesn't *take* counsel *from* the ungodly." But, "Blessed is the man who *walketh* not *in* the counsel of the ungodly."

Now that's significant. Because "walking in" somebodies counsel is not necessarily the same thing as taking counsel with them or from them.

Taking counsel *with* them would be to sit down with them, and together you'd come up with some advice on what ought to be done.

Taking counsel *from* them would be to go to them seeking some advice on what you ought to do.

But that's not what he's talking about here. Now, obviously, those would both be included, but he's actually speaking much more broadly than that.

He's talking about *walking in* the counsel of the ungodly. He's talking about the action you take, your daily walk of life, how it should be ordered, what it should be based on.

You see, to walk in the counsel of the ungodly is not necessarily to take counsel from them. It could be to just go along them in whatever counsel they've taken. To be swept along with them, so that you're walking along the same path that the ungodly have decided to take. That would be walking in the counsel of the ungodly.

So you know, you could be walking in the counsel of the ungodly, and not really realize it. You could just be going along with the crowd, not even thinking, and end up walking in the counsel of the ungodly, if that's where the crowd is walking.

But he says that if you want to be blessed, you need to not walk in the counsel of the ungodly.

To not take the path that they've decided to take. To not just accept their solutions for problems. What they think ought to be done about domestic issues, or when to go to war, or any aspect of life. Don't walk in their counsel.

The man who doesn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly, is the only one who can be blessed.

"Blessed is the man that *walketh* not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor *standeth* in the way of sinners, nor *sitteth* in the seat of the scornful."

Now do you see how this is a progression here? "Waking, standing, sitting."

If you start out at the start of this verse, the end of it is where you'll end up. It's a progression.

If you start out walking in the counsel of the ungodly, you'll soon find yourself standing in the way of sinners.

## STANDETH IN THE WAY OF SINNERS

Now what does that mean, to be standing in the way of sinners?

Well, we started out walking didn't we, and now we're standing still.

We were moving before, but now we're not. We're just standing there.

Now that's kind of an odd place to be, isn't it? He called this a way, like a road you travel, and yet here you are just standing on it. You're just standing in the middle of the road.

That's a place of indecision. I mean, you're not going to stand there for ever, you're either going to have to walk on, or take a seat. And if you do decide to stay and take a seat, he's going to tell you where you're going to be sitting in a minute.

But right now you're just standing there, standing in the way of sinners. The *way of sinners*. Now there's progression in that too. Before he was talking about the *counsel of the ungodly*. Now he's talking about the *way of sinners*. Now, "ungodly", that's a statement of character, not necessarily of action. Are you like God in character, or unlike him? Are you godly, or ungodly? But now he's describing this "way" that he's talking about, not as the way of the ungodly, but the way of sinners. Now, "sinner", that's not a statement of character, that's a statement of action. What you do. Being a sinner is being somebody who sins. Now, an ungodly person might sin too, but that's just a description of their character, of who they are, not what they are, and what they do. He's now talking about people who are not only unlike God in character, but actually act against him, against what is right. And so we have the *way of sinners*. The *counsel of the ungodly*, but the *way of sinners*. The advice that springs from the ungodly's character, but the walk that springs from the sinner's action.

So you see how there's a clear progression there. Putting it all together, when you start out walking in the counsel of the ungodly, you're going to end up coming across a certain path, a certain way. It will inevitably lead you to the way of sinners. That's where the counsel of the ungodly leads. So you'll end up standing in the way of sinners. And then you'll have to decide, are you going to walk on it, or are you not? Are you going to sin, or are you not? Because the counsel of the ungodly is going to tell you that that is the place to walk. If you walk in the counsel of the ungodly, that's ultimately where you'll end up walking, is in the way of sinners. If you take counsel from people who are unlike God, you're going to be confronted with the question of whether or not you will sin against him. That's where it will lead. And if you follow that counsel, walk in it, and end up on that path, in the way of sinners, you will not be blessed. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

## SITTETH IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL

And that will bring you to the end of the progression, where you decide to pull up a chair, and sit in the seat of the scornful. Now the scornful, those are the people who mock and scorn and ridicule the counsel other than their own, and the way other than their own. They don't just stand in the way of sinners, they walk in it, and scorn those who don't. They not only walk in the counsel of the ungodly, but scorn any counsel that isn't ungodly. Now that's pretty far, that's pretty far gone. That certainly makes a fitting end of the progression. Now some of us might think that it's a little bit of a jump, to say that walking in the counsel of the ungodly will always put you in the seat of the scornful in the end. But that's what is implied here. When a man walks in the counsel of the ungodly, he'll end up standing in the way of sinners, and then sitting in the seat of the scornful. And he will not be blessed. If you walk in the counsel of the ungodly, you will not be blessed. That's where it all begins, walking after ungodly counsel, and that's the first thing that you need to avoid, because if you don't, you will not be blessed, you'll end up sitting in the seat of the scornful.

## Verse 2

So now that he's told us what you need to not do, in order to be blessed, he's telling us what you need *to* do.

And it's very simple. That's all folks, just this one verse. That's it.

Just one thing, or two things, depending on how you want to look at it.

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

### LAW OF THE LORD

So the key to it, is the word of God. He says, the "law of the LORD", because at that time they were still living under the law, that was the main brunt of their scripture. They didn't have the whole Bible yet, they didn't have the NT, or most of the OT. After all, these Psalms were just being written.

And so when he says "the law of the LORD, "he's talking about the Bible. What they had of it. The word of God.

That's the key to being blessed.

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

### DELIGHT

Now the first word that stands out there is delight, isn't it?

His delight is in the law of the LORD.

Not, "he reads his Bible...sometimes." Or even, "he reads his Bible, a lot."

But his *delight* is in the law of the LORD. That's what he delights in.

You know, you can read your Bible every day, and still not delight in it. It can be a chore, and if that's all it is, then don't think that you're doing what is necessary in order to be blessed, because that's not what it says.

You know, this sounded so simple at first, but after you start to think about it, it isn't quite so easy, is it?

You need to not just accept the word of God, or honor the word of God, or read the word of God, but if you want to be blessed you need to delight in the word of God.

"But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

You need to delight in it so much, that you meditate in it day and night.

Not just during church on Sunday...and maybe Wednesday evening. But day and night, every day.

That's what you need to do, in order to be blessed. Meditate constantly in the word of God.

### MEDITATE

Listen to what it says:

**Joshua 1:8** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt **meditate** therein *day and night*, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: *for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

And so way back just after God had given them the law, he told them to meditate in it day and night, and that if they did, they would be blessed.

Now this word meditate, we kind of know what it means, but we have several different ways that we use it today.

Like oriental, mystical, meditation type stuff.

That's Satanic, that's not what he's talking about here.

How do I know? Because I looked up verses that use the term meditate paralleled with other words, so that I could find some synonyms.

Here is how the Bible uses the word meditate:

**Psalms 63:6** When I *remember* thee upon my bed, and **meditate** on thee in the night watches.

So later in Psalms it talks more about meditating in the night, and it calls that *remembering*.

So meditating on something is to remember it, to think about it. To call it to mind.

That's actually the opposite of oriental meditation, isn't it, because when you do that you're not supposed to remember things, you're supposed to clear your mind of everything. So that's really a contrast.

**Psalms 77:12** I will **meditate** also of all thy work, and *talk* of thy doings.

So meditation there is paralleled with *talking*.

Now, you certainly wouldn't compare oriental-style meditation with talking, it is all about being quiet.

But the Bible compares meditating on the words of God to talking to others about what he has done.

You know, I've heard it put very well before, in this way: meditating is preaching to yourself, inside your head. Preaching the word of God to yourself. Thinking about it, and expounding it. I think that's a pretty good definition. I think that hits the nail right on the head.

**Psalms 143:5** I *remember* the days of old; I **meditate** on all thy works; I *muse* on the work of thy hands.

So there again we see remembering compared to meditating, and also musing. And so when the Bible talks about meditation, it is talking about thinking on something, mulling it over, remembering it, considering it. Expounding it to yourself.

And it says that for a man to be blessed, he needs to meditate on the law of the LORD, on the word of God, day and night.

Do you see how that presents a contrast to what he said a man who wanted to be blessed needed to not do, in the first verse?

That verse started out talking about ungodly counsel. Walking in the counsel of the ungodly. And this one doesn't talk about counsel directly, it doesn't mention the word, but it's clear that it is implied that to be blessed your counsel needs to come not from ungodly men, but from God. From the word of God. From meditating on it, remembering it, keeping it in mind, and always thinking about it. And that's where your counsel needs to come from.

And note that here it presents this as a binary choice. You can walk in the counsel that you receive from daily meditating on the law of the LORD, the word of God, or you can walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Those are the choices.

Which means that if you aren't daily meditating on God's word and walking in that counsel, then you *are* walking the counsel of the ungodly.

Like we said before, you might not be taking counsel *with* the ungodly, or intentionally taking counsel *from* the ungodly. But you may be walking in, being carried along with, the counsel of the ungodly anyway.

If you don't delight in the word of God so that you meditate on it daily, then you probably are walking in the counsel of the ungodly. Because that is the counsel that is out there in the world.

That's they only other kind of counsel that there is.

And so it presents this here as a binary choice.

And note what it doesn't say. It doesn't say that the man will be blessed who takes counsel from men who aren't ungodly. It doesn't say that the man will be blessed who takes counsel from godly men. It doesn't say to take counsel from the priests, the Levites. Or from your pastor. No, to be blessed, you don't walk in the counsel of men. You walk in the word of God, delighting in it so much that you meditate on it day and night. That's how to be blessed.

When you think about how counsel in the Bible is often in reference to national concerns, general concerns, and not necessarily personal concerns, referencing the law of the LORD in regard to that makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?

Because it is the law of the LORD that instructed Israel about how to handle various different domestic issues, and what their culture should be like, and what their laws should be, and how they should war, and against whom, and who they should make peace with, and who they shouldn't.

And so the law of the LORD offered them lots of wisdom, of advice and counsel, about how they ought to walk and live, not just as individuals, but as a people, as a nation, as a kingdom.

And it is often that broader, collective counsel, that the Bible is referring to when it uses that word.

And so the word of God, and for them, the law of the LORD especially, offers counsel in regard to these things, that we need to have always in mind, and meditate on day in night, if we want to be blessed.

So that we'll walk in that counsel, after the word of God, and not in the counsel of the ungodly.

So he's laid out here, in just two verses, a prescription for how to be blessed. First the things that you need to not do, the counsel that you need to not follow, and then the things that you need to do, and the counsel that you need to follow.

And now, starting in the third verse, he's going to explain how you will be blessed, or what will happen if you aren't blessed.