

“Psalms: Week 1”

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2025 -MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Psalms: Praise and Worship”

We are beginning the first 14 weeks of 2025 by working through a study of the Psalms. The Hebrew word Psalm means praises. In Greek, a Psalm is a poem sung with a musical instrument. The themes of Psalms are worship and praise, which are repeated often. Almost every individual Psalm instructs us to praise the LORD, sing a new song to the LORD, or instruct us to give thanks to the LORD. The Psalms are a collection of examples of hymns and songs that display multiple authors praising God with raised hands, contrite hearts, broken hearts, with an instrument or a voice, whether alone or collectively gathered with other people. Multiple authors write the Psalms with a variety of glimpses of worship and praise: Some were suffering, others were weary, there are confessions of sin, there are moments where the writer is praising God while they sit and observe creation, some of the Psalms teach history, some Psalms are written while full of sorrow, others with joy. Whether the writer looks back at history, looks up into the heavens, or looks around at their problems, they first examine their faith in the Lord. The Psalms teach us to have a personal relationship with God as we tell Him our hurts and needs and meditate on His greatness and glory. The Psalms remind us that through Jesus Christ, we can be honest and transparent in our praise and worship of God. We will open up the first week by taking a deeper look at Psalm 1 which clearly lays out the differences between walking the path of the Lord, which leads to righteousness, versus the path of the wicked, which leads to perishing.

Scripture - Psalm 1 (The way of the righteous and the wicked)

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. 4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; 6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Key Terms - Psalm (Strong’s Definition)

Psalm: A set piece of music, i.e. a sacred ode (accompanied with the voice, harp or other instrument; a "psalm"); collectively, the book of the Psalms:—psalm. A striking, twanging a.) of a striking the chords of a musical instrument b.) of a pious song, a psalm

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

Psalm 1 (Read Psalm chapter 1-15 this week); Isaiah 57:20-21; Ephesians 4:1, 17 & 5:1-21; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 John 1:7

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions..

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

The Psalms are a lot like a mixtape or playlist of different authors showing a range of feelings and emotions: praise, worship, joy, lament, pain, grief, suffering, guilt, shame, regret, loneliness, anger, awe, and love to name a few. Here is a quick summary of the authors of the Psalms.

- David wrote 73 of the 150 Psalms: Psalms 3–9; 11–32; 34–41; 51–65; 68–70; 86; 101; 103; 108–110; 122; 124; 131; 133; and 138–145 to be exact. There are some NT passages that attribute 2 more Psalms to him: Psalm 2 (see acts 4:25) and Psalm 95 (see Hebrews 4:7)
- The Family of Asaph (Asaph was one of David’s and Solomon’s key worship leaders) wrote 12 of the Psalms: Psalm 50, 73-83
- The Sons of Korah wrote 11 of the Psalms: Psalm 42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88
- Heman the Ezrahite co-authored Psalm 88 with the Sons of Korah
- Solomon wrote two Psalms: Psalm 72 & 127
- Moses wrote Psalm 90 and is traditionally attributed to writing 90-100. There is some question as to Psalm 95 however as Hebrews 4:7 attributes it to David.
- Ethan the Ezrahite wrote Psalm 89.
- There are around 50 Psalms with unknown authors

Whether the writer looks back at history, looks up into the heavens, or looks around at their problems, they first examine their faith in the Lord. The Psalms teach us to have a personal relationship with God as we tell Him our hurts and needs and meditate on His greatness and glory. The Psalms remind us that through Jesus Christ, we can be honest and transparent in our praise and worship of God.

To connect with God and the things of God, we must disconnect from the things that move us away from God. As we look at Psalm 1 this week we will clearly see this truth at play.

As we look at the opening line of Psalm 1 “Blessed is the man”, we must be very careful to not think, “If I do the things listed in the next verses, I will only be blessed, and I will equate blessing to financial gain, or no suffering, no sickness or difficulty.” The ultimate blessing is that we would have a growing, intimate relationship with God.

To be blessed is to have found the favor of God and receive life, peace, joy, and delight.

In verse 1 there is a pathway that is being chosen and also a pattern or progression toward allowing someone or something to create a habit in our lives and, in turn, lead us away from our walk and growing relationship with God due to the company that we keep.

Key Thoughts

This depicts a habit being born in our lives based upon the people we listen to and the company we keep...

- Walk→Stand→Sit (Habit in life)
- Counsel→Pathway→Company (People you listen to)
- Wicked→Sinners→Mockers (Company you keep)

We are being warned that if we want to be blessed, we must examine our habits and the people we listen to. We must be as careful as those pursuing a relationship with the LORD because there are a million voices in our world vying for our attention, likes, and support.

The Christian life is compared to a walk and it begins with a step of faith in trusting Christ and grows as we take further steps of faith in obedience to His Word. Walking involves progress, and Christians are to make progress in applying Bible truths to daily life. (see also Ephesians 4 & 5; Colossians 1)

The people God blesses are careful in their walk: though they are in the world, they are not of the world. By contrast, it takes little imagination to see the person walking near sin, then standing to consider it, and finally sitting down to enjoy “the pleasures of sin for a season.”

There is a progression and pathway in verse 2-3 as well. Delighting in the law of the Lord leads to daily influence and impact from God’s word. Our attitude toward the word of God will dictate the impact it will have on our desires and direction. Delight → Daily → Deep Roots → Fruit

We want the fruit of Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control), yet we don’t want to spend time planting the roots and daily delighting in the word. The Psalmist says the one who delights in the word is growing deep roots, where they are continually being given the water for growth, and when this person goes through hardship, they don’t wither. They don’t fade away. Because they are meditating and growing in the word of God, they will continue to flourish and grow and even be able to handle the difficulties that this sinful world throws in their path.

Spiritually and emotionally, we are designed to function best when we are fuelled by the truth of God’s word and the impact of God’s love, grace, and forgiveness. This is the “blessed is the man.” A relationship with God through Jesus Christ, filled with his teaching, brings blessing and fuels our daily lives. Decisions made out of evil, sin, selfishness, and disobedience do not set roots; they are not planted near people who bring life; they shift and change. Therefore, the wicked are tossed about in the trials of this life.

Reflect & Respond

Who are you standing with in life? (What/whom is shaping your principles?)

Who do you sit with when you make decisions? (What company are you keeping?)

The Psalmist in chapter 1 is very clear. There is a path that leads to life and blessing, or a path that leads to perishing without hope. Which path are you traveling today?

What is your take away on what Psalm 1 means to be “blessed”? How does the definition in Psalm 1 of “blessed” differ from how our world and culture see blessing? Which definition do you find yourself most pursuing?

In verse 2 we read that “his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night.” How are you doing in this regard of finding your delight in the word of God and meditating (focusing) on it day and night?

What type of tree are you right now? Are you experiencing the fruit of having planted yourself in the word, beside living waters, or are you withering, lacking nourishment, and living in drought? What needs to change? How can you plant yourself by streams of water and/or what needs to be pruned in your life in order for you to yield fruit and prosper? (verses 3-6; see also Joshua 1:8)

Additional Thoughts