

Psalm 1

- 1:1** Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stand in the way of sinners,
nor sit in the seat of scoffers.¹
- 1:2** But hey! His delight is in the Torah of Yahweh,
and in His Torah he meditates day and night.²
- 1:3** He will be like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
And in everything which he does, he succeeds.³
- 1:4** The wicked are not so,
but hey! They are like chaff which the wind drives away.⁴
- 1:5** Therefore, the wicked will not rise in the judgment,
nor will sinners be in the assembly of the righteous.⁵
- 1:6** Because Yahweh knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will vanish.⁶

¹ אֲשֶׁר־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר | לֹא הִלְךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים וּבַדְרָךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמַד וּבְמוֹשֵׁב לְצִדִּים לֹא יִשָּׁב – The psalmist provides three ways to contrast the inwardly changed person, even in the OT times. He does not join those who are committed to their moral depravity in the way that they think about the nature of reality which is a false understanding. He does not place himself on the same path of evil of those who are committed to rebelling against God. He does not mock God and those who genuinely believe in and follow God and His moral commandments.

² כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְצָּו וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵל – Instead of ingesting the ideas of people who are hostile towards biblical truth, the inwardly changed person has locked onto the ideas of God’s instructions in the Bible about Him and all other things with which the Bible is concerned. As often as he can, he meditates on the biblical ideas, probably to help him live consonant and in accordance with them, because it these ideas which are the most attractive ones to him in all reality.

³ וְהָיָה כַּעֵץ שֶׁתּוֹלַע עָלָיו פֹּלְאֵי מָנוֹם אֲשֶׁר פֶּרְיוֹ | וְיָתֵן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעָלְהוּ לֹא־יָבוּל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה יַצְלִיחַ – Just as a tree needs water to carry out its purpose successfully of producing fruit, this man of changed inwardness needs God’s Torah to carry out his purpose successfully of producing the fruit of his inwardness, i.e., belief, acts of love, patience, kindness, goodness, etc.

⁴ לֹא־כֵן הִרְשָׁעִים כִּי אִם כַּמִּוֶּץ אֲשֶׁר־תִּדְפְּנוּ רוּחַ – In contrast to the inwardly changed person, the one who remains in his moral depravity and therefore committed to rebelling against God will eventually find himself destroyed by God.

⁵ עַל־כֵּן | לֹא־יִקְמוּ רְשָׁעִים בְּמוֹשָׁפֵט חַטָּאִים בְּעֵת צַדִּיקִים – The word יִקְמוּ certainly can mean “will rise,” and the LXX translates it with ἀναστήσονται which can easily mean “arise.” Thus, it makes sense that this psalmist understands that there will be a resurrection from the dead by the righteous and those of authentic belief who will experience eternal forgiveness and mercy from God (because of their changed inwardness) (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4 & Revelation 20). He is saying that the wicked will not participate in this resurrection in order to gather together with the ones to whom God grants mercy in order that they live in the eternal Kingdom of God.

⁶ כִּי־יֹדַעַ יְהוָה הַדֶּרֶךְ צַדִּיקִים וְדֶרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד – Clearly, for God to “know” something is for Him to approve of it and be committed to preserving it into eternity. This will be the case for how those of changed inwardness and forgiven by God live. Their pursuit of goodness, along with them as persons will be kept alive and in existence in the eternal Kingdom of God. As for the wicked, instead of finding themselves alive and existing in the eternal Kingdom of God, they who have had a path on which they walked that could be described as pursuing evil will vanish along with how they have lived their lives.