

Psalm 1

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 23 August 2010 08:31

Do you join with the ungodly? Do your pursuits involve you in being as one with wicked men and women? If so, it is the wicked who badly affect the Christian... the Christian will not affect the wicked by his presence. No Christian should mix with the wicked, because his soul will be tarnished by the sinfulness of his fellows. This is what Psalm One teaches us, with both a warning and an assurance. The Psalm is quite forthright in its judgment. Read and beware!

Verses 1&2

1.

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.

2.

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

Keeping apart from the unsaved is not just a command or warning. When a Christian refuses to join with them, he is actually *"blessed"*, 'esher. That is, he will know happiness or the blessedness of God. In full it means the man will be happy because God will give him many rewards and benefits. This is because the *man "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly"*

From my own experience I know that when I have been amongst the unsaved, even for work purposes, I felt tainted and uncomfortable. I know I ought not be with them, even if it is temporary. In my work I used to be amongst my employees for only as long as I needed to be. I did not join them in their unsavoury conversations, their lewd jokes, their foul language, their descriptions of unsaved activities, nor did I join them after our work. I kept well away because I did not wish to have my life tarnished with their sin. If I joined them and mingled freely with them, I know that their sin would become my own, even if I did not wish it to be so. By remaining amongst them I would be complicit in their sins, and even their wickedness, and so my own spiritual life would be compromised badly, dragging my soul down to the pit, where these unsaved belong and have their thoughts and actions.

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This is underpinned by the root of 'blessed', '*ashar*', meaning to 'go straight', to advance or to make progress, to 'set right'. The man who determines to do only what God says and does not mix with the ungodly, is 'walking a straight path' - that is, he is right with God. Any other path is ungodly, not acceptable to God. Any Christian who thinks he can mix with the ungodly without penalty, is deluded. When we deliberately mix with them our souls are blackened by their sins. The only reason Christ mixed with the unsaved was to preach the Gospel! If He had stayed with them for any other reason, He would have become sinful, as they were, just by being with them. (This was, of course, not possible).

Some, thinking they are doing some kind of 'good work' by mixing with the unsaved constantly, are also deluded, for God warns us to keep away from them and never to be part of their ways or lives. We have no business mixing with them, because we are now 'new creatures'. But, when we mix with them we tend to be like them, doing what they do, saying what they say, thinking as they think. In other words – we are sinning just like them! We cannot escape this conclusion.

"*walketh*", *halak*, is used figuratively, to mean our way of life, the way we live it. In verse one we are told that we must not live like the ungodly, because their "counsel" is wrong... their advice, their ways and their purpose. The purposes of the ungodly are opposite to the ways and life of God. There is no way we can mix with them and come away untarnished, even if we think we can resist their sins. As far as God is concerned the ungodly have no real purpose to their lives, and serve no purpose to God! They are literally the 'walking dead', so we should not be with them. Their 'counsels' also include conspiracy and godless plans. This is why so many live lives of criminality and nastiness. Their lives are the end result of godlessness, and this is why we should not mix with them. Few can come away untouched by their sin, whether in actuality or in mind and heart. Satan makes sure of that!

Who are the "*ungodly*", the *rasha*'? They are people who are wicked or criminal. So, the word does not just refer to those who resist God and live godless lives, it also refers to those who are against the civil law, criminals. Thus, 'ungodly' speaks of either the unsaved or criminals, or both. These are people we must not join with or stay amongst, because they are unrighteous. As the root (also *rasha*') says, they are guilty and stand condemned, both by civil law and by God. How, then, can any Christian be amongst them?

Nor may we "*standeth in the way of sinners*". 'Walketh' and 'standeth' have virtually the same kind of meaning. To 'walk' with sinners means to live in the same way and share the same values (which is, of course, impossible if we claim to belong to Christ). To 'stand', '*amad*', is even worse, for it means to be resolute in our sin, to arrogantly face God and tell Him we ignore

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His commands! It means to have the same attitude and blackness of heart and to become the servant of sin... that is, of Satan. We are, then, harmed deeply, if not permanently, by a close relationship with sinners. To 'stand' also means we 'rise up' (in sin) and rise against God, whether or not we mean to, or feel comfortable with it.

The "way" of the ungodly, is the path they take in life. It does not take much to know that their path is ruinous and sinful, if not filthy and totally wicked. No Christian can be part of such a pathway, because the ungodly go against God in morals, life and ideas. They are already condemned, being **chatta** – offenders before God. If we share the same path, even if pretending not to, then we also stand condemned. We are also warned:

"nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful"

. Every word used has a specific meaning in scripture. We have been commanded not to walk or stand with the unsaved. Now we are commanded not to sit with them.

"Sitteth"

,

yashab

, means to remain, to dwell... it is our way of life, the reason for our living such a sinful life. The *"seat*

", mowshab

, refers to the company such sinners keep as well as the way of life they have. To 'sit' amongst sinners is to make our life with them, to share sin, to rebel against God.

We must not, live like scorners, or *"the scornful"*, **luwts**. As sinners they are arrogant and think they can 'get away with it', civilly and spiritually. They boast of what they do wrong, and mock authorities, deriding them scornfully. Is this not what we see in sinners today? Movement amongst the wicked is strong and merciless, as they do and say whatever they wish. They mock God, denying Him their bodies and minds.

David is, then, using very strong language and concepts. He does not pull his punches, because his words are from God. He is telling us to avoid the ungodly as if they had the plague, so that we are not infected by their wickedness and sin. And when we avoid them and live according to holiness, we are given many blessings and benefits by God. Such a man exhibits true godliness: *"his delight (is) in the law of the LORD."* Just as the ungodly delight in doing wrong and what is criminal, so the genuine Christian delights in doing what is holy and pure... any time spent with the ungodly casts a shadow of evil upon him and he spends more time with godlessness than with God.

"Delight", chephets, is a longing or desire to be holy, to do what pleases God. The saved soul

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cannot in any way delight in being amongst evil men and women; conscience prods it until the person leaves their company. Some Christians pretend to enjoy what the unsaved do, just to be counted as part of the 'crowd'. This is not just folly – it is grave sin, and it will always affect the spirit.

Rather, the saved person delights in the "*law of the LORD*". He loves the **towrah** (from which we get 'Torah'). These are the instructions and laws of God. Though the law does not save us, we are nevertheless expected to keep God's laws for daily living. These are the 'standing laws' of God; we cannot say such laws are not required, for *everything* said by God is a law! And if such a law is universal and not simply Mosaic, we must obey. The Decalogue is one such example.

Remember that the LORD in this text is **Yěhovah**, 'the existing God', the one true God, not just of the Hebrews but of all people, whether saved or not: from **hayah** – to exist. He is the self-existing One, God. He holds our very lives in His hands and can crush us if He wishes to. This is why we must always have a fear of God in our hearts... it balances with His love towards those who love Him. He is our Creator Who alone gives us life and maintains it. He does not just deserve our love and obedience, but commands it.

The man who delights in God will "*meditate day and night*" in God's commands. It is an undisputed privilege to serve God full-time as a minister. But, ALL Christians must serve God full-time in their hearts, for this is their only and true service. They are saved not just to sit around this earth until they enter Heaven, but to actively serve Him with their whole lives, no matter what activity they are employed in! Everything they do MUST be directed *at* God and receive its life *from* God. If we have parts of our life that do not do this, we are sinning, no matter what excuse we give for not revealing our faith. We must meditate day and night in the things of God... we must imagine what God requires, think upon it, study it, speak it, and do it. This is what God demands of us, and living as an ungodly person cannot be an option.

Verses 3&4

1.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

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2.

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Many are envious of the ungodly, who often become rich and powerful. Some even think it would be nice to copy them, just to get money and power! What fools! Money cannot save us, nor can power make us holy. And, on top of that, the ungodly will enter an eternity of hell, so why envy them? The ungodly can be destroyed at any time; their gains will disappear, as if they had never existed. But, those who belong to God and are faithful will be different. Perhaps it does not seem so, but compared to the ungodly, the Christian will be bounteous, as a tree planted on a riverside next to flowing waters. This is a symbol for actual benefits given by God.

To some, who are going through troubles or poverty this might not seem the case – but even the poverty of a Christian is bountiful when compared to the life of a rich unbeliever! This is not playing with words. I know because I have experienced many years poverty and many years serious ill health! I preferred my state to the state of those who had plenty in this world but nothing of God. That is reality... the riches of the unsaved are equal to dust, for when they die they will never enter Heaven.

The Christian will bring *“bring(eth) forth his fruit in his season.”* That is, God will use him as and when required. The faithful will know periods of service to the Lord and subsequent gifts and blessings. But, the unsaved will not have such grace and mercy; their lives are empty and without reason, no matter how rich they are. Their existence will change soon, as they come under the vicious bondage of Satan in hell. Conversely, as believers, we will know God and Heaven, living in His greatness and love, in light and power. When we look at it this way, we “shall prosper”, perhaps in financial terms, but mainly in spiritual terms, which is far greater.

Verses 5&6

1.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

2.

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For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Because their existence will end in hell, *“Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.”* No, this does NOT mean they will not be judged. Rather, it means they think they are powerful and their lives have purpose, but, without God, it is all a delusion. When the judgment day comes, they will not ‘stand’... their reasoning will evaporate in the gaze of Almighty God’s light, and they will fall. They will not endure, quwm; they will lose their lives as they come under Satan’s hand; they will be invalid in the eyes of God.

The judgment day of God will decisively divide one man from another, the very few from the large majority. God will cast the unsaved into hell and give the righteous their reward of Heaven. That is what judgment day will be for – the legal and deific ruling on who will survive God’s gaze, and who will not, knowing only His wrath and legal penalty. In that day all unrighteous people will come to realise that the God they rejected, or thought was feeble or even non-existent, will show them their folly... but they will have no choice or possibility of changing their minds.

Thus, no sinner will enter the *“congregation of the righteous”*. Though many will mix with sinners on this earth, there will be no such mixing in the next life – there will be two classes of people, the saved and the unsaved. They will be divided by eternity, for after judgment they will no longer meet; the unsaved will know only misery and damnation, but the saved will know only wonder, joy and wondrousness. Today, most churches mix saved and unsaved. Not so in the next life... there will only be the righteous with the righteous!

The *“Lord knoweth the way of the righteous”*. That is, He discriminates between saved and unsaved, for He knows that the righteous have lived according to His will after they have been saved. He therefore rewards them with eternal bliss for following ‘the Way’, Jesus Christ. The unsaved follow the way of Satan, their father, so, being ungodly, they will perish, ***‘abad***

. In this case, ‘perish’ means to be lost, not simply removed from existence. They will be judged as wanting, and handed over to hell. Many try to claim that hell does not exist, or that God will never cast anyone into hell. It is a lie, for God has said what He will do... and He will do it.

In all this, as Christians, we must, at all costs, live as God demands, and not mimic or live

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amongst, the wicked, the unsaved, as a way of life... for the way of life of the wicked is already condemned, and they will end up in hell. Our reward for obedience will be Heaven and real life. Why be under God's wrath for the sake of mixing with the unsaved for a few years? Surely it is better to know His blessing and holy approval? If you are amongst the unsaved as a way of life, leave them and rejoin God's people and follow His path, or suffer the consequences of loss of well-being and spiritual goodness, along with His gifts, blessings and peace.

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