

“Blessed ...”

“O the blessednesses of the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked.”
(Psalm 1:1 - James Montgomery Boice)

“**Blessed**” ... It is striking that the very first word of the entire book of Psalms should be this one. Surely it is far more important (this is the second question) that we should be righteous, or obedient, or loving, than that we should be merely happy? Yes, in the short term; but from his original creating of his people right through to his final redeeming of them, Scripture is clear that God’s long-term purpose for them is that they should be blessed. [Wilcock, M. (2001). *The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God.* (J. A. Motyer, Ed.) (Vol. 1, p. 20). Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press.]

“**Blessed**” ... Psalm 1 is a practical psalm. Since it leads the collection, we are taught at once that study of the Psalter must have practical effects if the psalms are to achieve the purpose for which God gave them to us. Psalm 1 introduces us to the way in which we may find happiness and fulfillment in life. It is by meditation on and delight in the law of God. The psalm also warns us of sure, eventual, and eternal ruin if we do not. [Boice, J. M. (2005). *Psalms 1–41: An Expositional Commentary* (p. 14). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.]

“**Blessed**” ... The first verse of Psalm 1, and therefore also the first verse of the

Psalter, begins with the word blessed. This is important certainly, for it is a way of saying that the psalms (as well as all Scripture) have been given to us by God to do us good. Blessed means supremely happy or fulfilled. In fact, in Hebrew the word is actually a plural, which denotes either a multiplicity of blessings or an intensification of them. [Ibid. (p. 15).]

“**Blessed**” ... The great Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who also calls Psalm 1 a “Preface Psalm,” adds, “It is the psalmist’s desire to teach us the way to blessedness, and to warn us of the sure destruction of sinners.” [Ibid. (pp. 14–15).]

“**Blessed**” ... In verse 1 the word “blessed” is a call to happiness, an invitation with a promise, like Jesus’ Beatitudes. The negative part of the blessing is expounded first: The blessed person is one who does not “walk,” “stand,” or “sit” with the “ungodly,” the “sinners,” or the “scornful.” First, then, he “walks not in the counsel of the ungodly.” His worldview, his ethical life, and his moral decisions are no longer dictated by the godless. Next, he no longer “stands in the path of sinners.” His identity, his standing, his lifestyle are no longer determined by those in rebellion against God. Finally, he no longer “sits in the seat of the scornful.” He neither learns nor judges from the perspective of those bearing the acid authority of cynicism and pride.

While these three clauses may simply be viewed as variations on the same theme, they may also form a mini-exposition of progressing depravity: Heeding the

wisdom of the ungodly (walking) leads to identification with sinners (standing), which results in being settled, established in the authority of their judgments (seated). [Williams, D., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1986). *Psalms 1–72* (Vol. 13, pp. 26–27). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc.]

“**Blessed**” ... What is God’s answer to Satan’s seduction, His response to the world’s illusions? Revelation! Torah! **The Word of God is the way to blessedness.** We are to delight in that Word as did Bunyan’s Pilgrim who rushed away from the City of Destruction holding his Bible and crying, “Life, life, eternal life!”

Our attitude toward the Word, our delight and pleasure in it, however, must lead to action—our meditation upon it: “And in His law he meditates day and night.”

Biblical meditation, unlike many recent popular techniques, is not content-less but content-full. It is not accomplished by eliminating thought but by redirecting thought to the Word of God. [Ibid. (Vol. 13, pp. 27–28).]

“Are not so ...”

“The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.”
(Psalm 1:4 ESV)

“**Are not so**” ... identifies the antithetical approach of the psalmist. The person that knows true blessing is **this and not that**. You may remember the axiom I have shared before. If two parties are in disagreement over a major issue, then it comes down to **either/or** but never **both/**

and. Either—one party is right and the other party is wrong. **Or**—both parties are wrong.

“**Are not so**” ... Donald Williams ... For the Bible, life is a journey offering two roads. Regardless of how offensive this idea may be to the modern mind, **it is “either / or,” rather than “both / and.”**

There are two perceptions of reality: the supernatural and the natural. There are two conflicting kingdoms: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. There are two entry points: the wide gate leading to destruction and the narrow gate leading to life (Matthew 7:13–14). As Francis Schaeffer stresses, unlike Hegel’s dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis), biblical thought is antithetical: thesis / antithesis. There is no reconciliation of opposites (synthesis). [Williams, D., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1986). *Psalms 1–72* (Vol. 13, pp. 24–25). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc.]

“**Are not so**” ... Michael Wilcock ... In fact this “not”, like the contrast between righteous and wicked later in the psalm, highlights the importance of definition. **A biblical faith and life are not that, but this.** On the broad scene, this attitude in the psalmists challenges the whole range of modern -isms, from liberalism to post-modernism, which shy away from the notion of objective truth and error, right and wrong. On the personal front, it challenges the individual to repeated choices between clearly defined ways of believing and acting. [Wilcock, M. (2001). *The Message of Psalms: Songs for the People of God.* (J. A. Motyer, Ed.) (Vol. 1, p. 21). Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press.]