

PSALMS

THE
SECRET OF
HAPPINESS



READING THE TEXT

PSALM 1:1-6 (NRSV)

“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”



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HAPPINESS IN PSALMS

1. ONE GOAL

“**Happy** are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”



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A state of pleasure or joy experienced both by people and by God, but subject to change according to circumstances. True happiness derives from a secure and settled knowledge of God and a rejoicing in his works and covenant faithfulness. God rejoices over his faithful people.

Martin H. Manser

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Why has this happened? A prime suspect is our modern belief system that everyone should follow their dreams...With expectations so high, less happiness is the inevitable result. Many Millennials (born 1980-1994) I interviewed...were angry. No one told us it was going to be this hard, they said.

Jean Twenge (PhD)

אֲשֶׁרִי

blessed!, how happy!, i.e., a heightened state
of happiness and joy, implying very favorable
circumstance and enjoyment
Dictionary of Biblical Languages

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The Hebrew, asherey, is a plural form, exclamatory and intensive: ‘O the sheer happiness of the person who ...’ With this expression a way of living is going to be warmly commended with all the authority of generations of experience.

John Eaton

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Blessed is the man. In Hebrew there are two words for blessing, one used by God when he is expressing a benediction (bâruch), and the other used here (ʿashêrê) by men when referring to other men. To merit the word blessed used here, man has to do something, or, as in this case, not do something, for which he can be commended.

Allan Harman

READING THE TEXT

2. *THE TWO WAYS*

“Happy are those **who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers**; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”



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READING THE TEXT

THREEFOLD DEGRADATION

“Happy are those who do not **follow** the advice of the wicked, or **take** the path that sinners tread, or **sit** in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”



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*A progression seems to be intended: **first an occasional compliance, then a lingering, and finally a settled identification.** By the ‘wicked’, ‘sinners’, and ‘scoffers’ is meant those hardened in defiance of God and of all that is good; arrogant and unscrupulous, they would be god to themselves, attempting to procure their own gain, and callous towards the poor.*

John Eaton

READING THE TEXT

THE ONE THING

“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; **but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.** They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”



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The 'meditating' (haga) suggests the murmur of recitation; the scroll is read, or passages are recited from memory, all in a kind of intoned way, and mingled with formulas of praise and prayer, sounding especially the names of the Lord. It is because this 'meditation' is a communion with the Lord that, ideally, it would be continued day and night.

John Eaton

READING THE TEXT

3. *THE THREEFOLD DESTINATION*

“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. **They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.** The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”



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DESTINATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS

planted tree



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READING THE TEXT

The threefold destination of the two

ways

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. The wicked are not so, but are **like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;** for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”



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DESTINATION OF THE WICKED

weightless chaff



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CONCLUSION

“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; **for the Lord watches** over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.”



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