

October 2009

Psalm One

B. Delighting in the Word of God. v.2

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” Psalm 1:2

כי אם בתורת יהוה חפצו ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה:

1. *“But his delight is in the law of the LORD;” - כי אם בתורת יהוה חפצו -*

The passage has the word *im* in it, which can be used demonstratively, "*But his delight **is** in the law of the LORD*", as the translators have it, or it can be used interrogatively, **if**, which is used to ask a question or to establish a condition.

I believe that it is used interrogatively to establish a condition for the reasons that **if**, first of all, verses one and two are established in the believer's life, then verse three will become a reality for them, he will be like a tree planted by streams of water, etc.. And secondly verse three is connected to verses one and two by the *waw* converseive connecting the two ideas together. Also verse three is in the future tense, "*he **will** be like a tree*", showing what will happen when the condition is met.

But either way you look at it, whether as a condition, or to demonstrate the state of the man who is being blessed by God, it describes to us the existence of a state of blessedness whereby believers are blessed by God. But there are certain conditions that must be fulfilled before this can happen, and this applies not only to those who were under the Old Covenant, but those under the New Covenant today.

The **first condition** is that we are not to listen to, that is, take the advice of the wicked, those who have rejected Bible doctrine in their lives. This deals with our **decisions** in life.

The **second condition** is we are not to purse after the same lifestyle as those who are controlled by the flesh natures do, whether legalism or lasciviousness. This deals with our **actions** in life.

The **third condition** is we are not to be around, or hang around those who deny, put down, or mock God's Word. This deals with our **associations** in life.

The **fourth condition**, and it summarizes the first three things, and is also taught in the New Testament, and that is the matter of **separation**.

And the **fifth condition**, which is heralded throughout the Bible, is the occupation with, learning and metabolizing by **faith** the teaching of God's Word.

These matters deal with growth for the believer. As they hear what the Bible teaches on these matters, and in submission to God's authority learn to incorporate it into their lives, they will find God blessing them and their households more and more. We don't have the right to determine how God is supposed to bless us, but to diligently study his Word to find out what he has to say on the matter.

The word for *delight* is *chaphats* and it meant to be favorably inclined toward something, to lean toward it, to be inclined or bend toward something, to will toward an idea or something, to be pleased with it, to be delighted in it, to have pleasure in, to love someone or something, also to pursue after something. It speaks of the desire of the mind and the will in wanting something.

It was used in connection with personal objects of affection, such as a girlfriend, woman, wife, etc., to impersonal objects of affection, such as gold, vineyards, homes, etc.. Here, and in many other passages in the OT, it was used of the Word of God. *Chaphats* entailed the will, the heart and a pursuing after the item desired. If one loves something, delights in it and desires it, then it stands to reason that he will pursue after it.

Chaphats does not convey the idea of the lower affections, things in life that we like, such as, I like tacos more than burritos, but is used to convey a desire, **a love that is at the highest ends of our priorities and desires**. A **woman** that a man delights in is the number one woman in his life. The **friend** that you delight in is your number one friend in life. This person or thing holds your highest affections and desires, therefore, it is the thing that your life centers around and the one thing that you will constantly choose above all other things!

But here we see that the object of the believer's affection, desire and will to have is not gold, houses, clothes, friends, or even one that you love, but **the Law of Yahweh!** But the *Torah* of *Yahweh* is not to be thought of restrictively referring to the Ten Commandments, for the word *torah* refers primarily to the idea of the instruction that comes from God. So what it's talking about is the teaching of God, or as we say, Bible Doctrine, or the teaching of the Bible. And here we get into the idea of the difference between revelation and religion.

Religion deals with a man-made system whereby man devises **his** way of finding God and his own way of pleasing God. While **revelation** is where God instructs us as to how we are to come to him and how we are to please him. So under revelation God instructs man on how we are to live in a manner pleasing to him so he can bless us. The **doctrinal, godly believer** in turn lives his life in accordance with what God's instructions are. While the **wicked** reject divine instruction and come up with their own ideas on the matter and expect God to bless that!

It's the same pattern found after the fall where God instructed both Cain and Abel how he was to be approached and what they had to do to receive his favor, or be blessed by Him. And that was to offer the proper sacrifice. Abel obediently offered the sacrifice as per the instructions of God, while Cain arrogantly rejected God's instructions and offered up what he wanted! And, as we know, God rejected Cain's sacrifice, but accepted Abel's!

Now it says that we are to delight ourselves in the teaching of God from his word. What this means is that we are to love it, that we are to desire it, to be positive toward it, that it is to be our priority in life taking precedence over all other things and that we are to pursue after it.

In verse one we have three negative concepts that we are to avoid: one, following after, listening to, or being influenced by the advice, suggestions, opinions, or ideas of those that are not positive to the Word of God. Two, getting involved in a lifestyle of sin nature conduct. Three, associating with, or even being around a gathering of those, who deny, mock, reject, or scoff at the teaching of God's Word. But in verse two it takes a more positive note and that is to delight in his Word, to love it, seek it, make it our priority. And this we can do through the confession of sins and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

2. "And in his law doth he meditate day and night." - ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה:

The word for *meditate* is *hagah* and should not be thought of one who sets aside time in the day for his personal devotions, but of one who reflects on the Word of God all throughout the day. It meant that one was "lost in his religion". He is consumed with it night and day. It fills his thoughts throughout the day and governs his actions.

It looks not so much at the mechanics of studying, learning, memorizing, reflecting upon, applying, or seeking to apply it to one's life, which will all be there, but at one's absorption in it. He may be working, he may be married, he may be active at any given moment in any given thing, but it is always at the forefront of his mind.

Some people may go to church on Sundays and Wednesdays and may even be very active in the programs that their church has, but this is religion. This is not the same as the believer who is absorbed everyday and all day with the Word of God. As we have seen, *torah* refers to the revealing of the instructions of God to his people as to how he wants them to live.

It is not an exercise where he is memorizing a scripture verse for Sunday School, as commendable and necessary as that is, or for a test he has to take, but where he loves God's Word to the point that he is continually occupied with it all throughout the day. He does things, but the Word is always at the forefront of his mind. He's constantly thinking about passages in the Scriptures, going over the doctrines that he has learned, thinking about and believing the promises God has made.

Much of what is passed off as Christianity today is really religiosity. People religiously go to church and actively take part in their particular church's program. Not just programs, but that church group's particular approach to the "*Christian*" life. Now they may read a little from the Bible and say a few words for awhile, and even deny that this is not the case with them, but there is always something else that gets the prominence in the service other than the simple teaching of Bible Doctrine.

For some churches their emphasis is on ritual. Standing, sitting, kneeling, saying certain words and other things add up to a ritualistic approach. Other churches the emphasis is on formalism. Other churches will have their emphasis on music and entertaining the people who attend there. They like to call it worship, (which it isn't), it's just a flesh fest centered around music. Other churches have their emphasis on people's emotions. They like to call it spiritual, (which it isn't again), it's just catering to people's flesh natures. And some churches get into the outright bizzare and goofy.

Now all of these groups will deny that they're doing anything wrong. They will adamantly hold to the position that this is **how they worship God!** But this is where we have to stop and ask the question, is this how God told us he wants to be worshipped? It sounds an awful lot like Cain telling God how he is going to worship Him! Christ has told us how the Father is to be worshipped and he said that **they who worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth!**

The Word tells us that we are to delight ourselves in the instructions from God, or as we say, Bible Doctrine. It doesn't tell us that we are to delight ourselves in the music program of our church, nor to delight ourselves in its entertainment programs, nor to delight ourselves in our emotions, nor delight ourselves in the church's rituals or formalism. We are to delight ourselves in the teaching of God's Word, to be absorbed in it, live it, love it, pursue after it, to make it our priority and our life, if we want to have God's blessing on our lives.

C. Enjoying God's blessing. v.3

"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." Psalm 1:3

והיה כעץ שתול על-פלגי מים אשר פריו יתן בעתו ועלהו לא-יבול וכל אשר-יעשה יצליח:

1. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water;" - והיה כעץ שתול על-פלגי מים -

The Lord now uses an agricultural metaphor to illustrate the blessings that come from obedience. For people who worked the land, like they did in Israel and all over the world, in contrast to those who were gatherers, they were all familiar with the principles of agricultural development. It was the basis of their economy and their survival. He uses this analogy to explain the absolute necessity of avoiding the wrong kind of people, the wicked, the sinners, the mockers, and staying with the Word of God.

A tree is used to show the prosperity, longevity and productivity of the doctrinal believer, and his survivability in hard times. And what is in view here is a fruit tree of some kind that farmers cultivated that produced edible fruit: date, palm, figs, etc..

There were three kinds of trees that produced edible fruit. Or I could say that were three areas that you would find such a tree. There were trees that grew exclusively in the **wild** that were sometimes harvested in the wild, such as the olive tree. These trees could be transplanted, or shoots taken off them to grow domestically. There were trees that grew in the **fields** having been brought in for agricultural development and planted in orchards. These trees were dependent upon rainfall. And there were trees that grew in **controlled areas** and were watered by irrigation canals.

It is this third kind of tree that the Lord is referring to in this passage. The believer is like the tree that has been purposely planted by streams of irrigation water. In the original it's *streams of waters*, both words, *peleg* and *mayim*, are in the plural. *Mayim* is the word for waters and *peleg* is the word for divided, so we have *divided waters*.

But this was an agricultural term for the little gullies or channels that the water coursed through when a farmer had developed an area for food. We see this principle at work on a smaller scale for row crops, such as, corn, tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage, etc., but it was also found on a larger scale for trees, where the channels were placed farther apart in the orchards.

This principle of horticulture was used on large scale developments where the farmer made a living out of it as a business, and on a small scale where the farmer grew only his own food. Either way, in arid or semi arid areas, where water was in short supply, it had to be used wisely.

There were only about four ways that a farmer could get water for his crops. One, from a well, but this was often used only for their animals and for the household. Two, from seasonal rainfall, which was enough for most crops, such as, barley, corn, trees in their fields, wild trees, etc., if it came on time and in sufficient quantity. They were very dependent upon on rainfall in those days. Three, annual flooding, such as the Nile river, which not only brought water, but new topsoil each year. And four, by the diverting of existing streams or rivers, where they would take small streams and channel them down to their respective farms and then onto areas on the farms.

In this matter of diverting existing rivers or streams water would be diverted to the land of many farmers, who would then divert it throughout the various areas they had under cultivation. Much like the Anderson Cottonwood Irrigation District (ACID) that we have in this area. Where water is diverted off the Sacramento River in a canal, which in turn distributes the water throughout many areas here in the valley. Only instead of flooding a field, they would divert it on their field using *palgay mayim* or little channels of water.

But even in town there was the same thing going on in many households where the owner would have a wall built around his small piece of land and on the inside he would have his little garden with fruit trees, spices, vegetables and herbs growing. Everything he needed for himself and his family was right there on the property. To water it he would divert water to come in at one end of the garden and then channel it around all his plants using these *palgay mayim*, and then on out the garden.

By the use of the phrase *palgay mayim, streams of water*, we know that we have here is a controlled environment situation. It tells us that the believer is not just growing out there "in the wild", so to speak, nor is he but one of many trees out in the field, but that **he has the special attention of a farmer who has brought him into the controlled and secure environment of his garden!**

The controlled environment speaks of the believer **being in the right geographical area** where all his needs will be provided for him so he can grow, be productive and be able to survive the hard times that do come in life. But we note that even though the hard times strike all around in the environment, the garden continues to flourish because of the farmer's care.

So the believer is not only placed in his right geographical area, but is also under the protective, nurturing care of the farmer who cultivates him for his own purpose. (We should not be too concerned about the wild trees outside the garden. It is the gardener who decides what he wants to do in his garden, not the tree).

Another thing we notice about this tree, (the believer under the teaching of the Word of God living in obedience to God), is that it is *firmly planted*. The word is the qal passive participle of *shatal*, which tells us that it has not only been planted (by someone else, the Lord), but that it has been **firmly planted!** Many a strong tree has been blown down when the storms of life come with their mighty winds, but not so with the tree planted by the gardener, for he has firmly planted it. And not only that, farmers usually planted other taller trees around the garden as windbreaks to protect the trees.

The word is in the passive voice which shows that the tree did not plant itself, but was planted by someone else, namely, the gardener or farmer. And in the case of Christians the gardener is none other than Jesus Christ! We also need to note that the tree was existing before it was planted in the garden, plot, or field chosen for it by the gardener. And the gardener took it and planted it in **his** garden!

We have a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ taking individuals from outside "in the wild", (a reference to the world system run by Satan), saving them, and taking them into his garden. Once he or she is in his right geographical location, there they can start to grow spiritually and come to the place of spiritual productivity and survivability.

Another thing about *shatal* is that it is in the participial form telling us that they have been planted and stay planted. With water, (Bible Doctrine), and the nurturing care of the farmer, they can put down roots, grow, produce and survive.

Now this passage definitely teaches that there is a right geographical area for every believer in Christ. This does not mean that one area in a country is better than another area, but that God has certain areas that he wants his children to live in. Even the farmer had different areas of his garden set aside to grow different things.

There in the believer's right geographical location the believer will be able to receive the doctrinal teaching they need, as well as their spiritual, physical, social and financial needs. And it will be there that they can not only grow, but bring about the spiritual production that the Lord desires.

Another aspect of the garden or field, if it was a large scale operation there would be a chief gardener, with gardeners under him, who would be in charge of and responsible for the field. This would be analogous to Christ being the Chief-Shepherd and Pastor-Teachers being the Shepherds under him. Each Pastor-Teacher would be in their right geographical area that God has placed them in, who are responsible to teach Bible Doctrine to those that God has given to his ministry and to watch over and care for them. Another reason why it is important for believers to be in their right location.

God prepared a garden on earth and planted Adam in it. He then gave Adam a woman, Eve, so he could have company and propagate. God prepared another garden (Canaan) and planted Israel in it. And God has prepared a garden for every believer in Christ, which speaks of their right geographical location, right local church and right Pastor-Teacher.

2. "That bringeth forth his fruit in his season;" - אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ

The word for *fruit* here refers to the production of the tree, whether it may be olives, walnuts, dates, pears, plums, or whatever. But we note that it bears its fruit in season. There was a time in the year that each tree produced its fruit. Not before, not after. (We should try to alter our diets so we eat only the fruits and vegetables, or more of them, in their season. There is a reason why God has them come out at different times of the year!)

Yielding its fruit in season tells us that the tree can be counted upon to have continual production. Each year, when it comes time for the harvest, there will be fruit there. Sometimes a bumper crop, sometimes a smaller one, (it's not an assembly line), but there will always be a harvest from a fruitful tree. In nature there are years that trees do not produce as much as they did the year before, especially when they are not chemically stimulated, but they still will produce their fruit each year.

But we have to ask, why does **this** tree produce fruit in its season year after year? And the answer goes back to the idea that it had been planted in the farmer's garden where it would have a **continual, dependable supply of water!**

Some concepts that must be considered are that the tree must grow before it begins bearing fruit. And the production of a young tree is small in comparison to that of a mature tree. Another concept regarding cultivated trees and their production is their annual pruning. Proper pruning in the hands of a master gardener insures a more bountiful crop each year at harvest time. (Our trials in life).

But we're not talking about trees here, but Christians in their walk with God and being blessed by God, which has the ideas of prosperity, success, production and survivability. First of all, we have the believer being planted in the garden by the gardener where the streams of water are, which is a picture of the Christian being placed in his right geographical location by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

In his right geographical location, and under the teaching of his right Pastor-Teacher, he will be under the care and cultivation of the Lord, like the tree under the master gardener, where he can grow and develop as the Lord intends. And also have protection from those who would seek to break the tree's limbs and steal its fruit. But more than that, the believer will have a continual supply of the water of God's Word to insure his growth, production and survivability in a time of drought (testing).

The thing to remember about a garden, or larger scale operation on a plot of cultivated land, is the fact that it had a year round supply of water, and because of the *palgay mayim*, the little streams of water, or irrigation canals, each plant could be assured that it had all the water that it needed. And because the believer in Christ is in his right geographical location, sitting under the doctrinal teaching of his right Pastor-Teacher, then he is assured that he will have a year round supply of the water of God's Word. (In some cases, the Lord will supply doctrinal teaching to believers who are not in the same geographical area as their right Pastor and right church).

And because the believer has a continual supply of the water of God's Word that his soul needs he will be able to grow into a healthy tree! He won't be like those trees (believers) still out in the wild of the world system without sufficient water and under the personal care of the farmer, who, if they do survive, will be stunted, diseased and twisted, and if they do produce any fruit, there will be little of it, it will not be on a dependable year round basis and it will be sickly also!

The **tree** in the passage refers to believers in Jesus Christ. What **kind** of tree it is, as to its species, refers to the spiritual gift that God has given to every believer in Christ. The **master gardener** refers, of course, to Jesus Christ. The gardener or **farmer** refers to a man having the spiritual gift of Pastor-Teacher. The **water** refers to Bible Doctrine. The *palgay mayim*, *streams of water*, refers to the exegetical, line by line teaching of the Word of God to each believer in Christ. The **garden** refers to the right geographical area for each believer in Christ.

What makes one place of dirt a garden, instead of just being in the wild are two things: one, having water, and two, the land has been cultivated and cared for by a gardener. And in the garden there will be a wide variety of trees and plants. Which is to say that God places believers having different spiritual gifts in various geographical areas. But one thing that is important, and that makes a garden a garden, is that there will be a Pastor-Teacher in a local church teaching Bible Doctrine. And where are the Christians to be? Sitting on the pews in their church all in a row like little plants taking in the water of the Word of God.

It is very important that the believer in Christ is in his right geographical area sitting under the teaching and authority of his right Pastor-Teacher, because this is the provision of God for his **spiritual health!** For as the believer takes in the water of the Word of God their souls are nourished like the plants and trees in the field. And as they are nourished they become healthy and they grow! And as they grow they become mature trees producing the fruit God intended.

Healthy trees not only produce fruit, and fruit that is healthy, but fruit on a consistent basis. The leaf of the healthy tree will not wither because of the water that the farmer has provided. This is what David was talking about in Psalm 37:3, "*Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*" He's talking about believers settling down in their right geographical area where God has placed them sitting under the teaching of God's Word where they can grow spiritually and be blessed by God. Where they can grow, be blessed, be protected, provided for and get to the place where they can be spiritually productive.

3. "His leaf also shall not wither;" - ועלהו לא-יבול

The word for leaf is *elah* and denotes the leaves found on trees or vines. The word for wither is *nebal* and it means to fade, to shrivel, or wither. Basically there were about three things that would cause a tree's leaves to wither. **One**, some form of disease. **Two**, insects boring into the trunk. **Three**, lack of water. And usually the lack of water would make a tree susceptible to disease and insects.

A tree without water was not only a tree that was sick and diseased, maybe even dying, but it was also a tree that did not produce fruit. Isaiah 1:30, "*For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.*" Which speaks of a believer who is not taking in the Word of God in their life. They produce no spiritual fruit, they have diseases of the soul, they also have some problems with mental illness and they may be under the sin unto death.

While on the other hand a tree with green leaves was an healthy tree, one with no sickness, no disease, and was one that produced fruit! Proverbs 11:28, "*He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.*"

As the green leaf speaks of the health of the tree, so does it speak of the spiritual health of the believer. The tree that is planted by the irrigation canals of water is able to put its roots down and drink up the water that is there and that life-giving water is reflected all the way out to its tender little leaves. But not so with the tree living out in the wild away from the garden where there is a reliable source of water. When a time of drought comes the tree in the wild will suffer, but not the one in the garden.

But there is a difference between a tree and a believer, in that the tree will involuntarily suck up the water around it, while the believer must exercise positive volition and his faith. A believer can be living in his right geographical location, the area chosen for him by God, and water can be coursing right by him and he pays no attention to it. Unlike a tree that will take it in by osmosis, he must make a conscious choice to metabolize the Word of God by faith!

We have seen that the water refers to the Word of God, and the streams of water, *palgay mayim* refers to the line by line teaching of Bible Doctrine by a Pastor-Teacher in a local church that the believer needs for his spiritual growth. But the believer is a "**walking tree**", he must avail himself of it by walking his little roots over to where the water is. It's the believer's responsibility to go to where the water is, not the Pastor's responsibility to take it over to him. The local church is also like a chow hall and the Pastor-Teacher like the cook. He prepares the food and puts it out there, but you must come to the chow hall and eat.

A withered leaf tells us that either there is no Word being taught in the area that the believer is living in, or if there is, then they are not taking it in metabolizing it by faith. If there is no Word being taught in their area, then they move to an area where doctrine is being taught, or appeal to the Lord for another provision. And if the Word is being taught in their area, then they need to go and sit under it.

It's important to understand that Psalm One speaks of the believer in Christ living in their right geographical area, living the faith rest life of faith in the Word of God and applying doctrine to their lives. This is also spoken of in Jeremiah 17:7,8, "*Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*" Pastor Mike