

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 2

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This is Dr. Bruce Waltke on his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number two, Psalm 1, Wicked Gate to the Psalter.

We're going to be reflecting and expositing on Psalm 1, the introduction to the book itself. And as I say, the Psalms basically fall into the different kinds. So, you have hymns and subdivisions that would be like Songs of Zion and songs celebrating that the Lord is King, as those are sometimes called enthronement songs. I think it's a debatable term.

I don't accept it. Most don't, but some do. But that would be a subdivision of the Lord is King.

We sing it in the hymn, The Lord Reigns. The second time is what we call Petition Psalms. We call them Petition because it's one of the motifs.

The Petition Psalms have about five distinct motifs, elements to them, direct address to God in some way, often an introductory petition, but then secondly, they will have a lament and their complaint. And it's a debate, should we call it a complaint or should we call it a lament? And I think sometimes lament is appropriate. And I think sometimes complaint is appropriate.

So, for example, David's Psalm 51, a confession Psalm is not a complaint. It's a lament. But other Psalms like Psalm 44, where we suffer unjustly and where are you? I would say that's a complaint.

So, you could call them either way. And then we'll see, they usually contain a section on confidence which can change the dark questioning mood of despair and bring it into a confidence for petition. So, there's usually a section on why do you trust God in the midst of your adversity, confidence section.

And then out of that, you have the actual petition itself. Not always Psalm 63, interestingly enough, has no petition to it. It is a lament, but no petition.

The solution in Psalm 63 is to remember. And that will solve the problem. It's just remember.

And then they end with some form of praise, as I said, even the invocation may have praise, but, and then you have two kinds. They either enter directly into praise or they anticipate that when God answers the prayer, they will praise. So that's the petition Psalm.

Now you could see a sub-type of that is confidence. And though you have songs of confidence, like Psalm 23, Gunkel would classify that as a lament Psalm because it's the confidence section of a lament Psalm and so forth. And then the third kind of Psalm is instruction.

And they punctuate the Psalm that makes the book didactic. It's teaching. And so the very first Psalm is not petition.

It's not praise. It's instruction. And it prepares you for entering into the Psalter.

You don't enter into worship until you're prepared ethically, because God does not want worship from unclean hands. It's abominable to him. And so immediately we have to go through Psalm 1 in order to enter into that we were acting the way God wants us to do.

And the point is also, it's not concerned with adherence to the law. Which is legalism. It's concerned with dependence upon God to live life.

And that's quite different. So, I call Psalm 1 the wicket gate into the Psalter. I'm picking that up from Pilgrim's Progress.

And you could see I'm calling it the wicket with a T gate, not with a D gate. So it's the wicket gate. And remember that Pilgrim was in the city of destruction and he realized that it was doomed and he wanted to escape the city.

And he came to the wicket gate and he had to go through the wicket gate before he could get on the road to the celestial city. And if he didn't go through the gate and he had to go back to the city of destruction, there was no third way. You either go through the gate or you don't go through the gate.

That's how I see Psalm 1. There's no third way. You either go through it or you don't go through it. And if you don't go through it, you have no place in the book of Psalms.

So, it's the gateway into the book. That's what I was saying by way of translation, of introduction. Now we begin the translation.

And immediately we face this whole problem of inclusive languages. Blessed is the man or how, because of the Hebrew word ish. Some that say, ish means male in contrast to female. My research does not support that.

The man, ish, is the individual in contrast to others. It's the individual person. Now, of course, in Israel, it was a male-oriented thing and I think leadership oriented.

So that's my judgment. Well, how do you translate that in days of inclusive language? This is what got the NIV into all kinds of difficulties. The problem in translation is that the pronouns, they are all inclusive.

I, male, female, we, male, female, you, male, female, singular, plural, they, male, female. But when you get to the third person singular, it's either he or she, and that's the problem. And if I say he, I eliminate the she.

And so, and I don't think that was the intention. It didn't intend to exclude the woman. As I say in Proverbs that the mother has been taught because faithful instruction is on her tongue and you're to not abandon the teaching of your mother.

So, she's part of the process. It was not excluded at all, but that presents a problem for the translator. So, we wanted to use inclusive pronouns.

So that's why we shifted over. Blessed are those who, then we could go with they. And we didn't have to end with a he or something.

That was the difficulty. It's a major crisis that the feminists created in the language for us. Now I'm reading in the Oxford stuff that they is now more acceptable for the singular.

The NIV had already moved in that direction. But anyway, I translated person. So, we would feel the individual.

And that's the problem. When you make that change, you lose something in the process. So, I translated it.

Blessed is the person who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers. Now here, I did shift to the plural person, but their delight is in the law of the Lord. And in their law, they meditate day and night.

I guess you're noticing it's not saying they do the law. They delight in the law. It assumes a new heart.

It's different, it's just not legalism. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in the season and its leaf does not wither. In all they do, they prosper.

The wicked 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. And I translate the Lord by what his name means in his own mouth.

His name means, I am who I am. And if I say Yahweh, I think that probably was the pronunciation as to judge from hallelujah, for example. Probably right, but it doesn't mean anything.

Whereas to Israel, it had meaning. It was a sentence name that had meaning. So I prefer to give the meaning that he is the I Am.

So, the Lord, I Am knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish just by way of translation notes because I have to have a firm foundation. Fundamental as you're, if you're working in English is the fundamental in the Hebrew text is knowing what the text is. You have to engage in textual criticism.

Fundamental in English exposition is the translation and you know what the words mean. So the word blessed, what does that mean? And many translated, moderns translated happy. And I think that's inadequate.

I don't think we have a word for it, but I point out that in Hebrew, there are two different words for bless.

And one is barach. You know, the church Baraka, it comes from barak. It means blessing. Okay. So, you have barak, which means to bless barak.

And then you have this word, asherah. The word barach means to be filled with the potency for life. It's the ability to reproduce.

So that when God blessed the creation, it was to be fruitful and multiply. Now, when you carry that over to the New Testament, Jesus blessed the disciples. He himself never married.

So, he's not saying to them, be fruitful and multiply physically, but be fruitful and multiply spiritually. It's a different form of a kingdom. So that's the word to bless Barak.

Now the other word to bless is Asherah, the word used here. And that word Asherah means that you have a blessed destiny. It usually refers to the future.

And that future, that blessed future is based upon your present relationship with God. The blessed person, when you use Asherah, may be in deep trouble at the time. So I try to show that on the next page to show you how it's used.

I'm best on page eight of your notes. This is a quote from Eliphaz in the book of Job. He says, and this would be the Greek equivalent of asherah is machairos.

And he said, blessed is the one whom God corrects. And we don't think of a person who's being disciplined as particularly blessed, but that's a blessed person. Blessed is the person whom God corrects.

So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty for he wounds, but he also binds up. He injures, but his hands also heal. You have a blessed future.

So be thankful that you're being, you're a blessed person because God's disciplining you to give you the celestial city. You see that's different than the word fill you with the potency for life and victory. It's a different word.

Or another illustration is from the Greek of the Beatitudes of Jesus. Who are the blessed? It's not the way we normally think of it. Blessed, *Machairos*, plural, are those who mourn for they will be comforted.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you when you people insult you, persecute you, falsely say all kinds of evil against you, rejoice, be glad because great is your reward in heaven. So, the blessed person is a person who has this great reward in the future.

That is not translated by happy. It's totally inadequate for that. We didn't have a word.

I agree the average person doesn't understand it always, but I think it carries more than just being happy. I would translate it, how fortunate. The trouble with that is it sounds like fate, but I would translate it.

That's my own personal translation. I'm not offended. How fortunate.

And that leaves it open for the present and the future. I already commented on a person, on the *ish*. You can capture the notions in translation, but you can't capture the sounds.

And so I just, here's the first three words of the book of Psalms. *Ashere ish asher*. By the way, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is Aleph.

If you want to learn a little bit more Hebrew, what's the difference between A-N-I-C-E house, A-N-I-C-E house and A-N-I-C-E house. What's the difference where you put that N? They mean altogether different things. See A-N-I-C-E is a nice house. Put the N with the A and you have an ice house, altogether different. What's the difference phonetically? That difference is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It's phonemic, not in English, but it is in Hebrew.

It's the catch in your throat that when you say ice, you've got to catch. That's the A-F-H. Then you see how it's combined with the shin, with the S-H.

So, you have ashere ish asher. You hear the K assonance of that. And that's what is poetry.

And that's the frustration of a Hebrew teacher because you can't translate it. You have to know Hebrew and that's the encouragement to learn Hebrew. You enter into a whole other world.

So anyway, I just thought I'd share that with you. What's going on in the Hebrew. Now we read in the first line.

So blessed is the individual, the person, the man who does not walk in the way of the wicked and he does not stand in the way of sinners. And we changed that. That's exactly what the Hebrew says, does not stand.

ESV does not stand in the way of sinners. That's very literal. Why did we change it in the NIV? Well, the reason is that I was teaching a Sunday school class, and in it was a new student, just came to Christ.

He didn't come through daily vacation Bible school the way I did. Eight years old, I had memorized Psalm 1. Many of us have, I suspect, but he didn't come through that tradition. So, he hears this, does not stand in the way of sinners.

Oh, I said, I see. We're not supposed to oppose sinners. I said, where did that come from? And then Deuteronomy, that's exactly what the English says, does not stand in the way, does not oppose.

That's the problem with word-for-word translation. So now as a translator, I'm just trying to share with you the problems of translation. How do you get around that? So, the way we got around it is it does not stand in the way sinners take.

But that take is not in the Hebrew text. So, it's not word for word, but it is conceptually accurate. But then we're accused of being inaccurate.

So, it does not stand in the way sinners take or sit in the seat of scoffers and so forth. And I don't know. Oh, well, then I talk about the major metaphor.

We're going to be talking shortly in forms and so forth. We're going to be talking about poetry. Darlene, you should be teaching the course on poetry.

Anyway, I have to, in my limited way, be talking about poetry. It's fundamental to understand that poetry is figurative language. It's concrete.

It's short. It's terse. It's a very elevated style of speaking and very important to understand you're dealing with poetry.

So, this psalm has two dominant metaphors to it, comparisons of life. One is the comparison of tree and chaff. The other comparison is of other metaphor is of way.

That's the dominant metaphor of Scripture, a way. Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life and walk in the way. He got it all the way through Scripture.

You all know. What does it mean? What's the metaphor signified? For me, I have alliterated with four C's which this rich metaphor connotes. One is it deals with character.

It deals with a disposition. When you're talking about a way, you commit yourself to a certain way. That goes back to your heart, a basic disposition that I believe in sovereign grace, that God moves our heart, our dispositions to walk in a certain way.

The first cause of all good is God. Every good and perfect gift comes from God. Faith is a good and perfect gift and it comes from God.

There's no good thing in us. We do not generate faith. We're totally dependent upon God, but that's character, and disposition.

Your heart is inclined. My heart is inclined toward you, O God. The second one is C which I think is useful is context because you're always in community and you're in the context of those who are saints.

You separate, you minister to the sinner, but you are identified, your identity is with the people of God, that community. So, you live in a certain context. You live in the context of God's word.

You don't live in the context of the junk on TV. You don't live in sex and violence. You live in the context of faith, hope, and love of virtue.

That's part of the way. Blessed is the person who has this way of life and lives in that context. The third one is the conduct itself.

What do you do on that way? Where do you walk? How do you take your steps? What exactly do you do? And then finally that has consequences. So, you have this basic nexus of cause consequences, and deed results. So, this is the way, as I understand it, blessed is the person who has this way, and does not walk in the way of character, context, conduct, and consequence.

And that forms an inclusio, what we call an inclusio is a beginning and end are the same. It begins with the metaphor of way. It ends with the metaphor of way.

So he does not walk in the way of sinners and ends with, for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Because the Lord is in that same context, character, conduct, and consequence. That's where God is.

God knows that way. And therefore, because God is spirit, he's there in that way. You're participating in eternal life because you're in with God, his way, his character, that's life.

So you don't ever perish as God never perishes. So, your spirit and his spirit are united. Whereas the way of the wicked, God is not there at all.

There's no presence of God. Therefore, it's death. And so, if you have no relationship with God, you're dead, you're spiritually dead.

And that's where it ends at the end of the psalm. So, this is where you are. This is where we end.

Now we have another crucial word that we need to consider. I've taken up the word person, I've taken up the way, doesn't stand in the way of sin. I'm taking up fundamental stuff here.

And these words occur all the way through the Bible. When you pick them up here, hopefully, maybe I can give you a little bit of a dictionary to carry with you that you'll memorize it. And when you see these words, you'll rejoice in the truth of them.

The next one that I deal with is righteous. What do you mean by righteous? Now, as you know, I have the simple definition for the book of Proverbs is that the righteous are those who disadvantage themselves to advantage others. And the wicked are those who disadvantage others to advantage themselves.

So, the righteous give way to the other person on a line, of course, to let them in. The wicked intervene and they put themselves before the other person. They disadvantage others to advantage themselves whereas the righteous advantage others by disadvantaging themselves.

So that's a helpful, for me, revolutionary for me. But in the Psalms, it's a much more rich than that. One of the better essays in this Oxford handbook is by Creech, Thomas Creech.

He teaches at Pittsburgh Theological Seminar. I'm going to just quote him. It's fairly extensive, but I think it's worth our while and we'll be blessed by it.

He divides it into two parts with regard to God. That's the first paragraph. Then the second paragraph is with regard to humanity.

So, he defines righteous with regard to God and with regard to others, humanity. I take time here because this is a very dominant thought in the book of Psalms. It comes all the way through the righteous and the wicked.

It's just in most Psalms. So, we better have a good idea of what this is all about. I thought it was worth my while.

So he says that the righteous depend on God for protection, plead to God for forgiveness, and worship God in humility. In other words, they're very God-oriented. Those verses are all coming out of the Psalms.

I'm not taking time to read them all, but depend upon God for protection, plead for God, for forgiveness, and worship God in humility. They call on and align themselves with the righteousness of God himself. They are rooted in the house of I Am, feed on the word, and find access to God through prayer.

They relate to God as a servant to a king who is their Lord. Their childlike faith in his reign is their ultimate source of security. Their affirmation, I Am reigns is often offered amid circumstances that would seem to indicate that the wicked reign.

That was his definition. And that's so much there's worth pondering. With regard to humanity in aligning themselves with God, they love and serve their neighbors.

Their faith in God and obedience to him are inseparable. They have clean hands, what they do, and a pure heart. Ethics begins with dependence upon God, not on adherence to a legal code.

As I said earlier, it begins with dependence on God, not I'm going to do it. That's the point, by the way, of the Lord's prayer. What does he mean when he tells us, pray, do not lead me into temptation?

Would God lead us into temptation? Did that prayer ever bother you? It bothered me that I was telling God that I had to ask him not to lead me into temptation as though God would lead me into temptation. Why do we even need a prayer like that? I think the reason is I'm saying to God, don't lead me into temptation. You see, we might have the idea, boy, God, throw it at me.

I can handle anything. And what Jesus is saying, no, you can't. You're saying, I'm weak.

Don't lead me into temptation. I'm totally dependent upon you. When I saw it in that life, that gave meaning to me that I can't handle it.

Not me, I'm going to do the law. I'm going to show you like Peter. I won't deny you.

He should have prayed, don't lead me into temptation. See, it was the self-confidence that, and the righteous are praying, I can't handle it. I depend upon you.

The stance of the righteous before God sets them apart from the wicked. While the righteous praise God and pray to God when in trouble, the wicked almost always agree for that of themselves and seek to advance their own cause at any cost. Greedy for gain, the wicked curse and renounce I am.

This difference between the righteous and the wicked in turn produces the way of life that are diametrically opposed to each other. The wicked are self-absorbed. The righteous are God-absorbed.

And that's the radical difference. The wicked are oppressive and violent and advantage of the righteous. The righteous are often powerless before the wicked and therefore seek God's mercy and justice.

This helps you understand the imprecatory prayers, prayer for God will avenge the wrong. The righteous never take it into their own hands to avenge themselves. They just don't do it.

They depend upon God. It's not that they don't use means and I'll talk about that, but they are dependent upon God and not upon themselves. That is the key to the righteous spiritually.

Right to the point. And that shows David's natural inclination because he was going to do it. He was anointed David.

And even when he's in that wilderness, she believes one day he's going to be a king. Yeah. She's a great woman of faith at that.

I mean, against all odds, she believed in the prophetic word really. And that's a wonderful cross-reference. Don't bring it, don't do it by yourself.

See in Psalm 8, we'll see the enemies of God, the wicked are those who avenge themselves. They take it into their own hands. They're going to get even with the other person.

And they're not dependent upon God. They don't really believe God will right the wrongs. I got to right the wrong.

They have confidence in themselves. So, this is a basic word with regard to God dependence, with regard to others, loving and serving, and trusting God in all things. That's a great word.

All right. Now, and the law, by the way, the third last word I have to discuss is law, which is Torah. Torah basically means catechetical instruction.

It's not a legal term of a law with penalties. The 10 commandments have no penalties to them. They're a way of life.

It's a catechism. This is the way you live because you believe God redeemed you. He brought you out of Egypt.

He gave you a destiny and hope. And as a result, you live this way that's pleasing to him. So, Torah means teaching.

That's basically what it means. I think law, I don't have a better word, but, and I think some say, and I thought it for a while that the teaching then was the book of Psalms. It's an introduction to the book of Psalms.

But when I looked at Torah throughout the Psalms, it always refers to the Mosaic law. I don't think this is an exception. So, what he's saying is the Psalms are consistent with Moses.

Just as any teaching in the New Testament must be consistent with Paul, any teaching in the Old Testament must be consistent with Moses. It's the touchstone. And so that's what I think is going on here, that you are totally under Sinai.

David is going to build Mount Zion with the temple. He's going to make provision for it. It's in his heart.

He's going to build it. Sinai is greater than Zion. That's fundamental.

Put in other words, Zion comes to Canossa and then to Sinai. What I have in mind there is from Henry IV in the 11th century. You may remember that he had a conflict with Pope Gregory and he came to Canossa and he repented.

And so, I say, Zion comes to Canossa and when it violates the law, it repents and David will repent. That's what I have in mind. All right.

Those are the words, those crucial terms. All right. Now we need to look at the rhetoric that always deals with the logic of a psalm.

How is it put together? And that gets us into rhetorical criticism. That's rhetoric. How is it put together? So, I didn't call it rhetoric yet.

I will, but to introduce you, I'm talking about how is this structured. You could look at it in numbers of ways, and structure it in numbers of ways. Well, one of the things I noticed is the stitching effect to it.

A lot of people are not interested in poetry. The job of an exegete is to lead out of the text what was in the heart of God and his inspired author. And God is ascetic.

God is a poet. And so, a way of teaching theology is through the beauty of poetry, through the uniqueness of it. So, notice how this is stitched together and let the plus mean righteous and the minus mean wicked.

So how does it go? It does not walk in the way of the wicked, minus. He is the lightest in the law of the Lord, plus. He is like a tree, plus.

The others are like chaff, minus. The wicked do not stand, minus. The righteous stand, plus.

The Lord knows the way of the righteous, plus. The way of the wicked, minus. So, it goes minus, plus, plus, minus, minus, plus, plus, minus as part of the poetry.

It's stitched together by this alternating of plus and minus. You know, that's not a great theological moment, but it is something that God enjoyed and I want to enjoy it with him. And that's my job.

Okay. Now C.S. Lewis in his reflection on the Psalms, there's a lot of good in it, a lot of good in it. He's been canonized in the Anglican church and rightly so.

But I think he had some people quote him, I think too authoritatively. His idea of inspiration wasn't as strong. He was not, his whole apologetics is based on the free will of man.

And so, I think there are, we ought to be aware of it as much as I admire him and he's way beyond me. But nevertheless, I think it's reflections of the Psalms. He is offended by the implicative Psalms, for example, he calls them devilish.

So, we'll talk about that. But he has so much good. He's just a saint really.

And he is in the reflections of the Psalms. He says the Psalms are like pieces of embroidery, I would say, Danish lace. It has all kinds of patterns and designs to it.

You can outline in numbers of ways. And so, it depends on what pattern you want to follow. So, I'm showing one pattern.

In addition to the stitching pattern, you could also have this kind of an outline of two equal halves based on way. The first half would be the way of the righteous. The second half would be the way of the wicked.

And it would be in the form of concentric parallelism. You would have the way of the righteous, the cause, the character, context, conduct, and then the consequences pictured. They're like a tree.

And the consequences refer to the present and the future because their leaves never perish. They participate in eternal life, but they have their fruit in their future. So, the tree imagery with the lives and trees and you're ever alive, but there's a moment when you get the reward in the future, for example, and then you get the consequences plainly stated, they prosper.

Now you reverse that, the consequences of the wicked, they don't prosper. Not so. The consequences pictured, they're chaff.

They have no life, no worth, and they're not going to endure by contrast to a tree. And then you have the cause is that the Lord knows the way of the righteous that's behind it. So, you could see, I could divide it that way and I could preach it, teach it that way.

And very legitimately, I chose not to. I see it instead also as couplets. And this is very common quatrains 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. And that's how I'm going to seek to exposit it.

That is, it begins with the cause of the way of verses 1 and 2. The consequences are pictured in the present being a tree versus the chaff. And the consequences are plainly stated with respect to the future that is prosper, not prosper. So that's how I'm going to look at it as three quatrains.

All right, let's see, first of all, then the cause of the blessed, of the rewarded life. First of all, it begins with a renouncing of a certain way, the way of sinners. And here in verse 1, it is dealing with a progressive hardening in sin.

There are two figures of speech going on here. One is anabasis and the other one is katabasis. Anabasis is the Greek word, you're building up.

Katabasis, you're building down, you're slowing down. Notice the anabasis and keep the translation there. You see, blessed man does not walk in the council.

And then you move, does not stand in the way. And then you move into the seat. You see the heightening? You start with a way of thinking, and counsel, that leads to a way of behavior.

That leads to identification and leadership. You're in the seat of the muckers. Do you see the progressive hardening? From a way of thinking, it starts with a way of thinking to a way of behaving.

And you're transferred as in the Godfather. You were repulsed by the Godfather. You end up as the Godfather, the hardening.

That is paired with a katabasis from walking, standing, sitting, and slowing down. See, this is just, this is great poetry for me. The heightening and the slowing all going together to help us to feel the progressive hardening into sin, that he's getting worse and worse, beginning with the counsel.

And when I preach this, I have one of my, I like Alexander Pope and his heroic epaulets. And one of them is, vice is a monster of so frightful mean as to be hated needs but to be seen. But seen too off to familiar that face we must first endure, then pity, then embrace.

For me, now I'm 85, there was a time when homosexuality was a vice of so frightful mean as to be hated needed but to be seen. But in the 1960s with the sexual revolution, seen too off to familiar that face, we endured it as a sickness in the 1970s, a psychological sickness. And with Bill Clinton, we embraced it in 1992 when he wanted to put homosexuals in the military.

Now the president stood behind it. And now, because the serpent wasn't driven out of the garden, the serpent has driven the saint out of the garden. Vice is a monster of so frightful means as to be hated needs but to be seen, but seen too off to familiar that face we must first endure, then pity, then embrace.

And I illustrate it by the Medusa. Remember the Medusa in Greek mythology, she was the one with the snaky hair and the hideous face. The myth was a profound insight.

The myth was, that if you looked full face at the face of the Medusa, your heart would turn to stone. You would lose feeling. You wouldn't see it anymore.

I would suggest we all have Medusa boxes in our living rooms. We're looking at sex and violence, in full force, and our hearts have turned to stone. We're no longer offended.

Our hearts are hard due to this influence. I think this sort of tells us a lot about the context of the way of the kind of literature we read, and the things we watch. I think Satan has put a Medusa box in all of our living rooms.

Or to illustrate it again, I think the famous novel by Robert Louis Stevenson of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, as you know, Dr. Jekyll started as a very kind of good doctor, but he understood there was another side to him. He tried to give expression, and dabbled with the possibility of giving expression to that other side. He would take a toxic, a toxin and at night drink it.

What happened then he would become the diabolical Mr. Hyde in the bars and the bar brothels and murder and whatnot. Eventually one night at the end, he's thinking about taking his magical potion and he doesn't take it. He turned into Mr. Hyde without drinking, progressive hardening into sin.

So that evil took over, triumphed, and destroyed him. That's what I see happening in America. It's tragic that it's taking over.

Unless there's some miracle and God is a God of miracles and we live in hope and faith and we are the salt and the light. I don't despair. I don't see a future for our country.

Candidly, thank God he reigns. So we live in hope. Okay.

So that's from the cause is a progressive hardening into sin. I think that the way you could see a character, a disposition, and context is altogether important here. Who do you associate with? And that's in contrast to the other part, the positive, but his delight is in the law of the Lord.

And so therefore, this is, see, how is it that I'm raising the question here is why did David find the law, the teaching, a tree of life and Saul, Paul, a.k.a. Saul, he found that a sword that killed him. Well, the reason is that Saul came at it as a legalist trying to adhere to it and he killed him. Whereas the psalmist is delighting in him.

It's a total dependence, a very different thing. Therefore, it can produce fruit in him. And that's why you have a tension between Paul and the Psalms.

But you have to understand Paul is coming at it from his own narrative as a Pharisee of Pharisees, a legalist who's going to adhere to the law and he killed him. He couldn't do it. None of us can.

Whereas the psalmist is coming as the righteous who is totally not in the sense of the Pharisees understood righteousness, but as the psalmist understands righteousness,

which is childlike dependence upon God. And so, he reflects by his delight, the new heart. He can't take his eyes off the teachings.

He loves it. And, you know, I just don't like being with you all. And you're telling me how you spend the night in prayer and how you're listening to the word of God.

And it's just, and you're bearing the fruit. It's beautiful. And I'm privileged to be here.

So, I'll let it go with that. The context therefore is that he's in the law of the Lord, but now you have to make dispensational changes. Yes.

The problem with dispensationalism, I understand the value of dispensationalism. The danger of dispensationalism is you dismiss the entire word of God. It's not addressed to us.

It's addressed to the Jews. And therefore, we miss its resources when we understand how we should approach it with dependence upon God. We've come to it more or less through Paul's rejection of the law, which I think is a bastardization of Paul, frankly.

So, at any rate, and then it's the word of God, it's extended in the Psalms. Here's the law, but I don't think we do anything wrong as the light is in the entire word of God. And for us as Christians, the final word of God is the New Testament.

And we delight in the New Testament, in the Gospels, and in the epistles. And we spend there day and night listening to our Lord, who is so much greater than all. So, we have to always bring it up to date for how does the Christian respond to this? So, I'm saying we're not limited to the Torah of Moses.

We have the whole word of God and especially the Torah of our Lord Jesus, because he's our Lord. And I think that's an appropriate use of the psalm. Now that's the cause of the blessed light.

Notice he meditates on it. He accepts it. He treasures it.

He pays attention to it. He prays for it. He seeks it.

And that's based on the Proverbs, Proverbs chapter two, where in the Proverbs, how do you find the fear of the Lord? And he says, first of all, my son, accept my teaching. And then he says, store up my commands, store them up. Then he says, give your ear to it, pay attention to it, and recline your ear.

And then he says, cry out for it with all your heart. And then he says, seek it as you would for choice, silver and gold. That to me is what I mean by meditate.

And you chew it. We have a German shepherd and it fascinates me. We may give him the finest piece of meat.

He's always ready for something to eat. He's always around the refrigerator. And when you give him something, gulp, that's it.

Contrast to a cow, chews it. The Bible is saying, don't be a German shepherd, gulping it. Chew it.

Now on the next page, page 11, I'll come back to this. The consequence is pictured is that you're going to be, first of all, like a tree planted by streams of water. Now the word for streams means canals.

And you have different words for water bodies. So, you can have like Yarmuk, you can have a Nahal, wadi. And therefore, it runs in the rainy season and it runs wild and destructively.

And then the rest of you, you're absolutely bone dry. Or you can have a Naha, like a river that can flood. But this is the word of canal.

And I tried to picture myself, what is a canal? What is he talking about? And then I came across this picture and I'm going to come back to it again. When I was exegeting Psalm 92 out of Zenger's commentary. And what this is, this comes from the time of Ashurbanipal.

They have the dates wrong. I don't know why, but his dates are 665 to 627. But in any case, you notice what you have here.

You see that on the top, you have a temple, a pavilion in front of it. And the king is in it. And the king is in prayer within the pavilion in front of the temple.

Notice a river is flowing from the temple. And the Bible talks about that, a river of life that flows from the temple. There comes the river.

And then you see the canals coming off it, that water of the garden. I think that's what he has in mind, streams of water, these canals. And the source of the water is the word of God.

That's the metaphor. That's the picture. So, you have the word of God is like a river.

And then you have these streams of water coming off it that produce the tree of life. So that really helped me to understand the psalm in a better way. So I thought I'd include the picture for you.

By the way, notice on the way up to the temple, there's a via sacra, a sacred way. And notice there's an altar that's on the sacred way with the sacrifice before you get to the temple. If you're going to go up there, interesting.

By consequence, you have the chaff, they have no life, no worth, no root, and no endurance. So, as a result of that, you have the consequence of the future. The chaff does not stand in time, but when the time of judgment comes, it's blown away.

And so, you take all the great people of history and what do they come to? I'm trying to remember the lines of Anthony and Julius Caesar and on the corpse of Caesar, they'll come to me. So, this is what all your pride and pomp comes to. You're just a dead corpse here.

So, the chaff doesn't stand, but the righteous do endure for they participate in the Spirit of God. His Spirit resonates with our spirit and we resonate with him and we say, Abba, Father. It's worthwhile.

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke on his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number two, Psalm 1, Wicked Gate to the Psalter.