



THE MAN AFTER THE LORD'S OWN HEART

Please read Psalm 1 verses 1-4.

This psalm and the one following have no indicated authorship, but they were, nevertheless, like all the other scriptures, divinely inspired. The first psalm deals with law and the second with prophecy – the two great themes on which all Old Testament revelation hinges, and the themes which make up most of the psalms as well.

It is my intention only to look at Psalm 1 here and draw a few thoughts from it. You will notice first of all that the author begins his description of the man of God in a series of negatives, e.g. he “walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful” (v1), then he goes on to the positive. This is in keeping with many other scriptures, particularly the ten commandments – many of which begin with “Thou shalt not”. St Paul in many of his epistles does exactly the same thing, e.g. “Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good” or “Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate” (Rom. 12 verses 9 & 16).

Returning to our psalm: there are three negatives at the outset and it is interesting to note the order in which they appear. The godly man must not walk nor stand nor sit in the path of the ungodly – one leads on to the next. To walk off the straight and narrow way one can quite unconsciously become ensnared i.e. get in with the crowd (like Peter when he denied His Master) and then it becomes extremely difficult to escape. To use an alliteration – to stroll (walk) along this way means we become scared (stand) and finally we get stuck (sit). I remember as a toddler trying to run; and tramping into a patch of thick mud, could not go further and eventually could not stand, so I sat down in it and remained there until rescued by my aunt – a perfect illustration of what the psalmist is saying here.

Moving on to the positive side, we read that the man of God must take “delight... in the law of the Lord” and meditate on it “day and night” (v2). When Joshua succeeded Moses and was about to lead the Israelites into the promised land, he too was given this very same command. We read in the narrative, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.....for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous...” (Josh. 1 v 8).

Now let me ask my readers: Are you walking steadily and steadfastly along the path that leads to eternal bliss and not deviating onto the broad way? Also, in order to do that are you reading and meditating on the word of God day and night and thus making your way prosperous, or is your Bible sitting on the shelf week in, week out and gathering dust?



The man of God is here depicted as a tree planted by rivers of water (v3). Water for cleansing portrays the word of God and water for drinking portrays the Spirit of God. The Psalmist then indicates seven factors which mark the man of God as likened to a tree by the water: -

PROMINENCE. He is strong and resolute just like a tree.

PERMANENCE. He is planted. Unlike grass which is cut frequently, the tree sends its roots deep into the soil – or the foundation – and that foundation is of course our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

POSITION. He is by rivers of water and therefore has a continual source of life.

PRODUCTIVITY. He brings forth fruit. Jesus chose and ordained His followers to go and bring forth fruit (John 15 v 16) and earlier in the same discourse said, “Abide in me and I in you... apart from me ye can do nothing” (John 15 v 4&5).

PROPRIETY. His fruit is “in season”. As long as he abides in Christ the fruit will appear in its season.

PERPETUITY. His leaf will not wither. He is not affected by weather or adversity or what are often described as “the storms of life”. He is an evergreen, always the same.

PROSPERITY. “Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper”. This does not imply that it will be an easy road. Jesus never promised that at all. However, the business life, family life, church life and even the social life of a God-fearing man will prosper under the providence of God in a way that would not pertain to an ungodly man.

Thus we have the man of God graphically portrayed in these four short verses. I hope all my readers can honestly measure up to all the qualities laid down: because if you read the remaining verses of the psalm, describing the ungodly, you will see that those who persist in that way will utterly perish.