

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: Living By Faith In God

I. Fulfilled Living In Today's World

(Psalm 1:1-6)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

There is a lot of ideological upheaval today, and with it, one may wonder how he can find fulfillment in life:

(1) It occurs in academic circles: " . . . (S)ome professors" this year at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain "wanted the university to censure history professor Jay Bergman for urging school superintendents not to use in their curriculums the discredited '1619 Project' of the New York Times" that taught the Critical Race Theory. (Chris Powell, "Totalitarian sentiments are gaining," Republican-American, September 30, 2021, p. 8A) "The professors couldn't just disagree with Bergman -- they had to condemn him for contrary opinion and threaten his employment without ever specifying error in any assertion he had made about the '1619 Project.'" (Ibid.) "The professors did not achieve censure," but "they did induce the university's president to announce she disagreed with Bergman, lest she be suspected as politically incorrect, too." (Ibid.)

(2) It occurs at Harvard, historically a Protestant school: After Tracy O'Shaughnessy wrote in the September 19 Sunday Republican that Harvard's new Chaplain "'is an atheist'" and added the comment, "'This is not a joke,'" Robert L. Rafford of Middlebury, a retired chaplain, critiqued her remarks, writing, "Belief in a deity is not a requirement to qualify a religion or to be a clergyperson." (Ibid., Republican-American, September 27, 2021, p. 8A)

However, "Harvard's 'Rules and Precepts' adopted in 1646" included this statement: "Every one shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life." (The Rebirth of America, The Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, 1986, p. 41) That is a huge contrast to hiring an atheist as Harvard's Chaplain!

(3) Ideological upheaval affects all kinds of people: The alleged Christian website babylonbee.com satirically reported that "New York atheists" came "out in force against the COVID-19 vaccine after Governor Kathy Hochul claimed that God made the scientists, doctors, and researchers invent the vaccine." ("New York Atheists Claim Religious Exemption From Vaccine After Governor Claims That It's From God," September 29, 2021; babylonbee.com)

The fact that such a presumably erroneous report would be satirically posted by alleged Christians shows the enormous ideological and theological upheaval that affects all sorts of people.

Need: So, we ask, "*With so much ideological upheaval in today's world, how can we find fulfillment?!*"

- I. Psalm 1 was written to describe how to be fulfilled in life, Psalm 1:1a: The first word in the Psalm rendered "Blessed" in the KJV, NIV and ESV is a plural construct of the Hebrew noun 'esher, and it literally means "(Oh) the blessedness of . . ." (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., 80-81; Joseph A. Alexander, The Psalms Translated and Explained, 1975, p. 9)**
- II. How we can find fulfillment in life is then explained in Psalm 1:1b-6 (as follows):**
- A. The word for "man" in Psalm 1:1 is '*ish*, a "nobleman" as opposed to a "common man" (Robert B. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the O. T., 1973, p. 48-50), implying a man who succeeds in life.
- B. The **reason** for this "nobleman's" success is an important two-fold decision he makes (as follows), Psa. 1:1b-2:
- First**, this "nobleman" succeeds by deciding **NOT** to get involved in unbiblical ideologies, Psalm 1:1b:
 - He decides **not** to "walk," or "order his life" (*halak*, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 977; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 229-237) in the "advice" (*'esah*, p. 420) of the "ill-regulated, lawless" (*resh'im*, Ibid., p. 957) people of this world.
 - He also decides **not** to "stand," or "take his stand" (*'amad*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 763-765) in the "way [of ideology]" (*derek*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 202-204) of "sinners; those who miss the mark" of righteousness (*hat'im*, p. 306-307) in this world.
 - He then decides **not** to "sit," or "sit so as to act as a judge or a king" (*yashab*, Ibid., p. 442-443) in the seat of "scorners; deriders; mockers" (*lis*, Ibid., p. 539) in this world.
 - Second**, this "nobleman" succeeds by delighting himself in the "law of God," a general term for Scripture (Ibid., Alexander, p. 10), and on Scripture he "meditates, muses" (*hagah*, Ibid., p. 211) "day and night," an antonymical pair of nouns that implies that he meditates on it "all the time; as a way of life," Psalm 1:2.
- C. The **contrasting results** of the decisions the "nobleman" makes as compared to the decisions of the "lawless, sinners and scorners" are **IMMENSE**, described in two similes -- first of a tree in the case of the "nobleman" and second as chaff in the case of the lawless, sinners and scorners, Psalm 1:3-6 (as follows):

1. The "nobleman" is "like a tree" (*ke 'es*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 781-782) that "is *being transplanted*" (passive participle of *shatal*, Ibid., p. 1060) [by **God**, the **Author** of Scripture] onto "channels of water" (*palge-mayim*, Ibid., p. 811), i. e., onto **God's** irrigated garden, which tree then brings forth its fruit in its season [note the personal liberty to be productive within God's purpose of creating the "nobleman"] and its "foliage" (*'aleh*, Ibid., p. 750) does not "fade, wither and fall" (*nabel*, Ibid., p. 615) due to stress, and all that this "nobleman" does will "prosper," (*saleh*, Ibid., p. 852), Psalm 1:3. [The use of the passive participle for "transplanted" indicates a **process**, that as the "nobleman" **continues** to focus on Scripture and apply it, God **continues** to nurture him since he **continues** to shift away from the godless ideology(s) of the world that have so negatively affected him over to God's edifying truth.]
2. The "lawless" (by implication also "sinners" and "scorners") are "not so" (*lo'-ken*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 485-487), but are "like the chaff" (*ka mos*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 558) that the wind "drives about" (*nadap*, Ibid., p. 623), Psalm 1:4. [The verb "drives about" is in the imperfect tense (*tidpenu*, Ibid., Kittel; The Analyt. Heb. and Chaldee Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 749), indicating customary action (Allan P. Ross, A Heb. Handbook, 1975, p. 50), so opposite God's continual, stabilizing nurture of the "nobleman" (v. 3) the lawless (and sinners and scorners) are customarily insecurely flung about in futile living (v. 4).]
3. Therefore, the "lawless" will not "maintain themselves" (*qum*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 877-879) in [God's] judgment nor "sinners" (and also "scorners" by implication) in the assembly of the righteous, for the Lord "acknowledges" (*yada'*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 393-395) the "way [of ideology]" (*derek* again, cf. v. 1b) of the righteous, but the "way [of ideology]" (*derek* again, cf. v. 1b) of the "lawless" (and "sinners" and "scorners" by implication) will perish, Psalm 1:5-6.

Lesson: *For fulfillment, (1) we must refuse to be involved in the ideologies of the ungodly and (2) delight in God's Word so as to adopt its truths as our beliefs and apply those truths to life. (3) The great blessing of the Biblical way versus the vast lack of blessing of the ungodly way affects one in this life and in eternity.*

Application: *(1) In accord with Scripture, may we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-11. (2) May we reject heeding, adopting or promoting the unbiblical ideologies of the lawless, sinners and scorners that lead to a fruitless end and rather delight ourselves in God's Word, adopting its truths as our beliefs and applying them for God's great blessing!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We apply the sermon's lesson to the issues mentioned in our sermon introduction (as follows):

(1) On the pressure of some professors at Central Connecticut State University to promote the discredited "1619 Project" that taught Critical Race Theory, (a) as for CRT, God holds us accountable for our **own** sins, **not** for the sins of our **forefathers** (Ezekiel 18:1-24). (b) Also, contrary to the actions by those professors who condemned professor Jay Bergman without critiquing specific errors in his view, 1 Corinthians 14:19 calls us to communicate logically to the mind and 1 Peter 3:15-16 directs us to explain the logical reasons for our faith to unbelievers. We should communicate to the minds of those with errant ideologies the logical truth of God in order to disciple them!

(2) On Harvard University's hiring of an atheist as its Chaplain, (a) Scripture teaches there is One God, the God of the Bible (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:28-29), Who exists in Three Persons, the Father (Ephesians 1:3), the Son (John 1:1-2, 14) and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). (b) 2 John 7-11 then calls us to have no fellowship with one who denies the Deity and humanity of Christ, the Incarnation, so we should not hire such a party as a minister.

(3) On the satirical report by alleged Christian website babylonbee.com that atheists reacted angrily to New York Governor Kathy Hochul's claim that God made scientists, doctors and researchers invent the COVID-19 vaccines, (a) since all the information we need for faith and practice is in Scripture (2 Timothy 3:15-17), and it gives no insight on whether God made people invent the vaccines, the governor's claim is **not God's** claim! (b) Thus, the decision on taking the COVID-19 vaccines must consider other issues Scripture addresses [like the use of fetal cell lines to develop the vaccines when God opposes abortion (Exodus 21:22-23) and the possible harm taking a vaccine may bring (as we are not to harm the body, the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19; 3:17 ESV)]. (c) On atheism, Romans 1:18-20 claims God's existence is evident from creation, so there is no excuse in denying He exists. (d) On alleged Christians making satirical reports, we must not mislead others, but speak the truth, Ephesians 4:14-15!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we reject heeding, adopting or promoting the unbiblical ideologies of the lawless, sinners and scorners and delight ourselves in God's Word, adopting its truths as our beliefs and applying them for blessing.