

# Delighting in the Torah: The Affective Dimension of Psalm 1

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## ABSTRACT

*It is argued in this article that the common interpretation of Ps 1 as a call for obedience, a view exemplified by Walter Brueggemann's influential article, "Bounded by Obedience and Praise: The Psalms as Canon," does not quite capture the emphasis of the text. While it is true that Ps 1 affirms the lifestyle of the "righteous," righteousness is not limited to or equated with "obedience." The psalm points to the affections rather than to behaviour as the key element of the righteous person—"his delight is in the Torah of Yahweh" (Ps 1:2). Instead of calling for obedience to the Torah, Ps 1 evokes affection for the Torah. This important move suggests that the study of biblical poetry in general and of the Psalms in particular can benefit from an approach that is attuned to the passions that are inherent in the text and the passions that are brought to the text by the interpreter.*

## A INTRODUCTION

Recent studies of the Psalms have continued to include generous attention to the canonical shape of the Psalter, and Ps 1 figures prominently in those discussions.<sup>2</sup> It is generally agreed that the editors of the Psalter selected and placed Ps 1 as an introduction to the collection of psalms.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The most recent include Steven S. Tuell, "Psalm 1," *Int* 63:3 (2009): 278-80; Bernd Janowski, "Wie Ein Baum an Wasserkänen. Psalm 1 Als Tor Zum Psalter," in "Sieben Augen Auf Einem Stein" (*Sach 3,9*) (eds. Friedhelm Hartenstein & Michael Pietsch, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2007), 121-40; Bruce K. Waltke, "Preface to the Psalter. Two Ways," *Crux* 43/3 (2007): 2-9; C. John Collins, "Psalm 1. Structure and Rhetoric," *Presbyterion* 31/1 (2005): 37-48; Peter W. Flint & Patrick D. Miller et al., eds., *The Book of Psalms. Composition and Reception* (Boston: Brill, 2005); and Michael LeFebvre, "Torah-Meditation and the Psalms. The Invitation of Psalm I," in *Interpreting the Psalms. Issues and Approaches* (eds. Philip S. Johnston & David Firth, Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2005), 213-225.

<sup>3</sup> This view of Ps 1 apparently goes back as far as Origen ("Exegetica in Psalmos," *PG* 12:1099). Cf. the comments of Kemper Fullerton, "Studies in the Hebrew Psalter," *BW* 36 (1910): 323. Jerome suggests that the first psalm's lack of a title indicates its role as a preface. He writes, "Quidam dicunt hunc psalmum quasi prae-

One of the most helpful and influential articles in the debate about the macrostructure of the Psalter is Walter Brueggemann's innovative piece, "Bounded by Obedience and Praise: The Psalms as Canon."<sup>4</sup> Brueggemann argues that the shape of the Psalter registers a theological and experiential progression that begins with the "duty" of "obedience"<sup>5</sup> (Ps 1) and concludes with "glad, unconditional praise" (Ps 150).<sup>6</sup> Between Pss 1 and 150 a drama unfolds—the drama of the life of faith. Psalm 1 presents a coherent theology in which obedience produces a life of blessedness and well-being. This settled theology, however, is quickly shattered by the psalms of lament, which demonstrate that suffering comes even to those who are faithful. Psalm 73, found at the centre of the Psalter, is the "threshold"<sup>7</sup> in the movement from obedience to praise. Psalm 73 is comprehensive in its scope, including a restatement of the theology of Ps 1, coupled with protests against God and statements of confidence in the goodness of God. At the end of the journey from coherent theology through protest and confidence lies the goal of complete praise. Psalm 150 exemplifies this ultimate goal—"the joyous self-abandonment"<sup>8</sup> of pure praise.

Brueggemann's article has been cited widely and has met with near universal approval<sup>9</sup> and it is with much appreciation that I propose to engage and

*fationem esse Spiritus sancti, et ideo titulum non habere*" ("Breviarium in Psalmos," *PL* 26:823). Cf. other pre-critical writers John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (vol. 1, trans. James Anderson, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1949), 1; Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (vol. 2, 3 vols., London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1962), 1; Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments. ... With a Commentary and Critical Notes* (vol. 3, 6 vols., New Ed., New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1883), 219; and critical scholars Charles A. Briggs & Emilie G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (2 vols., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1969), 3; Artur Weiser, *The Psalms. A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 102; Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1948), 619-20; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms. A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1988), 113-14; and Gerald H. Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," *Int* 46/2 (1992): 129-42.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Brueggemann, "Bounded by Obedience and Praise. The Psalms as Canon," *JSOT* 50 (1991): 63-92, reprinted in Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith* (ed. Patrick D. Miller, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 189-213.

<sup>5</sup> Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 190-92.

<sup>6</sup> Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 193.

<sup>7</sup> Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 204. See also Walter Brueggemann & Patrick D. Miller, "Psalm 73 as a Canonical Marker," *JSOT* 72 (1996): 45-56.

<sup>8</sup> Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 212.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," 34-35; Roger N. Whybray, *Reading the Psalms as a Book* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 85; Nancy L. DeClasse-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning. The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997), 43; Milton A. Vincent, "The Shape of the Psalter. An Eschatological Dimension?" in *New Heaven and New*

build upon Brueggemann's groundbreaking work. When I came back to his article during my recent study of the Psalms,<sup>10</sup> I found myself struggling over his use of the word "obedience" as the characteristic descriptor for Ps 1. My hearing of the psalm suggests that while obedience may lie in the background, it is not in the foreground.<sup>11</sup> I will argue in this article, therefore, that Ps 1 does not teach the duty of obedience so much as it evokes affection for the Torah. In Ps 1, the righteous are not those who *obey* the Torah but are those who "delight in the Torah" (v. 2).

## B OVERVIEW OF PSALM 1

We will begin with a brief look at the whole Psalm. It reads as follows:

<sup>1</sup> אָשָׁר יָדָא יְהִישׁ אָשָׁר לَا הָלַךְ בַּעֲצָת רָשָׁעִים וּבַדָּרְךָ חַפְאִים לֹא עָמַד וּבָמָשֵׁב לְצִים לֹא יָשַׁב	Oh, the blessedness of the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked and in the pathway of sinners he has not stood and in the seat of the scorner he has not sat.
<sup>2</sup> כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת יְהָוָה חַפְצָוּ וּבְתוֹרַתְוּ יְהָנָה יוֹמָם וּלִילָה <sup>3</sup> וְהִיא בַּעַז שְׂתִיל עַל-פְּלִינִי מִים	Rather, his delight is in the Torah of Yahweh and in his Torah he will meditate day and night.
<sup>4</sup> אָשָׁר פְּרִיוּ יְתַן בְּעֵתָו וּלְהָיוּ לְאִיּוֹבָל וְכָל אָשָׁר יִעַשֶּׂה וְצָלִיחָה	He will be like a tree planted beside channels of water which gives its fruit in its season and its leaf will not wither and everything it does will thrive.
<sup>4</sup> לֹא-כָּךְ הַרְשָׁעִים כִּי אִם-כְּמַצֵּן אָשָׁר-תְּדַבֵּר רֹוח	Not so are the wicked. Rather, they are like the husk which the wind drives.

*Earth—Prophecy and the Millennium: Essays in Honour of Anthony Gelston* (eds. Peter J. Harland & C. T. Robert Hayward, Leiden: Brill, 1999), 69; J. Kenneth Kuntz, "Wisdom Psalms and the Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter," in *For a Later Generation* (eds. Randal A. Argall, Beverly A. Bow & Rodney A. Werline, Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2000), 151; John Goldingay, *Psalms* (Vol. 1. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. 3 Vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 58. Questions have been raised by Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," 136, n. 26, who writes, "While Brueggemann's treatment will probably influence how I personally read and appropriate the Psalter in the future, it has thus far left me with a vague sense of incompleteness in understanding the final form of the Psalter." More disapproving responses include those offered by Jerome F. D. Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 17 and LeFebvre, "Torah-Meditation and the Psalms," 216.

<sup>10</sup> See Lee R. Martin, *The Book of Psalms. A Centre for Pentecostal Theology Short Introduction* (Cleveland, Tenn.: CPT Press, forthcoming).

<sup>11</sup> I argue for the term "hearing" over "reading" in Lee Roy Martin, *The Unheard Voice of God. A Pentecostal Hearing of the Book of Judges* (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2008), 52-79.

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<sup>5</sup> עַל-כֵּן לֹא-יָקְמוּ רָשָׁעִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט וְחַטָּאִים בְּעֹדָת צְדִיקִים	Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous
<sup>6</sup> כִּי-יְדֹעַ יְהָוָה דֶּרֶךְ צְדִיקִים וְדֶרֶךְ רָשָׁעִים תָּאֶבֶר	because Yahweh knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish. <sup>12</sup>

The structure of the psalm is debated, and each proposed structure will yield its own nuances of meaning; nevertheless, my thesis remains valid no matter which structure one chooses to follow.<sup>13</sup> A two-part structure is possible:

*Blessedness of the righteous* (vv. 1-3). The theme of the psalm, announced in verse 1, is the “blessedness” or “happiness” of the person who is not influenced by evil and who does not practice evil but instead is moved by the Torah of Yahweh and practices meditation in it. Three descriptive names are given to the evil person (“wicked,” “sinner,” “scorner”), but the happy person is not yet identified by any titles. The person who delights in the Torah is like a flourishing and productive tree.

*The ruination of the wicked* (vv. 4-6). The wicked, in contrast to the righteous, are like worthless husks of grain. The wicked person does not flourish and has no status among God’s people. He has no standing at the place of judgment and no place in the congregation of the righteous. Here, for the first time, the happy person is named in the plural and is given a title—“righteous ones.” It is finally revealed to the hearer that the psalm is describing the blessedness of the righteous (heretofore unnamed) in contrast to the ruination of the wicked. The move from the singular (“the man”) to the plural (“righteous ones”) is grammatically necessary in verse 5 because a “congregation” requires more than one person, but in verse 6 “the way of the righteous ones” could just as easily have been framed in the singular. The plural may be a way of summarising and of giving the psalm a general application. The Psalm’s overall theme of the blessedness of the righteous (expressed through the contrast between the righteous and the wicked) is confirmed and sharpened in the final verse—“Yahweh knows (יְדֹעַ) the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish (אָבֶר).” It is Yahweh’s providence that guarantees the blessedness of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked.

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<sup>12</sup> This and other citations from Scripture are the translations of the author.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Goldingay, *Psalms*, I: 81-88, who outlines the psalm in three parts: vv. 1-3, vv. 4-5, and v. 6. See also Collins, “Psalm 1. Structure and Rhetoric,” 37-48; Pierre Auffret, “Comme Un Arbre ... Etude Structurelle Du Psaume 1,” *BZ* 45/2 (2001): 256-64; Walter Vogels, “A Structural Analysis of Ps 1,” *Bib* 60 (1979): 410-16; and Remi Lack, “Le Psaume 1—Une Analyse Structurale,” *Bib* 57 (1976): 154-67. I suggest that Psalm 1 may be chiastic in the broad sense of the term: A-blessed state of the righteous contra “the way” of the wicked, B-success of the righteous, B'-failure of the wicked, A'-Yahweh’s care of the righteous contra the end of “the way” of the wicked.

Brueggemann is correct in saying that Ps 1 “presents a morally coherent world” with no “ambiguity or slippage.”<sup>14</sup> The righteous are blessed and the wicked are doomed. Brueggemann, however, unjustifiably equates righteousness with “obedience” and Torah with “duty” and “command.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, his emphasis upon obedience creates an excessive dialectical tension between Ps 1 and Ps 150. He writes, “Though *obedience* is the beginning point of the Psalter and *insisted* upon with great *severity*, by Ps 150 the *rigors* of *obedience* have all been put behind the praising community … As Israel moves from *commandment* to communion, the *weight* of *duty* is overridden by the delight of lyrical community with God.”<sup>16</sup> While I agree that a dialectic exists between the two psalms, I do not perceive the tension to be as deep as Brueggemann proposes. Of the happy person Ps 1:2 declares, “His delight is in the Torah of Yahweh, and in his Torah he meditates day and night.” Consequently, I do not perceive an “insistence;” rather I discern an invitation. I do not detect “severity;” I hear congratulations. Instead of the “rigors of obedience,” I sense the joy of discovering God’s revelation. Instead of the “weight of duty,” I observe the delight of communion with God. Instead of “commandment,” I understand Torah to be the entire story of Israel’s life in covenant with Yahweh.

## C BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

I have chosen Brueggemann’s article as my point of entry because he exceeds all others in his stress upon obedience. However, he is neither the first nor the last to argue that Ps 1 presents the demand for obedience. Other interpreters offer less forceful but concordant interpretations. Origen argues that meditation upon the Torah includes the requirement of producing “consistent works” (τὰ κατάλληλα ἔργα), and he posits that meditation results in “living perfectly according to the law” (κατὰ τὸν νόμον τελείως βιοῦντι).<sup>17</sup> Jerome concludes that delighting in the Torah is an expression of “wholehearted obedience.”<sup>18</sup> According to Calvin, Ps 1:2 teaches “that God is only rightly served when his law is obeyed.”<sup>19</sup> Adam Clarke understands the Torah to be the “rule” of life, the “holy standard,” which is not to be heard only but is to be performed.<sup>20</sup> Many

<sup>14</sup> Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 191.

<sup>15</sup> Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*. “Obedience” is used throughout the piece; “duty” is found on pp. 193, 195, 196, and 197; and “command” is found on pp. 191, 194, 196, and 197.

<sup>16</sup> Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 195 (emphasis mine).

<sup>17</sup> “Exegetica in Psalmos,” PG 12:1088. Cf. Hilary of Poitiers who claims that meditation in the Torah consists in “pious performance of its injunctions” and in “fulfilment of the Law by the works we do” (“Homilies on the Psalms,” NPNF<sup>2</sup> 9: 239).

<sup>18</sup> “Homily on Psalm 1,” FC 48:6.

<sup>19</sup> Calvin, *Psalms*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Clarke, *Commentary* 3, 220. Cf. Poole, *Commentary* 2, 1.

recent interpreters adopt a similar stance.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the long history of viewing Ps 1 as a call to obedience, I would argue that such an interpretation does not accurately reflect the wording of the text. The psalm itself does not use “obedience,” rather it describes the happy person by means of a broader term—“righteous” צַדִּיקִים, vv. 5-6). The righteous are depicted in two ways: firstly, the psalm reveals what the righteous are not; and secondly, it reveals what they *are*. The righteous are not like the wicked – רָשָׁע); rather they are lovers of the Torah. Throughout the Psalm, the righteous person stands in contrast to the wicked (vv. 1, 4-6). The righteous person has not been influenced by the habits and dispositions of the “wicked,” the “sinner,” and the “scorner” (v. 1). The “way of the righteous” (v. 6) represents the thriving Israelite’s whole manner of being, lived faithfully in covenant with Yahweh. It is opposite to the “way of the wicked” (v. 6), which perishes. Viewed positively, the righteous are those who take delight in the Torah and meditate (הַנִּהְנָה) in it always (v. 2).

On the one hand, the contrast between the wicked and the righteous implies that the righteous are obedient; but on the other hand, righteousness must not be limited to or equated with obedience. Obedience is only one aspect of righteousness. When the psalm comes to the positive portrayal of the righteous (v. 2), the terminology shifts unexpectedly away from behaviour and toward the affections.<sup>22</sup> The righteous are not like the wicked; instead, the righteous delight in the Torah. Surprisingly, the entire Psalm includes no commands or injunctions, and it includes no language that falls within the semantic range of “obey.” The language is that of affirmation (“Blessed is the man”), which evokes a desire for righteousness by means of the indirect and subtle effect of the poem’s inviting and hopeful mood. The hearer of Ps 1 is told that the person who delights in the Torah will flourish like a well-watered tree. The Psalm, therefore, is “warmly encouraging a godly lifestyle.”<sup>23</sup>

The language of obedience permeates the Hebrew Bible and would be

<sup>21</sup> DeClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning*, 38, equates righteousness with “individual obedience.” Cf. Vincent, “Shape of the Psalter,” 65; Denise D. Hopkins, *Journey through the Psalms. A Path to Wholeness* (New York: United Church Press, 1990), 3; Patrick D. Miller, *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology. Collected Essays* (JSOTSup, 267; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 280; and Samuel L. Terrien, *The Psalms. Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 60.

<sup>22</sup> LeFebvre, “Torah-Meditation and the Psalms,” 216, suggests that the misconstrual of Ps 1 as a call of obedience is due to its common association with Pss 19 and 119, two Psalms that *do* emphasise obedience. He argues that the “dialectic behind 1:1-2 is not ‘sinning vs obeying,’ but ‘delight-in-sinful-counsel vs delight-in-torah’” (216, n. 11).

<sup>23</sup> Geoffrey Grogan, *Psalms* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 42.

expected in a text like Ps 1, in which the blessedness of the righteous is emphasised. Commentators have rightly pointed to the similarities between Ps 1, Deut 17:18-19, and Josh 1:8.<sup>24</sup> According to the Deuteronomic instructions to Israel's king, he must keep a copy of the Torah, and “he shall read (**אָקֵרֶת**) therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Yahweh his God, to keep (**שָׁמַר**) all the words of this instruction (**תּוֹרָה**) and these statutes, to do (**עֲשֵׂה**) them” (Deut 17:19). Likewise, Yahweh's mandate to Joshua reads, “Do not let this book of the Torah depart from your mouth; but you shall meditate (**הַנִּגְהַן**) in it day and night, so that you may be careful (**שְׁמַר**) to do (**עֲשֵׂה**) everything written in it because then you will make your way prosperous (**צְלָחָה**) and then you will succeed (**שְׁכָלָה**).” While the similarities between the three texts are obvious, the differences are striking. Both Deut 17:19 and Josh 1:8 include clear demands for obedience, using the terms “keep” (**שְׁמַר**) and “do” (**עֲשֵׂה**). Surprisingly, these terms (and similar ones) are absent from the parallel text in Ps 1. The unique phrasing of Ps 1:2 challenges any preconceived interpretation that might be assumed from the association with other texts. Charles A. Briggs, noting the variation, argues, “the Ps. substitutes for the external, ‘depart out of thy mouth,’ the first clause of Jos. 1:8, the internal ‘delight in,’ indicating a later and more matured conception.”<sup>25</sup>

Psalm 1 stands apart from parallel texts by placing the idea of obedience in the background while the affections are in the foreground. Obedience would have been in the foreground if Ps 1:2 had read, “He *keeps* (**שְׁמַר**) the Torah of Yahweh” (cf. 1 Chr 22:12); “He *performs* (**עֲשֵׂה**) the Torah” (cf. Ezra 7:10); “He *walks* – (**הַלֵּךְ**) in the Torah” (cf. Ps 119:1; Jer 44:10); or “He *obeys* – (**עֲשֵׂה**) the Torah” (cf. Isa 30:9). However, to “delight” in the Torah pushes into a different semantic domain. Delighting in the Torah does not exclude obedience, but it moves the emphasis to the realm of the affections.

Moreover, the word “Torah” would have registered “duty” or “command” if the second line of verse 2 had included the word “commandment” (**מְצֻוָּה**, cf. Prov 3:1), “statute” (**חֻקָּה**, cf. Amos 2:4), or “judgment” (**מְשֻׁפָּט**, cf. 2 Kgs 17:34) as a parallel to “Torah.”<sup>26</sup> If Torah were regarded here as equivalent to commandments that call for obedience, the writer could have stated as much through the use of parallelism, but instead he uses “Torah” in both lines. The word “Torah” (**תּוֹרָה**) is found 36 times in the Psalms, but only here does it stand in parallel to itself. In Ps 1, therefore, we find no evidence that obedience is in the foreground.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Poole, *Commentary* 2, 1; Briggs & Briggs, *Psalms*, 4-5; Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983), 60; James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1994), 41; and Grogan, *Psalms*, 42.

<sup>25</sup> Briggs & Briggs, *Psalms*, 4.

<sup>26</sup> Psalm 119, for example, utilises a variety of terms interchangeably.

## D DELIGHT IN THE TORAH

Overstating the demand for obedience may lead hearers to ignore the important affective dimension of the psalm that is expressed in v. 2: “His delight is in the Torah of Yahweh.”<sup>27</sup> That the word “delight” (גָּמָר) has reference to the affections is discerned from its usage and is confirmed by the lexica, which define the Hebrew word as “joy, delight,”<sup>28</sup> “delight, pleasure.”<sup>29</sup> It denotes “the direction of one’s heart or passion,”<sup>30</sup> a pleasurable emotional attraction.<sup>31</sup> Outside the Psalter, גָּמָר can denote the attraction between a man and a woman—we read that the son of Hamor “delighted in Jacob’s daughter” (Gen 34:19). Also, גָּמָר can refer to God’s pleasure in his people and their actions—the Israelites are hopeful that Yahweh “delights” in them (Num 14:8), and Samuel insinuates that Yahweh has greater “delight” in Saul’s obedience than in his sacrifices (1 Sam 15:22).

Within the Psalter, it is said that God does not “delight in wickedness” (5:4),<sup>32</sup> rather his people are his “delight” (16:3, cf. 37:23). The psalmist claims, “[Yahweh] delivered me because he delighted in me” (18:19, cf. 35:27). We learn of the wicked, however, that “they delight in lies” (62:40). The unrighteous nations “delight in war” (68:30), but the “meek … delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (37:11). God’s people are enjoined, “Delight yourself also in Yahweh, and he will give you the desires of your heart” (37:4).

In light of the texts mentioned above, “delight” (גָּמָר) should be understood as an affective term, and its prominence in Ps 1 testifies to the importance of the affections in the life of the righteous.<sup>33</sup> Ps 1:2, however, is not alone in its affirmation that the righteous are those who take “delight” (גָּמָר) in the Torah of Yahweh. A similar sentiment is echoed four times in Ps 119 (vv. 70, 77, 92, and 174). Furthermore, the Psalter calls for not only a delight in the “Torah” but also a delight in the Lord’s “statutes” (119:16), his “testimonies”

<sup>27</sup> Oddly enough, Brueggemann uses the word “delight” not in reference to Ps 1 but in reference to Ps 150, although neither “delight” nor any of its synonyms is found in Ps 150; see Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 193, 195-196.

<sup>28</sup> Ludwig Köhler, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Study Ed., vol. 1, 2 vols., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 340. Cf. David J. A. Cline, ed., *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 127.

<sup>29</sup> Francis Brown et al., *The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (trans. Edward Robinson; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1979), 343.

<sup>30</sup> David Talley, “גָּמָר,” *NIDOTTE* 2: 231.

<sup>31</sup> Leon J. Wood, “גָּמָר,” *TWOT* 1: 310-11.

<sup>32</sup> Where English versification differs from the Hebrew, the English will be used.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Kraus, *Psalms*, 116.

(119:24), and his “commandments” (112:1; 119:47).<sup>34</sup>

Affection for the Torah, which Ps 1 evokes, is not out of character with the theology of other psalms, and the word “delight” (חַפֵּץ) is not the only term that suggests the importance of affection for the Torah. The writer of Ps 119 declares, “Oh, how I love (אהָבָה) your Torah! It is my contemplation (שִׁיחָה) all the day” (v. 97, cf. vv. 113, 127, 140, 163, and 165). Psalm 19 praises God’s “law,” “testimony,” “precepts,” “commandments,” and “judgments,” saying, “They are more desirable (חַמִּידָה) than gold, yes, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (v. 10, cf. Ps 119:72, 103). Through the use of other affective terms the hearer of the Psalms is encouraged to put the Torah “in his heart” (לְבָבָה) (37:31; 40:8), to “rejoice” (שִׁירָה) in the Torah (119:14, 111, 162), to “long for” (חַאֲבָה) Yahweh’s precepts (119:40), to “rejoice” (שִׁמְחָה) in his statutes (19:8), to “desire” (אִיָּבָה) his commandments (119:131), to “run” (רוֹזֵץ) toward them (119:32), and make them his “songs” (זָמָרָה, 119:54) and his “desire” (שְׁעַשְׁעָדָה). The hearer is enjoined to “rejoice” (שִׁמְחָה) and “be glad” (גִּילָּה) because of Yahweh’s judgments (48:11; 97:8). The Psalmist pleads longingly, “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things (פָּלָא) out of your Torah” (119:18, cf. v. 129). The tenor of the Psalms is similar to that of Jeremiah who exclaims, “Your word was for me the joy (שְׁלֹנִין) and rejoicing (שִׁמְחָה) of my heart” (Jer 15:16).

The above texts demonstrate a common interest in the affective dimension of Torah devotion. To delight in the Torah is an affective inclination, a passionate disposition. To delight in the Torah is to rejoice in it, to love it, to long for it, to desire it more than gold, and to enjoy it more than honey. The words of the Torah, declares Terrien, “penetrate the heart, stir the emotions, warn the intellect, and energise the volition.”<sup>35</sup> The emphasis of Ps 1 is not upon deeds but delight, not on duty but desire, not on obedience but on affections that are rightly oriented towards God. “The righteous man, who rejects the influence of the ungodly, finds his physical and mental vigour in the delights afforded by the Law of Yahweh.”<sup>36</sup> Torah obedience is vital to the Hebrew tradition, but Ps 1 registers another theme, namely, the inner life of the heart that longs to hear God’s voice and that welcomes the Torah “with affec-

<sup>34</sup> The perspective of the Psalms is somewhat different from that of the wisdom literature, where we read, “Happy (רַשְׁתָּה) is the man who finds wisdom” (Prov 3:13). In Proverbs, the righteous are encouraged to desire wisdom above all things (e.g. Prov 2:10; 3:15; 4:6-8).

<sup>35</sup> Terrien, *The Psalms*, 73. Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, Harold J. Grimm & Helmut T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther’s Works* (55 vols.; Saint Louis, Mo.: Concordia Pub. House, 1955), where Luther writes that Psalmist uses the word “delight” as a way of saying, “Thy law is not in the outer edges and skin of my heart, but in the inside, in innermost and complete dedication” (X, 14).

<sup>36</sup> Terrien, *The Psalms*, 72.

tion and joy.”<sup>37</sup> Ps 1 promotes “delight-nurturing meditation on torah.”<sup>38</sup>

## E PASSION IN THE PSALMS AND THE PASSIONS OF THE HEARING COMMUNITY

Biblical scholarship has given little attention to the affective dimension of biblical poetry in general and of the Psalms in particular. The modern approach to scholarship emphasises historical questions and values objective analysis; therefore, it is not surprising that the academy would neglect the poetic passions. Modern study of the Psalms centres on questions of authorship, *Sitz im Leben*, compositional history, literary genre, poetic structure, ancient Near Eastern parallels, grammar, and semantics. I would argue that the function of poetry is to evoke the affections and provoke the passions. Therefore, poetry cannot be understood at a distance; it requires that the hearer enter its world of imagery and emotion. The apprehension and appreciation of poetry requires first that we experience it and only secondarily that we analyse it. Terrien declares, “Such a *Credo* must be sung, not signed. Doxology is the key to theology … The protophilosophical thinking of sapiential reflection is necessary, but it must remain ancillary.”<sup>39</sup> This article attempts to stimulate awareness of the affective dimension of the Psalms and to awaken the hearer to the advantages of a passionate involvement with the text. I echo the sentiments of Rickie D. Moore who wants to show

… the prominent presence of passion in the biblical writings themselves, a presence which has been long overlooked or dismissed by the dispassionate modes of scholarship which have until recently monopolised modern biblical study.<sup>40</sup>

It is perhaps my interpretive location within the Pentecostal community

<sup>37</sup> Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001), 4.

<sup>38</sup> LeFebvre, “Torah-Meditation and the Psalms,” 217. Cf. Calvin, *Psalms*, 5, who writes, “from this love of the law proceeds constant meditation upon it … all who are truly actuated by love to the law must feel pleasure in the diligent study of it.”

<sup>39</sup> Terrien, *The Psalms*, 60.

<sup>40</sup> Rick D. Moore, “‘And Also Much Cattle.’ Prophetic Passions and the End of Jonah,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 11 (1997): 37 (emphasis Moore’s). Moore finds support in Robert O. Baker, “Pentecostal Bible Reading. Toward a Model of Reading for the Formation of the Affections,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7 (1995): 34-38; W. Dow Edgerton, *The Passion of Interpretation* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992); Walter Brueggemann, *Abiding Astonishment. Psalms, Modernity, and the Making of History* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1st Ed., 1991); Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (2 vols., New York: Harper & Row, 1962); and Jeffrey L. Staley, *Reading with a Passion. Rhetoric, Autobiography, and the American West in the Gospel of John* (New York: Continuum, 1995).

that has made me aware of the affective impact of Ps 1:2. Steven J. Land has shown that Pentecostal spirituality, which is often caricatured as “emotionalism,” is generated by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, who infuses the believer with apocalyptic passions in anticipation of the coming kingdom. These renewed affections (orthopathy) serve as integrating centre for a Spirit-filled life that orients also the mind (orthodoxy) and actions (orthopraxy).<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the passionate and participative worship of Pentecostals appeals to the heart more than it appeals to the intellect.<sup>42</sup> I find that the Psalmist’s encouragement to “delight in the Torah” is consistent with Pentecostal spirituality and that the passionate pleas and the exuberant praises that we find in the Psalms are consistent with Pentecostal worship. Like the Psalmist, the Pentecostal community seeks to “serve the Lord with joy” (Ps 100:2) and to confess, “I rejoiced when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord” (Ps 122:1; cf. 26:8; 27:4; 84:10).

Given the fact that Pentecostalism emerged from the holiness movement, it might be expected that I would be drawn to Brueggemann’s interpretation of Ps 1 as a demand for obedience. While it is true that obedience is central to the Pentecostal tradition, it is also true that obedience which is not generated by Godly affections is no more than legalism.<sup>43</sup> Jesus insisted that all behaviour is governed by the affections of the heart (Matt 5:17-48) and that all of God’s commandments can be summarised in the command to love (Luke 10:27).<sup>44</sup> John Wesley, the grandfather of Pentecostalism, argued that holiness is a matter of “heart and life,” showing that all behaviour is an expression of the affections.<sup>45</sup> Genuine righteousness, therefore, does not flow out of a sense of duty and obligation but out of love for God and his Torah. Schaefer observes, “An individual is formed by what one loves and reflects on continually. What de-

<sup>41</sup> Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality. A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 32-57. See also pp. 122-36 for Land’s further explication of the role of the affections.

<sup>42</sup> For a sound assessment of the formative role of Pentecostal worship, see R. Jerome Boone, “Community and Worship. The Key Components of Pentecostal Christian Formation,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8 (1996): 129-42.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Weiser, *The Psalms*, 104, who writes, “The psalmist does not therefore stop at the external aspect of a godliness based upon the law … the law is here not regarded as an irksome burden but as a source of joy.”

<sup>44</sup> Luther writes insightfully, “what is held without love and delight is not held for long” (Pelikan et al., eds., *Luther’s Works*, X, 14).

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sanford, 1844), where he writes, “[Christian perfection is] love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions” (p. 17); and “[P]ure love reigning alone in the heart and life, this is the whole of Christian perfection” (p. 21).

lights us invades us.”<sup>46</sup>

Brueggemann suggests that the normal trajectory of Christian formation is the “move from duty to delight,”<sup>47</sup> but I would argue that the opposite is true. God’s act of salvation produces in those who are saved a deep gratitude and affection, which in turn generates heartfelt obedience. The exodus (Exod 14) produces a song of praise (Exod 15), and only afterwards does Israel commit to obedience through the covenant (Exod 20-24). I would admit, however, that affection may wane and require rediscovery. The prophet Isaiah calls Israel to that process of rediscovery when he writes, “This people has drawn near to me with its mouth and honoured me with its lips, but its heart is far from me; and its worship of me has been a commandment of men, learned by rote” (Isa 29:13). Unfortunately, Israel’s affections were not rekindled until they experienced anew the saving acts of God in the form of the exodus from exile.<sup>48</sup>

## F THE MEANING OF “TORAH” (תורה) IN PS 1:2

The object of delight for the righteous is the “Torah of Yahweh” (תורה יהוה), a phrase that occurs nineteen times in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>49</sup> The “Torah” can denote either the five books of Moses, the larger written canon (in whole or in part), or the more general “teaching” of Yahweh, which may include both written and oral traditions.<sup>50</sup> In most cases the exact meaning of “Torah” is difficult to determine, but in seven out of the nineteen occurrences the “Torah of Yahweh” refers to a written document. It can be a book (ספר, 2 Chr 17:9; 34:14; Neh 9:3); it can be something written (כתב, 1 Chr 16:40; 2 Chr 31:3; 35:26); and it can be the work of the pen (עט, Jer 8:8). John Calvin contends that “Torah” in Ps 1 refers to the “whole of Scripture,” including the Psalms.<sup>51</sup> Briggs, on the other hand, limits “Torah” to the books of Moses, the “Pentateuch.”<sup>52</sup> Because of the similarities between Ps 1:2, Deut 17:19, and Josh 1:8, Ps 1 could be directed toward Israel’s king, and the “Torah” might refer to a written copy of the law. However, the lack of any reference to the king and the use of the plural “righteous ones” (Ps 1:5, 6) as the subject of the psalm indicate a more general audience, an audience that would not have daily access to a written copy of the Torah. McCann argues that “Torah” fundamentally means “instruction,” and that it here refers not only to written scriptures but also to “the

<sup>46</sup> Schaefer, *Psalm*s, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 195, n. 16.

<sup>48</sup> I would suggest that this post-exilic passion can be discerned from the psalms of the period, though the post-exilic prophets register Israel’s continuing struggle to reach the place of joyous, heartfelt service to Yahweh.

<sup>49</sup> Exod 13:9; 2 Kgs 10:31; Isa 5:24; 30:9; Jer 8:8; Amos 2:4; Pss 1:2; 19:8; 119:1; 1 Chr 16:40; 22:12; 2 Chr 12:1; 17:9; 31:3, 4; 34:14; 35:26; Ezra 7:10; and Neh 9:3.

<sup>50</sup> Terrien, *The Psalms*, 72.

<sup>51</sup> Calvin, *Psalm*s, 4.

<sup>52</sup> Briggs & Briggs, *Psalm*s, 5.

whole sacred tradition of God's revelation." He points out that Ps 1, in contrast to parallel texts (Deut 17:18-19 and Josh 1:8), contains "no mention of a book or a copy of the law."<sup>53</sup> Approaching the question from the perspective of Jewish tradition, Schaefer argues that Torah consists of two parts: (1) the "story of God's actions" with Israel and (2) the "precepts and guidelines that shape" its life. These two parts can be described as "narration and obligation" (הנְדָה and הַלְכָה), and together they represent the totality of "God's will or design for the chosen people."<sup>54</sup> I conclude, therefore, that the phrase "Torah of Yahweh" in Ps 1:2 signifies any and all of Yahweh's teaching,<sup>55</sup> both narratives and commands, both written and oral.

Theologically, Torah signifies the narrative ethos that forms the Israelite faith community.<sup>56</sup> The Torah stands in contrast to the way of the wicked, the path of the sinner and the seat of the scorner. These are destructive influences that deform character and destroy community. The righteous, therefore, delight in the Torah because, as Kraus writes, "it is no fixed, static entity, but a power that is creative and life-giving;" it is a personal word "that goes forth from Yahweh's person;" and as a "spoken purposive word" it contains "healing, saving, creative powers."<sup>57</sup>

## G THE MEANING OF "MEDITATE" (הַנְהָה) IN PS 1:2

The righteous person delights in the Torah, and that delight is manifested through continual reflection upon it. The meaning of the Hebrew **הַנְהָה**, translated here as "meditate," is not entirely clear. What is clear, however, is that it does not correspond exactly to the English "meditate," which means "to exercise the mind in thought or reflection."<sup>58</sup> While "meditate" often denotes a silent activity, the Hebrew **הַנְהָה** seems in most cases to signify some sort of audible, vocal utterance. It has been defined as "moan, growl, utter, speak, muse,"<sup>59</sup> and "utter, mutter, moan (mourn, KJV), meditate, devise, plot."<sup>60</sup> The word carries a variety of meanings depending upon its syntactical role. Used intransitively, the verb **הַנְהָה** can mean "moan" (Isa 16:7), "growl" (Isa 31:4), "coo" (Isa 38:14), or

<sup>53</sup> J. Clinton McCann, Jr., "Psalms," *NIB* 4: 684. Cf. Kraus, *Psalms*, 116.

<sup>54</sup> Schaefer, *Psalms*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. the JPS TANAKH (1985), which translates Ps 1:2a, "the teaching of the LORD is his delight."

<sup>56</sup> The theological function of Torah is explored by Walter Brueggemann, *The Creative Word. Canon as a Model for Biblical Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 14-39.

<sup>57</sup> Hans-Joachim Kraus & Keith R. Crim, *Theology of the Psalms* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Pub. House, 1986), 34.

<sup>58</sup> John Simpson & Edmund Weiner, eds., *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd Ed., 1989).

<sup>59</sup> Brown et al., *BDB*, 211.

<sup>60</sup> Herbert Wolf, "הַנְהָה," *TWOT* 1: 205.

“mutter” (Isa 8:19). When followed by an object, it can mean “speak” (Ps 37:30, parallel to **דָבַר**) or possibly “devise, plot” (Ps 2:1, Prov 24:2). In one case, **הַנֶּה** is followed by an infinitive where it apparently signifies “ponder, consider:” “The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil” (Prov 15:28). However, given that in other contexts **הַנֶּה** is expressed through utterance, the contrast here may be between the loud and thoughtless speech of the wicked and the quieter, more deliberate speech of the righteous.

In Ps 1:2 the verb **הַנֶּה** is followed by the preposition “in” (**בָּ**), a usage that represents still another syntactical variation. The same construction is found in the following texts:

- (i) “This book of the Torah shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate (**הַנֶּה**) in it day and night” (Josh 1:8).
- (ii) “My mouth will praise you with joyful lips. When I remember you on my bed, I meditate (**הַנֶּה**) on you in the night watches” (Ps 63:5b-6).
- (iii) “I remember my song in the night … I will meditate (**הַנֶּה**) on all your work, and muse (**חִשָּׁשָׁ**) on your mighty deeds” (Ps 77:6-12).
- (iv) “I remember the days of old; I meditate (**הַנֶּה**) on all your works; I muse (**חִשָּׁשָׁ**) on the work of your hands” (Ps 143:5).

In light of the fact that the Torah is to be in Joshua’s “mouth,” it seems likely that his meditation would include some form of utterance. Also, two of the three examples from Psalms include parallels to the word **חִשָּׁשָׁ** (Ps 77:12 and 143:5), which may signify “rehearsing” a matter<sup>61</sup> and most often includes speech (Ps 55:2, 18; 64:2; 69:13; 102:1; 105:2; 142:3). Furthermore, the context of singing is evident in Pss 63 and 77, which leads Ringgren to conclude that in these texts “meditation is expressed in a song of praise.”<sup>62</sup>

The verb **הַנֶּה**, therefore, likely denotes a thoughtful, deliberate utterance, which is usually spoken softly or even unintelligibly. Translating **הַנֶּה** precisely has proven to be difficult, and almost all translations have settled on “meditate” in Ps 1:2.<sup>63</sup> Luther, however, in choosing “*redet*” (“speaks”) emphasises the vocal sense, as does the *New Jerusalem Bible* in its choice of the word “murmur.” The intellectual aspect is stressed in the *New American Bible* and the JPS *TANAKH* (1985) which render **הַנֶּה** as “study.”

<sup>61</sup> Gary G. Cohen, “**חִשָּׁשָׁ**,” *TWOT* 2: 875.

<sup>62</sup> H. Ringgren, “**הַגָּהָ**,” *TDOT* 3: 323.

<sup>63</sup> For example, see LXX, Vulgate, ASV, CJB, CSB, DRA, ERV, ESV, Geneva, JPS, KJV, NASB, NAU, NIV, NKJ, NLT, NRSV, RSV, Louis Segond (French, 1910), Reina-Valera (Spanish, 1960), and NVB (Italian, 1996).

Meditation on the Torah might be accomplished through the reading of the written text, as in the case of Josh 1:8. Or for those who do not have access to the written Torah, meditation could be in the form of recitation from memory or of rehearsing the traditional narratives. Meditation might also signify the “audible murmuring”<sup>64</sup> of one whose thoughts are occupied in deep reflection upon God’s words and deeds. The possibilities are open because the verb *הגה* does not specify an exact method or type of verbal activity, rather it denotes the “quality” of that utterance.<sup>65</sup> Negoitā contends that *הגה* “is sometimes used to express the feelings of the human soul. With *siach* [שְׁמִיחָה] in particular, *haghah* means that a man ‘is lost in his religion,’ that he is filled with thoughts of God’s deeds or his will.”<sup>66</sup> In Ps 1:2, the verb *הגה* “highlights that the speaker’s wholehearted sentiments are being revealed ... It is an expression of innermost delight in torah.”<sup>67</sup> The emotive connotations of *haghah* make it a fitting parallel to *חפץ* (“delight”), thus carrying forward the affective import of Ps 1:2.

The significance of the affective dimension of *הגה*, which is barely noted in discussions of Ps 1, becomes conspicuous when we observe the connections between *הגה* and singing. LeFebvre, going beyond Ringgren’s aforementioned comment that *הגה* can signify the utterance of a song, argues convincingly that the meditation of Ps 1:2 can include singing of Psalms as one of its modes of expression. LeFebvre points to Pss 63 and 77 (mentioned above) as examples where *הגה* has reference to singing, and he adds a third text, which reads, “My lips shall rejoice greatly when I sing (*זמר*) unto thee ... My tongue will utter (*הגה*) your righteousness all the day” (Ps 71:23-24).<sup>68</sup> Another connection between meditation and singing, noted by Terrien, is the noun *הינן* (derived from *הגה*) which “is a sung soliloquy, whispered with a susurration of the lips, the arrhythmic and melodic exteriorisation of an inner reflection” (see Pss 9:16 and 92:3).<sup>69</sup> LeFebvre shows still another connection between Torah and song, observing that Moses wrote both the book of the law and a commemorative song (Deut 31:22-24). The song is taught to the people, and the book of the law is handed over to the Levites and elders. Thus, “Deut 31–32 identifies law-contemplation with worshipful song-singing. It is the song which will be forever known by the people (Deut 31:21), while the book is not accessible to them.”<sup>70</sup> Consequently, while reading the Torah, reciting oral tradition and re-

<sup>64</sup> Ringgren, *TDOT* 3: 323.

<sup>65</sup> LeFebvre, “Torah-Meditation and the Psalms,” 219.

<sup>66</sup> Ringgren, *TDOT* 3: 323.

<sup>67</sup> LeFebvre, “Torah-Meditation and the Psalms,” 219.

<sup>68</sup> LeFebvre, “Torah-Meditation and the Psalms,” 218-25; contra Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 207, who goes so far as to say that Ps 1 “indicates that [the Psalter] is a collection to be read rather than performed.”

<sup>69</sup> Terrien, *The Psalms*, 73.

<sup>70</sup> LeFebvre, “Torah-Meditation and the Psalms,” 222.

flecting on Torah may be possible modes of expressing meditation (הַגָּה), the worshipful singing of psalms may be the form of meditation that is most appropriate to the context of Ps 1:2, and it may be the clearest manifestation of the affective import of the verb “meditate” (הַגָּה).

Finally, it should not be overlooked that the commendation to meditate in the Torah appears within a Psalm, suggesting perhaps that “Ps 1 itself becomes a demonstration of what is envisioned in 1:2.”<sup>71</sup> Therefore, as an introduction to the Psalter, Ps 1:2 may not conceive of the Psalms as a *part of* the Torah,<sup>72</sup> but as passionate *meditations on* the Torah. The content of the Psalter could certainly support such a conclusion since numerous explicit references and allusions to elements of the Torah are found throughout the Psalms.<sup>73</sup> For example, Ps 19:1-6 is a delight-filled meditation on the Torah’s claim that God is creator: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows his handiwork” (v. 1). Psalm 44:1-3 is a passionate meditation on the conquest story: “You drove out the nations with your hand” (v. 2a).<sup>74</sup> The psalms of lament often appeal to the justice that is demanded by the Torah. Psalm 78 delights in Yahweh’s mercy from the time of Jacob to David. Psalm 105 meditates on the Abrahamic covenant (vv. 9-22) and delights in the salvation of the exodus (23-45). Perhaps the singing of the Psalms is not the only way of taking delight in the Torah, but it is one way. It follows that the promise of “blessedness” (Ps 1:1) accrues to the person who reads, recites, and sings the Psalms with delight.<sup>75</sup>

## H CONCLUSION

I have shown that the common interpretation of Ps 1 as a call for obedience, a view exemplified by Walter Brueggemann’s influential article, “Bounded by Obedience and Praise: The Psalms as Canon,” does not quite capture the emphasis of the text. Ps 1 sets up an opposition between the righteous and the wicked—the righteous are “blessed” and the wicked “perish.” The righteous are identified by their resistance to the lure of wicked counsel and by their affection for the Torah of Yahweh. While it is true that Ps 1 announces Yahweh’s

<sup>71</sup> LeFebvre, “Torah-Meditation and the Psalms,” 224.

<sup>72</sup> Contra Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (1st American Ed., Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 513 and Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999), 42.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Psalms* (vol. 1, 3 vols.; Cherry Hill, N.J.: Mack Publishing Co., 1972), 11.

<sup>74</sup> If “Torah” consists of the larger tradition, as I have argued above, then the conquest would be a part of that “teaching.”

<sup>75</sup> See Creach (*Yahweh as Refuge*, 69-73), who ties together the ideas of meditating in the Torah and “seeking refuge in Yahweh.” He suggests that meditating upon the Torah perhaps became a “means of protecting oneself spiritually from enemies” (p. 79).

approval of the “righteous,” righteousness is not limited to or equated with “obedience.” Instead, the psalm points to the affections rather than to behaviour as the key element of the righteous person—“his delight is in the Torah of Yahweh and in his Torah he meditates day and night” (Ps 1:2). Instead of calling for obedience to the Torah, Ps 1 evokes affection for the Torah. “The blessed one is thus identified not by social status or by mere behaviour but by attitude.”<sup>76</sup> Psalm 1:2 suggests that delight in the Torah “is the determining and effective disposition of the truly happy life.”<sup>77</sup>

In its role as an introduction to the Psalter, Ps 1 shows that right worship begins with rightly oriented affections. When Ps 1 invites meditation on the Torah as a response to God’s self-revelation, it becomes its own example. It offers itself as a model of Torah meditation, a model which is picked up and expanded by the psalms that follow. The Psalms, therefore, serve as exemplars of what it means to delight in the Torah of the Lord.

The psalm’s accentuation of the affections suggests that the study of biblical poetry in general and of the Psalms in particular can benefit from an approach that is attuned to the passions that are inherent in the text and the passions that are brought to the text by the interpreter. This affective approach to the text is evident in the writings of Martin Luther, whose comments on Ps 1:2 register his own passionate affection for the Torah of the Lord:

[This affection] is the pure desire of the heart ... it is not only the love of the Law but also a loving delight in the Law which the world and the prince of the world can destroy and defeat neither by prosperity nor by adversity. Yet through need, ignominy, the cross, death, and hell this “desire” breaks through to victory.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Broyles, *Psalms*, 42.

<sup>77</sup> Kraus, *Psalms*, 117.

<sup>78</sup> Pelikan et al., eds., *Luther’s Works* 14, 295.

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