

Psalm 73

Why Do The Ungodly Prosper and the Righteous Suffer?

1 <<A Psalm of Asaph.>> Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.
2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.
3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
4 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.
5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.
6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.
7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.
8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.
9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.
10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.
11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?
12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.
13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.
14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.
15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.
16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;
17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.
18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.
19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.
20 As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.
21 Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.
22 So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.
23 Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.
24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.
25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.
26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.
27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.
28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.

I. Superscription

- A. The writer appears to be Asaph - 1 Chronicles 6:31-39; 15:16-17
- B. Psalm is *mizmor*.

II. Theme

- A. Stated - why do the ungodly prosper and the righteous suffer?
- B. Nature - there appears to be no justice in this life.

III. Major Ideas

- A. Pessimism - Psalm 73:2-14
 - 1. Reality - Asaph was envious of the wicked due to their prosperity.

2. Reasons - the wicked appear to be healthy, prosperous, powerful, and boastful.
3. Result - Asaph had his doubts about God's justice and righteousness.

B. Prayer

1. If he succumbs to his doubts he will be a traitor - Psalm 73:15
2. Understanding only came when this issue was seen in light of eternity - Psalm 73:17.

C. Asaph's Understanding

1. He saw that it was foolish to be pessimistic - Psalm 73:21-22
2. God will uphold Asaph continually - Psalm 73:23
3. God will guide Asaph to future glory - Psalm 73:24
4. God alone can bring satisfaction to life - Psalm 73:25
5. God is the strength of the believer's heart forever - Psalm 73:26

IV. Religious Ideas and Applications

- A. Pessimism is based on the wrong sense of values.
- B. Pessimism brings a limited perspective in man's life.
- C. The remedy for pessimism is contact with God in prayer.