

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Seventy-Three - Dealing With The Oppressive Successes Of The Ungodly (Psalm 73:1-28)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the tough lessons in life is that **this** life is **not always fair!** A newborn has a cleft palate or a vicious murder goes unsolved with the murderer going free.
- B. In the Christian context, sometimes those who promote unbiblical ideas in the workplace or community get all the breaks or political influence or job promotions, and the believer loses out here **because** of his stand.
- C. Psalm 73:1-28 is a lesson on handling the frustration of losing out for righteousness' sake while the ungodly seem to see their very godliness pave ways of success for them.

II. Dealing With The Oppressive Successes Of The Ungodly, Psalm 73:1-28.

- A. Asaph, the psalm's author, expressed his frustration over the success of the wicked due to their evil:
 1. Though God was good to His people who were pure of heart (Ps. 73:1), Asaph noted that he came close to sinning due to his envy of the boastful wicked who prospered in their sin, Ps. 73:2-3.
 2. Asaph went on to detail what made him so upset at this **unfair** set of circumstances in Ps. 73:4-14:
 - a. Asaph was frustrated at how wicked people seem to have little or no physical ailments, Ps. 73:4.
 - b. He was bothered by how many of them were free from the burdens common to those who earned a decent day's wage, Ps. 73:5.
 - c. By way of injurious words or actions, the wicked gain wealth to clothe themselves in wealth, 73:6-9.
 - d. Asaph details how this wickedness produces such wealth: by scoffing, malice and threatening oppression to those less powerful than they (73:8-9a), they take possession of the earth's resources (73:9b) and have people pamper to their every wish to avoid further oppression by them, 73:10.
 - e. These wicked live outlandishly this way due to a total lack of their sensing any accountability, 11.
 - f. As a result, they are actually carefree in their increasing of wealth and power, Ps. 73:12.
 - g. On the **other** hand, Asaph felt that his godliness was not cost-effective in comparison to the advances of the wicked: he complained that his efforts to be good had not only been in vain (73:13), but had actually plagued him as he looked on the greater advances of the wicked in life, Ps. 73:14!
- B. Yet, he caught himself not yet spreading this frustration and negative viewpoint around to other fellow believers lest he cause them to depart from the Lord, Ps. 73:15. Asaph's respect for the Lord was still strong enough to keep him from becoming evil himself!
- C. To **solve** his frustration, Asaph considered how all men in the **end** of this earthly life will give an **eternal accounting** to a **righteous GOD**, and his whole attitude changed, Ps. 73:16-28:
 1. When Asaph entered the temple to worship the Lord, and thereby recalled that **man** was **accountable to GOD**, he realized that the **FINAL DESTINY** of the wicked made a profound difference in his considerations of this problem, Ps. 73:16-17.
 2. In particular, the wicked will be cast down in judgment, unable to help themselves by God's rule so that they are suddenly, completely and forever vanquished from their former luxurious states, Ps. 73:18-20!
 3. Considering this tragic, sudden, catastrophic end of the wicked caused Asaph to see his envy of them to be a foolish spiritual blindness, an attachment to a vain world system that needed to change, 73:21-22!
 4. Accordingly, he readjusted his **viewpoint** to assert God's **eternal values** for blessing of heart, 73:23-28:
 - a. The psalmist reaffirmed his satisfaction in life as resting in his relationship to God, Ps. 73:23.
 - b. He also saw that his life's **end** would be blessed due to this relationship with the Lord, Ps. 73:24.
 - c. He also saw that, due to the futility of this short life, and all that it could offer by way of living unrighteously, this life's real blessings were tied up **exclusively** in one's properly relating to God, not in anything else this life had to offer, Ps. 73:25-26, 27-28.

Lesson: (1) *If the believer adopts a worldly value system of appreciating the gratification of the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, and that to keep up with the seeming fulfillment of the ungodly who abuse others to stay ahead, he loses out of really lasting fulfillment in this life, let alone of blessings in eternity.* (2) *If he rather chooses to live righteously, though he misses out on wealth and positions in this life, he has the fulfillment of fellowship with God now and untold wealth of eternal rewards with the Lord. In REAL terms, it is more cost-effective to live uprightly NOW!*