

## PSALM 73

This psalm is much akin to the 37th. It centers on that ancient stumbling block concerning the present prosperity of the wicked and the sorrows of the godly. Why do the wicked have more success and less troubles than godly men? Does sincere piety toward God afford no good fortune for man in this life? Can earthly happiness be gained only by a total disregard, even contempt, of God? Asaph laments, "surely in vain I have kept my heart pure." He tries to understand this, and it was very troublesome to him--UNTIL he came into the sanctuary of God, and then he perceived their end. And how did Asaph respond? He knows that God has taken hold of his right hand, God's counsel will guide him, and afterward the Lord will receive him to glory. "Whom have I in heaven but You?"

### A Psalm of Asaph.

- 1 Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart!
- 2 But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, my steps had almost slipped.
- 3 For I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- 4 For there are no pains in their death, and their body is fat.
- 5 They are not in trouble as *other* men, nor are they plagued like mankind.
- 6 Therefore pride is their necklace; the garment of violence covers them.
- 7 Their eye bulges from fatness; the imaginations of *their* heart run riot.
- 8 They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; they speak from on high.
- 9 They have set their mouth against the heavens,  
and their tongue parades through the earth.
  
- 10 Therefore his people return to this place, and waters of abundance are drunk by them.
- 11 They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?"
- 12 Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased *in* wealth.
- 13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence;
- 14 for I have been stricken all day long and chastened every morning.
  
- 15 If I had said, "I will speak thus,"  
    behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children.
- 16 When I pondered to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight
- 17 until I came into the sanctuary of God; *then* I perceived their end.
- 18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.
- 19 How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!
- 20 Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form.
  
- 21 When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within,
- 22 then I was senseless and ignorant; I was *like* a beast before You.

23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand.  
24 With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven *but You*? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.  
26 My flesh and my heart may fail,  
    but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish;  
    You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You.

28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good;  
    I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.

#### PRAYER

*O heavenly Father, you are the high and lofty one, perfect in knowledge, and guiding the affairs of heaven and earth with perfect wisdom. Teach us to trust in your divine providence as an anchor for our souls. Let not our feet slip when we see the prosperity of the wicked, but let us be content with the lot you have ordained for us. Remove all envy from us when we meet with those who have riches beyond their needs, and let us remember that we have been blessed with the riches of salvation, purchased for us at a great cost to yourself through the death of your only Son, in whose name we pray. Amen.*