

# Psalm 73:1-28

A Psalm of Asaph

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

## *Introduction*

“We come to this Psalm of Asaph, and I believe that he is a character that we should familiarize ourselves with a bit. He wrote Psalm 50, and then he writes Psalms 73 through 83. He’s an interesting man, and we should be familiar with him to some degree, because when you put those Psalms together, you have a man, Asaph, who wrote more of the Bible than Jonah, Amos, Micah, Joel, Malachi, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Nahum, Haggai, Peter, James or Jude. And yet we hardly know his name. And yet he wrote more than all of those other authors in these 12 Psalms he’s written for us. He was a Levite, of the family of Gershom, one of the sons of Levi, the son of Berechiah. And David put him in charge of the music in the Tabernacle, and then on into the Temple of Solomon. You can read about him in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles chapters 15 and 16. 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 29:30 mentions him as Asaph the Seer, or the Prophet. And evidently, Israel recognized, not too long after his ministry began, that he had a prophetic mantle on his musical ability and ministry. When David brings the Ark of the Covenant from Kiriath Jearim to Jerusalem, you remember that process, it was long and drawn out, and failed at first. And then when David brings it up, he leaves Asaph in charge of the Ark of the Covenant there, as he puts a Tabernacle up in Jerusalem. Some of the other priests were still in Shiloh and other places, until it was all consolidated in Jerusalem. But Asaph, this young man, ends up there overseeing the Ark and the Tabernacle that was in Jerusalem. He went through that entire process, all the way to the Dedication of Solomon’s Temple when David is dead, Asaph is still there. And Asaph rides through all of that, to the divided kingdom, as he watches Rehoboam take over the Southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin [half tribe of Benjamin], and Jeroboam taking over the northern tribes, and sees all of that divided [to read about that Bible history, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/kings/1.html>] So, this young man, this Levite, the prophet, watched David in tremendously difficult days, he saw David fail morally with Bathsheba, and take the life of Uriah. He watched David in his repentance, and what took place in worship in Jerusalem. He watched David as he put together the plans for the Temple, and that David said that the LORD gave him the blueprint, and the LORD gave him the order for the all of the priests. His (Asaph’s) sons ended up overseeing 24 courses of priests that were just given, Levites, just given to worship. So Asaph gets to see all of that. He sees Absalom’s rebellion, and David driven out of Jerusalem, and no doubt they wanted to take the Ark, and David said **‘No, you**

*leave that in Jerusalem,*' no doubt he was part of that, and he watches that whole process, and then David comes back to Jerusalem, and Absalom is dead, and he watches David's failing, in the end numbering the tribes of Israel, and then the fire of God falling from heaven on the threshing floor of Ornan, and sanctifying the place where the Temple would be built. He watches Solomon's Temple constructed, David is gone at this point in time. And he's there on the day that Solomon's Temple is dedicated, and the priests are unable to stand [inside the Temple] because of the glory of God coming out the front door. So this man Asaph has seen all of that. And then what should have been Israel's glory days under Solomon, he watches Solomon begin to compromise, and begin to fail, he sees idolatry introduced into Israel, and when Solomon passes he watches Jeroboam and Rehoboam, the kingdom is divided, there's idolatry, and he's a man that's seen all kinds of things. So when he tells us about the things that he's seen that are unjust, that are unfair, that should never happen, he's speaking no doubt in retrospect, and from a very deep place. He's a man whose been through these things. He's not someone whose just writing and telling us truths in a song in Israel, this is a man whose been through the worst of days, he's seen people slaughtered, he's seen people killed, he's watched the ungodly prosper, he's watched the righteous driven out of Jerusalem, he's seen all of these things, and God uses him to put now the next 11 Psalms to the page as we move forward. So this man, Asaph, a major contributor to the writing of the Bible, more than many people that we're familiar with now begins this Psalm, Psalm 73, that many of us are familiar with.

*'These Are The Ungodly Who Prosper In  
The World...Verily I have Cleansed My  
Heart In Vain'*

He begins by saying **"Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But"** as in contrast, **"as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped."** (verses 1-2) The reason? **"For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."** (verse 3) and he introduces us to a problem that we see in Psalm 37, we see it in other places, we see it through ancient literature and Hebrew poetry. What's the deal here? How does this kind of fit with the moral government of a good God, when we look around and we see what's going on in the world? How do we, you know, gel,

how do we put together the idea, how does this go together, that God is good, and God is on the throne, and God is in control of everything, and yet we see sex-trafficking, and we see the sale of heroine, we see people in prostitution, and we see pornographers flourishing, making all kinds of money, we see drug-runners, money running out of their pockets, with the nicest houses, the nicest cars. We see people in high positions in government that sell out, take bribes, we see the wicked flourishing and prospering, and sometimes we see just good and righteous people, they can't get ahead, nothing works out for them, maybe they have a prolonged illness, this goes wrong in their life, somebody stabs them in the back, somebody steals from them, you know, somebody punches them and knocks them down when they're trying to be nice to somebody, they end up with broken bones, they have to stay in the hospital for months, somebody steals from them, steals their identity. Where do we go, how do we put together the idea of the prosperity of the wicked, and the suffering of good people, how do we square God's moral government, with all of that wrong, all of the injustice that we see in the world? And people in church will do that, people in church will come to me and say, *'That's it, I'm done, why should I even try? I try to do what's right, I try to do what's best, I try to serve the Lord, nothing works out, everything falls apart on me, I'm left sitting alone, I'm lonely, I'm broken, I'm sick, I don't have any money, I'm losing my home, and you look at these guys here, they're ripping everybody off, they're doing whatever they want, they're shacking up with their girlfriend or boyfriend, they have no rules, they're doing whatever they want to do, and everything in their life seems easy, everything in their life seems to be going right.'* [he just sung my song, 90 percent of that fits me...] And Asaph begins to address that, and we can tell, as he does, that he has wrestled with this. And every one in this room, sooner or later, if you haven't already, will wrestle with similar issues. Because every one of us in our life, we will experience betrayal, and to a depth that it will hurt us deeply. [And we will also experience betrayal in the church too, and this will hurt much more than betrayal from the world outside. Jesus addresses that in the parable of the wheat and the tares, dealing with false brethren. See, <http://www.unityinchrist.com/mathew/Matthew13-24-43.htm> for an expository study on this parable and subject.] We will experience illness, one way or another. Nobody ever died of good health, every one of us is going to experience that somewhere, somehow. Every one of us in this room will see somebody we love, somebody good, somebody we admire, go through terrible things, and we'll see other people think *'How is*

*this happening, it's not fair!*' and that's our cry, *'It's not fair,'* like there's a big Court House in the sky we're gonna make God show up at, and he's going to have to answer why these things are going on. And Asaph looks at that. Now look, in **verse 1** you see that word **"Truly"** there. That's the same word over in **verse 13** where it's translated **"verily"** in King James, and it's the same word down in **verse 18** where it's translated **"surely"**, it can be "surely," it can be "verily," it can be "truly," it can be "only." And certainly here as he begins, he's saying, ***'Look, God is good, that's true, truly, God is good, I've got that squared away, I've got that nailed down. He's good to his people, he's good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But, even with that in view,'*** he says, ***"as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped."*** (**verse 2**) they weren't gone, God was gracious, they were almost gone. ***"and my steps had well nigh slipped"***, almost slipped, they hadn't slipped. And now he tells us what's contributing to that, he says, ***"For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."*** (**verse 4**) He says, ***'I was envious, I was jealous, there was something in my heart that was wrong, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked,'*** he said, ***'I was jealous of that, I was envious of that, I was struggling with that, it became my dilemma, I saw, at the foolish, I saw the prosperity of the wicked.'*** Now look, this is easy to do, to see it with your physical eye. Understand when we study prosperity through the Scripture, it doesn't have to do with just dollars and cents, please understand that. What does it mean to God, if some human being just raked off Wall Street, or just took all the money from Fanny Mae or Freddie Mack, just ripped off half the country, they got so much money in the bank that they don't know what to do with, and they're going die and go to hell. Was that prosperity before God? Or is prosperity somebody whose struggling, doesn't seem to get ahead, they're working at it, they're on their knees crying out to God, and the Lord is slowly revealing himself. That is a person, in the estimate of God, and in the long run, who is a prosperous person, because life has come into perspective, and they find themselves on their knees, crying to the Living God, and finding strength there. God estimates prosperity vastly different than we do. And that deals with an envious attitude, or a jealous attitude, over the wrong things. We're going to find that this guy comes, Asaph, he's honest with us, he comes to some wrong conclusions because he has the facts wrong. But he's going to tell us, and God puts it to the page, because all of us struggle with this at one point or another. He says ***"I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the***

wicked.” (verse 3) He says this, now, **“For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.”** (verse 4) **“bands” ‘pains’** you know, **‘twinges of fear, there’s no torture in their death, but their strength is firm.’** They live, they’re strong, when they die they’re not afraid. Now by the way, that’s not true. That is a misperception. He’s at that place, because there have been plenty of people that are godless, and on their deathbed, crying out in fear, and there are plenty of pangs in their death. This is his perspective at this point in time. And we don’t know, over in **verse 26** he says **“My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”** He may be in the middle of an illness himself, suffering, as he’s pouring out these thoughts here on the page. He says in **verse 5**, **“They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.”** By the way, that’s wrong. That’s his perspective. **“neither are they plagued like other men”** they get away with anything. They’re running the world and they’re running people into the ground, they’re taking advantage of everybody, they’re ontop of the game, it’s dog-eat-dog, and everybody else is getting eaten by them, and there’s no problem in their lives, there’s no trouble, they’re not plagued like other men. That’s not true. **“Therefore”** because of that, **“pride compasseth them about as a chain;”** as a necklace, they wear pride, they got enough pride-ring, you know, they wear it around their neck like a chain, like a necklace, **“and violence covereth them as a garment.”** (verse 6), they wear it. They’re so arrogant that their pride looks like a big fancy necklace, you can’t not see it. And it says **‘their garment that covers them is violence, they’re arrogant.’** **“Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.”** (verse 7) Now that’s not today everybody wants to loose weight, it’s not talking about that. The idea is, **‘Their eyes, the way they look at you, they’re just proud, they’re arrogant,’** you know, **‘they have this look of disdain, if you say anything about goodness or about God or about the right way to do things, it says they just look at you, their eyes are bulking with fatness, this disdain is the idea, they look at you.’** **“they have more than heart could wish”**, they got it all. You look at them, this could be your neighbour, it could be your relative, it could be your peer, it could be somebody you know. And here’s the envious part, Asaph is saying, **‘What’s the deal? They got it all. They got everything, I got nothing. And they’re arrogant, look at the way they act. They got everything that a heart could wish for.’** Now he’s going to correct himself as he goes on. But we can get there in our minds.

**Verse 8** he says, **“They are corrupt,”** the Hebrew idea is **‘they scoff’** **“and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.”** they look down at people, they’re scornful, they’re mockers. You ever see them on TV. Sometimes comedians, sometimes people in the media, and they mock anything that has to do with Jesus, they mock anything that has to do with Christians, they mock anything that has to do with righteousness, they mock anything that has to do with morality or Creation. You see them, I can say some names right now, I can see one of them in my mind, he drives me out of my mind. And he says here, **‘They’re corrupt, they’re mockers, they speak wickedly, and concerning oppression, they’re just lofty, they’re just looking down, they’re condescending, they look down on everybody else,’** he says. And he says **“They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.” (verse 9)** They speak against God and man, they’re blasphemous in regards to the heavens, they mock God, and their tongue literally parades through the earth, they’re so arrogant, they’re famous for what they say, they mock God and their mouth just parades through the earth, and they’re not afraid of God or man. And you see them out there. You know, I wouldn’t want to stand next to that guy in an electrical storm, that’s for sure. **“Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.” (verse 10)** It’s in context with the wicked and their mouth. “waters of a full *cup* are wrung out to them” you know, they got many followers, it seems everything goes their way. **“And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?” (verse 11)** **‘Where’s your God? You think your God is real? You think he knows?’** and they got people that follow them, mockers who join them, **‘Ya, where is he?’** They don’t know that God is longsuffering, he tells us that in the New Testament, hoping that men will turn to repentance. They think they’re getting away with something. And he says that’s their cry, *‘You think God knows? Come on, cut me a break, you’re telling me there’s a God up there that watches? Then why’s he let this stuff go on?’* they bring up the stuff that bothers you. *‘Oh ya, if there’s a God up there, then why’d these people get killed on the train the other day? Oh ya, there’s a God up there, this little girl got shot in the street. Oh ya, if there’s a God up there, how come there’s sex trafficking. Oh ya, if there’s a God up there, how come this is going on? How come innocent people get killed, if God’s up there, did he bring Hurricane Sandy? Did he bring the tidal waves, did he do this? This is your God? I want nothing to do with your God, I’m going to get what I get while I’m down here, I’m getting everything for*

*myself, you're God ain't real, he ain't doing nothing, don't tell me about it anymore. You can say grace at Christmas, besides that, just shut up. How does God know? You really think he's there? You really think he's watching? Is that what you're telling me?* And Asaph says, **“Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.” (verse 12)** this is who they are. And he's seen a lot, no doubt, this man. These are the ungodly who prosper in this world, you know, sometimes you look at some of the wealthiest people, you know, the media brings them in front of us, you hear some of the things they say, and you think, ‘*Man, just there's no fear of God,*’ they prosper in this world, they increase in riches.

*Have I Cleansed My Heart IN Vain?---Our Thinking And Reasoning Doesn't Always Provide The Answer Or Solution For Us To Find Peace*

**Verse 13**, he says now, **“Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.”** “Verily” is our word, probably should be **“Surely”** is the idea. **“I have cleansed my heart in vain,”** That's wrong? That's a wrong conclusion. **“Verily I have cleansed my heart, and washed my hands in innocency.”** Wrong conclusion. **“For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.” (verse 14)** **‘You do right? So what, what's it mean?’** He says **‘I'm tortured with this, I've cleansed my heart in vain.’** And look, that's a struggle, isn't it? It's one thing cleansing your behaviour, cleansing your heart is a vastly different thing. You know, when you're walking before the Lord, and your relationship with Jesus is to the point where you're thinking *‘You're right, I shouldn't think that. I'm never gonna do it, but can't I just think about strangling him for a little while? Lord, just,’* and the Lord's saying, *‘No, I want you to bring your thoughts into captivity to me, even the imaginations of your heart.’* And Asaph is saying, **‘LORD, I even want to cleanse my heart, even those things that are deep within. Have a done that in vain? What's the point? You know, I've cleansed my heart in vain, washed my hands in innocency. What's the point?’** **“For all day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.” (verse 14)** And we're not sure what situation, if you study the life of Asaph from early in David's life, you know, all the way through Solomon to Rehoboam, he's been in some terrible, terrible circumstances,

and seen the highs and lows. He's seen the good, bad, and ugly of the Tabernacle and the Temple, and genuine worship and hypocritical worship, he's seen people murdered, driven out, in intrigue in God's house. He watched David's sons and Joab trying to take the throne, before Solomon was anointed. I mean, he's seen all kinds of insanity. And at some point here, however low, his point is, and maybe he's suffering with illness at this point, and it may be a prolonged illness, he says, **'You know, I've done all this for nothing, I'm plagued all the day long, I'm just chastened, it never stops.'** And he says, **verse 15**, look, **"If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children."** He said, **'LORD, if I shoot my mouth off about this, let alone write it in the Best Seller, if I shoot my mouth off about this, I'm going to stumble your children. I mean, I'm supposed to be Asaph, I'm one of the Levites, I'm supposed to be one of the worship leaders, and all I want to do is gripe. I'm plagued with this all the day long. I can't escape it, it's more than I can bear. Because, reality is, LORD, I see wicked people flourishing, they're getting away with murder, and I see righteous people being slaughtered and put down, and I'm supposed to be a worship leader? LORD, this is eating me alive,'** he says. **'I've cleansed my heart in vain,'** and he says, **'If I should speak this, behold, I'm going to offend against the generation of your children.'** and **"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;"** **'when I thought to know it, it's too painful for me, I can't handle it. I can't handle it, it's too much. It doesn't process logically, it doesn't process if I think critically, LORD, as I try to think theologically I have problems here, this does not process, it doesn't process.'**

*'It Was Too Painful For Me, UNTIL I Went Into The Sanctuary'*

And as we come to **verse 17**, he begins to give us then the answer, and what took place. Look, I think it's important, because there was no therapy or reasoning or counseling that was able to bring Asaph out of this. [You might say this set of circumstances had brought Asaph into a state of depression for however long it took him to work through this.] The truth is, sometimes we get in those situations, and that really is the way things are around us. That is the way it is, sometimes. It is unfair, it is hard, it is painful, it doesn't square with a God who rules a moral government, whose supposed to be on the throne,

and loves us, and he's powerful enough to change everything. ***Sometimes that's the way it is, and our thinking and reasoning does not provide the answer or the solution for us to find peace.*** And that's just the way it is, sometimes. ***"Until"*** Look, ***"it was too painful for me; until"*** that's an important word, isn't it, when something's too painful? ***'This was too painful, until...'*** I'm ready to know, right away. When you got an "until" when you're too painful, I want to know what your "until" is. He said, ***"it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."*** (verse 17) He says, ***'it was too painful, I couldn't handle it, until'*** he says, ***'I went into the sanctuary,'*** and he said, ***'of course, that was the place where the blood was flowing, that was the place where the incense was rising, that was the place where the worship of an eternal God was taking place.'*** and he says, ***'When I went into sanctuary, I understood their end.'*** It wasn't about where they were, it was about where they were going. It wasn't about here, it's about the hereafter. That's why you should come to church. That's why we're told in Hebrews not to neglect that gathering together of ourselves. Because the world out there can drive you nuts. And Satan will sit right there and lie, like he did in the Garden of Eden, and say *'God is not fair, God is holding out on you, if he's really on the throne, why is all this going on? Why all this pain?'* And Asaph says, ***'You know, I should have known this, for me it was like 'Duh!', because I stood in that sanctuary year after year and led worship.'*** He said, ***'I went into the sanctuary, and I stood there, I saw the incense rising, I heard people praying, I saw the blood flowing, I was reminded that an innocent substitute had to die in my place to make me acceptable with an eternal God, and I remembered 'they have no hope, they have no atonement, they have no trust in God.'*** And he said, ***'And I stood there, and I remembered their end, I remembered their end.'*** Look, in the world we live in, all wicked people don't prosper, all of them don't, some of them suffer. All godly people don't suffer, some of them do, and it seems so unfair. And you think, *'But it seems that all wicked people should suffer, and all godly people should prosper.'* And the truth is, they will. The truth is, that is signed, sealed, and delivered, the truth is, that is exactly what is going to happen. And he said ***'When I got into the sanctuary, and I worshipped, and I stood there, and I remembered we worship an eternal God, then I realized their end, the wicked, who seemed to have all this stuff,'*** he said, ***'I realized, I remembered their end, and then it was no longer too painful for me. Then I***

*remembered, oh yea, we're getting out of here, oh yea, we're going to glory, oh yea, we're going to stand in front of our sweet Saviour Jesus Christ, and there ain't going to be any sickness, or pain, or death.'* Jesus in Revelation 21, when he finally describes *'When I have it my way, when I put up the new heavens and a new earth, when everything is gathered to me the way I want it, and I have my children, I'll walk among them, they'll be my sons and daughters, there's no more sorrow, no more death, no more pain, no more crying, I'll wipe the tears away from their eyes,'* he goes down the list. He says *'When I got into the sanctuary, then I remembered the end of the wicked. Before that I kept thinking about their prosperity, thinking everything's working for them, everything looks good for them, everything works out for them,'* and then he said, *'When I came into the sanctuary,'* that's why it's important to come to church, because you need an attitude adjustment a couple times a week [applause]. [Comment: every church should have a normal service, and then a midweek Bible study for this "attitude adjustment" and spiritual replenishment.] I do. Because when you're out there, your attitude gets adjusted in the wrong direction. We have sensory overload, you know, between media, and television, and sounds, and words, and computers, and bosses, and employees, and fellow students, we're on sensory overload. And usually that sensory overload is not in a place where we're quiet, and reading, you know, it's wonderful when we get time with the Lord in the morning. But it's wonderful to gather with a whole bunch of other people that get beat up out there, and get told they're crazy. Isn't it wonderful to gather with all the crazies? and realize *'We're not crazy, we all believe the same thing!'* we do believe the same thing, we do know what's right, and we do know how this is going to roll out. And we come together, and it says *'We should stir one another up to faith and to good works, not neglecting the gathering together of ourselves, especially as you see the day drawing near.'* (Hebrews 10:24-25) Do you see *The Day* drawing near? Or are you waiting for the U.N. to straighten the world out? [End-Time prophecies, current events leading to the fulfillment of them, are just screaming out at us every week, every day now it seems.] Do you think time is just going to go on and sooner or later, and we're going to have like these great big heads and little arms, and we're going to be so smart we're not going to do anything wrong? It ain't gonna happen. That ain't where it's going. I hate to tell you that. The show is winding down. There are enough things out there, that the Lord said *'When you see these things begin to take*

**place, you lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing nigh.'** And we need to remember the end-game here. We need to remember how this all rolls out, because we know the last chapter, we know who wins, we know who loses, it's written out. The anti-christ can't change his number from 666 to 667, it's written out.

### *Fate Of The Wicked, Those That Seem To Have It All*

He said ***'It was too painful for me to bear all of this, until I went into the sanctuary of God, THEN understood I their end,'*** listen to what he says in **verse 18**, ***"Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction."*** ***"Surely"*** this one could be ***"Only"*** ***"Surely thou didst set them in slippery places"***, ***'not me LORD.'*** There in verse 2 he said ***'I thought my feet had well nigh slipped,'*** he said, ***'I got things back in perspective, you've put them in slippery places. I thought it was me that was in a slippery place, and they were all flourishing and there were no problems in their lives.'*** He said, ***'LORD, I remembered now, their end, surely you've set them in slippery places,'*** ***"thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors."*** (verses 18b-19) ***"Desolation"*** very interesting word, it means ***"to be completely ruined, nothing left,"*** it's a word of shame, it's a word that the Jew would understand, it's worse than destruction. ***"How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors."*** (verse 19) where's their wealth now? ***'My perspective was there's no pain in their death? That's insane, that's not true at all.'*** He says, ***'The truth is, you set them in slippery places, you're casting them down into destruction.'*** How are they brought into this terrible state of desolation? ***"in a moment!"*** It can happen ***snap!*** like that. ***"they are utterly consumed with terrors."*** No longer is he envying the wicked, **verse 3** says ***'I was envious of them.'*** That's not happening anymore, things are back in perspective, in a moment. You know, you watch Leonardo DeCaprio in the movie *The Titanic*, everybody out on this big beautiful luxury liner, the best food, the best wine, the best entertainment, everybody eating hors'dorves and all this wonderful stuff, and all of the glitz, and one hunk of ice changes everything. [Comment: the Titanic is an excellent picture of modern society, showing how fast it's going to go down, in a moment, when World War III occurs, which is the great

tribulation in Bible terminology. How's it all begin, and where is it all headed? See [http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming\\_4.htm](http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming_4.htm)] People went down, and are still going down, still falling in darkness. How many people were on that ship that the world envied, they were millionaires, they were wealthy, they had everything, and in a moment, it says. This world is a *Titanic*. In a moment, they're utterly consumed with terrors.

*Asaph Comes Under Conviction: 'I Was Like A Beast That Has No Understanding'*

**"As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." (verse 20) 'LORD, this is all an illusion,'** and he says in **verse 21, "Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins." 'I just came under conviction in the deepest part of my being.'** **"So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee." (verse 22) 'I was like an animal, LORD, I lost perspective.'** You know, humankind is so different. You know in our culture, isn't it crazy, I just saw on the news this guy, Washington, Colorado somewhere, who raped this little girl, and I think they gave him a month and a half or something in jail, and this other guy burned a cat, and he got 10-years. I just don't understand, and the cat don't look that bad, looking at it, I'm not pushing barbeque or anything [chuckles]. But I think how crazy we are. You can rape a little girl and get a month-and-a-half, and then probation. You burn a cat and get 10-years. We've completely lost perspective, we have completely lost perspective. He said **'I was so foolish and ignorant before,'** he's not afraid to say it, **'I was like a beast before you.'** That's the truth. These animals are not our brothers and sisters. People say that. They ain't my brother. I have a sister, I have kids, I ain't related to cats and dogs. There here, that's fine. God made them, I appreciate the ones I eat [laughter], ah, you know, cows, lambs, you know, it's good stuff. But there ain't no lambs out in the field, *'I wonder why we're here,'* or any cows saying *'Mooo-ust be more to life than this.'* He says **'I became like a beast, I was like a beast, I had no perspective on anything, all I think about is what rich people are eating and shoving down their throat, and how much money they got in the bank, I was no better than an animal, I had no more reasoning, because an animal has no sense of eternity, of purpose, of destiny,'** he said, **'I became like a beast, LORD.'** He's so convicted here. He says

***‘When I went into the sanctuary, I remembered, I understood their end, I said ‘O ya, the righteous are going to flourish, and the wicked are going to suffer, the God of Israel is good, and now he’s slow and he’s merciful, hoping that people will come to repentance.’*** I mean, how many of us were insane, we’re taking drugs, we were in the world, we were doing things, and here we sit, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Right? And now we’re anxious for Jesus to come, because now that we’re in the heck with everybody else. What if he’s going to wait ten more years, and a multitude is going to be gathered in, just like we were, no good good-for-nothings, and here we are saved and cleansed. And he said ***‘When I went into the house of God, it came back into perspective again.’*** I love that song, you know the one we just sang, whatever, and then he said, ***‘Then I remembered, terror is going to come on them in a moment, it’s going to be like an illusion, like a dream, destruction is going to come upon them, they’re going to be gone.’*** And he says ***‘like someone waking up from a dream, LORD, when you arise, when you awake yourself, you’re going to despise their image. Though my heart was grieved,’*** he said (verses 20-21), and he thought, ***‘Oh man.’*** You ever do that? In 20/20, in hindsight, 20/20, everything seems so clear. You’re going through a situation complaining, *‘If you love me, how could you let this happen to me, if you love me!? Why is this going on in my life? I can’t believe you’re letting this happen to me!’* and then you get on the other side of it, and you can look back, and you say, *‘sorry.’* [laughter] *‘you were smart, I wasn’t. I see now, you were so wise, you were so right. Thank you Lord.’* The Psalmist is saying that now, ***‘You were right, LORD, my heart was grieved, I was pricked in the deepest part of my being.’*** ***“So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.”*** (verse 22) ***‘All I cared about was satisfying my flesh.’***

*‘LORD, You’ve Got My Right Hand, You’re Guiding Me  
With Your Counsel’*

Now I love the verse, **verse 23** where it says, **“Nevertheless”**. I’m glad we find God’s “nevertheless” in the Bible. ***“Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.”*** ***“Nevertheless”, ‘I’m like a beast, I’m foolish, I’ve been thinking the wrong things, I am so ignorant, I was saying everything wrong. Nevertheless I am continually with you. And I’m griping, and***

*complaining, and stamping my feet, and acting like a spoiled little brat, nevertheless I'm continually with thee, even when I've lost perspective, LORD, you hold me by my right hand, you've taken hold of me.'* You know, I kind of like that. If you have grandkids, you appreciate that, say you're going through slippery or dangerous places or a parking lot, it's one thing to tell them to "Look out", because they don't. It's much different to grab their hand, and walk them through the traffic. And he said, *'LORD, that's who you are, that's what you've done, you're taking me by my right hand.'* And then this, **"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,"** through the slippery places of life, it's all come back into perspective, **"and afterward receive me to glory."** (verse 24) *'I gripe, I complain, I lose perspective, but LORD, nevertheless you're continually with me, you've taken me by my hand, you're going to guide me with your counsel,'* you know, the Psalmist said, *'Your Word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path, you're going to guide me.'* And after all of that, **"receive me to glory"** all of this, and glory too, all of this, and glory too. Our struggles, our misperceptions, our losing perspective, our becoming just like a beast sometimes, our highest motivation is something relative to our flesh, we don't see anything beyond that, and it says *'Nevertheless, he's always with us, nevertheless, he takes us by our hand, nevertheless, he guides us with his counsel. Nevertheless, when it's all over, he's taken us to glory.'* I'm ready. It'd be fun just to see some people in this church, with a big smile on their face, old wracked up body gone, disappointments, not remembered anymore, just---won't that be nice? Just a new start, waking up at 30 again [or 20 again], that'll be good.

### *It's Not About Where You Are---It's About Where You're Going*

He says, **"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."** (verse 25) There's nobody up there LORD that I want but you. **"and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."** Now that's getting things back into perspective again. **My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."** (verse 26) The truth is, my flesh, it fails. This bag of bones, wearing out, **"but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee."** (verses 26b-27) How are they going

to perish? It says **“in a moment! they shall utterly be consumed with terrors.”** Look, I don’t imagine, but if anyone’s here tonight, and you don’t know Christ as your Saviour, do not leave here without coming up afterwards to pray with us. He says here, **“lo, they that are far from thee shall perish”** they’re gonna perish, that is just the truth. How? in a moment, it says, in a moment. That’s how somebody passes over from this life to the next. It may be a last breath on a bed in a hospital, it may be a car wreck, it may be the Titanic, it may be a bullet, but the point is everybody’s crossing over, and you’re crossing over in a moment. You cross over without him, you’re out in the darkness, it says, filled with terror, there’s nothing. **“For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. 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.” (verses 27-28)** You know, he says in the final analysis, it’s not about where you are, it’s about where you’re going. Because people always want to say, *‘Hey, let me tell you where I’m at.’* We understand where you’re at, it stinks, you’re not happy, *‘Let me tell you where I’m at.’* It’s not about where you’re at, it’s about where you’re going, where you’re going to end up at the end of all this. In the long run, that’s the picture. Faith is not based on us understanding God’s ways, but he says here, it’s based on us drawing close to God himself. **‘When I sought to understand,’** he says, **‘what I was looking at was factual, it was unjust, I looked at the wicked, they were prospering, there was arrogance, there was lifting their mouth against God and man, it was looking down at everyone,’** and he said, **‘When I tried to understand that, it was painful. It was too painful for me to bear that, it isn’t right, and it shouldn’t be going on. And if God is moral, and he runs the universe, why is this going on?’** It’s one of the great dilemmas of believers in every age, from the Garden of Eden onward. [Comment: One group of Christians, the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God, think they have the answer to that one. They believe the fate of the “unsaved dead” has been misinterpreted by most Christians down through the ages, due to a misunderstanding of Scriptures having to do with the two major resurrections the Bible teaches about. The secret, they believe, is locked up in the prophetic and symbolic meaning of God’s Old Testament Holy Days of Leviticus 23, which they believe map out the entire Plan of God, from the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, to the Great White Throne Judgment. Now granted, this is not what the majority of professing Christians believe. But what if the majority are the ones who

lack proper understanding, and this interpretation explains this age-old dilemma? Wouldn't it be worth a look-see? I mean, let's face it, if sociologists and historians and anthropologists are all somewhat in agreement across that wide variety of disciplines that there have been anywhere from 50 billion to 100 billion people who have lived and died in man's short 6,000 years of recorded history---and we know for sure that not all that many, numerically speaking, have been bonafide, legitimate Holy Spirit indwelt Christians---then simple logic of deduction would tell us that Jesus and God the Father are losing in their war against Satan, and by Christianity's interpretation, whenever the "unsaved dead" die, they go to some everburning hellfire for eternity, and that a majority of mankind, about 99.9999999 percent of everyone who have lived and died in man's history are in that hellfire somewhere. Does that look like a decent, fair and merciful plan of salvation being administered by an all-wise, all-merciful God? Or does it seriously look like something is radically wrong with our past interpretation of Scripture on this matter? To read some of these other interpretations about the fate of the "unsaved dead" and the overall Plan of God, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/plaintruth/battle.htm> and <http://www.unityinchrist.com/E-Mails/June%2014/FallHolyDays-short.htm>.

I would seriously say the greater Body of Christ needs to show some, to put it in Mikhail Gorbachev's words, *Glasnost* ("openness, honesty") in the exchange and review of beliefs held, and then do some serious *Perestroika* (restructuring) of our belief systems. Just a thought I'm throwing out there, since this website is all about unity in the Body of Christ, and is basically non-denominational (i.e. I don't take sides. I have my own beliefs, but I don't take sides). Pastor Joe continues...] But he's saying here, the ultimate answer to that is not understanding why God allows a particular thing, or why he's doing it. The ultimate therapy, the ultimate getting hold of peace again, is the Person of God himself, ***'LORD, when I came into the sanctuary, when I drew near to you again, then I remembered their end, and I realized that all of this that they have is going to come crashing down in a day, in a moment, and when that happens they're going to be filled with terror.'*** And he said, ***'When I realized that, I was so convicted. I'd been accusing God, I'd been thinking things the wrong way, I'd been picking on people, I've been doing everything wrong,'*** he says, ***'it was eating me up inside, I was like a beast,'*** and then he says, ***'but you know what? Nevertheless, I realized LORD, through all of that, you were***

***there with me, you're always with me, you've taken me by my hand, here I am griping and complaining, kicking and screaming.*** It reminds me of that, you know that movie *Young Frankenstein*? He says, 'Alright, let me get in the room with the monster now, and when I get in there, no matter what I say, don't unlock the door,' as soon as he gets in there, 'UNLOCK THE DOOR!' We say to the Lord sometimes, 'Lord, ok, Lord, take me by the hand, and lead me in the way everlasting,' and then we end up like some little kid, and we feel like he's dragging us, and we scream 'I don't want to go this way,' and we just told him, 'Just take me and lead me.' One time we were down at the airport years ago, and there was this lady dragging her little kid, he was two or three years old, and he was refusing to walk, she had him by the arm, she's dragging him, and his feet are dragging on the carpet, and he's screaming 'HELP! SOMEBODY HELP ME! HEELP!' just, sometimes I feel like that with the Lord, I say 'Lord, just take me through this, whether I like it our not, Lord, make me go through this, make me learn,' you know, 'work me out here, my life is yours,' and the next day I'm going 'HELP! SOMEBODY HELP ME!' and I feel like he's dragging me. And Asaph says, 'No, no, look, I'm griping, I'm complaining, I'm coming to the wrong conclusions, I'm accusing God, I'm talking down to people, I can't even witness to the people in God's house, I don't want to drag them down, all of this was too painful,' and then he said, 'Then I found myself right where I'm supposed to be, I'm a worship leader, standing in the house of God, everything comes back into perspective of eternity again, and I realized, these people that I think they have everything are gonna crash and burn in a moment, and cry out in terror, they're going to be gone. And I was so convicted, I felt like a beast, so stupid, so brutish. And yet, when I looked up, there was a "nevertheless" there, and God was standing next to me, he had hold of my hand, he said 'I'm going to guide you with my counsel, and when I'm done with you I'm going to bring you to glory.' And Asaph said, 'That's the way that it needs to go, it is good,' verse 28, 'for me to draw near to God' not to understand everything, not to figure it all out, "**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.**" (verse 28) I'm going to have Rob come, we're going to sing a last song tonight. Let's stand together...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Psalm 73:1-28, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

related links:

1. Why is the world the way it is? For one interesting interpretation, see,

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/Does/TheMatrix.htm>

2. God has everything under control. See,

[http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming\\_4.htm](http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming_4.htm)

and

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/kingdomofgod/mkg1.htm>

and

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/E-Mails/June%2014/FallHolyDays-short.htm>

and

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/mathew/Matthew13-24-43.htm>

3. What does God want us to be doing in the mean time? See,

[http://www.unityinchrist.com/evangelism/samaritan\\_purs\\_e.htm](http://www.unityinchrist.com/evangelism/samaritan_purs_e.htm)

and

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/evangelism/Short-TermMissions.htm>

and

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/wwcofg/wearesalt.htm>

and

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/wwcofg/Questions.htm>