

## Psalm 73

*A psalm of Asaph. 亚萨的诗。*

This psalm is one of twelve psalms that were written by Asaph. He was one of the chief singers appointed by King David for the worship in the Temple in Jerusalem. David's son Solomon actually built the Temple, but David made all the arrangements for it before he died, even down to the details of who the chief singers should be.

Asaph was a true believer. He knew the Lord. And we find that out in v.1:

*1 Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*

神实在恩待以色列那些清心的人。

He knew that God was good, and he knew that God would bless Israel. And he knew that the true Israel, the true people of God, weren't necessarily all those who were physically descended from Abraham. The Old Testament shows us that most of them rebelled against God. They weren't God's chosen people. But rather the true people of God are all those who are spiritually descended from Abraham as the "father of the faithful."

Galatians 3:7

*Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

所以你们要知道那以信为本的人，就是亚伯拉罕的子孙。

In other words, the ones who will inherit all the eternal promises of God are not the Jews as a race, but rather all those, both Jew and Gentile, who are of a clean heart. Christ said:

Matthew 5:8

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

清心的人有福了，因为他们必得见神。

These are true believers. These are the only ones on their way to heaven, who'll escape the judgment to come. The first thing we all have to admit is that none of us have a clean heart. By nature, we're all born in a sinful condition. We need our hearts completely renewed even to begin to live clean and pure lives. So, first of all, we must cry to God for Him to give us a new heart. Only then, can we have a heart that seeks after purity.

But Asaph had a problem.

*2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.*

至于我，我的脚几乎失闪。我的脚险些滑跌。

He was a true believer, but there was one big question he just couldn't understand. He knew that God was good to His people. He knew that God would keep His people, and look after them. He knew that God was kind and generous to His people. These things

weren't the problem. He knew all that from his own experience of God. His problem came when he saw the wicked seemingly having such a better time of things than he was.

*3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

我见恶人和狂傲人享平安，就心怀不平。

*4 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.*

他们死的时候，没有疼痛。他们的力气，却也壮实。

*5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.*

他们不像别人受苦，也不像别人遭灾。

He envied the wicked. They were so much more prosperous than he was. They didn't seem to have any difficulties in their lives and they were healthy and strong. Now, how much of that was actually true, we don't know. Wicked people tend to put on an outward show. Maybe many of them were really miserable in their hearts. They'd never show it if they were. But at least to Asaph, life seemed to be so much easier for them. God seemed to bless them more than those who loved righteousness and at least wanted to do what was right. He thought it was so unfair of God to allow such wicked people to prosper.

Do we envy anybody? Maybe our unbelieving neighbour seems to be getting along so much better than we are. They seem to have so much ease and pleasure, and here we are struggling away. We've got the Lord to help us, but we still find life difficult, whereas they just drift through a life of relative ease.

But this ease begins to have an affect on them:

*6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.*

所以骄傲如链子戴在他们的项上。强暴像衣裳遮住他们的身体

*7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*

他们的眼睛，因体胖而凸出。他们所得的，过于心里所想的。

As a result of their being comfortable in this world, they become proud and arrogant. They have pride in their achievements. "Look what I've achieved." "Look at me, aren't I wonderful." They're so full of pride. And they become so self-centred, that they'd get violent if anybody opposed them. They end up living openly sinful lives, and whatever their evil imaginations come up with, they're able to have and enjoy it, without a problem.

*8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.*

他们讥笑人，凭恶意说欺压人的话。他们说话自高。

*9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.*

他们的口亵渎上天，他们的舌毁谤全地。

And they can use their mouths to get anything they want out of life. Do you know anybody with the uncanny ability to be able to control others to always get what they want? There are a lot of people in the world like that, who have this “power of persuasion.” It’s a real power, and it’s a very dangerous thing.

They can manipulate others to do anything they say. Think of the dictators of the world. How did Adolf Hitler come to power? The people voted for him. They wanted him. People blindly follow such personalities, wherever they lead them. That’s why it’s so dangerous.

*10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.*

所以神的民归到这里，喝尽了满杯的苦水。

“*His people return hither.*” This is quite difficult to understand, but I think “*His people*” refers to God’s people, or at least many who profess to be God’s people. Even they can be so persuaded by silver tongued speakers that they’ll do anything they say. They end up not following a God at all, but they return back to their old way of life, their old ideas.

Those who’ve truly received a new heart from God, while they can backslide grievously, and be affected by these people, they can never fall away completely. So, when it says “*waters of a full cup are wrung out to them,*” this must only speak of those who professed belief in God, but returned completely to their old life, like a dog returning to its vomit:

2 Peter 2:22

*But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*

俗语说得真不错：狗所吐的，他转过来又吃；猪洗净了又回到泥里去辊；这话在他们身上正合式。

And the wicked can see this happening. They see people who once professed Christianity going back and following their old way of life again, and it gives them boldness to even challenge God Himself. They don’t want any being greater than themselves to exist.

*11 And they say, ‘How doth God know?’ And ‘Is there knowledge in the Most High?’*

他们说，神怎能晓得？至高者岂有知识呢？

We’re warned in the Scriptures to particularly look out for this phenomenon as we come nearer to the end of time:

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [i.e. the Day of Judgment] shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

人不拘用什么法子，你们总不要被他诱惑，因为那日子以前，必有离道反教的事，并有那大罪人，就是沉沦之子，显露出来。他是抵挡主，高抬自己，超过一切称为神的，和一切受人敬拜的。甚至坐在神的殿里，自称是神。

*12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.*

看哪，这就是恶人。他们既是常享安逸，财宝便加增。

So prosperity and riches in this world lead to all sorts of wickedness: pride, violence, corruption, oppression, evil speaking, a power of persuasion to influence others, and in the end it leads people to set themselves up in the place of God Himself.

Asaph, a true believer who loved God, had a serious problem when he saw all these things happening around him. How could God allow this to happen? Wickedness wasn't being punished. People seemed to be getting away with it. In fact they were becoming more and more prosperous. God didn't seem to stop any of it.

Asaph was really beginning to think that following the Lord wasn't worth it:

*13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence.*

我实在徒然洁净了我的心，徒然洗手表明无辜。

*14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*

因为我终日遭灾难，每早晨受惩治。

Asaph thought, what's the point of keeping ourselves from evil, of fleeing from sin, of trying to keep ourselves holy, as the Lord wants us to do? Because sin seems to bring so much prosperity and advantage in this world. But he at least also had the sense to realise that if he'd said this to anyone, his witness for the truth would have been destroyed.

*15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.*

我若说，我要这样讲，这就是以奸诈待你的众子。

Do we have doubts in our mind about God? About what He's doing in the world? "Why does God allow this or that?" Or even about whether we're truly one of His children? It's at this point we should be careful what we say. If we truly love the Lord, and if we diligently stay close to Him, He'll keep us from completely destroying our witness for Him by saying unwise things about Him to others. If we have a problem with the things of God, there should be some people we can speak to about it, close friends, but generally we ought to keep quiet about it until God sheds more light on the situation for us.

But Asaph isn't the only one in the Bible who had a hard time thinking on these issues.

Jeremiah 12:1-2

*Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy*

*that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.*

耶和華阿，我與你爭辯的時候，你顯為義。但有一件，我還要與你理論，惡人的道路為何亨通呢？大行詭詐的為何得安逸呢？你栽培了他們，他們也扎了根，長大，而且結果。他們的口是與你相近，心却與你遠離。

Jeremiah had the same problem. Notice, v.2, he acknowledged that the Lord had allowed the wicked to get into that position, and he realised that although they professed the true religion outwardly, they were far from God in their hearts. But he still found it so unfair these people prospered. The Lord replied to him, but it wasn't the answer he expected:

Jeremiah 12:5-6

*If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.*

耶和華說，你若與步行的人同跑，尚且覺累，怎能與馬賽跑呢？你在平安之地，雖然安穩，在約旦河邊的叢林要怎樣行呢？因為連你弟兄和你父家都用奸詐待你。他們也在你後邊大聲喊叫，雖向你說好話，你也不要信他們。

The Lord told Jeremiah that if he couldn't understand what was happening now, then how was he going to understand in a far more difficult situation? And God revealed to him just such a situation, namely, his own family had betrayed him. All that the Lord brings upon us is under His overall control. It would have to be Jeremiah's faith that kept him faithful to the Lord, not what he saw in external circumstances.

Habakkuk was another prophet who also had the same problem:

Habakkuk 1:2-4

*O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.*

他說，耶和華阿，我呼求你，你不應允，要到幾時呢？我因強暴哀求你，你還不拯救。你為何使我看見罪孽？你為何看着奸惡而不理呢？毀滅和強暴在我面前。又起了爭端和相鬥的事。因此律法放鬆，公理也不顯明。惡人圍困義人。所以公理顯然顛倒。

Habakkuk saw so much injustice and violence everywhere. He cried to the Lord asking Him why He doesn't do anything about it? To which the Lord replied:

Habakkuk 1:5-6

*Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs.*

耶和華說，你們要向列國中觀看，大大驚奇。因為在你們的時候，我行一件事，雖有人告訴你們，你們总是不信。我必興起迦勒底人，就是那殘忍暴躁之民，通行遍地，占据那不屬自己的住處。

Just like Jeremiah, God gave Habakkuk a reply he could never have expected. He was going to bring a far worse nation, the Chaldeans, to be the instruments of His justice on Judah. They would do what was unthinkable to the Jews, and take away their land and destroy the Temple. How could God do that? Allow an even more evil nation to prosper? Well, if it's any consolation, Babylon itself was also going to be judged seventy years later.

Habakkuk finally came to terms with God's response, and, like Jeremiah, concluded:

Habakkuk 2:4

*The just shall live by his faith.* 惟義人因信得生。

This is quite an important verse in the Bible. It's quoted three times in different parts of the New Testament, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38. This was the call of the Protestant Reformation. In the Reformation, the main issue was the question of how God can declare sinners righteous, and accept them into His presence. Does God look at our works? No. We're not saved by works. We can't work our way to heaven ourselves, we're not good enough. We're not even saved by faith with a little bit of works. We can't do any good works at all, by nature – any works pleasing to God that is. We must be saved by the grace of God through faith alone. It has to be this way.

The just have to live by their faith. If they looked to their works, all they'd see is sin. We have to live by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that He's paid the price for our sin, and that He now declares us righteous in God's sight, so we'll escape the punishment we deserve.

But we also have to live by our faith in practical everyday circumstances as well. We have to live by faith that the Lord is in control of all things, despite what we see around us.

2 Corinthians 5:7

*We walk by faith, not by sight.* 因我們行事為人 是凭着信心，不是凭着眼见。

We only have to go out of our front doors, or turn on our television sets, to see wickedness everywhere. Many people just can't believe in a God of love when they see the world so full of sin and evil. "How can God allow this or that to happen?" they'd say.

And true believers too, like Asaph, Jeremiah and Habakkuk, also found this difficult to understand. What's the point of striving for righteousness, of keeping oneself from sin, if everybody else around, who isn't bothered by these things, is having a far better time of it? Well, I suggest we do what Asaph did, and enter the sanctuary of God.

*16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;*

我思索怎能明白这事，眼看实系为难。

*17 until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*

等我进了神的圣所，思想他们的结局。

*18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castest them down into destruction.*

你实在把他们安在滑地，使他们掉在沉沦之中。

*19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors!*

他们转眼之间，成了何等的荒凉。他们被惊恐灭尽了。

*20 As a dream when one awaketh; so O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.*

人睡醒了怎样看梦，主阿，你醒了，也必照样轻看他们的影像

If we ever have a problem with the prosperity of the wicked, injustice in society or the extent of wickedness we see all around us, then we really need to change our perspective. We need to keep our eyes fixed on eternal things, not on things on this earth:

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

我们这至暂至轻的苦楚，要为我们成就极重无比永远的荣耀。原来我们不是顾念所见的，乃是顾念所不见的。因为所见的是暂时的，所不见的是永远的。

On this earth justice is clearly not done. People get away with all sorts of evil things here. So if we're to believe in a holy, righteous, living Creator God, we must conclude that perfect justice will be dealt by Him in the next world, after death.

Genesis 18:25

*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* 审判全地的主岂不行公义麽？

So we've got to get away with just looking at what we can see around us. We must set our sight on invisible, eternal things, not just things on this earth. Only then can we get rid of any envy we could have because of the prosperity of the wicked. If we could just see their upcoming punishment, we'd never want to be in their shoes on Judgment Day.

Asaph came to realise this, and he saw how foolish he had been at envying the wicked:

*21 Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.*

因而我心里发酸，肺腑被刺。

*22 So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.*

我这样愚昧无知，在你面前如畜类一般。

And he came to realise that it's always the right thing to do to put our trust in the Lord, despite outward circumstances seeming to tell us otherwise. Only in Him, following Him, trusting in Him, can we begin to see reality. Reality is seeing things in the light of eternity.

Habakkuk finally concluded:

Habakkuk 3:17-18

*Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

虽然无花果树不发旺，葡萄树不结果，橄榄树也不效力，田地不出粮食，圈中绝了羊，棚内也没有牛。然而我要因耶和华欢欣，因救我的神喜乐。

In fact, we're told in the Bible that things'll get worse and worse before the end of time, so we should be ready for that, not be surprised by it. Christ said about the end of time:

Matthew 24:21

*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

因为那时必有大灾难，从世界的起头，直到如今，没有这样的灾难，后来也必没有。

Matthew 10:22

*And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

并且你们要为我的名，被众人恨恶，惟有忍耐到底的，必然得救。

Asaph continued:

*23 Nevertheless, I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.*

然而我常与你同在。你搀着我的右手。

*24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.*

你要以你的训言引导我，以后必接我到荣耀里。

There's nowhere else for any of us to go for protection and help but to the one true living God. He is continually with His people, holding and guiding them until they reach glory.

Peter saw this when Christ's followers began to leave Him.

John 6:68-69

*Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*

西门彼得回答说，主阿，你有永生之道，我们还归从谁呢？我们已经信了，又知道你是神的圣者。

Asaph saw this too. He lived a thousand years before Christ, but true believers in Old Testament times put their trust in a Saviour to come. We today have exactly the same hope Asaph had, except we now know who that Saviour is, Jesus Christ.

Asaph concluded:

*25 Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*

除你以外，在天上我有谁呢？除你以外，在地上我也没有所爱慕的。

*26 My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

我的肉体，和我的心肠衰残。但神是我心里的力量，又是我的福分，直到永远。

Can we say this about the Lord? Is He all we desire, not just for the next world, but here, now, on this earth too? Is He our strength, even when we go through the valley of the shadow of death? When our bodies start to decay, and death comes near, who have we got to help us through it? Only the Lord can help us in life and death. Nobody else can do that. All other religions tell us there's something we can supposedly do in order to get the blessing in the next world. No, there's nothing we can do, except put our trust in the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*

远离你的，必要死亡。凡离弃你行邪淫的，你都灭绝了。

*28 But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the LORD God....*

但我亲近神是与我有益。我以主耶和華為我的避难所，

So, are we quite happy with ourselves, our status, our comfortable life? Not really bothered about sin or injustice (so long as it doesn't affect us)? As long as we can prosper in this world, it doesn't matter about anybody else – is that our philosophy of life? Do we think Christians are a bit simple? Do we think that they can't cope with the realities

of this world, so they invent an invisible God to help them when they're in trouble? Is that what we think? If this describes us, then watch out. There's going to be a judgment.

Hebrews 9:27

*it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*

按着定命，人人都有一死，死后且有审判。

The one thing we all need to do right now is to repent.

Acts 17:30-31

*[God] now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

世人蒙昧无知的时候，神并不监察，如今却吩咐各处的人都要悔改。因为他已经定了日子，要借着他所设立的人，按公义审判天下。并且叫他从死里复活，给万人作可信的凭据。

And what did this whole lesson encourage Asaph, the believer, to do?

*....that I may declare all thy works.* 好叫我述说你一切的作为。

We've got a marvellous message to give to the world. It is possible for us to be saved from our sinful nature. There is a Saviour. Jesus Christ of Nazareth. We must put our trust in Him. If people laugh at us because of this message, so be it. But we know that here is the most wonderful message of all. Let's never let the world out there get us down ever again. Let's not follow the world and its wicked ways, despite the pressure we get on us every day to do so. But rather let's flee from sin and live our lives in the light of eternity.

Colossians 3:1-6

*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.*

所以你们若真与基督一同复活，就当求在上面的事。那里有基督坐在神的右边。你们要思念上面的事，不要思念地上的事。因为你们已经死了，你们的生命与基督一同藏在神里面。基督是我们的生命，他显现的时候，你们也要与他一同显现在荣耀里。所以要治死你们在地上的肢体。就如淫乱，污秽，邪情，恶欲，和贪婪，贪婪就与拜偶像一样。因这些事，神的忿怒必临到那悖逆之子。