

Intro: The age-old question: why do the wicked prosper while the godly suffer?

Thesis Statement (1)

This Psalm actually begins w/ a conclusion & shows us this is a Psalm of *trust* to build up the community's faith. "I am going to tell you a story; I am going to tell you what happened to me. But the thing I want to leave w/ you is this: God is good!"

But this also sets up the tension encountered in 2-14 (I.e. "Surely" in *doctrine*, but yet this *seems* to not be so *practically* in real life).

"Pure in heart" means that the inward attitude coheres w/ the outward word. His oppressors may have said all the right things & been pure outwardly, but inwardly were ravening wolves. To become like them, he would forfeit Yahweh's goodness.

1. Rumination: Faith Tried (1-14) → The danger of fixing our eyes on things below

Despite having been taught good theology ('surely'), he almost 'slips' ('but'). Why?

- ⇒ His focus changed (cf. the blessings of Psa. 1) & he envied the wicked (3)
- ⇒ Life w/ God is seen as one walking along a right path. Here, he takes a few wrong turns b/c he has turned his head from God's road map. How often our eyes lead us astray.
- ⇒ It is not his theology that is bad, his eyes are. In the Hebrew, this is no mere accidental glance, but a deliberate & continual looking.
- ⇒ What was so appealing to him (remember, he is suffering & poor)?
  - They are healthy & prosperous (4-5), he isn't. How prone *we* are!

And yet they:

- Are proud & arrogant, things God despises above all things (Prov. 6:16-17)
- Have wicked hearts & minds that are always scheming (7)
- Mock & scoff at the faithful, threatening them w/ extortion (8)
- "They speak as if they rule in heaven, & lay claim to the earth" (9, NET)
- "They have > than enough to eat, & even such up the water of the sea" (10)
- They make mock at the fact that they are able to get away w/ their violence & scoffing. To them, 'God' lives in 'Heaven' and/or in the temple & so is not involved in everyday life in the world or in the city" (11).
- They are carefree & increase more in wealth (12)

His initial conclusion (based upon looking at the world) → 13-14 (cf. v. 1)

- ⇒ The righteous life appeared to be pointless. It actually was worse off.
- ⇒ How often we think this way when in similar circumstances.

2. Realization: Faith Renewed (15-28) → The safety of fixing our eyes on things ↑

In the temple, where God's ways are celebrated & taught, the psalmist begins to see life in a totally different light. Renewed orientation towards the wicked (18-20), toward himself (21-22) & towards God (23-26). He now sees by FAITH! Before, God had disappeared in the sea of 'I's' (psalmist focused on himself).

- ⇒ He now realizes what God's 'goodness' & 'blessing' truly entails.