

Difficulty to Appreciate

(June 16, 2023)

Reading through my daily Bible reading took me to **Psalms 72-75**. **Psalm 73** is written by a guy named Asaph and as far as we know, he *may* have been associated with Temple worship. It's a fascinating **Psalm** and as I read it this morning, several things jumped out at me. In fact, it was as though someone living today wrote it based on what is happening in the world now.

Asaph opens with recognizing how good God is to Israel and then acknowledges that he almost slid backwards spiritually because of his focus on his local world and events he saw.

1 Surely God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold.
3 For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Notice he had been looking around at people and began to envy them. These were arrogant and wicked people. The remainder of **Psalm 73** goes into detail about the problem of the wicked and what we cannot appreciate about their plight because we too often judge from the outside.

4 They have no struggles;
their bodies are healthy and strong.
5 They are free from common human burdens;
they are not plagued by human ills.
6 Therefore pride is their necklace;
they clothe themselves with violence.
7 From their callous hearts comes iniquity;
their evil imaginations have no limits.
8 They scoff, and speak with malice;
with arrogance they threaten oppression.
9 Their mouths lay claim to heaven,
and their tongues take possession of the earth.
10 Therefore their people turn to them
and drink up waters in abundance.
11 They say, "How would God know?
Does the Most High know anything?"
12 This is what the wicked are like—
always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.

Let me take a few minutes to pull that apart and point out a few things. The rich and arrogant *appear* to have zero struggles. They always seem healthy and strong, going from rich to richer. Do you ever hear of

them getting sick? David Rockefeller lived to be over 100. I don't recall reading of him ever getting cancer or having any major organ failures. Klaus Schwab is in his 80s and seems to have plenty of energy. George Soros is 93. I've never read where Soros suffered any serious illness, have you?

Apparently, the same thing was true of the rich and arrogant during Asaph's day. They seem to never have to deal with the problems that the average person deals with in life. Because of this, Asaph notes that pride is their necklace and they are literally clothed with violence. They do what they want because they fully believe they are above the law. Who can stop them? I'm surprised Jeffery Epstein was actually arrested.

Asaph continues by stating that their hearts are callous and from those hearts stream rivers of callousness and evil, which to Asaph, seemed to have no limitations. Is this true of the arrogant rich today? It most certainly is and the average person suffers because of it.

Beyond this, Asaph heard their arrogant words. Scoffing, malice and arrogant speech is used to threaten oppression on anyone who seeks to stand in their way then and now. Average people are here for their good pleasure, to be used, abused and jettisoned, doncha know?

The rich's arrogance is seen in the way they view God Himself. Their rhetorical questions are, "How would God know?" and "Does the Most High know anything?" These are questions that ridicule the concept of God and His perceived limitations (or even His existence). Commentators believe that because Asaph was in some way connected to Temple worship, he witnessed first hand the proud, arrogant, rich Jewish men in the Temple do what they wanted to do and fully believed that God did not notice or was incapable of noticing what they did. They believed this because they reasoned that had God noticed, He would have done something about it before that point. So, in their arrogance, they laugh at the thought of an all-knowing, omnipotent God. They brought God down to be *less* than a human being. Some of these rich, arrogant men were likely also involved in leading Temple worship too. This problem is likely due to Solomon's worship of many gods because of his many wives who worshiped numerous false idols. Solomon created a monster in Israel. Much later, Jezebel extended that travesty and King Ahab encouraged it.

Because these arrogant rich people do, say and believe what they want, average people become enamored with them and seek to be like them. **Psalm 73:12** kind of sums things up even though Asaph has much more to say.

12 This is what the wicked are like—
always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.

That really does sum things up. The rich want more wealth because they understand that wealth provides *power*. The more wealth a person has, the more powerful they are in life. That is the general rule and we can clearly see that happening today. Rich people call the shots, whether we like it or not.

Show me a person who is extremely wealthy and I'll show you a person who exercises *power over others*, with rare exceptions. It is exceedingly rare for a rich person to be a true philanthropist. Today's

philanthropists, for the most part, lord it over others and want something in return. People cater to people with money.

In verses **13** and **14**, Asaph bemoans his fate, compared to the rich.

13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure
and have washed my hands in innocence.
14 All day long I have been afflicted,
and every morning brings new punishments.

Have you ever felt like that? I have and unfortunately, often still *do*. We love God and we seek to follow Him in all things. What do we get for it? Often, we receive pain and problems. Is it worth it? Well, if the **Psalm** ended here, we'd say "no." But it doesn't end there.

16 When I tried to understand all this,
it troubled me deeply
17 till I entered the sanctuary of God;
then I understood their final destiny.

Psalm 73:16-17 is Asaph's "aha!" moment. He begins to see that all that troubled him brought clarity. As he went into God's sanctuary and worshiped, everything took on a new light. He began to understand things from God's perspective, which also needs to be *our* perspective.

It dawned on Asaph that these arrogant rich evil people all had the same destiny and it was to be separated from God for all eternity and to experience the literal hell that is entailed in that. Asaph did not understand much about the afterlife. No one did then. Now, we understand it far better because God has revealed it in His Word. All the arrogant rich and evil people who direct the affairs of men, reject and even hate the idea of a loving God, will be tossed with finality into the Lake of Fire after their judgment at the Great White Throne (**Revelation 20:11-15**), in which Jesus, *the Judge*, will clarify for them *why* they are going *where* they are going.

When Asaph realized that, his heart lightened and he likely began to feel pity for the arrogant rich. His faith in God was renewed. Asaph literally ends **Psalm 73** with tremendous praise to God and for the things God has done for those who love Him.

23 Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.
24 You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.
25 Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
26 My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.

Asaph understood - he had an epiphany and realized that God held Asaph up. God guided him through life, helping him maneuver through the difficulties, while the arrogant rich had only themselves and their money to rely on. They could not cheat death though because they will die. The globalists of today want trans-humanism to keep them alive forever here on this planet, but they *will* one day die. They cannot escape that.



Yet, for the believer, God is our strength, our portion. We may fail Him, but He will never fail us. He will always be there as a mother hen is for her chicks. That mother hen will protect her chicks from all predators and even give her life in doing so if necessary. How much more will God protect and be with those who are His? He *already* gave His life for us, to rescue us from Creation's greatest predator, Satan, didn't He? In the photo, there are two chicks, but one you cannot see because it is safely underneath mom's wing, while the other is in mom's view.

I confess I spend more time being annoyed and frustrated with the arrogant rich than pitying or praying for them. That's because it is difficult for me to appreciate their fate after this life is over. How bad *is* hell? What is the actual experience in the Lake of Fire, aka the second death? How long is eternity?

I have head knowledge of these things, but none have been absorbed into my inner being. Unless they repent and receive salvation, the arrogant rich will live in torment forever. Could it be grace from God that they enjoy long life, with as many chances as possible to come to Him for salvation? They won't be able to argue they were not given chances.

I need to come to grips with the arrogant rich's plight after this life. I'd like that same epiphany experienced by Asaph. Maybe through the reading of His Word, He will increasingly enlighten me over time.