

"Why Do the Wicked Prosper?"

(THE PERPLEXITY OF ASAPH)
Psalm 73:1-28
8-21-2019

INTRODUCTION: (v. 1)

***Don't be fooled by the glitter, glamour, and glee of the wicked!**

I. The PROSPERITY of the Wicked (v. 4-12)

A. The APPEARANCE of the Wicked (v. 4-5)

1. They appear to be comfortable even at death (v. 4)
2. They appear to be free from trouble (v. 5)

B. The ARROGANCE of the Wicked (v. 6, 8-9)

C. The ABUNDANCE of the Wicked (v. 7, 12)

D. The IGNORANCE of the Wicked (v. 11)

II. The PERPLEXITY of the Righteous (v. 2-3, 13-16)

The apparent success of the wicked is a temptation even to the righteous:

A. There is a temptation to ENVY those who prosper (v. 2-3)

B. There is a temptation to QUESTION the value of righteousness (v. 13)

C. There is a temptation to COMPLAIN over one's troubles (v. 14-16)

III. The PUNISHMENT of the Wicked (v. 17-20)

A. Their end is DESTRUCTION (v. 17-18)

B. Their end is DESOLATION (v. 19)

C. Their end is DREAD (v. 19b)

D. Their end is DESPISED (v. 20)

IV. The PRECEPTS for the Righteous (v. 22-26)

A. Things are not always what they appear to be (v. 22)

B. The Lord is the greatest asset anyone could have (v. 23-26)

1. He is with me (v. 23)
    a. His presence is continual (v. 23)
    b. His presence is personal (v. 23b-24)
    c. His presence is desirable (v. 25)
    d. His presence is eternal (v. 26)
2. He holds me (v. 23b)
3. He guides me (v. 24a)
4. He receives me (v. 24b)
5. He satisfies me (v. 25; cp. v. 1)
6. He strengthens me (v. 26)

CONCLUSION: A final admonition - v. 27-28

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Asaph – A levite who led on of the Temple Choirs (1 Chron 15:19; 25:1,2).
He penned Psalm 50 and Psalms 73-83.
No doubt he and his choir sang the Psalms God inspired him to write.

"Let not thine heart envy sinners…" (Prov. 23:17)

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1. They appear to be comfortable even at death (v. 4)

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   Some wrongly equate material wealth with God's blessing.

   Beware of interpreting physical prosperity with divine favor (SEE: Romans 2:4).

B. The ARROGANCE of the Wicked (v. 6, 8-9)

SEE: Psalm 49:6-17

v.10 – Due to their popularity many of their people turn to them for advice and they drink in everything they say (contrast with Psalm 1:1).

C. The ABUNDANCE of the Wicked (v. 7, 12)

D. The IGNORANCE of the Wicked (v. 11)

II. The PERPLEXITY of the Righteous (v. 2-3, 13-16)

"The problem of the life-long prosperity of the wicked is aggravated by the apparent lack of reward for those who live righteously" (Ryrie note).

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B. There is a temptation to QUESTION the value of righteousness (v. 13)

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Plagues and chastisement are in actuality a blessing. (II Cor. 12; Heb. 12)

They do not mean that God is against you!

III. The PUNISHMENT of the Wicked (v. 17-20)

Asaph realizes who the real fool is. They have blundered greatly.

A. Their end is DESTRUCTION (v. 17-18)

Cp. the example of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16).

B. Their end is DESOLATION (v. 19)

Example of the Rich Young Ruler (Mt. 19).

C. Their end is DREAD (v. 19b)

"They are gone from the mind of God and disregarded as a dream when one awakens" (Spurgeon, p. 270).

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   Heb. 13:5 - "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

   a. His presence is continual (v. 23)

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I Timothy 6:6-11, 17-19