

#1. Asaph was upset at their “prosperity” (Vs. 3-5)

- ◆ “I saw their prosperity” (v. 3) (Or, they seem to be blessed of God.)
- ◆ “No bands in their death, their strength is firm.” (V. 4) (Or, they die happy with full strength and do not seem to suffer.)
- ◆ “They are not in trouble as other men.” (V. 5) (Or, they seem to be exempt from the afflictions of the righteous.)

#2. Asaph was upset at their “pride” (V. 6-9)

- ◆ “Pride” surrounds them like a chain.” (V. 6)
 - Chains of gold and gold rings were signs of civil power and powerful offices.
 - The proud were wearing pride on their faces like the chains around their necks. (Arrogance, conceit and a proud look).
- ◆ “They have more than heart could wish.” (V. 7)
“Their eyes stand out with fatness.” (V. 7)
 - They wouldn’t even give God the credit for all they had.
- ◆ “They speak loftily” (V. 8)
- ◆ “They set their mouth against the heavens.” (V. 9)
 - They feel so superior to all who live “other worldly” and for “eternity”

#3. Asaph was upset at their “popularity”

“Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.”
(v. 10)

Fact: “Waters of a full cup” mean that people drink it all in and beg for more.

“And they say, how doth God know?” (V. 11)

- ◆ They even say, “Does God know who I am and what I’ve got?”
- ◆ They think to themselves, “I’m increased with goods without any help from God.”

“Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.” (V. 12)

(After looking at the wicked prospering beside him)

II. Asaph Looks Inside Himself (Vs. 13-15)

- ◆ “Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain.” (V. 13)
- ◆ “I’ve washed my hands in innocency.” (V. 13)
- ◆ “All day long I’ve been plagued.” (V. 14)
- ◆ “I’m chastened every morning.” (V. 14)

(Asaph is yielding to temptation)

- ◆ He feels there is no advantage to living a pure and holy life.
- ◆ He believes his righteous living is in vain.
- ◆ He thinks his discipline is not paying off.
- ◆ He keeps all of his feelings to himself.

“If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.” (V. 15)

(Asaph is in pain)

“When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.” (V. 16)

1. Asaph looked behind him (and declared God is good).
2. Asaph looked beside him (and became envious).

3. Asaph looked inside him (and feels great pain).
 - ◆ He feels that God is not being fair!
 - ◆ He feels that God is overlooking some things!
 - ◆ He feels that God is unaware of what's happening!

Question: What do you do when you are at a crossroad?

Question: What do you do when you are in turmoil?

Question: What do you do when you're filled with questions? (You do what Asaph did)

III. Asaph Looks Outside Himself (Vs. 16-22)

"I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end." (V. 17)

Fact: Asaph went to church to worship God

Fact: Asaph went to God for some answers

Fact: Asaph went to the source where all truth dwells.

(What did God reveal about the wicked?)

1. They stand in slippery places (V. 18)
 - ◆ They have no sure foundation or footing.
 - ◆ They have no anchor to hold too.
2. They are headed for destruction (V. 18)
 - ◆ Their end is in view to God.
 - ◆ Their end is now in view to Asaph.
3. They are prosperous but only temporarily (V. 19)
 - ◆ "In a moment" they can lose it all.
 - ◆ "In an instant they are consumed with terror."
4. They are living only a dream. (V. 20)
 - ◆ Their life is only an image (no reality to it).
 - ◆ Their life is only glamour and glitter (Hollywood).
 - ◆ Their life is only a mirage (no substance).
 - ◆ Their life is only a bubble waiting to pop.

IV. Asaph Looks Before Himself (Vs. 23-28)

(After Asaph confesses his ignorance and his foolishness (Vs. 21 & 22) he confessed the awesome revelation from God to us all).

(During worship in the temple)

God revealed to Asaph:

1. The awful ending of the ungodly!
2. The glorious ending of the righteous!
 - ◆ Asaph doesn't have prosperity
 - ◆ Asaph doesn't have a trouble-free life.
 - ◆ Asaph doesn't have the applause of the world. **(But look what Asaph does have)**

#1. He has the presence of the Lord:

"I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand." (V. 23)

#2. He has the **guidance** of the Lord:

“Thou shalt guide me with counsel.” (V. 24)

#3. He has a **future** with the Lord:

“...and afterward receive me to glory.” (V. 24)

#4. He has a **single minded eye**:

“There is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” (V. 25)

#5. He has the **strength** of the Lord:

“God is the strength of my heart.” (V. 26)

#6. He has **spiritual understanding** as to the wicked:

“Lo, they that are far from thee shall perish.” (V.27)

#7. He has **fellowship** with the Lord:

“It is good for me to draw near to God, I have put my trust in the Lord.” (V. 28)

So if you ever feel like Asaph, and....

...You wonder why life isn't always fair,
...You feel cheated in respect to the wicked,
...You feel God has been unfair to you in some way,
...You cannot understand a disappointment or a tragedy,

Remember the Revelation of Psalm 73

1. God is always good, regardless of your human understanding and limitations.
2. There are great dividends in living pure before God, regardless of what possessions you do not possess.
3. All prosperity on earth is temporal at best.
4. The end of all wicked will be sad and sudden destruction.
5. The true standard of life, is not what we accumulate down here, but what we send ahead to enjoy for eternity.
6. The prosperity of the wicked is not real prosperity from God's point of view.
7. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus, it will be worth is all, when we see Christ. One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrows will erase, it will be worth it all, when we see Christ.

AMEN
Bill Kirk