

Psalm 76: It's Not Fair
10-6-19 PM

Psalm 73 is a psalm of Asaph. We read about this man in 1 Chronicles: *These are the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest. They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order. And these are the ones who ministered with their sons: Of the sons of the Kohathites were Heman the singerAnd his brother Asaph, who stood at his right hand...* 1 Chronicles 6:31-33,39

Asaph's qualifying observation: Whatever I think, God is good. *"Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart"*. This permits him to launch into his first point of observation. Asaph nearly stumbled because of the prosperity of the wicked. They seem to have no problems; they seem healthy and happy; they don't even care that they do evil. As a result of what he sees in the world, Asaph nearly washed his hands of God (vs. 13).

But Asaph acknowledges that this is not his real problem. Asaph's first problem is NOT the rich, - It is his own struggles (vs. 14). When we suffer we become frustrated; we want life to be fair and just, especially when we try to do what is right and suffer.

Asaph's observation amounts to one of several common accusations against God. First, many have said that He is not fair (Ezekiel 18:1-3, 25). Second, many have said that He does not care (Mark 4:38-40). Finally, many think that He lets people get away with sin (Job 21:7).

But Asaph stops himself before He goes too far. In fact, he says that had he actually said what he was thinking, it would have been a dishonest claim. When he contemplated things from God's point of view, the perspective became something else.

First, Asaph may have considered that God does not see time as we do; for God, there is no time, and the justice of God is therefore swift and absolute. Remember that time can be deceptive. We don't have as much as we think, and in this case, we let time cause us to miss truth. Punishment need not be immediate from our perspective to be firm, absolute and imminent from the Divine Mind.

Second, we must remember that God cannot tolerate the sins of men. It is not because God is cruel or mean, but because of the nature of God as good He cannot permit evil to be in His presence. God must punish evil doing; His nature demands it. Therefore, no one will escape His justice. Perhaps this scared Asaph (vs. 21), as he had nearly sinned himself in making a false claim.

But what is most important is the understanding that God's desire is NOT punishment but mercy (Ezekiel 18:23, 32). When Peter spoke of the behavior of the mocker and scoffer of our age in 2 Peter 3:9, he reminds us that God's patience is present because He desires all men to be saved. This is the most critical point of the patience of God; His patience is for us.

Asaph saw that he had thought and nearly spoken foolishly. This was the very reason he needed God's mercy! Asaph desired God's eternal justice (vs. 24), which was the (uncertain in the Old Testament) hope of the resurrection. He trusted God to strengthen him since he knew that all around him was fading. Asaph knew he owed God his oath: To declare the works of God to others and to remain faithful and draw near to Him.