

The Prosperity Of The Corrupt

How can we come to terms with the fact that in this world the wicked, corrupt and arrogant seem to prosper, while the humble, right living seem to be continually struggling to make ends meet?

Where is the justice?

There is one Psalm in the Christian Bible that can help us to understand this seeming injustice that the Creator God is allowing to happen.

Psalms 73:1-3 [NIV] *“Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”*

The writer of this Psalm really presents the truth of what He sees and experiences in the society in which he lived.

As we read his words we will be able to relate to what he tells us, in the society and culture in which we live today.

The basis of this problem is an apparent inversion of morality and success, evil people prosper while God-fearing people are often in serious distress and need.

Psalms 73:4-8 [NIV] *“They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits. They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression.”*

From their elevated position of wealth these people are full of pride in what they have accomplished in life, even to the extent of unjust gain.

Even their bodies remain strong and healthy right up to the time of their death.

Their wealth frees them from the financial burdens that plague most people, in fact they have more than their conceited minds could imagine.

They look down upon other people who are not in their wealth bracket and treat others with contempt.

Psalms 73:9-11 [NIV] *“Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. They say, ‘How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?’”*

They are always ready to boast about how they without God’s help have obtained their wealth, that causes them to have many dotting on them and wanting to be their friends.

Psalms 73:12 [NIV] *“This is what the wicked are like, always carefree, they increase in wealth.”*

Their wealth, without great personal labour, continues to increase.

It is only to be expected that such people with the behaviour, as mentioned above, should indicate an exaggerated self-opinion and that nothing in heaven or on earth is beyond their criticism.

Psalms 73:13-15 [NIV] *“Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been plagued; I have been punished every morning. If I had said, ‘I will speak thus,’ I would have betrayed your children.”*

The Psalmist is tempted to doubt the necessity of a strict integrity and adherence to a high moral code in his life.

There seems to be **no** tangible advantage in his endeavour to live a godly life for it brought **no** evidences of divine approval, but only daily chastening.

If he had voiced these doubts in public, he would have been a traitor to God’s potential children, encouraging them to also doubt God’s way of life.

See how this godly man controls his tongue and thinks deeply before he airs his doubts and problems.

This shows a concern for the spiritual wellbeing of others.

Psalms 73:16 [NIV] *“When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me”*

The more the Psalmist pondered over the meaning of this inversion of values the more wearisome it became.

Psalms 73:17 [NIV] *“till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.”*

At last the Psalmist sought to be in the presence of the Creator God and meditated on the ultimate state of the corrupt people.

Within the time of meditation the Psalmist discovered a new outlook.

The thing that had baffled the Psalmist was because he had **not** looked at the situation in the light of the final issue.

Psalms 73:18-20 [NIV] *“Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.”*

Corrupt people are on a pathway that it is **not** easy to control when their life ends and they sleep, awaiting their resurrection to face the judgement of Jesus Christ. [**2 Corinthians 5:10-12; Romans 14:10-12; Revelation 20:11-13**]

The Psalmist now sees clearly that the corrupt cannot flout God and escape.

The Psalmist saw that the majority of those who live a proud, corrupt, godless life die without evidence of retribution, but when they awake in a resurrection what was a dreamlike life will face judgement.

Don’t ever wish you could trade places with these corrupt people with their wealth.

One day they will wish they could trade places with you, as a Christian, and have your eternal wealth.

Psalms 73:21-22 [NIV] *“When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you.”*

The Psalmist realised that he had **not** used the human spirit within him but had acted like a beast that is devoid of that intellect. [**Job 32:8**]

Psalms 73:23-28 [NIV] *“Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterwards you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And*

earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you. But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.”

The readjustment of values, as a result of seeking a close relationship with the Creator God, eradicated distress about life including the shadow of old age and approaching death.

It is then that the Psalmist was able, confidently and fervently, to state the end of the whole matter.

Those who withdraw from God’s way of life would be in the end deprived of eternal life in God’s presence.

For the Psalmist the proximity of God was the source and cause of all his wellbeing.

This relationship was his personal confession and a testimony that the Psalmist wanted everyone to hear and know.

The knowledge that is available in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, should bring every true Christian to this active position of confession and witness of how loving, merciful and compassionate our Creator God is.