

**ABATT**  
 Psalm 73  
 Christian Life Assembly  
 Jim Hoffman

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DOES GOD

PROMISE HEALTH &

WEALTH?




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**Psalm 73**

**73** Surely God is good to Israel,  
 To those who are pure in heart!  
 2 But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling,  
 My steps <sup>1a</sup>had almost slipped.  
 3 For I was envious of the <sup>1b</sup>arrogant  
 As I saw the prosperity of the wicked.  
 4 For there are no pains in their death,  
 And their <sup>1c</sup>body is fat.  
 5 They are not <sup>1d</sup>in trouble as *other* <sup>1e</sup>men,  
 Nor are they plagued <sup>1f</sup>like mankind.  
 6 Therefore pride is their necklace,  
 The garment of violence covers them.  
 7 Their eye <sup>1g</sup>bulges from fatness;  
 The imaginations of *their* heart <sup>1h</sup>run riot.  
 8 They mock and <sup>1i</sup>wickedly speak of oppression;  
 They speak from on high.  
 9 They have set their mouth <sup>1j</sup>against the heavens,  
 And their tongue <sup>1k</sup>parades through the earth.

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Psalm 73

10 Therefore <sup>10</sup>this people return to this place,  
 And waters of abundance are <sup>10</sup>drunk by them.  
 11 They say, "How does God know?  
 And is there knowledge <sup>10</sup>with the Most High?"  
 12 Behold, these are the wicked;  
 And always at ease, they have increased *in* wealth.  
 13 Surely in vain I have <sup>10</sup>kept my heart pure  
 And washed my hands in innocence;  
 14 For I have been stricken all day long  
 And <sup>10</sup>chastened every morning.  
 15 If I had said, "I will speak thus,"  
 Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children.  
 16 When I pondered to understand this,  
 It was <sup>10</sup>troublesome in my sight;  
 17 Until I came into the <sup>10</sup>sanctuary of God;  
*Then* I perceived their end.  
 18 Surely You set them in slippery places;  
 You cast them down to <sup>10</sup>destruction.

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Psalm 73

19 How they are <sup>10</sup>destroyed in a moment!  
 They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!  
 20 Like a dream when one awakes,  
 O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their <sup>10</sup>form.  
 21 When my heart was embittered  
 And I was pierced <sup>10</sup>within,  
 22 Then I was senseless and ignorant;  
 I was *like* <sup>10</sup>a beast <sup>10</sup>before You.  
 23 Nevertheless I am continually with You;  
 You have taken hold of my right hand.  
 24 With Your counsel You will guide me,  
 And afterward receive me <sup>10</sup>to glory.  
 25 Whom have I in heaven *but* You?  
 And <sup>10</sup>besides You, I desire nothing on earth.  
 26 My flesh and my heart may fail,  
 But God is the <sup>10</sup>strength of my heart and my portion forever.  
 27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish;  
 You have <sup>10</sup>destroyed all those who <sup>10</sup>are unfaithful to You.  
 28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good;  
 I have made the Lord <sup>10</sup>God my refuge,  
 That I may tell of all Your works.

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Psalm 73

- This psalm was written by one of David's chief musicians, Asaph.
- In verse #3 we read ... "For I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked."
- Asaph begins in a very awkward place with breath taking honesty about what he thinks and feels as he observes the wicked around him.

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Psalm 73	
Verse#	What Asaph Sees
4	No pain when the die
4	Plenty to eat
5	No trouble with the authorities
6	They are a protected class of people
7	They have everything the wish for
9	They are boastful and proud
12	They live lives of ease while their riches grow

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**Psalm 73**

- Prosperity often comes with a godless life – this is not just our imagination, it is real.
- Think of the 10 richest people you can name, and then ask yourself how many of them are Christians.
- The mistake Asaph, and we too sometimes make is to assume that riches are a good thing and a sign of God’s blessing.

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**Psalm 73**

- God may bless you with money, or He may not, but neither condition is an indicator of your spiritual health.
- The rich man of Luke 16 had it all so to speak, but went to hell when he died.
- Lazarus had to beg for food as he nursed his sores, yet he died and went to Paradise.

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Psalm 73

• Prov 30:7 O God, I beg two favors from you; let me have them before I die. 8 First, help me never to tell a lie. Second, give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs. 9 For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the Lord?" And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name. NLT

• Agur asks God for **underwhelming** wealth so that he might experience **overwhelming** fellowship. 10

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Psalm 73

• Because the wicked seem to have no pain in their death it doesn't mean that they don't.

• This is especially true today as we have drugs to mask much of the pain and sorrow that accompanies the death of the wicked.

• Prov 11:7 When the wicked die, their hopes die with them, for they rely on their own feeble strength. NLT

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Psalm 73

• Psalm 73:13 Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason? 14 I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain. NLT

• Notice here that Asaph actually wonders aloud if living a life dedicated to God, as opposed to self, is actually a good choice.

• From an earthly perspective it seems his reward is trouble and pain.

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Psalm 73

- This life is like a dream... It will end suddenly and we will realize it was very brief.
- Dreams have a way of seeming larger than life – while we are having them they are our reality.
- Our lives are real, but this life is not our permanent reality – “and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.”

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Psalm 73

- Perhaps the ultimate irony of this life is that what we view as good in this world may well not be good at all, but poisonous.
- When Americans think of the “good life” we tend to think in terms of wealth, health, and good looks.
- Well, what if we could fast forward our lives 80 years or so and see the folly of such thinking?

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Psalm 73

- There is a dreadful and damnable line of thinking that many know as the “health and wealth” gospel.
- It is propagated by greedy men and women looking to profit from those they sucker into believing that it is always God’s will for you to be rich and well.
- This “other gospel” is alluring because, after all, who doesn’t want to be healthy and wealthy.

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Psalm 73

- Despite all of the evidence to the contrary, this “other gospel” still captures new converts by the thousands.
- And often the victims of these frauds are those who can least afford to be defrauded.
- The tragedy is that when people come to Jesus based on false promises, and they remain poor and sickly, they conclude that Jesus is a fraud.

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Psalm 73

ABOUT THE  
**PRO\$PERITY**  
 GOSPEL

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Psalm 73

- Let’s consider the very ones Asaph was observing and weigh out the real value of their lives.
- It is actually a very bad thing for the unsaved to have wealth because with it comes accountability.
- And unlike the accountability of the believer, where we can lose rewards, but not our souls – the accountability of the unbelieving is disastrous.

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Psalm 73

# Degrees of Punishment

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Psalm 73

- Psalm 73:16 So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is! 17 Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked. 18 Truly, you put them on a slippery path and send them sliding over the cliff to destruction. 19 In an instant they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors. 20 When you arise, O Lord, you will laugh at their silly ideas as a person laughs at dreams in the morning. NLT

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Psalm 73

- In the end we will see that God has “put them on a slippery path” and a path that will “send them sliding over the cliff to destruction”.
- And we will see that “In an instant they are destroyed, completely swept away by terrors.”
- And we will see that God “will laugh at their silly ideas as a person laughs at dreams in the morning.”

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Psalm 73

- Try to take this in – God has set the wicked on a slippery path to destruction, they will be judged and terrorized, and God will laugh at them.
- This is the end for the so-called “Rich and Famous” who all their lives have satisfied their fleshly appetites with the world’s offerings.
- Their end is one where God judges them, casts them away, and laughs at them.

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Psalm 73

- Notice below how Asaph assesses his life once he has seen the destiny of the wicked.
- Psalm 73:21 Then I realized that my heart was bitter, and I was all torn up inside. 22 I was so foolish and ignorant—I must have seemed like a senseless animal to you.
- The lifestyles he once envied he now sees in comparison to the one God has him on.

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Psalm 73

- Asaph recognizes that the pains of life are for our good and our Father’s benefit.
- He comes to place where he sees that God has had a plan for his life all along, and that plan is “for good and not for disaster, to give him a future and a hope”. (Jer 29:11 paraphrase)
- You want to know why the wicked do not seem to have the same trials as we do? Because they are not God’s children.

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Psalm 73

- Asaph goes from being envious of the wicked to feeling sorry for them.
- Remember what Jesus said about the truth? That it sets us free? Asaph has been freed from the darkness that distorts every value of the universe.
- Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. KJV

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Psalm 73

We may one day thank God for the temporal things He withheld!

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Questions

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