

Grace Bible Church
Tree of Life
A Weekly Review
Week ending 111614
Doc of election: Prt 12.

The Equal Opportunity under election and the Conclusion.

Mat 5:43-48, You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The **righteousness of God** has demanded, ever since the moment of our salvation, that the **justice of God** sustain our life even through every stupid mistake and every dumb decision we ever make. We noted that we are not blessed because we give, or witness, perform Christian service, or because of anything we can do or anything we are.

God blesses us only because we have His righteousness indwelling us and therefore His integrity is never compromised. We are saved by grace through faith, and we are sustained by grace. Three verses come to mind here:

Eph 2:8-9, For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

Time after time, a question comes up in the scripture, why do the wicked prosper?

David said in **Psa 37:7, Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.**

Psa 73 is a Psalm that describes some of the frustrations that many believers have had at times. They make positive decisions and then see friends, family members and relatives making negative decisions and getting ahead in life and receiving prosperity. So there’s a frustration that can actually take place, because things are not working out in their life and then they see certain people, namely the wicked, or those who could care less about God, prospering.

Psa 73:1, (A Psalm of Asaph.

Asaph was one of the finest and chief musicians in Israel.

He wrote about ten songs and so this is said to be a Psalm or a Song of Asaph, a fine and chief musician in Israel.

And so he sings **Psa 73:1, Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart!**

This type of thinking that **“God is good to His people,”** is very important especially when you’re going through something and you don’t know how that thing is going to turn out. When you’re going through adversity in time or disaster, remember:

Even if you don’t understand what you’re going through remember God is good to His people. Then in verse 2 he describes for us how he almost slipped.

Psa 73:2, But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling; My steps had almost slipped.

How?

Psa 73:3, For I was envious of the arrogant, {As} I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

The word envious means jealous - I was envious. It starts out with envy in the soul and then turns into jealousy. I was envious or jealous of the arrogant, as I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Note that there are certain people who prosper even though they are wicked. And one of the main reasons is found in our main passage in Gen 17, blessing because of association with a mature believer. And so he says, **“For I was envious or jealous of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”**

You see what he was doing, he was looking too much at one thing: their present condition, he saw what they had right now, but he forgot their future. He saw what God had given them. God in His Grace actually will allow the wicked to prosper on this earth. One of the reasons is because this is their Heaven. And God loves them so much. He sent His uniquely born son for them but they rejected Him.

However, His impersonal love, loved them. He sent His Son to die for their sins and they rejected Him so this is their only form of prosperity. This is their Heaven. Once they die they suffer in the eternal lake of fire and so in God’s grace, He blesses them and lets them have some enjoyment, because He’s a just and righteous God. And therefore in **Mat 5:45b, He causes His sun to rise on {the} evil and {the} good,**

So, there are revisionistic believers and unbelievers who cheat and lie and steal and who are criminals and who would do what they can to get ahead and they can get more than you. And that’s what happened to this individual, he saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Psa 73:3, For I was envious of the arrogant, {As} I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

What did he see? He saw their outward display of prosperity. He saw what they had. Some of us do that as well. We see what people have. A New car, new home, better job, fine clothing, no problems with the finances, everything going right. We look at what they have, but we only see their outward display. We don’t see the discomfort and lack of content in their soul. We don’t see when they go to sleep at night that they have all these riches and all these things and all this form of prosperity, but there’s something missing in their soul.

They don’t have that peace that goes beyond understanding (Phi 4:6). Most of you would be shocked if you could trade places with a millionaire, or a person who has everything going for them. You would be shocked at how fast you would say, **“I want to come back to my life, I don’t want to trade places with them.”** Because of their discomfort that they have in their soul inwardly.

Psa 73:4, For there are no pains in their death; And their body is fat.

Now, he doesn't know whether or not there are no pains in their death. He's just thinking like many do. Many people think that if you have money, if you have prosperity all your problems are solved and that's not true at all. When it says that "their body is fat." it means that their strength was from their riches and they were really healthy. In the ancient world, prosperity was manifested by the strength of the human body being healthy and prosperous through the physical body. Remember that this is the thinking of the individual who almost slipped. He almost slipped away from God. He said, "There's no pain from their death," everything goes right, but look at what I'm going through. You can see a little bit of arrogance coming through. But, you always need to remind yourself of something, you have something in your soul that money cannot buy, a peace that you can go through a tragedy, disaster, sickness, and still say, "I have learned to be content in whatever state I am in." You cannot buy true contentment.

Psa 73:5, They are not in trouble {as other} men; Nor are they plagued like mankind.

Remember again that this is the thinking of the individual that almost totally slipped away from that which was important, the plan of God. He says, "They (the wicked) are not in trouble as other men; nor are they plagued like mankind." There are some things about the wicked who prosper or people who have riches. They don't have to be concerned about where their next meal is going to come from. They don't have to be concerned about who's going to pay for the insurance, for their health insurance, who's going to pay the car payment. They don't have to worry about those things and the ordinary domestic and personal troubles that we would have as naturally minded individuals or people who are not rich.

Psa 73:6, Therefore pride is their necklace, the garment of violence covers them.

They think they're something. In other words, they wear their own pride and their own violence as jewelry and they want everyone to see "Look what I've got. Look what I am. Get out of my way.

Psa 73:7, Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of {their} heart run riot.

When it says, "Their hearts run riot" it refers to fact whatever their heart wants, they get, because of their riches. Solomon said this in **Ecc 2:10, And all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,**

He said this when he was miserable. He was the most miserable person in the world at this time and he said, "**All that my eyes desired, I did not refuse them.**" How would you like to have at your resource anything you want, anything you could buy?

Psa 73:8-9, They mock, (They usually make fun of what other people have or don't have) and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high. They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth.

They speak from on high refers to their arrogance. They usually say, "I could care less about God." People think that what they say is very important. **what they say parades through the earth.** It's like a parade accepted as mankind's tremendous wisdom because of their so-called success. In other words, when it says, "**They have set their mouth against the Heavens.**" **They deny God. They reject God. They attack God.** There's the "I Will" syndrome of Satan. And, what they say is considered by human viewpoint to be wisdom and success.

Psa 73:10, Therefore his people (a reference to the wicked who prosper, they always have people because of their riches) Therefore his people return to this place; And waters of abundance are drunk by them.

In other words, they recruit more wicked people like themselves and teach them to do the same things.

Psa 73:11, And they say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?”

They deny the Omniscience of God, reject His Doctrine.

Psa 73:12, Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased {in} wealth.

Everything goes right for them. They can buy their way out of things. They get accused of a crime, they buy their way out. They have a need, they buy their way out. They need something, they buy it. Whatever it may be, they buy it. In their carnal security, they become very powerful and mighty.

The writer began to look at what people had overtly instead of what he had and that's why he almost slipped. And that's why he almost slipped.

Look at **Psa 73:13, Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure, And washed my hands in innocence;**

Have you ever thought that? This is crazy, I'm following God. I'm taking in Doctrine, it's all vanity. If you lie and steal and cheat and get ahead, or if you lie and steal and cheat, you can get the job. If you're honest, you don't get the job. It's all vanity. I try to do the right thing. I try to be honest with people. I try to love people and level with them and along comes this conniver, this deceiver and he just lies and he gets everything. Sometimes this is the thinking of those believers who are trying to do right things, but who do not see immediate results.

Psa 73:14, For I have been stricken all day long, And chastened every morning.

This may be true for a believer who is under divine discipline, because of rejection of God's plan for his life, but this is not the norm and standard for those in God's plan. We're not stricken all day long, or chastened every morning. If we have positive volition, we're not. But we are stricken and chastened if we have negative volition.

Psa 73:15-16, If I had said, “I will speak thus,” Behold, I should have betrayed the generation of Thy children meaning that he knows that the answer is not to become wicked so he can prosper. When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight.

So, I'm trying to make godly decisions and everything's going wrong. And here's Jack, my neighbor cheating, lying, stealing and getting ahead and everything's going right. **“When I ponder to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight.”** However, please notice the first word in verse 17.

Until. **“Until I came into the Sanctuary of God;”** that's a good place to go when you have a problem. **“Then I perceived their end.”** Once he came back into the sanctuary or the place where God's Word was taught, his eyes were opened again to the truth. You see, that's what happens to a lot of people. They live in the world, in the cosmic system. Everything goes wrong and all of a sudden they come back to church and they go, “Oh yeah!” And, that's what happened to the writer of this Psalm.

Once he came back to the sanctuary or the place where God's Word was taught, his eyes were opened once again to this truth. A light came upon him and he withdrew from the ways of the world and drew toward, drew near toward the ways of God. When things are not going right in your life, that's a time to draw near. If everything's going wrong in your life say, "I better get to class right now, things are not working out and I know God is on my side, I need some enlightenment. I need to hear what the Spirit says to the church." This man was starting to say, "The wicked are better than the Godly."

Until he came back into the place where God's Word was taught. And, then he said, "Oh yea! That's right." His eyes were opened. He saw truth. The light came upon him. When he was living in the ways of the world, the darkness came upon him. When he came back to the ways of God, the light shined upon him and gave him a direction. And, then notice what verse 18 says.

Psa 73:18, Surely Thou dost set them in slippery places; Thou dost cast them down to destruction.

They were standing on a smooth place (everything's going smooth for them), but always remember something - smooth places can be very slippery. Sometimes we think everything is going smooth, but the smooth place can be very slippery. And, they may be standing on a smooth place, but all of a sudden that place that they're standing on is very slippery.

Jer 23:12, "Therefore their way will be like slippery paths to them,

They may be prospering right now, but slippery paths are going to follow.

Ecc 8:11, Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.

They keep doing it, because they think they're getting ahead, they're getting away with it. They're not. The Lord says, "*There's a year for their punishment*" meaning every person who is anti-God and has negative volition has a year assigned by God for their punishment.

Psa 73:19-20, How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors! Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, Thou wilt despise their form.

In other words, When the person awakes, the dream is forgotten quickly - so will the wicked and their prosperity. Their prosperity will be forgotten very quickly as well. You have something far greater than any rich man could ever, ever buy and never forget that.

Psa 73:21-22, When my heart was embittered, And I was pierced within, Then I was senseless and ignorant; I was {like} a beast before Thee.

Notice what he says. "I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before thee." The word for "*beast*" is the Hebrew word behemah which refers to the water ox or the hippopotamus and it means a plump colossus of flesh which is an emblem of colossal stupidity. That is the definition of behemah, a plump colossus of flesh, which is an emblem of colossal stupidity.

Psa 73:23, Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast taken hold of my right hand.

I don't care if things are going wrong. I don't care if I don't have that money. I don't care if I don't know what my future is all about. ***"I am with thee; You have taken hold of my right hand."*** Even though he has failed and he thought all these negative thoughts, he doesn't let his failures keep him away from God.

Psa 73:24, With Thy counsel [your doctrine] Thou wilt guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.

He knows that afterwards, even after this dark way of faith, God will still receive him.

Psa 73:25-28, Whom have I in heaven {but Thee}? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For, behold, those who are far from Thee will perish; Thou hast destroyed all those who are unfaithful to Thee. But as for me, the nearness of God [being near to God in fellowship with Him] is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, That I may tell of all Thy works.

What a beautiful Psalm.

"I am with you God and I could care less if things are not going right at this time."