

Psalm 73- reality check

- I. [Superscription] (1a)
 - A psalm
of Asaph
- II. [The confession] (1b-c)
 - A. Surely God is good to Israel (1b)
 - B. to those who are pure in heart (1c)
- III. [The problem] (2-12)
 - A. [Envy of the wicked] (2-3)
 - 1. But I, my feet slipped a little; (2a)
 - 2. My steps almost slid¹ away. (2b)
 - 3. For I was envious of the arrogant ones (3a)
 - 4. [when] I saw the prosperity of the wicked ones. (3b)
 - B. [The description of the wicked] (4-9)
 - 1. [They don't have problems] (4-5)
 - a) There is no pang to their death; (4a)
 - b) And their belly is fat. (4b)
 - c) They are free from the trouble of mankind; (5a)
 - d) they are not plagued along with humanity. (5b)
 - 2. [They are proud] (6-7)
 - a) Therefore pride is their necklace; (6a)
 - b) they clothe themselves with garments of violence. (6b)
 - c) From their unresponsive eye comes iniquity; (7a)
 - d) The imaginations of [their] heart overflows. (7b)
 - 3. [They are rebellious] (8-9)
 - a) They mock, and speak with malice; (8a)
 - b) From high arrogance they speak oppression. (8b)
 - c) They set their mouths against heaven, (9a)
 - d) and their tongues walk about² on the earth (9b)
 - C. [People follow them in their rebellion] (10-12)
 - 1. [People follow them] (10)
 - a) Therefore he turned people to him (10a)
 - b) and waters of abundance are poured out for him. (10b)
 - 2. [What these people think] (11-12)
 - a) [God won't judge] (11)
 - (1) They say, "How can God know? (11a)
 - (2) And "Is there knowledge with the Most High?" (11b)
 - b) [Wicked are worth following] (12)
 - (1) Behold, these are wicked ones- (12a)
 - (2) They are continually at ease, they increase wealth. (12b)

¹ K-B 'I was almost slipping away' picture of movie when car or person teeters on edge of cliff.

² Lit. walk, possibly means behavior, lifestyle. Possibly means follow, i.e. "does the same thing"

- IV. [Ironic restatement of the problem³ - ‘God’s ways don’t pay’] (13-14)
- A. Surely in vain I have made/kept my heart pure; (13a)
 - B. And [in vain] I have washed my hands in innocence. (13b)
 - C. And I was plagued all day long; (14a)
 - D. And my punishment in the morning. (14b)
- V. [Solution- coming to his senses] (15-20)
- A. [Realizing the error of this mindset] (15)
 1. If I said, “I will announce/tell like this,” (15a)
 2. Behold, I would have dealt treacherously with your children (15b)
 - B. [How the realization came] (16-17)
 1. When I tried to understand this, (16a)
 2. it was trouble in my eyes. (16b)
 3. Until I entered the sanctuary of God; (17a)
 4. [then] I understood their destiny⁴. (17b)
 - C. [Their destiny] (18-20)
 1. Surely you place them on a slippery place; (18a)
 2. you caused them to fall to deception. (18b)
 3. How they are to desolation in a moment, (19a)
 4. They come to an end, they are finished because of sudden terrors! (19b)
 5. As a dream when one awakes, (20a)
 6. so when you arise, O Lord, (20b)
 7. You will despise them as fantasies⁵. (20c)
- VI. [Recounting the change] (21-28)
- A. [I was stupid to doubt] (21-22)
 1. When my heart was embittered (21a)
 2. And I was pierced/dismayed in my secret parts⁶, (21b)
 3. I was brutish and I was not understanding; (22a)
 4. I was a brute beast with you. (22b)
 - B. [But now I see the reality] (23-24)
 1. Yet I am always with you; (23a)
 2. You grasp [me] by my right hand. (23b)
 3. You will guide me by your counsel, (24a)
 4. And afterward⁷ You will take me into glory. (24b)
 - C. [The confession] (25-26)
 1. Who is mine⁸ in heaven [except You]? (25a)
 2. And I don’t desire anything in the earth in addition to You. (25b)
 3. My flesh and my heart will fade away, (26a)
 4. [but] God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever (26b)
 - D. [The bottom line] (27-28)
 1. For behold, those who are far from You will perish; (27a)

³ This is a dramatic shift. The Psalmist is narrating as if he is shaken awake – he comes to his senses.

⁴ Lit. “what happens afterward”, cf. v. 24.

⁵ Either, ‘image’ like shadow lacking reality (from parallelism) or ‘idol’ as in idolatry (implied in rest of Psalm)

⁶ “to be pierced through one’s internal organs, be poignantly disturbed” KB

⁷ cf. v. 17

⁸ Poss. Possessive “Who is mine?” Will § 270, interest- advantage “Who is for my sake?” Will § 271, or assistance or partisanship, “Who is on my side?” Will. §282

2. You will annihilate all who are unfaithful to You. (27b)
3. And for me, nearness to God is good. (28a)
4. I have made my refuge in the Lord Yahweh; (28b)
5. To announce/tell all of Your deeds. (28c)