

# Studies in the Psalms 06 I Went Into Sanctuary

by Neil Fraser

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*Asaph's encounter with God in the sanctuary reveals God's justice and favor, leading him to see the wicked's end and his own faithfulness.*

**Duration:** 45:25

**Scripture:** Exodus 25:8, Psalm 73:17, 2 Corinthians 4:17, Hebrews 12:1-2

**Topics:** "Faith And Trust", "Gods Justice"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the temptation to envy the apparent prosperity and pleasure of those who engage in sinful activities. He encourages the audience to focus on the past, present, and future of their faith in Jesus Christ. The preacher shares his own personal struggle and how God revealed to him the end of the wicked and the righteous. He emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's justice and holding onto faith even in difficult circumstances. The sermon also highlights the security and protection that believers have in God's hands.

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## Transcript

Now, shall we turn, please, this morning to the next psalm, Psalms number 73. Psalms number 73, please. And once more, shall we read it responsibly? Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

But as for me, my feet were almost gone. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.

Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain. For I am a stubborn man of the ground, their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish. They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

Therefore this people return thither, and inquire of them, and they say, How doth God know, and is their knowledge in the Most High? Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For I will speak thus, Behold, I should offend the generation of thy children. Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.

How are they brought into desolation as in a moment? They are utterly consumed with terror. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee.

Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there's none upon earth that I desire beside thee. For lo, they that are far from thee shall perish.

Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from thee. Thank you, the Lord will bless to us his holy word. Now this is the first of the Levitical Psalms.

For those of you who have not heard, we have stated that from ancient times even the Jews divided the Psalms into five according to the first five books of Moses. Psalms number 1 to 41 they called the Genesis portion. They did that because God was revealed in his creatorial work and in his covenants with men.

Now the Exodus portion of the Psalms begins with Psalm 42 and goes on to 72. In that section you'll find, I think, six times over the word redemption spoken of per the redemption of Israel and of God's people at large. The Levitical portion begins in this psalm today and goes on, if I remember, until about Psalm 105 and so on.

Each of those divisions is indicated by the words amen and amen, doxologies. You'll notice that at the end of Psalm 72 in verse 19. So that Psalm 73 opens the third division, what we would call the Levitical portion, since Leviticus is the third book of the Bible.

Now in Leviticus you have the sanctuary and the worship and sacrifices that pertain to the sanctuary of God. God had said, let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. He said that in Exodus and when you come to the last chapter of Exodus that sanctuary is complete and as we saw the glory of the Lord immediately filled the tabernacle.

So that Leviticus is the book of the sanctuary of God and you'll notice that in this first psalm in verse 17 the whole solution of the problem that is before Asaph is answered, until I went into the sanctuary of God then understood I their end. Now the problem that was before Asaph here is the problem that has ever confronted the children of men. It is the problem of the strange providence of God as seen in this present life.

The problem that was before this man was this. Why the seeming prosperity of the wicked men and the pain and pains of the men of God? Why should it be so? Leading a person to say almost out loud if he doesn't say it, or rather to say it in his heart if he doesn't say it out loud, what you have in verse 13, verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocent sin. Asaph couldn't understand the problem of the prosperity of wicked men and the trials of the man or woman who is seeking to live for God.

Inasmuch as that was a problem in those bygone days and is still with us, it is profitable to look at it once more. You'll notice then that the psalm is about, shall we say, three things, and that is the trial of faith, and then the triumph of faith from the time that he goes into the sanctuary of God, and then the testimony of faith in verse 28. It is good for me to go near to God.

The psalm begins with, truly God is good to Israel, and it finishes with, it is good for me to draw near to God. There you have the testimony of faith arising out of the triumph of faith. Now, what then was the trial of faith? Notice what he confesses in verse 2. As for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps, and well I slipped.

Why? First of all, because of the wicked man's apparent prosperity. Verse 3, For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, and not only their apparent prosperity, but their apparent peace. For, he says in verse 4, there are no bands.

That word, bands, means pain, pains, violent pains. In their death, their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men, and then their pride.

Therefore, pride compasses them about as a chain. Violence covereth them as a garment. Pride is like a bracelet about their necks and arms.

Their eyes stand out with fatness. They have more than heart could wish. From them their pretensions.

For they speak wickedly concerning oppression, they speak loftily, they set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. So, here you have, on the one hand, the prosperity, and the peace, and the pride, and the pretensions, and very evidently the pleasures of the wicked. And the trouble was, as seems to be indicated in verse 10, that God's people look at those folks, and they're ready to swallow their philosophy, their philosophy of life.

Now, the meaning of verse 10 is a bit obscure. It may mean, therefore, God's people turn to them, and as they observe that the waters of a full cup, a metaphor that means their full round of pleasure, is wrung out to them, not off them, but to them. Or, it may mean that his people, God's people, turn to them and are ready to swallow their philosophies as a thirsty man swallows water.

It might be one of these two things. And so, all this observance on the part of Asaph leads him to question whether he has cleansed his heart in vain, and washed his hands in innocence. Now, you'll notice that I have used the word apparent several times.

The apparent peace of the wicked, the apparent prosperity, the apparent pleasure. I say that because Asaph's look at them was entirely superficial, as yours is and mine so often. Since I came down here, I saw one day in the paper a picture of the new boss of the Mafia.

And, you know who the Mafia are, don't you? I noticed also the other day that Mr. Diefenbaker, ex-premier of Canada, was deploring the fact that there are now headquarters of the Mafia in Toronto and in Montreal, and it's known of the government, and Mr. Diefenbaker was complaining that the government was doing nothing about it. Now, the picture of this new boss of the Mafia, the other man being in prison, showed a man, a man with a drawn face, a man with a sad expression, and the article about him said that he was to be extradited three years ago, and sent back to Italy, where so many of the Mafia came from. But, they couldn't do so because of his terrible heart condition.

They were afraid he might die on the road. And so, I say that those pleasures are apparent, dear friends. They're not having the good time that we think they're having.

Nevertheless, superficially, we often envy them because of their prosperity, because of their apparent peace, because of their apparent pleasure, and certainly because of their manifest pride. And so, he's almost ready to give up as he looks at that. For he looks at himself in verse 14, and he says, for all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning.

He looks at himself, and in contrast to prosperity, and peace, and pleasure, he sees nothing but pain, and pain, and, as he views them, perplexity. And then, he says in verse 15, if I were to give utterance to what's in my heart, I should offend the generation of thy children. In other words, if I gave vent to my inwards thoughts sometimes, I would stumble at people of God, for in my heart there's rebellion.

I don't understand it, and I'm wondering if it pays to be a child of God at all. That's what it seems to amount to. Now, that leads me to say this, friends, we should be very slow to give vent to our inward feelings if those inward feelings give utterance to the unbelief of our hearts.

For you may stumble somebody who but lately has entered the path of faith, and you who have professed it, have walked it so many, many years, have nothing but protest and unbelief because of the hardness of your past. Let us beware of giving utterance to a rebellion seething in our bosom, and thus offend somebody who may be weak in the faith, and will grasp at our unbelief and perpetuate it. Now, he says, all this was too painful for me until, until what? Until I went into the sanctuary of God.

It is, I went into God's presence, and I spread out the whole matter. My perplexity, my problem, and my protest, and I told him all about it. And you know what he did? He pulled aside the veil, the veil that intervenes between time and eternity.

He pulled it aside for me, and he showed me the end, the end of the wicked, and the end of the righteous. And I saw that in comparison with the greatness of eternity, and the fleeting character of time, that God was good to Israel and to man, and God, the judge of all the earth, would deal with unrighteousness, and impiety, and unbelief. He said, I discovered when God drew aside the veil, as you have in verse 18, they were standing already in slippery places, those wicked, and they were cast down to destruction, and they were brought into desolation, and utterly consumed with terrors.

He said, I saw the judge of all the earth would do right with the injustice of earth. I saw that God would deal with those men, and God was not to be judged in respect of the wicked, because of his long-suffering toward them during a comparatively short time, in the hope of their repentance, in comparison with the eternity of their woe, and their suffering, when they were released from this present life, and ushered into the life beyond. And I saw, said he, that God's love towards us is not to be measured by the little time we are here on earth, but with the ages to come.

Or, in the words of Paul later, that my light affliction, which is but for a moment, is not worthy to be compared to that exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Let's turn to that portion, 2 Corinthians chapter, let's keep our hands in the place here, and turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 3, is it? Sometimes we miss the contrast here. Chapter 4, 2 Corinthians chapter 4, and verse 17, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, momentary and light, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight.

The weight is in contrast to the light affliction. An eternal weight, a momentary affliction, a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory, while, don't forget that word while, everything depends on this, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Now, let's go back to 7 to 3. He says, and I repeat this, God's justice is not to be measured by the fleeting time of the wicked upon the earth, nor is his favor to be measured by the fleeting time of God's people on earth. The sanctuary supplied the solution. Now, whenever God drew aside the veil and showed Asaph the afterwards, the afterwards of things, he saw that God would deal summarily with the wicked, and God would deal with his people.

Now, as he comes out, he gives utterance to verses 22, 23, and 24, which please note with me carefully. He says in verse 21, thus my heart was grieved, I was pricked in my reins, that is when I was going, when I went into the sanctuary. And then he says, so foolish was I, and ignorant.

I was as a beast before thee. Notice the words, so foolish was I, and I was as a beast before thee. This is his past, as he reviews it, his past.

But as to his present, nevertheless, I am continually with thee. Thou hast holden me by my right hand, his present, and as to his prospect in the future, thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Right? Underline those verses.

His past, his humbling past, his present, his heartening present, his prospect, his happy prospect, the confession of his past, so foolish was I, I was as a beast before thee. Why does he say that? Because a beast is satisfied with the present. The present comfort, the present meal, that's all that matters to a beast.

The present comfort, the present meal. It is always just like the beast, and you and I can get like them too. Just the present happy circumstances, and if something happens that we don't have the present happy circumstances, we're all broken up, we're all defeated, we're all despondent, we haven't got much faith after all.

The humbling past, but the heartening present. Nevertheless, look up that word nevertheless sometimes in the bible, do you good? Nevertheless, I am his present, continually with thee. Thou hast holden me by my right hand.

Aren't you glad that God has holds you by your right hand? I hadn't preached very long when I was in Alexandria, Minnesota, and I was preaching one evening about the security of God's people, and I quoted, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father is greater than all, and none shall pluck them out of my father's hand. There's a dear man waited after the meeting, a real child of God, but he said to me, Brother Frazer, I've enjoyed your messages, but I can't go along with you tonight in what you said about having eternal life, and can never perish.

He says, you know, it's to me it's like this. Here is a man and his little girl walking along the street on a slippery night, and she lets go his hand, and down she goes. She gets up, rubs the injured part, takes his hand again, and is safe.

After a while, she forgets, and lets go his hand, and down she goes again. He says, you know, that's how it is, Brother Frazer, unless we hang on to the Lord, we'll be lost every time. And I wondered what to say to him, and then I said, well, I'm not a father, and I haven't got a little girl.

I've got three now. But I said, if I had a little girl, I'd never allow her to hold my hand on a slippery street. He says, you wouldn't? No, sir.

I'd hold her hand on a slippery street. Now, the difference between you and me, Brother, is that you think you're holding on to Christ, and I'm thankfully holding on to me. And he says, what about the scripture, though, that about the dog returning to its vomit, and the sow that is washed to its wallowing in the mire? What about that? I said, well, that comes from the pen of Peter.

And Peter was a Jew, and Peter knew what animals were clean and unclean under Jewish law. And a dog and a sow were both unclean under Jewish law. And you would never find Peter calling God's people either dogs or swine.

He does call God's people sheep, because a sheep was a clean animal under Jewish law. And the fact that Peter speaks of the dog and the sow is proof positive. He's not talking about a real child of God.

He's talking about a person who professes to faith. And if they've only got a profession, like the dog returning to its vomit, and the sow returning to the wallowing in the mire, they'll soon show that they were not new creatures in Christ Jesus. And that's true.

Now, I never quote, hardly ever, quote John 10, 28, and 29 without quoting John 10 and 27, and 28, and 29. Because 27 says, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. In other words, the proof of being a sheep is not that you want to go out and do every kind of thing you can think about because you've got eternal life.

No. The proof of being a sheep is that you hear his voice, and the bent of your life is to follow him. Amen.

It doesn't make you careless to know that he's got you by the right hand. It makes you profoundly thankful. Amen.

Thou hast holded me by my right this present. And what about his happy prospect? Thou shalt guide me, shalt. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.

And afterwards, afterwards, receive me to glory. And so, says Asap, I found that as the justice of God is not measured by the brief span of the wicked upon the earth, neither is the favor of God towards his people measured by the light affliction which is but for a moment in their lives, comparatively speaking. But the favor of God is measured by the exceeding and eternal weight of glory reserved for you and for me.

And that glory, friends, may not be very far away. And afterwards, receive me to glory. Glory! What is heaven? I asked the little child.

All sunshine, and in her innocence she smiled. I asked the widow with her care oppressed, all suffering o'er her. Oh, heaven at last is rest.

I asked the poet with his soul of fire, his glory, and he struck his lyre. I asked the aged waiting his release, a hill around him. Lo, he answered, peace.

So, all may look with hopeful eyes about, to sunshine, glory, rest, peace, and love. Amen? Heaven is everything you would like it to be, and then some. Glory! Afterwards, it was afterwards that he learned in the sanctuary of God that may don't.

And now, please, will you turn with me to Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews 12 gives us afterwards. If I could write a word, I think, over Hebrews 12, I think I should write afterwards.

Let's read it together. Wherefore, seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, levitly aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, amid us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who from the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your mind.

Now, let's notice here in this portion the past, and the present, and the future of the past, of the author and finisher of faith. You see, dear friends, in Hebrews 11 we are encompassed about with a great cloud of

witnesses, men and women, heroes and heroines of faith, who walked in the light of the afterwards long, long ago. Moses walked in the light of the afterwards.

He endured at seeing him who is invisible. Abraham walked in the light of the afterwards, because he left the glitter and glamour of Ur of the Chaldeans. He went out not knowing whether he went to live in a tent.

Why? Because he looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. The heroes and heroines of faith looked to the afterwards. Even Rahab the harlot looked beyond the strong molds of Jericho and saw them tottering, and she saw the armies of the living God advancing, and she lived her life in the light of the afterwards.

Now, when you come to Hebrews chapter 12, the figure, not literally, but the figure is that those who were in chapter 11 in the arena are now elevated to the standing. And now we are in the arena. We are called upon to run our race, and as it were, they are the spectators and we are the gladiators.

Hmm? I don't say literally. They're not looking over the battlements of heaven, watching us today. God wouldn't allow it.

It would make such a poor showing. But the figure is that those in the arena are elevated to the steps, and we are now running. Every way is set aside, looking not at the heroes and heroines in the steps, but looking at the author and finisher of faith, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Did he have a past? Yes. He endured the cross. He despised the shame.

He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself. That was his past. What about his present? Set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

There he is today, says the writer of the Hebrews. But what about the future? Why did he do what he did? Because of his absence. The joy that was set before him.

The joy that was set before him. What was that joy? To do the father's will. Yes, and more.

To have a multitude that no man can number, of those whom he calls his brothers, blessed be it. To have fellows to share his glory. Everyone with a faith like a king.

His afterwards. So, this chapter begins with the Savior's afterwards, and I'll look at the son's afterwards, if you please. Verse 11.

Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterwards, nevertheless, afterwards, it yields as a peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised in Christ. Again, you see, you have the afterwards of the sons of God.

First the son of God, and now the sons of God. Now, he says, you endure chastening, and when we think of the word chastening, we must not think of a father with a whip, for the word means child's reign. It's not the branches that don't bear fruit, that he purges, that he purges, and cuts, and trims, but those who are bearing fruit.

It's all part of that thread, that culture. It doesn't, it's not joyous, but grievous. But, we must not get our eyes on this fleeting light momentarily thing, beloved.

We must endure as seeing him who is in this. We know that presently this child's reigning, in which we must come out well, is working for us a far more eternal and exceeding glory. Why? We don't look at it.

We don't take our eyes on this thing that's hurting, while we look not at the things which are seen, which are tempest, but while we look for the things which are not seen, which are. And so, I say to you who may have been enduring such trials, and I'll say to you in verse 12, wherefore my sister, wherefore my sister lift up the hands which hang down on the feeble neck, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, lest you be the means of discouraging someone else by your deportment under trial. Lest that be lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be human.

Follow peace with all men, holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Looking diligently, lest any man fail, any woman fail the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness bring you trouble. Beware of the root of bitterness whereby many are defiled.

And I think the context would show you, if you pursued it enough, that the root of bitterness is not just bitterness against God, but bitterness against a fellow believer for something which he has done, or she has done, however real or however fancy. We must ever have our eye on that afterwards. And then, the afterwards of the sinner in verse 16, lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

For you know how that afterwards, the afterwards of the sinner, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected. For he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. The afterwards of the sinner.

Now, don't just project that to be the afterwards of the unbeliever. It's true. Esau's story is the story of a man who bartered earthly temporal comforts for eternal spiritual blessings.

He says, give me that meal that you're cooking, and you can have your heaven. You can have that birthright which made the holder a priest with God to represent the family before God. Give me the present, and you can have your future.

Give me my comforts now, and you can have your eternal life and your heaven. That's the sinner. But let's be aware that we are not sinning believers who are bartering, even now, temporary gratification for eternal benefits, holding on to those things that perhaps very soon we'll have to let go, and we'll die, and have so little to show for the years we say we have been in Christ.

Let's live in the life of that afterwards. Now, let's go back to Psalm 7 to 3, and I close. Verse 1. Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such out of the clean heart.

Now, that's his conclusion at the end. That's why he didn't put it at the beginning, for it all depends. This is the principle above everything that we must adopt as the people of God.

If, in the midst of our trials, we're going to say God is not good to me, then we'll learn nothing. But on the basis, friends of the past, can we not say God is good? Amen? So, I think as we close this meeting, we'll say, and we'll repeat it together, truly, put a real emphasis on that word truly, truly, God is good to me. Huh? Truly, God is good to me, even to such out of the clean heart.

Are you ready? Truly, God is good to me, even to such out of the clean heart. Do you really mean it? I'm sure you do. May God bless you for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Gracious God, our Father, thou art indeed good, and doeth good. And we can say in the end of this psalm, it is good for me to draw near unto the Lord.

I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works. O God, may it make us a thankful people. May we never allow the transient sufferings of this present life to compare to that which is to come.

Help us remember we're living in a very, very small part of this present age. Of it, thy word says, in the ages to come, ages to come, thou wilt show us the exceeding riches of thy grace and thy kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. We give thee thanks in his blessed name.

Amen. You know, dear friends, let me just add this. There's just been about three or four or five ages that have already run their course.

There was the age of innocence, we don't know how long that lasted. There was the age of human conscience. There was the age of the promises of God, they say.

There was the long age of law, and now there has been the long age of grace. Only five. And in each of those, there was a progression in the knowledge of God.

But the bible says that in the ages to come, ages to come, and as each age was different, there's no reason for not believing that those ages to come will be different. And as those past ages showed an increasing knowledge of the Lord, there's no reason for not believing that the ages to come will continue to show an increasing knowledge of our God, and he will show us the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Amen? It makes you happy, and makes you glad you're safe.

And the Lord grant we shall go on trusting him right to the end of the journey. Part as our Father was I bless you, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

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