

Exposition on Psalm 74

by St. Augustine

The sermon is an exposition on Psalm 74, where St. Augustine explains the understanding of Asaph and the redemption of God's inheritance through Christ.

Scripture: Isaiah 66:2, Matthew 3:12, Matthew 5:3, Luke 18:13, John 1:17, John 1:47, Romans 9:6, Romans 10:3, Romans 11:1, Galatians 3:29

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Old And New Testament"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the understanding of Asaph in the Psalms, delving into the significance of the congregation being referred to as Synagogue, symbolizing a certain understanding congregation. He explores the distinction between the people of Israel who truly follow God's ways and those who are unfaithful, emphasizing the importance of faith and obedience. St. Augustine reflects on the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament, highlighting the differences in sacraments, promises, and the need to fully surrender to God's grace and truth through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

1. This Psalm's Title is, Of the Understanding of Asaph. Asaph in Latin is translated congregation, in Greek Synagogue. Let us see what this Synagogue has understood. But let us understand firstly Synagogue: from thence we shall understand what the Synagogue has understood. Every congregation is spoken of under the general name of Synagogue: one both of beasts and of men may be called a congregation; but here there is no congregation of beasts when we heard understanding...for this the Psalm's Title does prescribe, saying, Of the understanding of Asaph.

It is therefore a certain understanding congregation whereof we are about to hear the voice. But since properly Synagogue is said of the congregation of the people of Israel, so that wheresoever we may have heard Synagogue, we are no longer wont to understand any but the people of the Jews; let us see whether perchance the voice in this Psalm be not of that same people. But of what sort of Jews and of what sort of people of Israel? For they are not of the chaff, but perchance of the grain; Matthew 3:12 not of the broken branches, but perchance of those that are strengthened.

For not all that are of Israel are Israelites. Romans 9:6 ...There are therefore certain Israelites, of whom was he concerning whom was said, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom guile is not. John 1:47 I do not say in the same manner as we are Israelites, for we also are the seed of Abraham. For to the Gentiles the Apostle was speaking, when he said, Therefore the seed of Abraham you are, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 3:29 According to this therefore all we are Israelites, that follow the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham.

But let us understand here the voice of the Israelites in the same manner as the Apostle says, For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. Romans 11:1 Here therefore let us understand that whereof the Prophets have spoken, a remnant shall be saved. Romans 9:27 Of the remnant therefore saved let us hear in this place the voice; in order that there may speak that Synagogue which had received the Old Testament, and was intent upon carnal promises; and by this means it came to pass that their feet were shaken.

For in another Psalm, where too the title has Asaph, there is said what? How good is the God of Israel to men right in heart. But my feet were almost moved. And as if we were saying, whence were your feet moved? Well near, he says, my steps were overthrown, because I was jealous in the case of sinners, looking on the peace of sinners. For while according to the promises of God belonging to the Old Testament he was looking for earthly felicity, he observed it to abound with ungodly men; that they who worshipped not God were enriched with those things which he was looking for from God: and as though without cause he had served God, his feet tottered....But opportunely it has chanced not by our own but by God's dispensation, that just now we heard out of the Gospel, that the Law was given by Moses, Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

John 1:17 For if we distinguish between the two Testaments, Old and New, there are not the same Sacraments nor the same promises; nevertheless, the same commandments for the most part....When examined they are either all found to be the same, or there are scarce any in the Gospel which have not been spoken by the Prophets. The Commandments are the same, the Sacraments are not the same, the Promises are not the same. Let us see wherefore the commandments are the same; because according to these we ought to serve God.

The Sacraments are not the same, for some Sacraments there are giving Salvation, others promising a Saviour. The Sacraments of the New Testament give Salvation, the Sacraments of the Old Testament did promise a Saviour. When therefore you have now the things promised, why do you seek the things promising, having now the Saviour?...God through the New Testament has taken out of the hands of His sons those things which are like the playthings of boys, in order that He might give something more useful to them growing up, on that account must He be supposed not to have given those former things Himself.

He gave both Himself. But the Law itself through Moses was given, Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ: John 1:17 Grace because there is fulfilled through love that which by the letter was being enjoined, Truth because there is being rendered that which was promised. This thing therefore this Asaph has understood. In a word, all things which to the Jews had been promised have been taken away. Where is their kingdom? Where the Temple? Where the Anointing? Where is Priest?

Where are now the Prophets among them? From what time there came He that by the Prophets was foretold, in that nation there is now nothing of these things; now she has lost things earthly, and not yet does seek things Heavenly.

2. You should not therefore hold fast things earthly, although God does bestow them....See ye how that in fearing to lose things earthly, the Jews slew the King of Heaven. And what was done to them? They lost even those very things earthly: and in the place where they slew Christ, there they were slain: and when, being unwilling to lose the land, they slew the Giver of life, that same land being slain they lost; and at that

very time when they slew Him, in order that by that very time they might be admonished of the reason wherefore they suffered these things. For when the city of the Jews was overthrown, they were celebrating the Passover, and with many thousands of men the whole nation itself had met together for the celebration of that festival. In that place God (through evil men indeed, but yet Himself good; through unjust men, but Himself just and justly) did so take vengeance upon them, that there were slain many thousands of men, and the city itself was overthrown. Of this thing in this Psalm the understanding of Asaph does complain, and in the very plaint the understanding as it were does distinguish things earthly from things heavenly, does distinguish the Old Testament from the New Testament: in order that you may see through what things you are passing, what you should look for, what to forsake, to what to cleave. Thus then he begins.

3. Wherefore have You repelled us, O God, unto the end? Psalm 73:1. Have repelled unto the end, in the person of the congregation which is properly called Synagogue. Wherefore have You repelled us, O God, unto the end? He censures not, but inquires wherefore, for what purpose, because of what have You done this? What have You done? You have repelled us unto the end. What is, unto the end? Perchance even unto the end of the world. Have You repelled us unto Christ, who is the End to every one believing? Romans 10:4 For, Wherefore have You repelled us, O God, unto the end? Your spirit has been angry at the sheep of Your flock. Wherefore were You angry at the sheep of Your flock, but because to things earthly we were cleaving, and the Shepherd we knew not?

4. Remember Your congregation, which You have possessed from the beginning Psalm 73:2. Can this by any means be the voice of the Gentiles? Hath He possessed the Gentiles from the beginning? Nay, but He has possessed the seed of Abraham, the people of Israel even according to the flesh, born of the Patriarchs our fathers: of whom we have become the sons, not by coming out of their flesh, but by imitating their faith. But those, possessed by God from the beginning, what befell them?

Remember Your congregation which You have possessed from the beginning. You have redeemed the rod of Your inheritance. That same congregation of Yours, being the rod of Your inheritance, You have redeemed. This same congregation he has called the rod of the inheritance. Let us look back to the first thing that was done, when He willed to possess that same congregation, delivering it from Egypt, what sign He gave to Moses, when Moses said to Him, What sign shall I give that they may believe me, that You have sent me?

And God says to him, What do you bear in your hand? A rod. Cast it on to the ground, etc. Exodus 4:1-3 What does it intimate? For this was not done to no purpose. Let us inquire of the writings of God. To what did the serpent persuade man? To death. Therefore death is from the serpent. If death is from the serpent, the rod in the serpent is Christ in death. Therefore also when by serpents in the desert they were being bitten and being slain, the Lord commanded Moses to exalt a brazen serpent in the desert, and admonish the people that whosoever by a serpent had been bitten, should look thereupon and be made whole.

Numbers 21:8 Thus also it was done: thus also men, bitten by serpents, were made whole of the venom by looking upon a serpent. John 3:14 To be made whole of a serpent is a great Sacrament. What is it to be made whole of a serpent by looking upon a serpent? It is to be made whole of death by believing in one dead. And nevertheless Moses feared and fled. Exodus 4:3 What is it that Moses fled from that serpent? What, brethren, save that which we know to have been done in the Gospel?

Christ died and the disciples feared, and withdrew from that hope wherein they had been. Luke 24:21 ...But, at that time some thousands of the Jews themselves, the crucifiers of Christ, believed: and because

they had been found at hand, they so believed as that they sold all that they had, and the price of their goods before the feet of the Apostles they laid. Acts 4:34-35 Because then this thing was hidden, and the redemption of the rod of God was to be more conspicuous in the Gentiles: he explains of what he says that which he has said, You have redeemed the rod of Your inheritance.

This he has said not of the Gentiles in whom it was evident. But of what? Mount Sion. Yet even Mount Sion can be otherwise understood. That one which You have dwelled in the same. In the place where the People was aforetime, where the Temple was set up, where the Sacrifices were celebrated, where at that time were all those necessary things giving promise of Christ. A promise, when the thing promised is bestowed is now become superfluous....

5. Lift up Your hand upon their pride at the end Psalm 73:3. As You repelled us at the end, so lift up Your hand upon the pride of them at the end. The pride of whom? Of those by whom Jerusalem was overthrown. But by whom was it, but by the kings of the Gentiles? Well was the hand of Him lifted up upon the pride of them at the end: for they too have now known Christ. For the end of the Law is Christ for righteousness to every one believing. Romans 10:4 How well does he wish for them! As if angry he is speaking, and he is seeming to speak evil: and O that there would come to pass the evil which he speaks: nay now in the name of Christ that it is coming to pass let us rejoice. Now they holding the sceptre are being made subject to the Word of the Cross: now is coming to pass that which was foretold, there shall adore Him all the kings of the earth, all nations shall serve Him. Now on the brows of kings more precious is the sign of the Cross, than the jewel of a crown. Lift up Your hand upon the pride of them at the end. How great things has the enemy of malice wrought in Your holy places! In those which were Your holy places, that is, in the temple, in the priesthood, in all those sacraments which were at that time. In good truth the enemy at that time wrought. For the Gentiles at that time who did this, were worshipping false Gods, were adoring idols, were serving demons: nevertheless they wrought many evil things on the Saints of God. When could they if they had not been permitted? But when would they have been permitted, unless those holy things, at first promised, were no longer necessary, when He that had promised was Himself holden? Therefore, how great things has the enemy of malice wrought in Your holy places!

6. And all they have boasted, that hate You Psalm 73:4. Observe the servants of demons, the servants of idols: such as at that time the Gentiles were, when they overthrew the temple and city of God, and they boasted. In the midst of Your festival. Remember what I said, that Jerusalem was overthrown at the time when the very festival was being celebrated: at which festival they crucified the Lord. Gathered together they raged, gathered together they perished. They have set signs, their own signs, and they have not known Psalm 73:5. They had signs to place there, their standards, their eagles, their own dragons, the Roman signs; or even their statues which at first in the temple they placed; or perchance their signs are the things which they heard from the prophets of their demons. And they have not known. Have not known what? How you should have had no power against Me, except it had been given you from above. John 19:11 They knew not how that not on themselves honour was conferred, to afflict, to take, or overthrow the city, but their ungodliness was made as it were the axe of God. They were made the instrument of Him enraged, not so as to be the kingdom of Him pacified. For God does that which a man also oftime does. Sometimes a man in a rage catches up a rod lying in the way, perchance any sort of stick, he smites therewith his son, and then throws the stick into the fire and reserves the inheritance for his son: so sometime God through evil men does instruct good men, and through the temporal power of them that are to be condemned He works the discipline of them that are to be saved. For why do you suppose, brethren, that discipline was even thus inflicted upon that nation, in order that it might perish utterly? How many out

of this nation did afterwards believe, how many are yet to believe? Some are chaff, others grain; over both however there comes in the threshing-drag; but under one threshing-drag the one is broken up, the other is purged. How great a good has God bestowed upon us by the evil of Judas the traitor! By the very ferocity of the Jews how great a good was bestowed upon believing Gentiles! Christ was slain in order that there might be on the Cross One for him to look to who had been stung by the serpent.. ..

7. Now let us hasten over the verses following after the destruction of Jerusalem, for the reason that they are both evident, and it does not please me to tarry over the punishment even of enemies. As if in a forest of trees with axes, they have cut down the doors thereof at once; with mattock and hammer they have thrown Her down Psalm 73:6. That is, conspiring together, with firm determination, with mattock and hammer they have thrown Her down. They have burned with fire Your Sanctuary, they have defiled on the ground the Tabernacle of Your name Psalm 73:7.

8. They have said in their heart (the kindred of them is in one)-- Have said what? Come ye, let us suppress the solemnities of the Lord from the land Psalm 73:8. Of the Lord, has been inserted in the person of this man, that is, in the person of Asaph. For they raging would not have called Him the Lord whose temple they were overthrowing. Come ye, let us suppress all the solemnities of the Lord from the land. What of Asaph? What understanding has Asaph in these words? What? Does he not profit even by the discipline accorded? Is not the mind's crookedness made straight? Overthrown were all things that were at first: nowhere is there priest, nowhere Altar of the Jews, nowhere victim, nowhere Temple. Is there then no other thing to be acknowledged which succeeded this departing? Or indeed would this promissory sign have been taken away, unless there had come that which was being promised? Let us see therefore in this place now the understanding of Asaph, let us see if he profits by tribulation. Observe what he says: Our signs we have not seen, no longer is there prophet, and us He will not know as yet Psalm 73:9. Behold those Jews who say that they are not known as yet, that is, that they are yet in captivity, that not yet they are delivered, do yet expect Christ. Christ will come, but He will come as Judge; the first time to call, afterwards to sever. He will come, because He has come, and that He will come is evident; but hereafter from above He will come. Before you He was, O Israel. You were bruised because you stumbled against Him lying down: that you may not be ground to powder, observe Him coming from above. For thus it was foretold by the prophet: Whoever shall stumble upon that stone shall be bruised, and upon whomsoever it shall have come, it shall grind him to powder. He does bruise when little, He shall grind to powder when great. Now your signs you see not, now there is no prophet: and you say, and us He will not know as yet: because yourselves know not Him as yet. No longer is there a prophet; and us He will not know as yet.

9. How long, O God, shall the enemy revile? Psalm 73:10. Cry out as if forsaken, as if deserted: cry out like a sick man, who hast chosen rather to smite the physician than to be made whole: not as yet does He know you. See what He has done, who does not know you as yet. For they to whom there has been no preaching of Him, shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand: and thou yet criest out, No longer is there a prophet, and us He will not know as yet. Where is your understanding? The adversary does provoke Your name at the end. For this purpose the adversary does provoke Your name at the end, that being provoked You may reprove, reproving You may know them at the end: or certainly, at the end, in the sense of even unto the end.

10. Why do You turn away Your hand, and Your right hand from the midst of Your bosom unto the end? Psalm 73:11. Again, another sign which was given to Moses. For in like manner as above from the rod was a sign, so also from the right hand now. For when that thing had been done concerning the rod, God

gave a second sign: thrust, He says, your hand into your bosom, and he thrust it: draw it forth, and he drew it forth: and it was found white, Exodus 4:6 that is, unclean. For whiteness on the skin is leprosy, Leviticus 13:25 not fairness of complexion. For the heritage of God itself, that is, His people, being cast out became unclean. But what says He to him? Draw it back into your bosom. He drew it back, and it was restored to its own colour. When doest Thou this, says this Asaph? How long dost Thou alienate Your right hand from Your bosom, so that being without unclean it remains? Draw it back, let it return to its colour, let it acknowledge the Saviour. Wherefore do you turn away Your hand, and Your right hand from the midst of Your bosom unto the end? These words he cries, being blind, not understanding, and God does what He does. For wherefore came Christ? Blindness in part happened unto Israel, in order that the fullness of the Gentiles might enter in, and so all Israel might be saved. Romans 11:25 Therefore now, O Asaph, acknowledge that which has gone before, in order that you may at least follow, if you were not able to go before. For not in vain came Christ, or in vain was Christ slain, or in vain did the grain fall into the ground; but it fell that it might rise manifold. John 12:24 A serpent was lifted up in the desert, in order that it might cure of the poison him that was smitten. Numbers 21:9 Observe what was done. Do not think it to be a vain thing that He came: lest He find you evil, when He shall have come a second time.

11. Asaph has understood, because on the Title of the Psalm there is, understanding of Asaph. And what says he? But God, our King before the worlds, has wrought Salvation in the midst of the earth Psalm 73:12. On the one hand we cry, No longer is there prophet, and us He will not know as yet: but on the other hand, our God, our King, who is before the worlds (for He is Himself in the beginning of the Word John 1:1 by whom were made the worlds), has wrought Salvation in the midst of the earth. God therefore, our King before the worlds, has done what? has wrought Salvation in the midst of the earth: and I am yet crying as if forsaken!...Now the Gentiles are awake, and we are snoring, and as though God has forsaken us, in dreams we are delirious. He has wrought Salvation in the midst of the earth.

12. Now therefore, O Asaph, amend yourself according to your understanding, tell us what sort of Salvation God has wrought in the midst of the earth. When that earthly Salvation of yours was overthrown, what did He do, what did He promise? You confirmed in Your virtue the sea Psalm 73:13. As though the nation of the Jews were as it were dry land severed from the waves, the Gentiles in their bitterness were the sea, and on all sides they washed about that land: behold, You have confirmed in Your virtue the sea, and the land remained thirsting for Your rain. You have confirmed in Your virtue the sea, You have broken in pieces the heads of dragons in the water. Dragons' heads, that is, demons' pride, wherewith the Gentiles were possessed, You have broken in pieces upon the water: for those persons whom they were possessing, You by Baptism have delivered.

13. What more after the heads of dragons? For those dragons have their chief, and he is himself the first great dragon. And concerning him what has He done that has wrought Salvation in the midst of the earth? Hear: You have broken the head of the dragon Psalm 73:14. Of what dragon? We understand by dragons all the demons that war under the devil: what single dragon then, whose head was broken, but the devil himself ought we to understand? What with him has He done? You have broken the head of the dragon.

That is, the beginning of sin. That head is the part which received the curse, to wit that the seed of Eve should mark the head of the serpent. Genesis 3:15 For the Church was admonished to shun the beginning of sin. Which is that beginning of sin, like the head of a serpent? The beginning of all sin is pride. Ecclesiastes 10:13 There has been broken therefore the head of the dragon, has been broken pride diabolical. And what with him has He done, that has wrought Salvation in the midst of the earth?

You have given him for a morsel to the Ethiopian peoples. What is this? How do I understand the Ethiopian peoples? How but by these all nations? And properly by black men: for Ethiopians are black. They are themselves called to the faith who were black; the very same indeed, so that there is said to them, for you were sometime darkness, but now light in the Lord.. ..Thence was also that calf which the people worshipped, unbelieving, apostate, seeking the gods of the Egyptians, forsaking Him who had delivered them from the slavery of the Egyptians: whence there was enacted that great Sacrament.

For when Moses was thus angry with them worshipping and adoring the idol, Exodus 32:19 and, inflamed with zeal for God, was punishing temporally, in order that he might terrify them to shun death everlasting; yet the head itself of the calf he cast into the fire, and ground to powder, destroyed, scattered on the water, and gave to the people to drink: so there was enacted a great Sacrament. O anger prophetic, and mind not perturbed but enlightened! He did what? Cast it into the fire, in order that first the form itself may be obliterated; piece by piece grind it down, in order that little by little it may be consumed: cast it into the water, give to the people to drink!

What is this but that the worshippers of the devil had become the body of the same? In the same manner as men confessing Christ become the Body of Christ; so that to them is said, but you are the Body of Christ and the members. 1 Corinthians 12:27 The body of the devil was to be consumed, and that too by Israelites was to be consumed. For out of that people were the Apostles, out of that people the first Church....Thus the devil is being consumed with the loss of his members.

This was figured also in the serpent of Moses. For the magicians did likewise, and casting down their rods they exhibited serpents: but the serpent of Moses swallowed up the rods of all those magicians. Exodus 7:12 Let there be perceived therefore even now the body of the devil: this is what is coming to pass, he is being devoured by the Gentiles who have believed, he has become meat for the Ethiopian peoples. This again, may be perceived in, You have given him for meat to the Ethiopian peoples, how that now all men bite him.

What is, bite him? By reproving, blaming, accusing. Just as has been said, by way of prohibition indeed, but yet the idea expressed: but if you bite and eat up one another, take heed that you be not consumed of one another. Galatians 5:15 What is, bite and eat up one another? You go to law with one another, you detract from one another, you heap revilings upon one another. Observe therefore now how that with these bitings the devil is being consumed. What man, when angry with his servant, even a heathen, would not say to him, Satan? Behold the devil given for meat. This says Christian, this says Jew, this says heathen: him he worships, and with him he curses!...

14. You have cleft the fountains and torrents Psalm 73:15: in order that they might flow with the stream of wisdom, might flow with the riches of the faith, might water the saltness of the Gentiles, in order that they might convert all unbelievers into the sweetness of the faith by their watering....In some men the Word of God becomes a well of water springing up unto life eternal; John 4:14 but others hearing the Word, and not so keeping it as that they live well, yet not keeping silence with tongue, they become torrents. For they are properly called torrents which are not perennial: for sometimes also in a secondary sense torrent is used for river: as has been said, with the torrent of Your pleasures You shall give them to drink. For that torrent shall not ever be dried up. But torrents properly are those rivers named, which in summer fail, but with winter rains are flooded and run. You see therefore a man sound in faith, that will persevere even unto the end, that will not forsake God in any trial; for the sake of the truth, not for the sake of falsehood and error, enduring all difficulties. Whence is this man so vigorous, but because the Word has become in

him a well of water springing up unto life eternal? John 4:14 But the other receives the Word, he preaches, he is not silent, he runs: but summer proves whether he be fountain or torrent. Nevertheless through both be the earth watered, by Him who has wrought Salvation in the midst of the earth: let the fountains overflow, let the torrents run.

15. You have dried up the rivers of Etham Psalm 73:15....What is Etham? For the word is Hebrew. What is Etham interpreted? Strong, stout. Who is this strong and stout one, whose rivers God dries up? Who but that very dragon? For no one enters into the house of a strong man that he may spoil his vessels, unless first he shall have bound fast the strong man. Mark 12:29 This is that strong man on his own virtue relying, and forsaking God: this is that strong man, who says, I will set my seat by the north, and I will be like the Most High. Isaiah 14:13 Out of that very cup of perverse strength he has given man to drink. Strong they willed to be, who thought that they would be Gods by means of the forbidden food. Adam became strong, over whom was reproachfully said, Behold, Adam has become like one of us. Genesis 3:22 ...As though they were strong, to the righteousness of God they have not been made subject. Romans 10:3 Observe ye that a man has put out of the way his own strength, and remained weak, needy, standing afar off, not daring even to raise his eyes to Heaven; but smiting his breast, and saying, O Lord, be merciful to me a sinner. Luke 18:13 Now he is weak, now he confesses his weakness, he is not strong: dry land he is, be he watered with fountains and torrents. They are as yet strong who rely on their own virtue. Be their rivers dried up, let there be no advancement in the doctrines of the Gentiles, of wizards, of astrologers, of magic arts: for dried up are the rivers of the strong man: You have dried up the rivers of Etham. Let there dry up that doctrine; let minds be flooded with the Gospel of truth.

16. Your own is the day and Your own is the night Psalm 73:16. Who is ignorant of this, seeing that He has Himself made all these things; for by the Word were made all things? John 1:3 To that very One Himself who has wrought Salvation in the midst of the earth, to Him is said, Your own is the night. Something here we ought to perceive which belongs to that very Salvation which He has wrought in the midst of the earth. Your own is the day. Who are these? The spiritual. And Your own is the night. Who are these? The carnal....You have made perfect sun and moon: the sun, spiritual men, the moon, carnal men. As yet carnal he is, may he not be forsaken, and may he too be made perfect. The sun, as it were a wise man: the moon, as it were an unwise man: You have not however forsaken. For thus it is written, A wise man endures as the sun, but a foolish man as the moon is changed. Sirach 27:11 What then? Because the sun endures, that is, because the wise man endures as the sun, a foolish man is changed like the moon, is one as yet carnal, as yet unwise, to be forsaken? And where is that which has been said by the Apostle, To the wise and unwise a debtor I am? Romans 1:14

17. You have made all the ends of the earth Psalm 73:17....Behold in what manner He has made the ends of the earth, that has wrought Salvation in the midst of the earth. You have made all the ends of the earth. Summer and spring You have made them. Men fervent in the Spirit are the summer. You, I say, hast made men fervent in the Spirit: You have made also the novices in the Faith, they are the spring. Summer and Spring You have made them. They shall not glory as if they have not received: You have made them.

18. Be mindful of this Your creature Psalm 73:18. Of what creature of Yours? The enemy has reviled the Lord. O Asaph, grieve over your old blindness in understanding: the enemy has reviled the Lord. It was said to Christ in His own nation, a sinner is this Man: we know not whence He is: we know Moses, to him spoke God; this Man is a Samaritan. And the unwise people has provoked Your name. The unwise people Asaph was at that time, but not the understanding of Asaph at that time. What is said in the former Psalm? As it were a beast I have become unto You, and I am always with You: because He went not to the gods

and idols of the Gentiles. Although he knew not, being like a beast, yet he knew again as a man. For he said, always I am with You, like a beast: and what afterwards in that place in the same Psalm, where Asaph is? You have held the hand of my right hand, in Your will You have conducted me, and with glory You have taken me up. In Your will, not in my righteousness: by Your gift, not by my work. Therefore here also, the enemy has reviled the Lord: and the unwise people has provoked Your name. Have they all then perished? Far be it....For even the Apostle Paul through unbelief had been broken, and through faith unto the root he was restored. So evidently the unwise people provoked Your name, when it was said, If Son of God He is let Him come down from the Cross. Matthew 27:40

19. But what do you say, O Asaph, now in understanding? Deliver not to the beasts a soul confessing to You Psalm 73:19....To what beasts, save to those the heads whereof were broken in pieces upon the water? For the same devil is called, beast, lion, and dragon. Do not, he says, give to the Devil and his Angels a soul confessing to You. Let the serpent devour, if still I mind things earthly, if for things earthly I long, if still in the promises of the Old Testament, after the revealing of the New, I remain. But forasmuch as now I have laid down pride, and my own righteousness I will not acknowledge, but Your Grace; against me let proud beasts have no power. The souls of Your poor forget Thou not unto the end. Rich we were, strong we were: but You have dried up the rivers of Etham: no longer we establish our own righteousness, but we acknowledge Your Grace; poor we are, hearken to Your beggars. Now we do not dare to lift our eyes to Heaven, but smiting our breasts we say, O Lord, be merciful to me a sinner. Luke 18:13

20. Have regard unto Your Testament Psalm 73:20. Fulfil that which You have promised: the tables we have, for the inheritance we are looking. Have regard unto Your Testament, not that old one: not for the sake of the land of Canaan I ask, not for the sake of the temporal subduing of enemies, not for the sake of carnal fruitfulness of sons, not for the sake of earthly riches, not for the sake of temporal welfare: Have regard unto Your Testament, wherein You have promised the kingdom of Heaven. Now I acknowledge Your Testament: now understanding is Asaph, no beast is Asaph, now he sees that which was spoken of, Behold, the days come, says the Lord, and I will accomplish with the House of Israel and of Juda a new Testament, not after the Testament which I ordered with their Fathers. Jeremiah 31:31 Have regard unto Your Testament: for they that have been darkened have been filled of the earth of unrighteous houses: because they had unrighteous hearts. Our houses are our hearts: therein gladly dwell they that are blessed with pure heart. Matthew 5:8 Have regard, therefore, unto Your Testament: and let the remnant be saved: Romans 9:27 for many men that give heed to earth are darkened, and filled with earth. For there has entered into their eyes dust, and it has blinded them, and they have become dust which the wind sweeps from the face of the earth. They that have been darkened have been filled of the earth of unrighteous houses. For by giving heed to earth they have been darkened, concerning whom there is said in another Psalm, Let their eyes be blinded, that they see not, and their back ever bow Thou down. With earth, then, they that have been darkened have been filled, with the earth of unrighteous houses: because they have unrighteous hearts....

21. Let not the humble man be turned away confounded Psalm 73:21. For them pride has confounded. The needy and helpless man shall praise Your name. You see, brethren, how sweet ought to be poverty: ye see that poor and helpless men belong to God, but poor in spirit, for of them is the Kingdom of Heaven. Matthew 5:3 Who are the poor in spirit? The humble, men trembling at the words of God, confessing their sins, neither on their own merits, nor on their own righteousness relying. Who are the poor in spirit? They who when they do anything of good, praise God, when anything of evil, accuse themselves. Upon whom shall rest My Spirit, says the Prophet, but upon the humble man, and peaceful, and trembling at My

words? Isaiah 66:2 Now therefore Asaph has understood, now to the earth he adheres not, now the earthly promises out of the Old Testament he requires not....

22. Arise, O Lord, judge Thou my cause Psalm 73:22....Because I am not able to show my God, as if I were following an empty thing, they revile me. And not only Heathen, or Jew, or heretic; but sometimes even a Catholic brother does make a grimace when the promises of God are being preached, when a future resurrection is being foretold. And still even he, though already washed with the water of eternal Salvation, bearing the Sacrament of Christ, perchance says, and what man has yet risen again?

And, I have not heard my father speaking out of the grave, since I buried him! God has given to His servants a law for time, to which let them betake themselves: for what man comes back from beneath? And what shall I do with such men? Shall I show them what they see not? I am not able: for not for the sake of them ought God to become visible....I see not, he says: what am I to believe? Your soul is seen then, I suppose? Fool, your body is seen: your soul who does see? Since therefore your body alone is seen, why are you not buried?

He marvels that I have said, If body alone is seen, why are you not buried? And he answers (for he knows as much as this), Because I am alive. How know I that you are alive, of whom I see not the soul? How know I? You will answer, Because I speak, because I walk, because I work. Fool, by the operations of the body I know you to be living, by the works of creation can you not know the Creator? And perchance he that says, when I shall be dead, afterwards I shall be nothing; has both learned letters, and has learned this doctrine from Epicurus, who was a sort of doting philosopher, or rather lover of folly not of wisdom, whom even the philosophers themselves have named the hog: who said that the chief good was pleasure of body; this philosopher they have named the hog, wallowing in carnal mire.

From him perchance this lettered man has learned to say, I shall not be, after I have died. Dried be the rivers of Etham! Perish those doctrines of the Gentiles, flourish the plantations of Jerusalem! Let them see what they can, in heart believe what they cannot see! Certainly all those things which throughout the world now are seen, when God was working Salvation in the midst of the earth, when those things were being spoken of, they were not then as yet: and behold at that time they were foretold, now they are shown as fulfilled, and still the fool says in his heart, there is no God.

Woe to the perverse hearts: for so will there come to pass the things which remain, as there have come to pass the things which at that time were not, and were being foretold as to come to pass. Hath God indeed performed to us all the things which He promised, and concerning the Day of Judgment alone has He deceived us? Christ was not on the earth; He promised, He has performed: no virgin had conceived; He promised, He has performed: the precious Blood had not been shed whereby there should be effaced the handwriting of our death; He promised, He has performed: not yet had flesh risen again unto life eternal; He promised, He has performed: not yet had the Gentiles believed; He promised, He has performed: not yet heretics armed with the name of Christ, against Christ were warring; He foretold, He has performed: not yet the idols of the Gentiles from the earth had been effaced; He foretold, He has performed: when all these things He has foretold and performed, concerning the Day of Judgment alone has He lied?

It will come by all means as these things came; for even these things before they came to pass were future, and as future were first foretold, and afterwards they came to pass. It will come, my brethren. Let no one say, it will not come: or, it will come, but far off is that which will come. But to yourself it is near at hand to go hence....If you shall have done that which the devil does suggest, and shall have despised that

which God has commanded; there will come the Judgment Day, and you will find that true which God has threatened, and that false which the devil has promised....Remember Your reproaches, those which are from the imprudent man all the day long.

For still Christ is reviled: nor will there be wanting all the day long, that is, even unto the end of time, the vessels of wrath. Still is it being said, Vain things the Christians do preach: still is it being said, A fond thing is the resurrection of the dead. Remember Your reproaches. But what reproaches, save those which are from the imprudent man all the day long? Does a prudent man say this? Nay, for a prudent man is said to be one far-seeing. If a prudent man is one far-seeing, by faith he sees afar: for with eyes scarce that before the feet is seen.

23. Forget not the voice of them that implore You Psalm 73:23. While they groan for and expect now that which You have promised from the New Testament, and walk by that same Faith, do Thou not forget the voice of them imploring You. But those still say, Where is Your God? Let the pride of them that hate You come up always to You. Do not forget even their pride. Nor does He forget: no doubt He does either punish or amend.

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