

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

PSALMS 73-77

Tonight we begin 11 consecutive psalms attributed to a man named “**Asaph.**” The original Asaph was one of King David's *master musicians*.

Along with Heman and Jeduthun, Asaph was one David's three chief musicians. Psalm 73-83, along with Psalm 50, are credited to Asaph.

Asaph was not only a godly man and a skilled musician - but he was able to leave behind a legacy of praise, and passion, and faithfulness.

The sons of Asaph became a Temple guild that supervised worship for generations. For the next 600 years every time a spiritual awakening occurs in Israel it seems the sons of Asaph have a crucial role.

The original sons played at the dedication of Solomon's Temple.

270 years later their descendants were part of Hezekiah's revival.

100 years after that, they were involved in the revival of Josiah.

Another 100 years later, they returned with the Jews from Babylon, and when the foundation was laid for a new Temple they led the praise.

As we study tonight's psalms we'll noticed all the songs are authored by Asaph, but they seem to span different periods of

Israel's history.

How could they all have been composed by one person?

The answer... there were probably different Asaphs...

Asaph Juniors...

“Asaph” became a surname like Blevins or Mumford.

Apparently, songs written by Asaph's descendents were all just credited to the name *Asaph*.

Let Asaph's life remind us of the power of godly parents. Asaph left a spiritual heritage, and a legacy of worship that lasted for generations.

This faithful worshipper inspired worship in his heirs for decades.

It reminds me of a song by Dan Fogelberg, *“Leader of the Band.”* It's about his dad. *“The leader of the band is tired and his eyes are growing old, but his blood runs through my instrument and his song is in my soul... My life has been a poor attempt to imitate the man. I'm just a living legacy to the leader of the band.”* The song could've been written by Asaph's son.

PSALM SEVENTY-THREE is titled, **“A song of Asaph.”**

And along with Psalm 10, 37, and 49 – Psalm 73 addresses a thorny problem... *“If God is good, and just, and omnipotent - then why do the righteous sometimes suffer and the wicked often prosper?”*

I like Warren Wiersbe's outline, *“Psalm 73 begins 'God is good' and ends with 'It is good,' but (in) between... things are not so good!”*

Verse 1, “Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart.”

This is the psalmist’s statement of faith - his creed. Yet he's having a tough time reconciling his creed with what he sees around him.

Asaph admits, “But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” When he saw the drug dealer's mansion – the tax evader's new sports car - the crime boss' beachfront condo...

He became envious and almost stumbled. He almost bought into the idea, “*Good guys finish last*” - that sin does pay. The psalmist was almost blinded by life’s injustices and apparent contradictions.

Asaph almost forgot that God always gets the last *laugh*.

The psalmist was walking by sight not by faith. He came close to denying what he knew, because of situations he couldn't explain.

Verse 4 records his observations about the wicked men around him.

“For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like other men.

Therefore pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish.” Evil men have all the world can offer – wealth and power.

“They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth.” They’ve defied God. His rules don’t apply to them.

“Therefore his people return here, and waters of a full cup are drained by them. And they say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?” How arrogant! These people have concluded they’re beyond God’s scrutiny. God is oblivious to their schemes and deeds.

And here’s the contrast that’s really bummed him out...
“Behold, these are the ungodly, who are always at ease; they increase in riches. Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning.”

People who do evil live in abundance, while the psalmist pursues purity and fights an uphill battle every morning. He’s always tried and troubled.

And he’s asking, “Why fight it? Piety doesn’t pay. Why serve God? Why not sell out and give in – and reap the temporary rewards of selfishness.”

Understand Asaph is the victim of some naïve thinking and false assumptions. He concluded, “the ungodly... are always at ease...”

The wicked may appear to have it made, but sin has its own ugly consequences... *a tormented conscience - destructive addictions - a growing despair about the meaning of life – a spiritual vacuum inside – fragmented relationships – an inevitable judgment hanging overhead.*

The lifestyle of the ungodly is not what it's cracked up to be...

And he's also drawn some wrong conclusions about the lifestyle of the godly. He says, "**Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain...**"

There's no gain in being good - but that's not true either.

Asaph has become so shortsighted. His perspective is myopic. He's lost sight of the big picture. He needs to view life from an eternal perspective...

Satan and this world have knocked Asaph off-track...
Foolish thinking leads to faulty assumptions, which leads to false conclusions...

He says in verse 15, "**If I had said, "I will speak thus," behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children.**" Asaph slid into the mire when he tried to reconcile life's discrepancies on his own.

As did Job, "*in asking why he lost his way...*"

As in the case with Job there are times when the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer, and we look to God for an explanation. But faith doesn't always get a reason. God doesn't always offer us one.

God is sovereign and He does as He pleases without *getting our permission or giving us an explanation*. I love the adage, "**Where God places a period, don't you change it to a question mark...**"

I saw on TV recently a man who suffers from diminished

eyesight. It's as if he looks through a straw. That's the breadth of his vision.

This is also the case with our perspective. Life is a huge canvas, and at times God's brush strokes are out of our view. This is where we need to trust the painter. When life is easy to **figure** there's no need for **faith!**

We need to learn to **trust** God even when we can't **trace** Him.

Life in a fallen world had thrown Asaph for a loop. He was confused, but rather than sink in despair the chief musician was smart. He **"went into the sanctuary of God."** He returned to God to recover a right perspective.

"When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me - until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end."

Life on the mean streets of this world is dog-eat-dog. It's easy for our concern to shift from *eternal salvation* to *momentary survival*. Heaven's viewpoint can get obscured, or even lost, in the rough and tumble.

That's why we need to retreat to the sanctuary as often as we can. We revive the *right perspective* when we refresh ourselves in *God*.

The rest of Psalm 73 reveals the change in viewpoint that overcomes Asaph after he takes the time to align *his thoughts* with *God's thoughts*.

He sees more clearly the plight of the wicked. He says with the last line of verse 17, **"Then I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to**

destruction.” Remember how Psalm 73 begins, “My steps... nearly slipped.” The psalmist had almost slipped because he didn’t recognize that the wicked walk in “slippery places.”

“Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakes, so, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was vexed in my mind. I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You.” The psalmist bemoans how foolish and short-sighted he was to actually think evil would ultimately prosper.

Now after time with God – after time in the sanctuary - He’ll never again question God’s sovereignty. **God is God... He's not applying for the job!**

Verse 23, “Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” Asaph has renounced his own wisdom for God’s counsel.

I don’t advocate tattoos, but if you wanted a tattoo that would do you some good, ink Proverbs 14:12 on the back of your eyelids, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

What I see is not always what I get! Our vantage point is so narrow.

We’re prone to false assumptions and wrong conclusions. We need God’s counsel. The best way to go through life is holding God’s hand.

“Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon

earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry.

But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all Your works.” Author Joe Bayly once commented, “Recall in the darkness what you learned in the light.”

Asaph would put it, “Remember in the streets what you learn in the sanctuary.” It’s up to us. We can learn God’s way or the *hard way*.

PSALM SEVENTY-FOUR is “A Contemplation of Asaph” and it deals with the destruction of the Temple at the hands of the Babylonians.

“O God, why have You cast us off forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?” In hindsight history teaches us that God didn’t cast off His people forever.

God’s promises to Israel are sure and certain – and eternal. But at this point in their history, Israel feels utterly forsaken.

“Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old, the tribe of Your inheritance, which You have redeemed - this Mount Zion where You have dwelt.” He’s talking about the Temple in Jerusalem.

Verse 3 “Lift up Your feet to the perpetual desolations. The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary.” The Temple was torched and burned to the ground. The dwelling

place of God was in ashes.

Verse 4 “Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place; they set up their banners for signs. They seem like men who lift up axes among the thick trees. And now they break down its carved work, all at once, with axes and hammers. They have set fire to Your sanctuary; they have defiled the dwelling place of Your name to the ground.

They said in their hearts, "Let us destroy them altogether." They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.”

The year was 586 BC. On July 18 of that year King Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian army breached Jerusalem’s walls and invaded the city.

Eighteen days later, on August 6 (my mother-in-law’s birthday – I’m not sure of the connection, but...) the Babylonians burned the sacred Temple to the ground. The beautiful cedar planks from Lebanon were charred. Ornate linen was in ashes. Gold had been melted by the fiery heat.

For 2½ weeks the banners of Nebo, Bel, and Merodach - idols of Babylon - hung in the Temple, a declaration of victory over Israel.

Psalm 74 was written by a Jew who was taken prisoner to Babylon.

He’s writing from a broken heart. Tears stain the parchments. Regret feels his heart over the plight of his people and the reputation of his God.

Asaph grieves in verse 9, “We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet; nor is there any among us who knows how long.”

The Prophet Daniel was taken to Babylon nearly 20 years earlier.

Ezekiel was taken captive 597 BC – about 11 years previously.

At the time this psalm was written, Jeremiah was in Egypt.

There was no prophet left to speak to God’s word to the people. And a sure sign of God's judgment on a nation is the absence of a prophet.

We’re told in Amos 8:11, “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it.” This is a tragedy – to seek a word from God in a critical hour and for the heavens to remain silent.

The psalmist cries out in verse 10, “O God, how long will the adversary reproach? Will the enemy blaspheme Your name forever?”

Notice the issue is “how long” will Jerusalem lie in ruins? Years later, in Babylon, Daniel reads the writings of Jeremiah and finds the answer to Asaph’s question. God predicts the Jews will be in exile 70 years.

Daniel tells us about his discovery in Daniel 9:2... *And I wonder how many other questions we’d find answers to if we*

just read our Bible?

“Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? Take it out of Your bosom and destroy them. Asaph is puzzled as to why God’s hands are stuck in His pockets while a pagan army tramples His Temple?

Jeremiah 7 provides one answer. There were Jews at the time that trusted in the Temple instead of the God of the Temple. They believed God would protect Judah because the Temple sat within the city limits.

Jeremiah told these Jews to go to Shiloh – north of Jerusalem. At one time the Tabernacle resided in Shiloh, but God sent the Philistines to sack the city, destroy the Tabernacle, and even capture the Ark.

“You can’t hide from God's judgment, by hiding behind the things of God.” *Church attendance won’t replace attending to your heart.*

Relics of religion are no substitute for the reality of a relationship.

Asaph continues, **“For God is my King from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.”** God delivered Israel from Egypt. He can bring the nation out of Babel. God saved in the past He can work salvation again.

In verses 13-17 Asaph describes how God brought the Hebrews through the Red Sea - and the attempts by Satan to stop them...

“You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads

of the sea serpents in the waters. You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.”

Here is an extremely cryptic and provocative passage. Asaph describes the parting of the Red Sea, but it sounds like an episode of “[The Deadliest Catch](#).” God fights a sea serpent – breaks his head – then transforms his carcass into survival food that His people eat in the wilderness.

And notice the name of the sea serpent that appeared in the Red Sea to confront and combat God’s salvation of His people – “[Leviathan](#).”

We talked about this imagery in Job 26. Throughout Scripture the sea serpent, Leviathan, rises up out of the sea to thwart God’s creative work.

Job 26 recounts creation. Job says of God, “[By His Spirit He adorned the heavens, His hand pierced the fleeing serpent](#).” Job pictures creation as a battle between God and the serpent. Read between the lines and a similar picture emerges in Genesis 1. Chaos and dark on the face of the deep - while the Spirit of God hovers above – *battle lines are drawn*.

When man sins again the serpent is instrumental in his fall. Satan can’t stop God’s creation in Genesis 1, so he tries to spoil it in Genesis 3.

According to Psalm 74 this same battle re-emerges at the Red Sea.

“[You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters. You broke the heads of](#)

Leviathan in pieces, and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.”

Some Bible commentators see the sea serpent as a symbol of Egypt and Pharaoh. Certainly God broke the Egyptian army in the sea. But I think you should look deeper than the Pharaoh. The word, “Leviathan” means “twisting serpent” - the preferred form that Satan assumes...

Genesis 3:15 is a passage pregnant with meaning. It's known as the protoevangelicum - or the first mention of the Gospel.

It depicts the cross as a battle between Jesus and Satan. The seed of the serpent will bruise His heel - but Jesus, the seed of the woman, will crush the serpent's head – which is exactly what God does to the serpent here in verse 13. By the time Satan gets thrown into the lake of fire at the end of the age he's going to have quite a headache.

Revelation 12 takes us back to the future. In the midst of the Great Tribulation, war breaks out in heaven, and Satan gets bounced.

It is interesting, Revelation 12:9 calls Satan, “the great dragon,” and “that serpent of old.” And as soon as he's thrown out of heaven, he pursues his old habit – it's instinctive – the serpent attacks Israel.

Back to Psalm 74, this is what happened at the Red Sea. The serpent attacked Israel as the nation passed through the sea, and God “broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces...” But here's the passage gets bizarre...

“...and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.” *What does God do with the sea serpent once He breaks him in pieces?*

He feeds to the children of Israel in the wilderness.

And what did the Israelites eat during their wilderness wandering?

Their food was called “**manna**” – which means, “**what is it?**” There was nothing like it in their normal diet. Was the “**manna**” *sea serpent meat?*

How ironic, Leviathan tries to destroy Israel, but God turns the tables. Satan gets *beaten* and then *eaten*. God chops up the sea serpent and uses the pieces to sustain Israel in the desert. God gets the last laugh.

Ancient Mesopotamian folklore speaks of a showdown between God and the sea serpent – where the serpent is cut into pieces and given to God’s people as food. It’s sounds strange, but it’s a common story line. The idea is even repeated in the Scriptures. Check out Psalm 89:10.

We think of the Exodus as a battle between Israel and Egypt, but in truth it was a spiritual battle between God and the twisting serpent.

There’s one certainty, this provides some real *food for thought*.

Verse 15 “**You broke open the fountain and the flood; You dried up mighty rivers.**” A reference to the Red Sea. **The day is Yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun. You have set all the borders of the earth; You**

have made summer and winter.”

God sets all the borders – days, years, weather, latitude and longitude. God authors the 95 degree summer day and the -10 degree winter day.

“Remember this, that the enemy has reproached, O LORD, and that a foolish people has blasphemed Your name. Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast! Do not forget the life of Your poor forever.” In recent weeks, Israel has acted very hawkish, but Asaph sees Israel as a defenseless dove. He prays for God’s protection.

“Have respect to the covenant; for the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty. Oh, do not let the oppressed return ashamed!

Let the poor and needy praise Your name. Arise, O God, plead Your own cause; remember how the foolish man reproaches You daily.

Do not forget the voice of Your enemies; the tumult of those who rise up against You increases continually.” And his prayer will be answered...

God didn't forget His promises to Israel or the crimes of her enemies.

In 735 BC Babylon - the unconquerable city - was conquered by the Medes and Persians... And the first decree issued by the Persian ruler Cyrus was to allow the Jews to return home and rebuild their Temple.

PSALM SEVENTY-FIVE rewinds 140 years from the period

of the Babylonians to another time when Judah was on the brink of battle.

On this occasion, the Assyrians were the invaders.

King Hezekiah prayed, and in the night, an Angel of the Lord came and slew the Assyrian army. The next morning when Hezekiah looked over the wall 185,000 Assyrian troops lay dead. That's when another Asaph picked up his pen and wrote... **"We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near."**

Remember in Psalm 74 the psalmist wanted to know *how long* it would be for God to judge the wicked. In Psalm 75:2 God tells him...

"When I choose the proper time, I will judge uprightly." God picks the appropriate time. It's not always when we desire, but God knows best.

"The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved; I set up its pillars firmly.

Selah 'I said to the boastful, 'Do not deal boastfully,' and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn. Do not lift up your horn on high; do not speak with a stiff neck.'" Since an animal's strength is in its horns. "Horn" is an idiom for strength. Here's he's saying, "Don't boast in your own strength."

It's as if he's saying, **"Now is not the time to toot your own horn."**

"For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another."

Here's a wonderful verse. God arranges the pecking order. He doles out opportunities - establishes authority – sets the chain of command.

If you're looking for a promotion the first person to see is God.

Notice also, by process of elimination, God abides in the north.

He came to Job in a whirlwind out of the north.

In Ezekiel's vision the throne of God came from the north.

The sacrifices in the Tabernacle were offered on the north side of the altar - as Leviticus 1:11 puts it, "before the LORD".

Maybe this is why a compass always points to true north.

I'm a southerner through and through, but I have to admit that in the Scriptures, God is always associated with the north.

Verse 8 "For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is fully mixed, and He pours it out; surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth drain and drink down."

This is a cup of wrath.

I'll bet you've never heard God referred to as "the divine bartender."

Yet that's the picture in verse 8. And beware... He's mixed up a double shot of righteous wrath for the wicked of this world. Next time you're at the party be careful what you do. Remember God ultimately stirs the drinks.

"But I will declare forever, I will sing praises to the God of

Jacob.

'All the horns of the wicked I will also cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.' God is the One who humbles and exalts.

It reminds me of what Jesus said in Matthew 23:12, "Whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament, contains a footnote that dates **PSALM SEVENTY-SIX** to the time of the Assyrian invasion of Jerusalem in 722 BC – which connects it with Psalm 75.

Asaph begins, "In Judah God is known; His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion."

The word "*Salem*" is a short form of "*Jerusalem*." Mount Zion is one of Jerusalem's five mountains, but is also a name for the whole city.

"There He broke the arrows of the bow, the shield and sword of battle. Selah" Outside the walls of Jerusalem God delivered His people from the sword of the ferocious Assyrians. Read of His deliverance in 2 Kings 19.

The psalmist says in verse 4, "You are more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey." After the angel's slaughter the Assyrians that were left fled their camp and left piles of supplies and weapons and money.

Yet in Asaph's estimation, God is more glorious and more excellent than *stacks of spoils* and "*mountains of prey*." I hope

you've concluded that no amount of *blessing* can ever compare to the *Blessor* Himself.

The Giver is always “more glorious” than *His gifts*.

Verse 5 “The stouthearted were plundered; they have sunk into their sleep; and none of the mighty men have found the use of their hands.

At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse were cast into a dead sleep.” Apparently, God put the Assyrian soldiers into a deep sleep before He executed them. It was an act of mercy in the midst of judgment. It was as if the Angel performed a lethal injection.

Verse 7 “You, Yourself, are to be feared; and who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry?” God gets angry with sin.

“You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment, to deliver all the oppressed of the earth.” God judges sin and sinners. It just doesn't always happen when I think it should. Always remember what God said in Psalm 75:2, “When I choose the proper time, I will judge uprightly.” God judges in His time.

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise You; with the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself. Make vows to the LORD your God, and pay them; let all who are around Him bring presents to Him who ought to be feared.

He shall cut off the spirit of princes; He is awesome to the kings of the earth.” Every king needs to be conscious that he has a king to whom he reports. Let's pray our new president

understands the same principle.

PSALM SEVENTY-SEVEN is a prophecy given when the Babylonians invaded Judah. It asks the same question as the book of Habakkuk.

Recall the Prophet Habakkuk was confused. *Why would God judge His people with a nation more wicked?* It just didn't make sense to Habakkuk.

We clear a huge hurdle in our relationship with God when we realize His ways aren't always guaranteed to make sense. God has a good curve ball, and change up, and He'll use either pitch at any point in the count.

There are times when God deliberately works in ways that don't make sense to me - to test my faith. Do I trust Him where I can't trace Him?

Can I obey in the dark? Do I follow my own sense of reason, or God?

In the first four verses, Asaph is so distressed he can't sleep.

“I cried out to God with my voice - to God with my voice; and He gave ear to me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; my soul refused to be comforted.” Asaph couldn't go to sleep he was so distraught.

“I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.” He accuses God of putting toothpicks under his eyelids.

“I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, and my spirit makes diligent search. Will the Lord cast off forever?

And will He be favorable no more? Has His mercy ceased forever?

Has His promise failed forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?

Selah

The situation the psalmist faces didn't fit with his knowledge of God.

He knows of God's graciousness. From ancient times God has been faithful, yet at the moment Asaph and Israel feel abandoned by God.

There's a great passage from Daniel Defoe's novel, "Robinson Crusoe." You know the story. A man is shipwrecked on a deserted island.

In the beginning Crusoe finds the island to be a tropical paradise. He's content. Life is good, until one day a discovery changes everything...

Defoe writes, "It happened about noon, going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen on the sand. I stood thunder struck...

I had no sleep that night; (and) the farther I was from the occasion of my fright, the greater my apprehensions were...

Fear banished all religious hope; all that former confidence in God... now vanished... I lived two years under this uneasiness, which made my life much less comfortable than it was before... (all) on account of the print of a man's foot (even though) I had never seen any human creature come near the island...

Notice an inexplicable turn of events robbed Crusoe of his faith and confidence in God. Remember, God never guarantees an explanation.

Faith doesn't always get a reason. Real faith is faith in the dark.

Verse 10 "And I said, "This is my anguish; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." I will remember the works of the LORD; surely I will remember Your wonders of old.

I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds."

Once again, "Remember in the dark what you've learned in the light." When face with what you don't know hold on to what you do know!

Verse 13 "Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; Who is so great a God as our God?" As in Psalm 73, Asaph finds encouragement, and comfort, and a renewed faith by turning from the *situation* to the *sanctuary*.

In the street, from the watchtower, his circumstances look bleak - but in the sanctuary he's reminded God is greater than any problem he faces.

Yet someone might challenge this thought. Isn't this a cop

out? When the real world gets tough we're suppose to just escape to the sanctuary.

Here's what we need to realize... *the sanctuary is the real world.*

The world we live in is temporary. It's passing away. Your situation and circumstances will change, but God's promises will last forever.

Here's a great poem... "Sometimes the spark of faith is slight, and does not make the darkness bright. But keep it lit and you will find, far better this than being blind. One little flame when all is night - proves there is such a thing as Light." And faith stays lit in the sanctuary – in God's presence.

Verse 14 "You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples. You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah

The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You, they were afraid; the depths also trembled. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; Your arrows also flashed about. The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; the lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook.

Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps were not known." At the crossing of the Sea, God's footprints were not known. Israel was trapped between the Sea and the charging army. Moses had no clue how God would save His people, but He did.

You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

And the same is true in your life today. You feel trapped between a rock and a hard place. You can't figure God out. His "footprints are not known."

Trust Him regardless. See Him in the sanctuary. Keep the spark of faith lit. "One little flame when all is night proves there is such a thing as Light."