



## WHEN EVIL MEN PROSPER--

*Is God fast asleep ?*

We all wrestle with the difficult age-old questions, “Why do the wicked prosper?” and “Why do the righteous suffer?” This question plagues every believer who is trying to live a godly life and finds life hard while others, who are evil and ungodly, seem to prosper and have a good life, whether it is on a wide scale, like wars, atrocities and injustices, or individuals maligning you with lies and rumors, or afflicting you with harsh sayings.

If these questions worry you, you are not alone. Down through the centuries, many great people of God have struggled with the same questions. Job asked: “Why do the wicked live and become old, yes, become mighty in power? Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.” (Job 21:7, 9) King David said, “Lord, how long will the wicked... triumph? They break in pieces Your people, O Lord, and afflict Your heritage.” (Psalm

94:3, 5) Jeremiah said, “Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?” (Jer. 12:1)

It may be very hard to have to endure unrighteousness year after year and to not see God’s vindication, but we can be absolutely assured that God sees everything. He is a God of justice. Nothing is hidden from Him and every righteous deed and every unrighteous act is recorded in the books of Heaven. Thus we do not need to fret that some injustice has gone unnoticed.

**What to Do When Evil Prevail?** When God seems to delay His chastisements, we are sometimes prone to question His justice, but we need to trust Him by guarding our attitude when we go through trials.

If you find yourself doubting the justice of God or whether He really will punish the wicked, get alone in His presence. Read Psalm 73 where the author, the psalmist Asaph, was struggling with the same issue, until he went into the « sanctuary of God ».

*« ... I had nearly lost my foothold, for I envied the arrogant, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ... They have no struggles, their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man; ... the evil conceits of their minds know no limit..... This is what the wicked are like: always carefree, they increase in wealth....*

*... When I tried to understand this, it was oppressive to me, till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.... When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before You. Yet I am always with You. You hold me by my right hand. You guide me with Your counsel and afterwards, You will take me into glory.... Those who are far from You will perish.... But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge... »*

We say things like, “Crime doesn’t pay.” “Cheaters never win.” “Liars never prosper.” But yet, sometimes crime does pay, cheaters do win and liars do prosper.

And apparently God doesn’t know or God doesn’t care, as He’s not doing anything about it. They are not sick. They don’t struggle. Things work well for them. --*Is God fast asleep?*

But then, the psalmist backed up from the moment, he began to see the big picture and reminded himself how the story ends. Because it's all a matter of perspective and seeing the bigger picture.

It may be true that crime does pay for a season, that liars do prosper for a while, that cheaters do win for a time. But eventually, the story comes to its conclusion and God will hold people accountable; God will make things right. Those who have walked uprightly, with integrity, will be blessed and those who have fought God and done wickedly will be held accountable.

Basically, what the psalmist is saying is, "I had lost perspective and I was just seeing life in the moment, and none of it seemed fair. I was discouraged and frustrated and upset. But God, like a loving heavenly Father, took me by the hand and held on to me. He walked me through my confusion."

While we live in the moment, we tend to lose perspective and it seems like the bad guys are winning and the good guys take it on the chin. But God patiently has us by the hand and His promise is, "I will get you there, and it will be everything your soul has ever longed for. In the meantime, you just have to trust Me." At the end of the day, when the story ends, there's only one thing that matters, and it is God.

The psalmist understands and he knows he would never trade places with those who have prosperity but for a moment. This earthly life is just for a moment, compared with eternity. « And if I have You, nothing on earth really matters." God becomes his refuge, "I will hide in God when life doesn't make sense and gets hard, I know He will get me to the finish line."

Meanwhile, obey God by holding to His absolute moral standards. When someone breaks God's moral standards and seems to be doing just fine, don't be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap.

One important point is to obey God by praying for evil people who need His grace. Remember God's reason for delaying judgment: "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9) When evil prevails, don't challenge God. Trust Him and obey His Word

Do good, trust God and don't worry or fret. It makes a terrific motto to live by, even though it is easier to say than do.

In the Psalm 37, David cautions us also not to worry about the prosperity of the wicked. He writes: « Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity... Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way... » Do not fret—it only causes harm. Their evil is obvious to all, especially God. We can be certain that the wicked have not fooled Him. As for you, keep the law of God in your heart.

We can know for a certainty that the unrighteous will get what is coming to them. God always gives the correct punishment at exactly the right time. It is out of our hands, so we need not concern ourselves over it. God is faithful and we know that He has our best interests at heart.

*"What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but ends up losing his soul?" -- Jesus*