

Tehillim / Psalms 73 | ספר תהילים עג

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Suffering for the Sake of God

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 73:1-28*, the psalm opens saying, א מְזִמֹּר לְאַסָּף אֶדָּ טוֹב, א psalm of Asaph. 73:1 Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart! (NASB) Who is Asaph? He continues saying, ב וְאֲנִי כְמַעֲט נְטָוִי [נְטָוִי] רְגְלִי כְאִין שְׁפָכָה [שְׁפָכָה] אֲשַׁרִּי: ג כִּי-קִנְאָתִי בַהוֹלְלִים שְׁלוֹם רְשָׁעִים אָרְאָה: ד כִּי אֵין חֲרָצְבוֹת לְמוֹתָם וּבְרִיא אוֹלָם: ה בַּעֲמַל אָנוּשׁ אֵינְמוּ וְעַם-73:2 But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped. 73:3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 73:4 For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. 73:5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind. (NASB) He continues saying that they adorn themselves with pride and violence (73:6) and that their eyes bulged with fatness (73:7). What is the significance of eyes that bulge with fatness? The unrighteous mock (73:8), speak against the heavens (73:9), and question whether God knows and where is knowledge of God (73:11). Asaph speaks of the wicked who are at ease and increase in wealth (73:12), and it is as if he has kept his heart pure in vane (73:13) because of his hardship (73:14-15). He continues saying, וְאֶחְשָׁבָה לְדַעַת זֹאת, 73:16 When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight 73:17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end. (NASB) He says the Lord has placed the wicked in slippery places, (73:18), and the Lord will cause them to be swept away (73:19), and they will be like a dream that will pass away (73:20). He says that he was pierced within (73:21), and like an animal before God (73:22). Nevertheless, he continued to serve the Lord (73:23; כג וְאֲנִי תָמִיד עִמָּךְ אֶחְזַק בְּיַד-יְמִינִי: 73:23). Asaph concludes his psalm saying, כד בַּעֲצָתְךָ תִּנְחַנְּנִי וְאַחַר, כה מִי-לִי בְשָׁמַיִם וְעִמָּךְ לֹא-תִפְצְּתִי בְּאָרְץ: כו כָּלֵה שְׂאֲרֵי וּלְבָבִי צוּר-לְבָבִי וְחֻלְקֵי אֱלֹהִים לְעוֹלָם: כז כִּי-הִנֵּה רַחֲקִיךָ יִאֲבְדוּ הַצְּמִתָּה כָּל-זוֹנֶה מִמֶּךָ: כח וְאֲנִי | קִרְבַּת אֱלֹהִים לִי-טוֹב שְׁתִּי | בְּאֲדָנֶי יְהוָה מַחְסֵי לְסִפֵּר: כט כָּל-מְלֹאכֹתֶיךָ: 73:24 With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory. 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. 73:27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. 73:28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works. (NASB) Asaph speaks of being taken to glory. Is this a belief that when one dies, they are taken to heaven? (Shekhinah) The one who has made the Lord his refuge will be able to speak of the glory and work of the Lord God in heaven!

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהילים פרק עג	ספר תהילים פרק עג	ספר טוביה פרק עג	ספר טוביה פרק עג	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 73	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 73
א מְזִמֹּר לְאַסָּף אֶדָּ טוֹב לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהִים לְבָרִי לְבָב: ב וְאֲנִי כְמַעֲט נְטָוִי [נְטָוִי] רְגְלִי כְאִין שְׁפָכָה [שְׁפָכָה] אֲשַׁרִּי: ג כִּי-קִנְאָתִי בַהוֹלְלִים שְׁלוֹם רְשָׁעִים אָרְאָה: ד כִּי אֵין חֲרָצְבוֹת לְמוֹתָם וּבְרִיא אוֹלָם: ה בַּעֲמַל אָנוּשׁ אֵינְמוּ וְעַם-אֵינְמוּ וְעַם-אָדָם לֹא יִנְגָּעוּ:	א מְזִמֹּר לְאַסָּף אֶדָּ טוֹב לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהִים לְבָרִי לְבָב: ב וְאֲנִי כְמַעֲט נְטָוִי [נְטָוִי] רְגְלִי כְאִין שְׁפָכָה [שְׁפָכָה] אֲשַׁרִּי: ג כִּי-קִנְאָתִי בַהוֹלְלִים שְׁלוֹם רְשָׁעִים אָרְאָה: ד כִּי אֵין חֲרָצְבוֹת לְמוֹתָם וּבְרִיא אוֹלָם: ה בַּעֲמַל אָנוּשׁ אֵינְמוּ וְעַם-אָדָם לֹא יִנְגָּעוּ:	א תושבחתא על ידיה דאסף ברם טב לישראל אלהא לברירי ליבא: ב ואנא כזעיר פון אתמוטטא ריגלי כלמא דא-זדעזעא איסתוורי: ג ארום טנגית במתלעביא בעידן די שלם רשיעיא אחמי: ד ארום ליתיהון תוהין ומצט-ערין מטול על יום מיתתיהון איתבעיין מחשבתהון ופטים ואלים לבהון:	א תושבחתא על ידיה דאסף ברם טב לישראל אלהא לברירי ליבא: ב ואנא כזעיר פון אתמוטטא ריגלי כלמא דא-זדעזעא איסתוורי: ג ארום טנגית במתלעביא בעידן די שלם רשיעיא אחמי: ד ארום ליתיהון תוהין ומצט-ערין מטול על יום מיתתיהון איתבעיין מחשבתהון ופטים ואלים לבהון:	73:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Ασαφ ὡς ἀγαθὸς τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ὁ θεὸς τοῖς εὐθέσι τῇ καρδίᾳ ἐμοῦ δὲ παρὰ μικρὸν ἐσαλεύθησαν οἱ πόδες πα ὀλίγον ἐξεχύθη τὰ διαβήματά μου 73:2 ὅτι ἐξήλωσα ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀνόμοις εἰρήνην ἀμαρτωλῶν θεωρῶν 73:3 ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνάνευσις τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτῶν καὶ στερέωμα ἐν τῇ μάστιγι αὐτῶν	73:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Ασαφ ὡς ἀγαθὸς τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ὁ θεὸς τοῖς εὐθέσι τῇ καρδίᾳ ἐμοῦ δὲ παρὰ μικρὸν ἐσαλεύθησαν οἱ πόδες πα ὀλίγον ἐξεχύθη τὰ διαβήματά μου 73:2 ὅτι ἐξήλωσα ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀνόμοις εἰρήνην ἀμαρτωλῶν θεωρῶν 73:3 ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνάνευσις τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτῶν καὶ στερέωμα ἐν τῇ μάστιγι αὐτῶν

<p>ו לְכֹן עֲנֵקְתֶמוּ גְאֹהַּ יַעֲטֶף-שִׁית חֶמֶס לְמוֹ: ז יִצָּא מִחֻלָּב עֵינֵימוּ עֲבְרוּ מִשֶׁ-כִּיּוֹת לְבָב: ח יִמְקִיּוּ וַיִּדְבְּרוּ בְרַע עֲשָׂק מִמְרוֹם יִדְבְּרוּ: ט שְׁתוּ בְשָׂמִים פִּיהֶם וּלְשׁוֹנָם תִּהְלֶף בְּאֲרָץ: י לְכֹן יִשְׁיב [יָשׁוּב] עִמּוֹ הֵלֵם וּמִי מָלֵא יִמְצֹו לְמוֹ: יא וְאָמְרוּ אִיכָּה יִדַע-אֵל וַיֵּשׁ דַּעַה בְּעֵלְיוֹן: יב הִנֵּה-אֵלֶּה רָשָׁעִים וְשִׁלְוֵי עוֹלָם הִשְׁגוּ-חַיִּל: יג אֶף-רִיק זְכִיתִי לְבָבִי וְאֶרְחֹץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כְּפִי: יד וְאֵהִי נְגוּעַ כָּל-הַיּוֹם וְתוֹכְחָתִי לְבָקֶר-רִים: טו אִם-אֶמְרָתִי אֶסְפְּרָה כְמוֹ הִנֵּה דוֹר בְּנֵיךָ בְּגִדְתִּי: טז וְאֶחְשָׁבָה לְדַעַת זֹאת עֲמָל הִיא [הוּא] בְּעֵינַי: יז עַד-אֲבֹא אֶל-מִקְדָּשֶׁי-אֵל אֲבִינָה לְאֶחְרִיתָם: יח אֶף בְּתִלְקוֹת תְּשִׁית לְמוֹ הַפְּלִתָם לְמִשְׁוֹאוֹת: יט אִיךָ הָיוּ לְשִׁמָּה כְּרָגַע סָפוּ תִמוּ מִן-בְּלֵהוֹת: כ כְּתִלּוֹם מִהֶקִּיץ אֲדַנִּי בְּעִיר צִלְמָם תִּבְנֶה: כא כִּי-תִתְחַמֵּץ לְבָבִי וְכִלְיוֹתַי אֶשְׁתַּוְּנוּ: כב וְאֲנִי-בְּעַר וְלֹא אֲדַע בְּהַמּוֹת הָיִיתִי עֲמָךְ: כג וְאֲנִי תְמִיד עֲמָךְ אֶחְזַק בְּיָד-יְמִינִי: כד בְּעֲצָתְךָ תִּנְחַנֵּי וְאַחַר כְּבוֹד תִּקְחֵנִי: כה מִי-לִי בְשָׂמִים וְעֲמָךְ לֹא-תִפְצְתִי בְּאֲרָץ: כו כָּלֶה שְׂאֵרִי וְלְבָבִי צוּר-לְבָבִי וְחִלְקֵי אֱלֹהִים לְעוֹלָם: כז כִּי-הִנֵּה רָחֵקֶיךָ יֵאבְדוּ הַצְמַתָּה כָּל-זוֹנָה מִמֶּךָ: כח וְאֲנִי קָרַבְתָּ אֱלֹהִים לִי-טוֹב שְׁתִּי בְּאֲדַנִּי יְהוָה מַחְסֵי לְסִפְר כָּל-מְלֶאכְתֵיךָ:</p>	<p>ה בליעות גברין דמתעסקין באוריתא ליי תיהון לעיין ועם בני נשא צדיקי דסבלין ייסורי איסורי לא ליתיהון מתכתשין: ו לכך בגין כן עטרנתון גיוותנותא כלילא דמשוין ברישיהון מן חטוף דילהון: ז שנא מן שמנא שויתא דמות פרצופיהון עברו חוטביהון רור טביהון חפורת חפו על לוחי ליבא: ח ית מקמקון מן פיטמא רוטבא וימללון לאבאשא ולטלומא מן רום לבהון ימללון: ט שויאו בקדישי שמיא פומהון ולישנהון מצלהבא בקדישי בצדיקי ארעא: י בכך בגין כן תאיב על עמיא דיהוה למלכותהון על דיי וימחונון במרזופין ודמעין היך סגיעין מחתין להון: יא ויימרון הכדין ידע אלהא ואית מנדעא בעילאה: יב הא אילין רשיעיא דיתבין בש-לותא בעלמא הדין אדביקו נכסין קנו חילא: יג ברם לסריקותא זכית לבבי לבי ושזבית בכרירי ידי: יד והויתי כתיש כל יומא ומ-כסנתי לצפריי: טו אין אמרית אישתי דמכתהון דכסתחין הא על דר בנייך ארש-עית: טז וחשבית למידע ית דא ליעות הוא בעיני: יז עד זמן פורקנא דאיתי לות מקדשי לבית מקדשא אלהא אתבין לסופיהון: יח ברם בקבליא שויתא להון רמיתנן לשהוואת לשחותא: יט הכדין הוו לצדו כשעתא כלו אישתיצון שלימו מן איתרגשון איתרוגשן: כ היך חילמא מן גבר רוי דמיתער יהוה ליום דינא רבא באתעריתהון מן בית קבורתהון ברגז דמותהון תבסר: כא ארום יחוש לבי וכולייתי בערן כאשא: כב ואנא שטיא ולא אידע היך בעירי איתחשבית גבך: כג ואנא תדירא עימך גבך אוחדתא ביד ימיני: כד במלכתך תדבריני בעלמא הדין ובתר שלים איקריתא דאמרת עלי לאייתאה תסבנני: כה מן כוותך דילי בשמיא אלא את ועימך ובהדך חברא לא צביתי בארעא: כו אשתיצא גוש-מי ולבבי תקיפא דבחין לבבי וחולקי אלהא לעלמא: כז ארום הא רשיעיא די מתרחקין מינך יאבדון שיציתא כל דטעי מן בתר דח-לתך: כח ואנא למיקרב ביהוה לי טב שוית ביהוה אלהים רוחצני למישתעיא לצדיקיא כולהון פיקודי שליחותך:</p>	<p>73:4 ἐν κόποις ἀνθρώπων οὐκ εἰσὶν καὶ μετὰ ἀνθρώπων οὐ μαστιγωθήσονται 73:5 διὰ τοῦτο ἐκράτησεν αὐτοὺς ἡ ὑπερηφανία περιεβάλοντο ἀδικίαν καὶ ἀσέβειαν αὐτῶν 73:6 ἐξελεύσεται ὡς ἐκ στέατος ἡ ἀδικία αὐτῶν διήλθοσαν εἰς διάθεσιν καρδίας 73:7 διανοήθησαν καὶ ἐλάλησαν ἐν πονηρίᾳ ἀδικίαν εἰς τὸ ὕψος ἐλάλησαν 73:8 ἔθεντο εἰς οὐρανὸν τὸ στόμα αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα αὐτῶν διήλθεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς 73:9 διὰ τοῦτο ἐπιστρέψει ὁ λαὸς μου ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἡμέραι πλήρεις εὐρεθήσονται αὐτοῖς 73:10 καὶ εἶπαν πῶς ἔγνω ὁ θεὸς καὶ εἰ ἔστιν γνώσις ἐν τῷ ὑψίστῳ 73:11 ἰδοὺ οὗτοι ἁμαρτωλοὶ καὶ εὐθνηοῦνται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατέσχον πλοῦτου 73:12 καὶ εἶπα ἄρα ματαίως ἐδικαίωσα τὴν καρδίαν μου καὶ ἐνιψάμην ἐν ἀθώοις τὰς χεῖράς μου 73:13 καὶ ἐγενόμην μεμαστιγωμένος ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν καὶ ὁ ἔλεγχός μου εἰς τὰς πρῶϊας 73:14 εἰ ἔλεγον διηγῆσομαι οὕτως ἰδοὺ τῆ γενεᾶ τῶν υἱῶν σου ἠσυνθέτηκα 73:15 καὶ ὑπέλαβον τοῦ γνῶναι τοῦτο κόπος ἐστὶν ἐναντίον μου 73:16 ἕως εἰσέλθω εἰς τὸ ἁγιαστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ συνῶ εἰς τὰ ἔσχατα αὐτῶν 73:17 πλὴν διὰ τὰς δολιότητας ἔθου αὐτοῖς κατέβαλες αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ἐπαρῆθῆναι 73:18 πῶς ἐγένοντο εἰς ἐρήμωσιν ἐξάπινα ἐξέλιπον ἀπώλοντο διὰ τὴν ἀνομίαν αὐτῶν 73:19 ὡσεὶ ἐνύπνιον ἐξεγειρομένου κύριε ἐν τῇ πόλει σου τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτῶν ἐξουδενώσεις 73:20 ὅτι ἐξεκαύθη ἡ καρδία μου καὶ οἱ νεφροὶ μου ἠλλοιώθησαν 73:21 καὶ ἐγὼ ἐξουδενωμένος καὶ οὐκ ἔγνω κτηνώδης ἐγενόμην παρὰ σοί 73:22 καὶ ἐγὼ διὰ παντός μετὰ σοῦ ἐκράτησας τῆς χειρὸς τῆς δεξιᾶς μου 73:23 ἐν τῇ βουλή σου ὠδήγησάς με καὶ μετὰ δόξης προσελάβου με 73:24 τί γάρ μοι ὑπάρχει ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ παρὰ σοῦ τί ἠθέλησα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς 73:25 ἐξέλιπεν ἡ καρδία μου καὶ ἡ σὰρξ μου ὁ θεὸς τῆς καρδίας μου καὶ ἡ μερίς μου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα 73:26 ὅτι ἰδοὺ οἱ μακρύνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ σοῦ ἀπολοῦνται ἐξωλέθρευσας πάντα τὸν πορνεύοντα ἀπὸ σοῦ 73:27 ἐμοὶ δὲ τὸ προσκολλᾶσθαι τῷ θεῷ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν τίθεσθαι ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ τὴν ἐλπίδα μου τοῦ ἐξαγγεῖλαι πάσας τὰς αἰνέσεις σου ἐν ταῖς πύλαις τῆς θυγατρὸς Σιών</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 73 A psalm of Asaph. 73:1 Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart! 73:2 But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped. 73:3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 73:4 For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. 73:5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind. 73:6 Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them. 73:7 Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of their heart run riot. 73:8 They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high. 73:9 They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth. 73:10 Therefore his people return to this place, And waters of abundance are drunk by them. 73:11 They say, ‘How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?’ 73:12 Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased in wealth. 73:13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure And washed my hands in innocence; 73:14 For I have been stricken all day long And chastened every morning. 73:15 If I had said, ‘I will speak thus,’ Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 73 73:1 A psalm composed by Asaph. Truly God is good to Israel, to the pure of heart. 73:2 But I – my feet had almost slipped; my steps had all but faltered. 73:3 For I became jealous of the mockers whenever I would see the welfare of the wicked. 73:4 For they are not dismayed and daunted by the day of their death; their opinions are sought out, and their heart is fat and strong. 73:5 They do not toil with the toil of men who are occupied with Torah; and they are not smitten with the righteous sons of men who endure sufferings. 73:6 Because of this, pride has adorned them, a crown that they place on their heads because of their rapacity. 73:7 Their faces are distorted by fat; their carvings have transgressed, the heart is ashamed. 73:8 They will decay because of fatness; and they will speak to cause harm and to oppress; they will speak from the arrogance of their heart. 73:9 They have set their mouth against the holy ones of heaven; and their tongue flares against the holy ones of the earth. 73:10 Then he turns against the people of the Lord, to rule them; and they will smite them with hammers, and cause many tears to flow from them. 73:11 And they will say, “How then does God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High?” 73:12 Behold, these are the wicked who dwell securely in this age; they have acquired property, they have procured wealth. 73:13 Truly in vain have I purified my heart, and washed my hands in purity. 73:14 And I have been smitten all the day; and my admonition [has come] with every dawn. 73:15 If I said, “I will talk like them” – behold, I would have done evil to the generation of your children. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 73 A Psalm for Asaph. 73:1 How good is God to Israel, to the upright in heart! 73:2 But my feet were almost overthrown; my goings very nearly slipped. 73:3 For I was jealous of the transgressors, beholding the tranquility of sinners. 73:4 For there is no sign of reluctance in their death: and they have firmness under their affliction. 73:5 They are not in the troubles of other men; and they shall not be scourged with other men. 73:6 Therefore pride has possessed them; they have clothed themselves with their injustice and ungodliness. 73:7 Their injustice shall go forth as out of fatness: they have fulfilled their intention. 73:8 They have taken counsel and spoken in wickedness: they have uttered unrighteousness loftily. 73:9 They have set their mouth against heaven, and their tongue has gone through upon the earth. 73:10 Therefore shall my people return hither: and full days shall be found with them. 73:11 And they said, How does God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? 73:12 Behold, these are the sinners, and they that prosper always: they have possessed wealth. 73:13 And I said, Verily in vain have I justified my heart, and washed my hands in innocence. 73:14 For I was plagued all the day, and my reproof was every morning. 73:15 If I said, I will speak thus; behold, I should have broken covenant with the generation of thy children. (LXX)</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 73 73:16 When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight 73:17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end. 73:18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. 73:19 How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors! 73:20 Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form. 73:21 When my heart was embittered And I was pierced within, 73:22 Then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. 73:23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. 73:24 With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory. 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. 73:27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. 73:28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 73 73:16 And I thought to know this, [but] it is a weariness in my sight – 73:17 Until the time of redemption, when I come to the sanctuaries of God, I will understand their fate. 73:18 Truly you have placed them in dark places, you have thrown them into the wasteland. 73:19 How they have become a desolation in a moment! They are finished, destroyed because of chaos. 73:20 Like a dream of a man who awakes: the Lord in the great day of judgment, when they awake from their graves; in anger you will despise their likeness. 73:21 For my heart will feel pain, and my kidneys burn like fire. 73:22 And I am a fool, and I do not know; I was reckoned as a beast with you. 73:23 But I am continually with you; you have grasped my right hand. 73:24 You will guide me by your counsel; and after the glory that you commanded to come upon me is complete, you will take me. 73:25 Who, like you, is mine in heaven, but you? And besides you I desire no friend on earth. 73:26 My body and my heart are destroyed; God is the Mighty One who tries my heart and my portion forever. 73:27 For behold, the wicked who are far from you will perish; you have destroyed all who stray from the fear of you. 73:28 But I – to be near to the Lord is good to me; I have placed my confidence in the Lord God, to tell to all the righteous the commandments of your charge. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 73 73:16 And I undertook to understand this, but it is too hard for me, 17 until I go into the sanctuary of God; and so understand the latter end. 73:18 Surely thou hast appointed judgments to them because of their crafty dealings: thou hast cast them down when they were lifted up. 73:19 How have they become desolate! suddenly they have failed: they have perished because of their iniquity. 73:20 As the dream of one awakening, O Lord, in thy city thou wilt despise their image. 73:21 For my heart has rejoiced, and my reins have been gladdened. 73:22 But I was vile and knew not: I became brutish before thee. 73:23 Yet I am continually with thee: thou hast holden my right hand. 73:24 Thou hast guided me by thy counsel, and thou hast taken me to thyself with glory. 73:25 For what have I in heaven but thee? and what have I desired upon the earth beside thee? 73:26 My heart and my flesh have failed: but God is the strength of my heart, and God is my portion for ever. 73:27 For, behold, they that remove themselves far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed every one that goes a whoring from thee. 73:28 But it is good for me to cleave close to God, to put my trust in the Lord; that I may proclaim all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion. (LXX)</p>
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א מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף אֶךְ טוֹב In this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 73:1-28*, the psalm opens saying, א מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּף אֶךְ טוֹב : *A psalm of Asaph. 73:1 Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart!* (NASB) Who is Asaph? There are 12 psalms which are attributed to Asaph, *Tehillim / Psalms 50, and 73-83* in the MT, and as 49 and 72-82 in the Septuagint. According to the Scriptures, the Asaphites were identified as the singers during the Temple service. As a result, Scholars have suggested that a psalm that is attributed to Asaph could mean that this psalm is for the Asaphites to sing that was written by David. Another possibility may be that Asaph was the author or the transcriber of these psalms, that he wrote down

the psalm for David. The issue with this perspective is the end of the previous psalm (*Tehillim / Psalms 72*) states this is the end of David's psalms.

In the Tanach there are three different men with the name of Asaph. The Asaph who is identified with these twelve Psalms is said to be the son of Berechiah which is said to be an ancestor of the Asaphites. More information may be gathered from 1st and 2nd Chronicles, which state that Asaph was a descendant of Gershom the son of Levi and therefore he is identified as a member of the Levites. He is also known as one of the three Levites commissioned by David to be in charge of singing in the house of the Lord. In *1 Chronicles 6:39*, David appoints a man named Heman as the main musician or singer and Asaph to be at Heman's right hand man and the Merarites were to be at Heman's left hand. In addition, Asaph is credited with performing at the dedication of Solomon's temple according to *2 Chronicles 5:12*. The time frame for Asaph's service, he would have served as an official during King David's time, and during his son King Solomon's reign as well. As a result, he would have witnessed the best and the worst of the leadership in Israel, giving him the ability to complain against the corruption, which may be what Asaph was trying to say in *Tehillim / Psalms 73*. Asaph may be describing these corrupt officials in this psalm.

Asaph opens the psalm saying, *73:1 Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart!* (NASB) Asaph speaks of the Lord being good to Israel and to those who are pure in heart. Notice how he does not use the word טהור as a reference to ritual purity, meaning as an adjective "pure, clean, fine, white, unblemished," or as a noun "purification, cleansing, sanctification, purgation," as David did in his psalms (יב יב 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. NASB). By not using the word Tahor (טהור), Asaph is not drawing a parallel to the ritual service of the Lord in one's heart. David does however say in his psalm, *ג מי-יעלה בהר יהוה ומי-יקום במקום קדשו: ד נקי כפיים ובר לבב אשר לא-נשא לשוא נפשי ולא נשבע: 24:3 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully.* (NASB) The one who is worthy to ascend the mountain of the Lord, is the one who has worthy (בר) hands, the NASB translates the MT to say, "he who has a pure heart" (ויבר לבב) using the word בר, and "clean or tidy lips" (נקי כפיים) In a similar way, Asaph says לבב לברי from the root בר meaning "able, worthy of, or deserving," "Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart!" The purity or uprightness of the heart is the main focus point of *Tehillim / Psalms 73*; Asaph discusses how the righteous are to respond to the corruption of the wealthy and those who have influence and power in the leadership of Israel. The conclusion is that based upon the Character of God, His Holiness, Righteousness, Truthfulness, and Justice, the wicked who corrupt their ways and use their power to harm the innocent and poor will receive his rewards at the hand of the Lord. Both the Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint are in agreement with the MT saying, *73:1 A psalm composed by Asaph. Truly God is good to Israel, to the pure of heart.* (EMC) and, *73:1 ψαλμὸς τῷ Ασαφ ὡς ἀγαθὸς τῷ Ισραηλ ὁ θεὸς τοῖς εὐθέσι τῆ καρδίᾳ ἐμοῦ δὲ παρὰ μικρὸν ἐσαλεύθησαν οἱ πόδες πα ὀλίγον ἐξεχύθη τὰ διαβήματά μου* *A Psalm for Asaph. 73:1 How good is God to Israel, to the upright in heart!* (LXX). The Aramaic Targum translates the MT saying the Lord is good to those who are "clear, pure, shining brightly, clear, obvious, valid, or truthful of heart" (לברירי ליבא). The importance of this opening verse is related to the one who has the right motivation in seeking the Lord. Does one have pure intentions, or is one motivated by the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, or some other selfish reason?

Asaph continues saying, *ב ואני כמעט נטוי [נטוי] רגלי כאין שפכה [שפכו] אשרי: ג כי-קנאתי בהוללים, 73:2 שולם רשעים אראה: ד פי אין חרצבות למותם ובריא אולם: ה בעמל אנוש אינמו ועם-אדם לא ינגעו: 73:3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 73:4 For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. 73:5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind.* (NASB) The Psalmist states that he had come close to stumbling (נטוי [נטוי] רגלי) and had almost slipped because he was envious of the arrogant and saw the prosperity of the wicked. Asaph says that the life of the wicked, they do

not suffer pain in death and their bodies are fat (*a reference to being well fed and prosperous*). The wicked do not suffer loss and are not plagued like mankind. Because of these things, their pride is their necklace and the garment of violence covers them, their eyes bulge because of their prosperity and in their arrogance the imaginations of their heart runs wild. What is the meaning of the “*bulging eyes*” of the wicked as compared to “*the eye that wastes away*” of the afflicted? (see *Tehillim / Psalms 6:7-9*) The wicked say to themselves according to *Tehillim / Psalms 10:6*: אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ בַּל-אָמוּט לְדֹר וָדֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-בָרַע: 10:6 *He says to himself, 'I will not be moved; Throughout all generations I will not be in adversity.'* (NASB) He says in his heart (אָמַר) (בְּלִבּוֹ) that he will not be moved (בַּל-אָמוּט) from generation to generation and there will be no evil (אֲשֶׁר לֹא-בָרַע). The Aramaic translation states: 10:6 *He will say in his heart, "I will not be shaken from doing evil for all generations."* (EMC) and the Septuagint states 10:6 εἶπεν γὰρ ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ σαλευθῶ ἀπὸ γενεᾶς εἰς γενεάν ἄνευ κακοῦ 10:6 *For he has said in his heart, I shall not be moved, continuing without evil from generation to generation.* (LXX) Based upon the interpretation of David's words, the rabbis translate *Tehillim / Psalms 10:6* saying the arrogance of the wicked is so great that they believe they will not be moved through all generations and will not see evil or adversity. This is synonymous to the unrighteous man saying in his heart that he will not be shaken from doing evil for all generations. The unrighteous will continue in their evil deeds from generation to generation, the sons will learn their fathers unrighteous deeds and pass their evil ways down from generation to generation. The unrighteous continue in their sin by reason of *Tehillim / Psalms 7:15* which states, טַז בּוֹר כָּרָה 7:15 *He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, And has fallen into the hole which he made. 7:16 His mischief will return upon his own head, And his violence will descend upon his own pate.* (NASB) The unrighteous man is unrepentant, he has trapped himself, he has dug a pit and has fallen into the hole that he has made and he continues in his ways because he is unable to recognize the error of his own ways (he is unable to climb out of the pit he has dug).

The rabbis say according to the Aramaic Targum, ב ואנא כזעיר פון אתמוטטא ריגלי כלמא דאזדעזעא איס, תוורי: ג ארום טננית במתלעביא בעידן די שלם רשיעיא אחמי: ד ארום ליתיהון תוהין ומצטערין מטול על יום מיתתיהון איתבעיין מחשבתהון ופטים ואלים לבהון: ה בליעות גברין דמתעסקין באוריתא ליתיהון לעיין ועם בני 73:2 *But I – my feet had almost slipped; my steps had all but faltered. 73:3 For I became jealous of the mockers whenever I would see the welfare of the wicked. 73:4 For they are not dismayed and daunted by the day of their death; their opinions are sought out, and their heart is fat and strong. 73:5 They do not toil with the toil of men who are occupied with Torah; and they are not smitten with the righteous sons of men who endure sufferings.* (EMC) They say essentially the same thing, that Asaph is saying his feet almost slipped due to jealousy of those who mock and the welfare of the wicked. They add in *Tehillim / Psalms 73:5* that the wicked do not toil with the toil of men who occupy themselves with Torah and that they are not smitten with the righteous sons of men who endure sufferings. What does this statement mean, that those who study the Torah are smitten and endure sufferings? This suggests that our studying God's Word and living by God's Word, we will endure sufferings as a result. On the one hand, our enemies will see our righteous deeds and persecute us as a result. On the other hand, the Lord is working in our lives to draw us to Himself, to correct and reprove us for our sins, etc, these things may lead to sufferings in this life. Or in other words, we will endure sufferings for the glory of God, and for Christ's sake. Notice this interpretation is based on the Aramaic Targum, a rabbinic translation of the MT. This rabbinic concept of suffering for the sake of God is spoken of throughout the Apostolic Writings.

Suffering for the sake of the Lord

Acts 5:41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.

Acts 9:16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.”

Romans 8:17 *and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

Romans 8:36 *Just as it is written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”*

2 Corinthians 1:7 *and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.*

2 Corinthians 11:23 *Are they servants of Christ?--I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.*

Philippians 3:10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;*

2 Timothy 2:12 *If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;*

Hebrews 11:25 *choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,*

James 5:10 *As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*

1 Peter 2:20 *For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.*

1 Peter 3:14 *But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,*

1 Peter 4:16 *but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

1 Peter 5:10 *After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*

This idea is the one who studies Torah and applies God’s way of life, truth, justice, and righteousness, will endure sufferings at the hand of the wicked for the glory of God and His Messiah Yeshua. Our patient endurance demonstrates the power of God and the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in our lives to enable us to remain faithful in the midst of troubles and sufferings. The unrighteous, the wicked, on the other hand who do not Study God’s Word, do not suffer as much, but when they do suffer, there is no glory, and nothing that is praise worthy for the Name of the Lord. The psalmist recognizes this, that on the one hand, he almost slipped into sin due to envy of the ways of the unrighteous and their lack of suffering, but on the other hand, the unrighteous man has nothing that is praise worthy, he does not have a refuge to lean upon, and he is unable to seek help from the Lord unless he were to repent and turn from his evil deeds, and seek the Lord God our father in heaven and His Messiah Yeshua.

Asaph continues saying the following:

Masoretic Text

Tehillim / Psalms 73

73:6 Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them. 73:7 Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of their heart run riot. 73:8 They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high. 73:9 They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth. 73:10 Therefore his people return to this place, And waters of abundance are drunk by them. 73:11 They say, 'How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?' 73:12 Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased in wealth. 73:13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure And washed my hands in innocence; 73:14 For I have been stricken all day long And chastened every morning. 73:15 If I had said, 'I will speak thus,' Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. (NASB)

ו לכן עֲנִקְתֶּמוּ גְאוֹנָה יַעֲטֹף-שִׁית חֶמְס לְמוֹ: ז יֵצֵא מִחֶלֶב עֵינֵימוּ עֲבָרוּ מִשְׁפִּיּוֹת לִבָּב: ח יִמְיָקוּ |
וידָבְרוּ בְרָע עֲשָׂק מִמָּרוֹם יְדָבְרוּ: ט שִׁתּוּ בְשָׂמִים פִּיהֶם וּלְשׁוֹנָם תִּהְלֶךְ בְּאָרְץ: י לִכֵּן יִשִּׁיב [יָשׁוּב]
עֲמוּ הַלֵּם וַיְמִי מָלֵא יִמְצוּ לְמוֹ: יא וְאָמְרוּ אֵיכָה יִדַּע-אֵל וַיֵּשׁ דַּעַה בְּעֵלְיוֹן: יב הִנֵּה-אֵלֶּה רִשְׁעִים וְשִׁ-
לְוֵי עוֹלָם הַשָּׁגוּ-חַיִּל: יג אֶה-רִיִּק זִכִּיתִי לִבִּי וְאָרַחֵץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כַּפֵּי: יד וְאֵהִי נִגּוּעַ כָּל-הַיּוֹם וְתוֹכַחְתִּי
לְבָקָרִים: טו אִם-אֶמְרָתִי אֶסְפְּרָה כְּמוֹ הִנֵּה דוֹר בְּנֵיךָ בְּגִדְתִּי:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms 73

73:6 Because of this, pride has adorned them, a crown that they place on their heads because of their rapacity. 73:7 Their faces are distorted by fat; their carvings have transgressed, the heart is ashamed. 73:8 They will decay because of fatness; and they will speak to cause harm and to oppress; they will speak from the arrogance of their heart. 73:9 They have set their mouth against the holy ones of heaven; and their tongue flares against the holy ones of the earth. 73:10 Then he turns against the people of the Lord, to rule them; and they will smite them with hammers, and cause many tears to flow from them. 73:11 And they will say, "How then does God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High?" 73:12 Behold, these are the wicked who dwell securely in this age; they have acquired property, they have procured wealth. 73:13 Truly in vain have I purified my heart, and washed my hands in purity. 73:14 And I have been smitten all the day; and my admonition [has come] with every dawn. 73:15 If I said, "I will talk like them" – behold, I would have done evil to the generation of your children. (EMC)

ו לכך בגין כן עטרתנון גיוותנותא כלילא דמשוין ברישיהון מן חטוף דילהון: ז שנא מן שמנא
שויתא דמות פרצופיהון עברו חוטביהון רוטביהון חפורת חפו על לוחי ליבא: ח יתמקמקון מן
פיטמא רוטבא וימללון לאבאשא ולטלומא מן רום לבהון ימללון: ט שויאו בקדישי שמיא פומהון
ולישנהון מצלהבא בקדישי בצדיקי ארעא: י בכך בגין כן תאיב על עמיא דיהוה למלכותהון על
דיי וימחונון במרזופין ודמעין היך סגיעין מחתין להון: יא ויימרון הכדין ידע אלהא ואית מנדעא
בעילאה: יב הא אילין רשיעיא דיתבין בשלותא בעלמא הדין אדביקו נכסין קנו חילא: יג ברם
לסריקותא זכית לבבי לבי ושזבית בביררו ידי: יד והוית כתיש כל יומא ומכסנותי לצפריירי: טו
אין אמרית אישתעי דמכמתהון דכסתחין הא על דר בניך ארשעית:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 73

73:6 Therefore pride has possessed them; they have clothed themselves with their injustice and ungodliness. 73:7 Their injustice shall go forth as out of fatness: they have fulfilled their intention. 73:8 They have taken counsel and spoken in wickedness: they have uttered unrighteousness loftily. 73:9 They have set their mouth against heaven, and their tongue has gone through upon the earth. 73:10 Therefore shall my people return hither: and full days shall be found with them. 73:11 And they said, How does God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? 73:12 Behold, these are the sinners, and they that prosper always: they have possessed wealth. 73:13 And I said, Verily in vain have I justified my heart, and washed my hands in innocency. 73:14 For I was plagued all the day, and my reproof was every morning. 73:15 If I said, I will speak thus; behold, I should have broken covenant with the generation of thy children. (LXX)

73:6 ἐξελεύσεται ὡς ἐκ στέατος ἡ ἀδικία αὐτῶν διήλθοσαν εἰς διάθεσιν καρδίας 73:7 διανοήθησαν καὶ ἐλάλησαν ἐν πονηρίᾳ ἀδικίαν εἰς τὸ ὕψος ἐλάλησαν 73:8 ἔθεντο εἰς οὐρανὸν τὸ στόμα αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα αὐτῶν διήλθεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς 73:9 διὰ τοῦτο ἐπιστρέψει ὁ λαός μου ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἡμέραι πλήρεις εὐρεθήσονται αὐτοῖς 73:10 καὶ εἶπαν πῶς ἔγνω ὁ θεός καὶ εἰ ἔστιν γνῶσις ἐν τῷ ὑψίστῳ 73:11 ἰδοὺ οὗτοι ἁμαρτωλοὶ καὶ εὐθηνοῦνται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατέσχον πλοῦτου 73:12 καὶ εἶπα ἄρα ματαίως ἐδικαίωσα τὴν καρδίαν μου καὶ ἐνιψάμην ἐν ἀθώοις τὰς χεῖράς μου 73:13 καὶ ἐγενόμην μεμαστιγωμένος ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν καὶ ὁ ἔλεγχός μου εἰς τὰς πρωίας 73:14 εἰ ἔλεγον διηγῆσομαι οὕτως ἰδοὺ τῆ γενεᾷ τῶν υἱῶν σου ἠσυνθέτηκα 73:15 καὶ ὑπέλαβον τοῦ γνῶναι τοῦτο κόπος ἐστὶν ἐναντίον μου

Asaph continues saying that the wicked adorn themselves with pride and violence (73:6). It is interesting how the Aramaic Targum translates it is their pride that has adorned them, they place a crown on their head because of their rapacity (*n. greediness, covetousness, selfishness, quality of hunting other creatures for food*). The Septuagint states that their pride clothes them with injustices and ungodliness. The idea is that pride causes them to be deceived to continue in their ways and perform more of these things. Because of pride they are self glorifying. On the other hand, we are called to be humble, and Yeshua states that we should allow others to glorify us rather than seeking the glory for ourselves. (see *Luke 14:8-10*) The MT states that their eyes bulge with fatness (73:7), and the Aramaic Targum states “*their faces are distorted by fat,*” and that “*they will decay because of fatness.*” (73:8) What is the significance of eyes that bulge with fatness? The MT text literally states, יֵצֵא מִחֶלֶב עֵינָיו, “*to go out from fat of his eyes.*” The Targum refers to facial expression, and that one will decay because of their fatness. The idea of fat draws with it that one is well fed or over eating. To decay from fat seems to be counter intuitive. *Jeremiah 2:17* states, יִזְכֹּר כִּי אֵין עֵינָיו וְלִבָּהּ כִּי אֵם-עַל-בְּצָעָהּ וְעַל דַּם-הַנֶּהְגִּי לְשִׁפּוֹף וְעַל-הַעֲשָׂק וְעַל-הַמְרוֹצָה לְעֵשׂוֹת: “*But your eyes and your heart Are intent only upon your own dishonest gain, And on shedding innocent blood And on practicing oppression and extortion.*” (NASB) The idea is that the eyes and the heart may be taken not as a reference to our organs, but for the restless looking about for sin. Jeremiah says they are intent upon dishonest gain, and doing so by the way of shedding innocent blood and oppression of the poor and helpless. The fat of the eyes appears to be a reference to the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life.

The psalm continues saying, the unrighteous mock (73:8, וַיְדַבְּרוּ בְרָע עֲשָׂק מִמָּרוֹם יְדַבְּרוּ:), speak against the heavens (73:9, וְלִשְׁנוֹם תְּהַלֵּךְ בְּאָרְץ:), and question how God knows and whether there is knowledge of the Most High (73:11, וְיֵשׁ דַּעַה בְּעֵלְיוֹן:). Asaph speaks of the wicked who are at ease and increase in wealth (73:12, הִנֵּה-אֵלֶּה רְשָׁעִים וְשִׁלְוֵי עוֹלָם הַשְּׂגוֹר, יב אֵה-רִיק זְכִיתִי לְבָבִי וְאַרְחֵץ בְּגִקְיוֹן כְּפִי:), and it is as if he has kept his heart pure in vane (73:13, יד וַאֲהִי נְגוּעַ כָּל-הַיּוֹם וְתוֹכַחְתִּי לְבָקָרִים: טו אֵם-אֶמְרָתִי אֶסְפְּרָה כְמוֹ הַנֵּה,

(דֹר כְּנִיף כְּנִיף בְּגִדְתִּי: Does it seem that walking in righteousness is in vane when troubles come? The Apostle Paul wrote in *Galatians 2:21* “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.” (NASB) The question of obeying God’s Torah is not about justifying ourselves before God, it is about doing what is right before the Lord. Obeying the Torah is not a vane action because the Lord is pleased with our striving to do what is righteous, holy, pure, in truth, and justice towards all men. But doing so to say “look I have earned a place in heaven because of my good deeds,” is not pleasing by the reason that if we have failed at one mitzvah, it is as if we have failed them all. If we violate one of the commands, we have failed to live up to the Torah. The real question then is whether we are prepared to do teshuvah? Do we care? Are we willing to look honestly at who we really are? Are we willing to try and do better next time? In truth teshuvah, in the full sense of the word, is really hard to do. It is easier to run away from our failings than to face them, let alone make to a change. On the other hand, realizing that failure is part of the human condition, the Lord God expects us to be obedient, but realizes that we do not have perfect obedience, failure is ok. The point is to perform Teshuvah, turn from sin and turn towards the Lord for His help and righteousness. The significance of Teshuvah is found in *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit 22, Part 28* which states, “Such is the power of teshuvah?!” Adam exclaimed. “I did not realize that by doing teshuvah a person’s past misdeeds are erased so completely and considered by God as if they had never taken place!” In addition, when we perform Teshuvah we learn about ourselves, our Father in heaven, and Yeshua the Messiah when we walk in the ways of God according to the Torah. The point of *Galatians 2:21* is with regard to what we have been seeing in the last few Psalms studies (68-72), that the Lord God places His righteousness upon us, God’s Messiah Yeshua brings with him the righteousness of God, and by faith in the Messiah, and in our Father in heaven, we receive the righteousness of God for justification (the forgiveness of sins) before the Lord. The Torah is an expectation of living as the people of God and is the manner in which we remain “in the Messiah” as Yeshua said “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you.” (*John 15:7*) This is the Word of the Living God, our Father in heaven!

Asaph continues saying, וְאַחַשְׁבָּה לְדַעַת זֹאת עֲמַל הִיא [הוּא] בְּעֵינַי: יז עַד-אַבּוּא אֶל-מְקַדְשֵׁי-אֵל אֲבִינִה, 73:16 When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight 73:17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end. (NASB) What is it about the sanctuary of God that caused Asaph to perceive the end of the wicked? Asaph came into the Sanctuary of God and he viewed the prosperity of the wicked in the light of his relationship with the Lord God in heaven. Those who appeared to be doing well are in fact in great peril. Asaph realized that it is due to the mercy of God and His Righteousness that he is able to stand in His presence in the Sanctuary. The unrighteous will not get away with their sins; there will be a day of reckoning. He sees his relationship with the Lord in light of our Father in heaven being the true refuge, help, redemption, salvation, and hope. In the Sanctuary he is able to focus upon the Lord and His attributes, His mercy and kindness to His people. In comparison, he says the Lord has placed the wicked in slippery places, (73:18, יח אַף בַּחֲלָקוֹת תְּשִׁית לָמוֹ הַפְּלִתָם לְמִשׁוּאוֹת:), and the Lord will cause them to be swept away (73:19, יט אִיךָ הָיוּ לְשִׁמָּה כָּרְגַע סָפוּ תִּמּוּ מִן-בְּלֵהוֹת:), and they will be like a dream that will pass away (73:20, כ צִלְמָם תִּבְזֶה: | כְּעֵיר מִהַקִּיץ אֲדֹנָי בְּעֵיר). The reason is that the wicked have hardened their hearts toward the Lord God in heaven. They have become proud, arrogant, and supposedly independent of Him. As a result of their prosperity, Asaph says that he was pierced within (73:21, כא כִּי-יִתְחַמֵּץ לִבִּי וְכִלְיוֹתַי אֲשָׁתוּנָן:), and like an animal before God (73:22, כב וְאֲנִי-בְעֵר וְלֹא אֲדַע, כִּי-יִתְחַמֵּץ לִבִּי וְכִלְיוֹתַי אֲשָׁתוּנָן:). But what is interesting about the way in which Asaph writes, the animal that is before the Lord, sounds as if he is describing himself as an animal that is prepared for slaughter. This has the concept of the one who draws near or close to the Lord at the altar and the Tabernacle and then lays down his life. Through his suffering and agony, he drew closer to the Lord, as opposed to the wicked, the prosperity of the wicked caused them to draw further away from the Lord. As a result, Asaph’s trials and by similar reasoning, our trials may be understood as a gift from the Lord for our own good. Our struggles cause us to seek the Lord for help which lead us into a deeper intimacy with the Lord and with the Messiah Yeshua. Because of these things Paul and the rabbis are able to speak of being counted worthy to endure sufferings for the glory of God, and as Paul said, for Christ’s sake (see previous Scripture references). Trusting in the

Lord and striving to live a righteous and holy life are not a means for earning eternal life, but for blessings in both this life and in the world to come (gifts and rewards). (see *James 1:12, Luke 12:33-34, 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Matthew 5:12, 5:17-19, 6:4-6, 6:18-21, 25:21, 25:14-30, 25:46, Revelation 2:11-12, 21:4, 20:12-13, 21:8, 22:12, Revelation 2:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Corinthians 2:9, 3:8, 3:12-15, 2 Timothy 2:11-12, 4:7-8, Romans 11:19-22, John 14:2, Jeremiah 17:10, Isaiah 40:10, Tehillim / Psalm 18:20, Luke 18:22, Malachi 3:10, Hebrews 11:16*) As a result, Asaph said he continued to serve the Lord, (73:23, כג וְאֲנִי תַמְיִיד, לַיהוָה אֲחַדְתִּימָהּ) because the Lord is good.

Asaph continues saying, כד בְּעֶצְתְּךָ תִּנְחַנְי וְאַחַר כְּבוֹד תִּקְחֵנִי: 73:24 *With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.* (NASB) Asaph speaks of being taken to glory. Is this a belief that when one dies, they are taken to heaven? When we think of being taken up to heaven, we are reminded of two stories in the Scriptures, (i) Enoch (*Bereshit / Genesis 5:21-24*), and (ii) Elijah (*2 Kings 2:1-12*).

Bereshit / Genesis 5:21-24

5:21 Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. 5:22 Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. 5:23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 5:24 Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. (NASB)

2 Kings 2:1-12

2:1 And it came about when the Lord was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. 2:2 Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here please, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. 2:3 Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, 'Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; be still.' 2:4 Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho. 2:5 The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, 'Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be still.' 2:6 Then Elijah said to him, 'Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.' And he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. 2:7 Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. 2:8 Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. 2:9 When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.' And Elisha said, 'Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.' 2:10 He said, 'You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so. 2:11 As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. 2:12 Elisha saw it and cried out, 'My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. (NASB)

These stories are very memorable and amazing, that the Lord God would take a man from this world into the next. Note to compare the righteous deeds of these men to the deeds of Yeshua, but this is a similar thing that happened to Yeshua, ascending into heaven on a cloud, the Lord God took him into glory. Note, the Lord taking Yeshua into glory is a very important concept. The rabbis reason that no man can go to heaven and see God. However, their commentaries have a lot to say on this matter. The Talmud and a few commentaries speak about what happened to both Enoch and Elijah.

The Rabbis on Enoch

Shelah, Noah, Torah Ohr:

We do not find that any person had enjoyed G'd's "light" from the time of Adam until the appearance of Chanoch whom G'd took from this earth and made into an angel (Genesis 5:24), the one usually referred to as Mattatron.

Shelah, Chayei Sara, Torah Ohr:

Tossaphot query how this Mattatron could be described as שר הבריאה, in charge of the universe, seeing that הנוך did not live till long after the universe was created, and they therefore solve the problem in a different way. [This problem is discussed in Tossaphot Yevamot 16 and relates to part of the liturgical poetry in the morning prayer of שמחת תורה. Ed.] I do not think that there is really any substance in the query posed by Tossaphot for all those who have been granted some insight. The שר הבריאה certainly existed ever since the בריאה itself, and he is called Mattatron, since it is his function to guard over everything that reflects G'd's expressed will. The word מטרה is the translation of the Hebrew word שומר, guardian. הנוך performed a similar function on earth until G'd decided to remove him from earth while alive (Genesis 5:24). While on earth, he performed what the Kabbalists call the בחינה התחתונה, the "minor" function of Mattatron on earth. This "minor" function is known as מנעל, shoe. The force in charge of such activities is called Sandalphon, from the Hebrew סנדל, a sandal. Solomon sings the praises of such people when he says in Song of Songs 7:2: יפו פעמיך המיך, "How lovely are your footsteps when shod in pilgrim's sandals." This is the hidden meaning of the Midrash Talpiot which describes Chanoch as a shoemaker. I have explained this elsewhere at length.

The commentary on the Torah portion for both Noah and Chayei Sara titled "*the sending of Torah light*" (Shelah Torah Ohr) has a very kabbalistic approach to the interpretation of Enoch passages from the Torah on Enoch being taken up from this earth. *Shlach, Noah, Torah Ohr* states that Enoch was taken from this earth and transformed into an angel. This suggests a belief that Enoch was in fact translated to heaven from earth, and in order for him to stand in God's presence, the Lord transformed him into an angel. The commentary *Shelah, Chayei Sara, Torah Ohr* states that Enoch is referred to as the Metatron. Metatron (מטטרון) is known as an archangel in Judaism as the Chancellor of Heaven. According to Jewish medieval apocrypha, Enoch the ancestor of Noah was transformed into an angel in heaven. However, there are no actual references to this happening (a man being transformed into an angel) in the Tanach or in the Apostolic Writings. *Bereshit / Genesis 5:24* however is often cited as evidence of Enoch's bodily ascension into heaven. The Babylonian Talmud mentions Metatron in two places, (i) *Sanhedrin 38b* and (ii) *Avodah Zarah 3b*. In *Sanhedrin 38b* a Minim tells Rabbi Idith that Metatron should be worshiped because he has a name like his master. Rabbi Idith uses the passage *Shemot / Exodus 23:21* to show that Metatron was an angel and not a deity and thus should not be worshiped. Furthermore as an angel Metatron has no power to pardon transgressions nor was he to be received even as a messenger of forgiveness. The important aspect of the Talmudic commentary is that the Metatron did not function as the King Mashiach as we have been studying previously, the one who comes with the righteousness, mercy, forgiveness, and judgment of God. There are significant differences between the Metatron and the Messiah figure described in the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings. According to *Avodah Zarah 3b*, the schools are divided into quarters, and in the fourth quarter the Lord God sits and instructs the school children. According to the rabbis, in the preceding three quarters Metatron may take God's place or the Lord God may do this too. In the *Talmud Bavli Yevamot 16b*, we find a record an utterance attributed to the Prince of the World which states, "*I have been young and now*

I am old,” where rabbinic tradition attributes this utterance to Metatron.

Shelah, Chayei Sara, Torah Ohr describes the Metatron as preexisting the creation or at least having existed from since the beginning (בריאה). The Metatron’s function is to guard over all things that express God’s will saying, “*The word מטרה is the translation of the Hebrew word שומר, guardian.*” The rabbis draw a parallel to Enoch performing a similar function on earth, and so he was taken from the earth while alive to perform the minor functions of the Metatron. This suggests that there may be more than one Metatron, or that one may share in this role of Metatron. This might also provide us with some insights into the word Mashiach in the sense that there are many Mashiach (anointed ones) of God, but there is only one Mashiach, Yeshua the King Messiah. Nevertheless, the Metatron appears to function in a different manner than the King Mashiach is described and therefore it would not be a logical conclusion to state that the Metatron is a type, shadow, or figure of the King Mashiach.

The rabbis also have the following to say about Elijah being taken up into heaven from the Talmud, Shelach Torah Ohr, and Ein Yaakov.

The Rabbis on Elijah

Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 5a, 1-22

and it has been taught, R. Yose stated: The Shechinah never descended to earth, nor did Moses or Elijah ever ascend to Heaven, as it is said, ‘The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth He has given to humanity’ (Psalm 119:16). But did the Shechinah not descend to earth? Isn’t it written, ‘And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai?’ (Exodus 19:20)? That was above ten handbreadths [from the summit]. But is it not written, ‘And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives?’ (Zechariah 14:4)? Above ten handbreadths. But did not Moses and Elijah ascend to Heaven? Is it not in fact written, ‘And Moses went up unto God?’ (Exodus 19:3). [That was] to a level lower than ten [handbreadths from heaven]. But is it not written, ‘And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven?’ (II Kings 2:11) [That was] to a level lower than ten handbreadths But is it not written, ‘He seizes hold of the face of His throne, and He spreads His cloud upon him,’ (Job 26:9) and R. Tanhum said: This teaches that the Almighty spread some of the radiance of his Shechinah and his cloud upon him? That was at a level lower than ten handbreadths. But in any case is it not written, ‘He seizes hold of the face of His throne’? The throne was well lowered for his sake until [it reached a level] lower than ten handbreadths [from Heaven] and then he seized hold of it.

Shelach, Shmini, Torah Ohr:

Midrash Shemuel on Avot quotes the opinion of Rabbi Shimon ben Tzadok to the effect that the Rabbi Shimon who told us about the advantages of silence in the above quoted Mishnah was one of the Ten Martyrs. All these martyrs sanctified not only their souls but also their bodies. There are two methods of sanctifying the body. 1) The way of Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues who died on משה שודק, a martyr’s death. This kind of holiness is referred to in the Torah as: מישודק סתייהו (11,45). The second method of achieving holiness of the body is referred to in the Torah as: משדקמ’ה ינא (21,23). Nadav and Avihu acquired holiness of the body via the second method, i.e. their souls were burned whereas their bodies remained intact. Their departure from this world was similar to that of Chanoch (Genesis 5,24), and Elijah (Kings II 2:11). This is why I believe that the reason their bodies remained intact was that their death was due to the intimacy they had established with G’d. When Rabbi Shimon said that he had not found anything better for the body than silence, he alluded to the instruction given to Rabbi Akiva and the other Martyrs to be silent and accept G’d’s decree without question.

Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition) Masechet 6 : Chapter 1

SUCCAH (Fol. 5) We have been taught in a Baraitha: R. Jose says: "Never did the Shechina come down below [on earth], and Moses and Elijah never ascended to heaven; for it is written (Ps. 115:16) The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth hath He given to the children of man." Then, the Shechina, you contend, never came down below? Behold, it is written (Ex. 19:20) And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai. This was ten spans above the ground. But it is written (Zech. 14:4) And his feet will stand on that day upon the mount of Zeithim (Olives). This was ten spans above the ground. Again, [let me ask], is it indeed a fact that neither Moses nor Elijah ever ascended to heaven? Behold, it is written (Ex. 19:3) And Moses went up unto God? This means below ten spans. But it is written (II Kings 2:11) And Elijah went up by a storm wind into heaven. This also means below ten spans. But it is written (Job 26:9) He lays hold of the face of His throne and spreads His cloud over him; and R. Tanchtum said: "This means to teach us that the Almighty spread the brightness of the Shechina and enveloped Moses with encouragement." This also refers to below these ten spans. However, it is written, he (Moses) lays hold of the face of His throne [hence they were both together]. He brought down His throne close to ten spans, where Moses took hold of it.

In 2 Kings 2:11, the Scriptures speak of Elijah being taken into heaven. According to the Talmud, Shelah Shmini Torah Ohr, and Ein Yaakov, the conclusion is that the Lord lowered His throne for Elijah's sake so that he could take hold of the throne. Again the idea is that no man can stand before God and live, no man can see his face based upon Parashat Ki Tisa (*Shemot / Exodus 34*). The conclusion of the rabbis is that Elijah was in fact caught up to heaven and he touched the throne of God. As we have been studying in *Midrash Tehillim 68-71*, the rabbis have concluded that where one's merit falls short, the Lord places His Righteousness upon us for Salvation's sake for the purpose of His dwelling in our midst. This is a significant aspect of the Lord God our father in heaven and of the King Mashiach who brings with him God's Righteousness to be given to the people. The rabbinic conclusions for the Lord dwelling in the midst of the congregation of Israel in the wilderness (pillar of cloud and fire) yet while the people were so sinful in their thoughts and deeds, had led to the interpretation that the Lord had placed His Righteousness upon the people for their salvation from death. In a similar manner, today in His Messiah Yeshua, we receive God's Righteousness, for salvation's sake, in both the Olam HaZeh and the Olam Haba. Asaph speaks of being taken to glory according to the Psalm and this belief is consistent with both the rabbinic interpretation and the interpretations of what we find in the Apostolic Writings by Yeshua, Paul and the disciples.

Asaph concludes his psalm saying, כה מי-לי בשמים ועמך לא-תפצתי בארץ: כו פלה שארי ולבבי צור, | קרבת אלהים לי-טוב שתי לבבי וחקי אלהים לעולם: כו פי-הנה רחוקי יאבדו הצמתה פל-זונה מך: כח ואני | קרבת אלהים לי-טוב שתי לבבי וחקי אלהים לעולם: כו פל-מלאכותיך: | 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. 73:27 For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. 73:28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works. (NASB) Asaph describes the absolute refuge that we find in the Lord God in heaven. Though flesh and blood may fail, no matter what troubles we may be going through, the Lord is faithful to us. Those who do not know the Lord, perish without hope. The one who has made the Lord his refuge will be able to speak of the glory and work of the Lord God in heaven! Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We praise Your Name always for the salvation that you have provided in both the Olam Hazeh and the Olam Haba. We acknowledge that it is only by Your Righteousness that we are saved. We also realize that because of who You have made us to be in the Messiah Yeshua, we called to live righteous and holy lives

before You each day. Lord we fall short of reaching that goal, but we ask that you would place in our hearts to always seek Your Righteousness and Truth for the glory of Your Name. We praise Your Holy Name for strength and faith in the Messiah Yeshua through whom we have the forgiveness of sins. Our changed lives bear testimony to Your Name and the presence of Your Spirit in our midst. We thank You for keeping our feet on the path of righteousness and truth according to Your Word (the Scriptures). Please create in us a deep respect, fear, and love for You Lord, coupled with a desire to dwell in Your presence, to study Your word, to pray, and to lead humble lives. Thank You for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the Messiah! Please have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins. We thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

Notes