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# DO NOT ENVY THE UNGODLY MAN

Proverb 24: 1

Emakpor, Jeremiah (Deacon)

The text of this admonition states thus: *“Be thou not envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.”*

This is a timeless advice which is needed now more than ever before. I shall use the experience and observations of the Psalmist as contained in ***Psalms 73:1-28*** to drive the message home.

The psalmist asserted that *“Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.”* (verse 1).

However, before this assertion, the psalmist himself admitted that he did not realize at first that truly, God is good to those with clean heart. How? *“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped,”* he says (verse 2).

Why? Because according to him, *“For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”* (verse 3).

The psalmist wondered why the foolish and wicked ones should prosper despite their ungodly nature. He also wondered why they should enjoy good health and strength (verse 4).

He equally noted that: *“They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.”* (verse 5). The psalmist observed that the foolish and wicked men flaunt their pride like a necklace and their violence like a garment (verse 6). That, besides, *“Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.”* (verse 7).

In other words, they are well nourished and have more than their heart desires. He said the ungodly are corrupt and do not condemn oppression (verse 8). That they set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth (verse 9). They are quick to say that heaven and hell do not exist, that life ends here on earth.

They say how would God know, and is there knowledge in the most High (**verse 11**)? They argue that God is too occupied with heavenly affairs to care about what happens here on earth.

To the psalmist, it is an irony that these ungodly ones are those who prosper in the world with much riches. Hear him: *“Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.”* (verse 12).

The psalmist expressed his frustration at this point, saying, *“Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence.”* (verse 13).

Why this submission? *“For all day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.”* (verse

14). Indeed, the psalmist complained that he had always been inflicted with all manner of problems despite being a man with a good heart.

But here comes the turning point: *“When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.”* (verse 16-17).

Yes, the psalmist decided to consult God for an understanding of this whole puzzle. He then understood from God’s revelation that, *“Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.”* (verse 18).

The perception of the psalmist concerning the situation changed forthwith. He became remorseful, admitted his folly and ignorance, and how unreasonable he was: *“Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.”* (verse 21-22).

He pledged his continued loyalty to God and trust that God would continue to guide him with His counsel, with a reward of glory at the end of time (verse 23-24).

Lastly, he saw every reason to continue with his uprightness before God (verse 25-26), having realized that the ungodly and

wicked ones will not go unpunished at the end of time (verse 27).

**Conclusively,**

*“Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked: For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.” (Proverb 24:19-20).*