

The Kingdom Hope in the Psalms

Psalm 12 The Apostasy

by Roger Samsel

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*1 Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!
For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.*

The word “Help” in Hebrew is “Hoshia.” It means “save!” David cries out to God for salvation because it seems that there are very few faithful and godly persons left. They have all “disappeared.” The second half of Verse 1 could be translated (as it is in the LXX) “truth is diminished from among the children of men.” If this was true in David’s lifetime, we know from the prophetic statements of the Lord Jesus and of the Apostles that it is even more truly descriptive of the time just before the Lord’s return. There will be a great falling away (apostasy) from the faith and a great longing for salvation on the part of the persecuted remnant. And even within the church, truth will be scarce and difficult to find.

Jesus first spoke of this in Luke 18.

*7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?
8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*

The Psalmist continues.

*2 They speak idly everyone with his neighbor;
With flattering lips and a double heart they speak.
3 May the LORD cut off all flattering lips,
And the tongue that speaks proud things,
4 Who have said, “With our tongue we will prevail;
Our lips are our own;
Who is lord over us?”*

This describes the character and actions of those who profess faith in God but are in truth living in rebellion against Him. They speak “vanity” with their neighbors. The word “vanity” (Heb **awv**) means “emptiness, worthlessness, falsehood.” Their speech is further characterized as “flattering” and “with a double heart.” “Flattery” means “crafty, deceitful, and treacherous.” To be of a “double heart” means to have two minds regarding a matter, to be

changeable, to say (and mean) something at one time and something entirely different at another time, and thus to be hypocritical and untrustworthy.

Their speech is further characterized in Verses 3 and 4 by pride, self-assurance, self-will, and defiance. Bear in mind that this is descriptive not of the world, but of those who profess faith in God. Jesus said this about the apostasy that would take place before His return.

9 Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. Matthew 24

Notice the three things that Jesus mentions that will result in the apostasy:

1. the oppression of the wicked will cause many Christians to be offended (stumble or fall away) and to betray and hate one another;
2. False prophets with deceptive teachings will lead multitudes astray; and,
3. Immorality (lawlessness) will be rampant and will result in many choosing to follow the lust of the flesh rather than to persevere in faith and patience.

The Apostles also prophesied a great apostasy in very explicit language. Consider just one example from many.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... 1 Timothy 4:1

We could also mention 2 Thessalonians 2:1- 5; 2 Timothy 3:1-13; 4:1-4; 2 Peter 2; Jude among others. But why connect Psalm 12 with this apostasy spoken of by The Lord and the Apostles? How do we know this is prophetic? Notice Verse 5.

5 "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, Now I will arise," says the LORD; "I will set him in the safety for which he yearns."

Notice the expression "Now I will arise," in verse 5. This expression is a technical term that is used dozens of times to describe the Lord's second advent. He says that He will "arise" because of the misery and sighing of the poor and needy. Notice also that when He arises, He will "cut off all flattering lips and the tongue

that speaks proud things" (Verse 3). This refers to those who profess faith in God but whose character and speech betray a double heart. Furthermore, He will set the poor "in the safety for which he yearns." These things are clearly associated with the second advent.

*6 The words of the LORD are pure words,
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,
Purified seven times.
7 You shall keep them, O LORD,
You shall preserve them from this generation forever.*

In the LXX, Verses 6 – 7 are rendered as follows:

The oracles of the Lord are pure oracles; as silver tried in the fire, proved [in] a furnace of earth, purified seven times.
Thou, O Lord, shalt keep us, and shalt preserve us, from this generation, and for ever.

Thus, the preservation promised in Verse 7 is for the faithful remnant described as "poor" and "needy." The certainty of this promise is underscored by the solemn introduction in Verse 6.

*8 The wicked prowl on every side,
When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.*

A more fitting description of the times in which we live could hardly be made. This is the cause of the misery and sighing of the upright and of the suffering of the innocent.