

MORNING & EVENING

A Study of Spurgeon's Classic Devotional

I. Who was Charles Spurgeon?

- With no formal theological training, British Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834 - 1892) became the most popular minister of the nineteenth century, regularly attracting crowds of 6,000 each Sunday to his London - based Metropolitan Tabernacle church.
- In the history of Christianity, no other minister is more widely read - after Biblical ones - than Spurgeon. He has more material available to readers than any other Christian author, dead or alive

II. Morning, July 28th

"So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee." Psalm 73:22

Remember this is the confession of the man after God's own heart; and in telling us his inner life, he writes, "So foolish was I, and ignorant." The word "foolish," here, means more than it signifies in ordinary language. David, in a former verse of the Psalm, writes, "I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked," which shows that the folly he intended had sin in it. He puts himself down as being thus "foolish," and adds a word which is to give intensity to it; "so foolish was I." How foolish he could not tell. It was a sinful folly, a folly which was not to be excused by frailty, but to be condemned because of its perverseness and wilful ignorance, for he had been envious of the present prosperity of the ungodly, forgetful of the dreadful end awaiting all such. And are we better than David that we should call ourselves wise! Do we profess that we have attained perfection, or to have been so chastened that the rod has taken all our wilfulness out of us? Ah, this were pride indeed! If David was foolish, how foolish should we be in our own esteem if we could but see ourselves! Look back, believer: think of your doubting God when he has been so faithful to you—think of your foolish outcry of "Not so, my Father," when he crossed his hands in affliction to give you the larger blessing; think of the many times when you have read his providences in the dark, misinterpreted his dispensations, and groaned out, "All these things are against me," when they are all working together for your good! Think how often you have chosen sin because of its pleasure, when indeed, that pleasure was a root of bitterness to you! Surely if we know our own heart we must plead guilty to the indictment of a sinful folly; and conscious of this "foolishness," we must make David's consequent resolve our own—"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel."

Psalm 73

¹ A psalm of Asaph. Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. ² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. ³ For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴ They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. ⁵ They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills... ⁸ They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression. ⁹ Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. ¹⁰ Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. ¹¹ They say, "How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?"

¹² This is what the wicked are like-- always carefree, they increase in wealth. ¹³ Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴ All day long I have been plagued; I have been punished every morning. ¹⁵ If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed your children.

¹⁶ When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me ¹⁷ till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. ¹⁸ Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. ¹⁹ How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! ²⁰ As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.

²¹ When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, ²² I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. ²³ Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. ²⁴ You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever... ²⁸ But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

III. Morning, July 23rd

“Even thou wast as one of them.” Obadiah 1:11

- Esau was the older brother of the father of Israel, Jacob. Therefore, Edom was considered a brotherly nation to Israel.

¹*The vision of Obadiah. Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom: We have heard a report from the LORD, and a messenger has been sent among the nations: “Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!”* ²*Behold, I will make you small among the nations; you shall be utterly despised...¹¹ On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them.* ¹²*But do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune; do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin; do not boast in the day of distress. (Obadiah 1:1-11)*

Brotherly kindness was due from Edom to Israel in the time of need, but instead thereof, the men of Esau made common cause with Israel’s foes. Special stress in the sentence before us is laid upon the word thou; as when Caesar cried to Brutus, “and thou Brutus;” a bad action may be all the worse, because of the person who has committed it. When we sin, who are the chosen favorites of heaven, we sin with an emphasis; ours is a crying offence, because we are so peculiarly indulged. If an angel should lay his hand upon us when we are doing evil, he need not use any other rebuke than the question, “What thou? What dost thou here?” Much forgiven, much delivered, much instructed, much enriched, much blessed, shall we dare to put forth our hand unto evil? God forbid!

A few minutes of confession may be beneficial to thee, gentle reader, this morning. Hast thou never been as the wicked? At an evening party certain men laughed at uncleanness, and the joke was not altogether offensive to thine ear, even thou wast as one of them. When hard things were spoken concerning the ways of God, thou wast bashfully silent; and so, to on-lookers, thou wast as one of them. When worldlings were bartering in the market, and driving hard bargains, wast thou not as one of them? When they were pursuing vanity with a hunter’s foot, wert thou not as greedy for gain as they were? Could any difference be discerned between thee and them? Is there any difference? Here we come to close quarters. Be honest with thine own soul, and make sure that thou art a new creature in Christ Jesus; but when this is sure, walk jealously, lest any should again be able to say, “Even thou wast as one of them.” Thou wouldst not desire to share their eternal doom, why then be like them here? Come not thou into their secret, lest thou come into their ruin. Side with the afflicted people of God, and not with the world.