

*13 Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:*

*14 From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. (Psalm 17:13-14)*

Happy indeed is the person who knows God to be the first and final cause of all things. Miserable indeed is the godless creature who imagines that he himself is the center of all things and that the outcome of every matter resides in his own ability and cleverness.

We learn from this Psalm that God uses the wicked as His “sword.” When the wicked man imagines that he is wielding the sword according to his own selfish designs, whether it be in conquest for gain, revenge for offenses, or just plain meanness, he does not realize that God permits him to do so because He has a purpose in what is being done.

God uses the wicked sometimes to chastise and correct His Own children. When we as God’s children realize this, it will save us from two destructive emotions. It will save us from hatred and resentment toward our oppressor. He is merely God’s sword, God’s hand. It will also save us from despair, from fear that we shall be utterly destroyed. The ungodly man may indeed be intent upon destroying us, but God will surprise him, disappoint him; like Satan in his attack upon Job, he can only go so far.

Nor let us suppose by this (the fact that God uses the wicked’s deeds for His Own good purpose) that the wicked may be excused for what he did and escape the judgment of God. From man’s side he deliberately planned, plotted and entered into his own wicked way, uncoerced by God or anyone other than his own perverse ways. He is responsible for his every deed. And except he find mercy from the only One Who has the right and power to forgive sins, he will surely perish.

-C.M.