

Psalm 37

"David's Counsel to the Righteous to Trust in Yahweh, Not Worry about the Apparent Success of the Wicked"

A Psalm of David.

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A1 THE RIGHTEOUS ADVISED NOT TO FRET ABOUT EVILDOERS 37:1-11

B1 Aleph.¹ The Counsel Not to Be Vexed about Evildoers, Who Are Transient 37:1-2

C1 The listener urged not to be concerned about evildoers 37:1

D1 Not to be vexed: {1} Do not fret because of **evildoers**,

D2 Not to envy: Be not envious toward **wrongdoers**.

C2 The rationale -- evildoers will quickly pass from the scene 37:2

D1 {2} For **they** will wither quickly like the grass

D2 And fade like the green herb.

B2 Beth. Prescription for a Godly, Fulfilled Life: Trusting, Faithful Delight in Yahweh 37:3-4

C1 Faith in Yahweh: {3} Trust in the LORD 37:3

C2 Good works: and do good;

C3 Commitment to the place of Yahweh's blessing: Dwell in the land

C4 Routine faithfulness: and cultivate faithfulness.

C5 Delight in Yahweh: {4} Delight yourself in the LORD; 37:4

C6 Reward from Yahweh: And He will give you the desires of your heart.

B3 Gimel. Dependence on Yahweh Produces Righteousness and Justice. 37:5-6

C1 The listener urged 37:5a

D1 To roll his way upon Yahweh: {5} Commit ² your way to the LORD,

D2 To trust in Him: Trust also in Him,

¹ 37:1 - Aleph: The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet (and so on). This is an acrostic psalm.

² 37:5 - commit: Lit., to roll upon Yahweh, defined in the parallel phrase as trusting in Him.

- C2 The part of Yahweh 37:5b-6
 - D1 In general terms, to act on the listener's behalf: and He will do it. 37:5b
 - D2 In more specific terms, He will cause to emit forth from the listener the latter's: 37:6
 - E1 Righteousness as light: {6} He will bring forth your righteousness as the light
 - E2 Justice as midday: And your judgment as the noonday.

B4 Daleth. The Counsel to Rely on Yahweh, and Not Be Vexed about the Success of the Wicked. 37:7

- C1 The proper attitude toward Yahweh: Rely on Him!
 - D1 Be still before Yahweh: {7} Rest in the LORD
 - D2 Wait longingly for Him: and wait patiently³ for Him;
- C2 The proper attitude toward the successful wicked -- Do not be vexed: Do not fret
 - D1 because of **him who prospers in his way**,
 - D2 Because of the **man who carries out wicked schemes**.

B5 He. The Counsel Not to Be Angry or Anxious about Evildoers. Yahweh Will Judge the Evildoer, and the Listener Will Possess Land. 37:8-9

- C1 The commands to flee angry vexation 37:8
 - D1 Anger
 - E1 {8} Cease from anger
 - E2 and forsake wrath;
 - D2 Vexation
 - E1 The command: Do not fret;
 - E2 The reason: *it leads* only to evildoing.

³ 37:7 - patiently: The root word *chuwל* (2342), Hithpael, is to whirl or writhe. It hardly suggests patient waiting, but rather intense waiting for Yahweh! This is not passive waiting. It is eager waiting, with eyes fixed on the horizon to see how He is going to act! Another possible meaning is to turn to or toward Yahweh (from the idea of whirling). The result is the same -- an eager expectancy that Yahweh will do something positive and beneficial.

C2 The rationale for fleeing angry vexation 37:9

D1 The death and disenfranchisement of evildoers: {9} For **evildoers** will be cut off,

D2 But those who wait⁴ for the LORD, they will inherit the land.⁵

B6 Vau. The Wicked Will Soon Disappear, But the Humble Will Possess Land and Prosper. 37:10-11

C1 The disappearance of the wicked 37:10

D1 {10} Yet a little while and the **wicked** man will be no more;

D2 And you will look carefully for **his** place and he will not be *there*.

C2 The prosperous possession of land by the humble 37:11

D1 Their possession of land: {11} But the humble will inherit the land

D2 Their possession of great peace / prosperity (*shalom*): And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

⁴ 37:9 - wait: (*qavah* 6960, Qal) simply means to wait, and is a different word than the wait (*chuwl* 2342, Hithpael), to whirl or turn to or wait longingly for in 37:7.

⁵ 37:9 - inherit land: What does it mean to inherit (*yarash*) land (*'erets*)? KJV translates it "inherit the earth." My study leads me to believe that "possess land" is a better translation (*'erets* in Psalms is always anarthrous) because *possess* incorporates the idea that effort is involved to acquire land, while *inherit* is more of a passive concept.

Independently, I thought of Jesus' dictum, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," and its kingdom implications (Matt. 5:5 -- here, the word means to *inherit*). I find, amazingly, that Ross (Psalms, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary [TBKC]*) has also linked these expressions in Ps. 37 with Jesus' dictum. The explanation in Strong's is that the idea is to possess or occupy the land by casting out or dispossessing the previous inhabitants. Obviously, this is precisely what the people of Israel did in the Old Testament, initially killing them.

Today, the same thing is going on in Israel. WHO SHALL INHERIT THE LAND? -- the so-called Palestinians or the Israelis? Right now it is a stalemate. But believe me, the time is coming when only true believers in Yahweh will inherit Israel, and they will dispossess those who do not believe in Him!

Furthermore, all unbelievers will be executed at the Millennial Kingdom and only the meek, those who trust in Yahweh and Jesus, will inherit the land.

Furthermore, only those who have their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb will inherit the New Jerusalem. Excluded, in the Lake of Fire, are the fornicators, liars, drug users and dealers, murderers, idolaters, and the like (Rev. 21:8). Nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into the City (Rev. 21:27). Furthermore, (Revelation 22:14-15) "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. {15} Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying."

A2 THE EVIL AGENDA AND COMING DEMISE OF THE WICKED 37:12-15

B1 Zain. Though the Wicked Man Angrily Plots against the Righteous, Adonai Laughs Because He Sees Judgment Coming against Him. 37:12-13

C1 The plot of the wicked against the righteous 37:12

D1 His plot: {12} The **wicked** plots against the righteous

D2 His malice: And gnashes at him with his teeth.

C2 The laughter of the Lord (Adonai) 37:13

D1 His laughter: {13} The Lord laughs at **him**,

D2 His knowledge of the future: For He sees **his** day is coming.

B2 Cheth. Though the Wicked Endeavor to Destroy the Upright, They Will Merely Destroy Themselves. 37:14-15

C1 The murderous intentions of the wicked upon the needy upright 37:14

D1 Their murderous preparations: {14} The **wicked** have drawn the sword and bent their bow

D2 Their vulnerable targets

E1 To cast down the afflicted and the needy,

E2 To slay those who are upright in conduct.

C2 The surprising retribution upon the wicked 37:15

D1 Their self-destruction by their own swords: {15} **Their** sword will enter **their** own heart,

D2 The demise of their bows: And **their** bows will be broken.

A3 THE LOT OF THE RIGHTEOUS IS BETTER THAN THE LOT OF THE WICKED 37:16-22

B1 Teth. The Advantage of the Poor Righteous over the Wealthy Wicked. 37:16-17

C1 The statement of the advantage: {16} Better is the little of the righteous Than the abundance of many **wicked**.

C2 The reason for the advantage: {17} For the arms of the **wicked** will be broken, But the LORD sustains the righteous.

B2 Yod. Yahweh's Provision for the Blameless Even in Troubled Times 37:18-19

- C1 Yahweh's knowing sustenance of the blameless 37:18
 - D1 His knowledge of their life and its span: {18} The LORD knows the days of the blameless,
 - D2 The resultant eternity of their inheritance: And their inheritance will be forever.
- C2 The success of the blameless in troubled times 37:19
 - D1 No shame in an evil time: {19} They will not be ashamed in the time of evil,
 - D2 Abundance during famine: And in the days of famine they will have abundance.

B3 Caph. The Doom of the Wicked -- Yahweh's Enemies! 37:20

- C1 The prediction of the death of the wicked: {20} But the **wicked** will perish;
- C2 The description of the death of Yahweh's enemies
 - D1 Like the fading glory of the pastures: And the **enemies** of the LORD will be like the glory of the pastures,
 - D2 Like disappearing smoke: They vanish--like smoke they vanish away.

B4 Lamed. The Blessing of the Righteous and the Cursing of the Wicked 37:21-22

- C1 The contrast between the wicked and righteous in regard to possessions 37:21
 - D1 The non-repayment of the wicked borrower: {21} The **wicked** borrows and does not pay back,
 - D2 The gracious giving of the righteous: But the righteous is gracious and gives.
- C2 The opposing destinies of those blessed and cursed by Yahweh 37:22
 - D1 Inheritance of the land for the blessed: {22} For those blessed by Him will inherit the land,
 - D2 Cutting off for the cursed: But **those cursed** by Him will be cut off.

A4 YAHWEH'S ETERNAL CARE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS 37:23-34

B1 Mem. Yahweh's Sovereign Guidance and Protection of the Righteous Man 37:23-24

C1 Yahweh's sovereign, joyful guidance of (the righteous) man 37:23

D1 Yahweh's sovereignty: {23} The steps of a man are established by the LORD,

D2 Yahweh's delight: And He delights in his way.

C2 Yahweh's tender protection of (the righteous) man 37:24

D1 His protection: {24} When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong,

D2 His personal attention! Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.

B2 Nun. The Righteous Man is Never Destitute, But Graciously Blesses Others 37:25-26

C1 The survivability of the righteous 37:25

D1 The length of David's observation of the righteous

E1 {25} I have been young

E2 and now I am old,

D2 The conclusion from David's observation of the righteous

E1 Not forsaken: Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken

E2 Not destitute: Or his descendants begging bread.

C2 The generosity of the righteous 37:26

D1 His own generosity: {26} All day long he is gracious and lends,

D2 The generosity of his descendants: And his descendants are a blessing.

B3 Samech. Eternal Life -- the Benefit of Departing from Evil and Doing Good 37:27-29

C1 Prescription for eternal life 37:27

D1 Negative prescription: {27} Depart from evil

D2 Positive prescription: and do good,

D3 Result: So you will abide **forever**.

- C2 The reason for eternal life 37:28
 - D1 The love of Yahweh for justice: {28} For the LORD loves justice
 - D2 Yahweh's eternal preservation of the godly
 - E1 Negatively, He does not forsake them: And does not forsake His godly ones;
 - E2 Positively, He preserves them forever: They are preserved **forever**,
 - D3 Yahweh's deadly opposition to the wicked: But the descendants of the **wicked** will be cut off.
- C3 The description of eternal life possessed by the righteous 37:29
 - D1 Possessing land: {29} The righteous will inherit the land
 - D2 Dwelling in it forever! And dwell in it **forever**.

B4 Pe. The Beneficent Speech and Unfaltering Walk of the Righteous 37:30-31

- C1 The beneficent speech of the righteous 37:30
 - D1 Wisdom from his mouth: {30} The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom,
 - D2 Justice from his tongue: And his tongue speaks justice.
- C2 The unfaltering walk of the righteous 37:31
 - D1 His heart governed by the law of Elohim: {31} The law of his God is in his heart;
 - D2 His steps thus unfaltering: His steps do not slip.

B5 Tzaddi. The Wicked Man's Attempts to Kill the Righteous, Who Is Nevertheless Protected by Yahweh 37:32-33

- C1 The murderous intent of the wicked 37:32
 - D1 {32} The **wicked** spies upon the righteous
 - D2 And seeks to kill him.
- C2 The protection of Yahweh 37:33
 - D1 {33} The LORD will not leave him in **his** hand
 - D2 Or let him be condemned when he is judged.

B6 Koph. The Counsel to Serve Yahweh Dependently and Humbly, Anticipating Exaltation and Vindication 37:34

- C1 The listener exhorted to anticipate Yahweh obediently
 - D1 Look eagerly for Him: {34} Wait for the LORD
 - D2 Observe His directives: and keep His way,
- C2 The benefits for the humble follower of Yahweh
 - D1 Exaltation to possess land: And He will exalt you to inherit the land;
 - D2 Vindication -- viewing the demise of the wicked: When the **wicked** are cut off, you will see it.

A5 THE DEMISE OF THE WICKED CONTRASTED WITH THE SALVATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS 37:35-40

B1 Resh. The Vanishing of the Wicked after Apparent Initial Success 37:35-36

- C1 The initial success of the wicked 37:35
 - D1 The characterization of the wicked: {35} I have seen a **wicked, violent** man
 - D2 The description of the wicked: Spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil.
- C2 The unsuccessful end of the wicked 37:36
 - D1 His departure: {36} Then **he** passed away,⁶ and lo, **he** was no more;
 - D2 His inability to be found: I sought for **him**, but **he** could not be found.

⁶ 37:36 - passed away: Neither the Hebrew Lexicon of Brown Driver Briggs (*BDB*) nor *Strong's Concordance* list death as a meaning of *abar*. It is a transitional word, used, for example, of crossing over a stream or wadi, or crossing a border or boundary. All that can be said in this instance is that the wicked man encountered some transition in his life, and he vanished from the scene. What that transition was cannot be stated precisely, although death, perhaps, cannot be ruled out (see the following phrase).

B2 Schin. The Viable Future of the Descendants of the Righteous Contrasted with the Demise of the Descendants of the Wicked 37:37-38

- C1 The future of the righteous man and his descendants 37:37
- D1 The listener instructed to take note of the upright and blameless man: {37} Mark the blameless man, and behold the upright;
- D2 The prediction for the man of peace -- descendants with a viable future: For the man of peace will have a posterity.⁷
- C2 The future of the wicked people and their descendants 37:38
- D1 The corporate destruction of the transgressors: {38} But **transgressors** will be altogether destroyed;
- D2 The obliteration of the future wicked: The posterity of the **wicked** will be cut off.

B3 Tau. Yahweh's Deliverance of the Trusting Righteous from the Wicked 37:39-40

- C1 Yahweh, the source of salvation for the righteous 37:39
- D1 The source of deliverance; {39} But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD;
- D2 The time of deliverance: He is their strength in time of trouble.
- C2 The description of Yahweh's salvation 37:40
- D1 The statement of His deliverance
- E1 {40} The LORD helps them
- E2 and delivers them;
- D2 The context of His deliverance: He delivers them from the **wicked** and saves them,
- D3 The reason for His deliverance: Because they take refuge in Him.

⁷ 37:37, 38 - posterity (*'achariyth* - 319): Though Psalm 37:37b and 37:38b are translated by KJV as "for the *end* of that man is peace," and "the *end* of the wicked shall be cut off;" and NIV translates both members, "there is a *future* for the man of peace" and "the *future* of the wicked will be cut off," NNAS is probably more accurate in its translations: "the man of peace will have a *posterity*" (37:37b) and "The *posterity* of the wicked will be cut off" (37:38b). This is so because *'achariyth* must be governed by the parallel member of its context. Since in 37:38a, we read, "But the transgressors will be altogether destroyed," (the subject being wicked people), so the subject of the second half of the member, "the *'achariyth* of the wicked will be cut off," likely also refers to wicked people who are *descendants*, not an abstract *future* or *end*. Since the two verses of Ps. 37:37-38 are both governed by the letter Schin, what is true in v. 38 is also likely true in v. 37. Since *'achariyth* in v. 38 refers to descendants, it also likely refers to descendants (rather than an abstract *future* or *end*) in v. 37. See also Ps. 109:13, where all three translations translate *'achariyth* as *descendants* or *posterity*.

Nevertheless, it is at least conceivable that in the Divine mind there is a hint of a more abstract idea -- that of a future life for the righteous -- possibly even the resurrection! (See Prov. 23:17-18.)

Note: Underlines, double underlines, and bold font have been introduced by WordExplain in places to better capture the flow of this psalm.

Expanded Analysis of Psalm 37

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