



Psalm 37 - Hope for the Righteous

"Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret--it only causes harm." (Psalm 37:1-2;7-8)

THREE times in this Psalm, the bible instructs us not to fret when we see the wicked prospering and having their way on the earth. The Hebrew word for “fret” means “to blaze up” with “jealousy.” The bible instructs us not to envy the wicked. In Proverbs 23:17-18 we read: “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; for surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off.” Over and over in this Psalm, the bible tells us the fate of the wicked in such phrases as:

“For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and whither as the green herb.” vs. 2

“For evildoers shall be cut off...” vs. 9

“For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more.” vs. 10

“The Lord laughs at him, for He sees that his day is coming.” vs. 13

“For the arms of the wicked shall be broken...” vs. 17

“But the wicked shall perish; and the enemies of the LORD, like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away.” vs. 20

“...But those cursed by Him shall be cut off.” vs. 22

“But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the future of the wicked shall be cut off.” vs. 38

The ageless question is: “Why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer?” Job asked that question. He said: “Why do the wicked live and become old, yes, become mighty in power? Their descendants are established with them in their sight, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull breeds without failure; their cow calves without miscarriage. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They sing to the tambourine and harp, and rejoice to the sound of the flute. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Yet they say to God, ‘Depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?’” (Job 21:7-15).

David also asked the same question in Psalm 73. He says: “But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish. They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. Behold, these are the ungodly, who are always at ease; they increase in riches” (Psalm 73:2-9; 12).

But then the Lord opens the eyes of David and gives him the right perspective and he sees the fate of the wicked. He says: “When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me – until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakes, so, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image. For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry” (Psalm 73:16-20; 27). Job also is awakened to the fate of the wicked and says: “For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom; they shall be brought out on the day of wrath” (Job 21:30).

Over and over in Psalm 37, God tells us not to fret and not to envy the wicked but to “trust in the LORD,” “delight in the LORD,” “commit our way to the LORD,” “rest in the LORD,” and “wait on the LORD.” Over and over in this Psalm, God pronounces blessings on the righteous and that their hope will not be cut off. The righteous may not enjoy in this life all the comforts and the ease of the world like the wicked. But as David, the righteous says to the LORD: “O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; you maintain my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance. I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons. I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved” (Psalm 16:5-8). And as Jeremiah says: “The LORD is my portion, says my soul, therefore I hope in Him!” (Lam. 3:24).

Consider a few out of many blessings that the righteous has in Christ which the wicked will never share in:

1. The peace of Christ to sustain us – John 14:27; John 16:33.
2. The joy of the Lord – Neh. 8:10; John 15:11.
3. Abundant life – John 10:10.
4. Open access to the throne of grace (God listens and answers our prayers by coming through Christ our High Priest) – Heb. 4:14-16.
5. Freedom from sin – John 8:34-35; Rom. 6:14.
6. Peace with God – Rom. 5:1.
7. Reconciliation (being reconciled to God by Christ our Mediator) – 2 Cor. 5:18.
8. Forgiveness of sins – Eph. 1:7.
9. Adoption as sons of God – Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:5.
10. Redemption (being redeemed from our sins by the blood of Christ) – Rom. 3:24.
11. Justification (being declared righteous before God) – Rom. 5:1.

12. Sanctification (being conformed to the image of Christ) – Rom. 8:29.
13. Glorification (being glorified with Christ in the age to come) – Rom. 8:30; John 17:22.
14. Eternal life – Rom. 6:23.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (Eph. 1:3-8).

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*My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,
His coffers are full, He has riches untold.*

*My Father's own Son, the Savior of men,
Once wandered on earth as the poorest of them;
But now He is pleading our pardon on high,
That we may be His when He comes by and by.*

*I once was an outcast stranger on earth,
A sinner by choice, an alien by birth,
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,
An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown.*

*A tent or a cottage, why should I care?
They're building a palace for me over there;
Though exiled from home, yet still may I sing:
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King.*

*I'm a child of the King,
A child of the King:
With Jesus my Savior,
I'm a child of the King.*

~ Harriet E. Buell (1834-1910)