



Psalm 37 - Exhortation to Patience and Trust

Of David.

Introduction

This can be called a wisdom psalm because it is a hymn that reflects on themes normally dealt with in the Wisdom Literature. In particular, it addresses the problem caused when godless people prosper; it helps the faithful to see that it really is better to stay loyal to the Lord, a loyalty expressed in contentment, honest dealing, generosity, and just speech. The Lord will make the distinction between the two groups clear in his own time, and the faithful must wait patiently.

This psalm has many parallel texts in Proverbs. The psalm follows an acrostic pattern, although it is slightly different from that of Psalms 25 and 34; here each grouping of usually two verses begins with the next successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. True to form for Davidic acrostics, this one is imperfect: the s grouping includes vv.27-29, and there is no 'ayin grouping after it as v.30 begins with p.

Psalm 37:1-11 - Do Not Be Envious of Evildoers.

The opening stanza sets forth the overall theme: Do not fret because of the wicked, especially when it seems that they are prospering, trust in the Lord, and do good. The reason not to fret is the assurance that justice will come in the end: the evildoers will soon fade like the grass (v.2) and shall be cut off (v.9), while the faithful, i.e. those who wait for the Lord – shall inherit the land (v.9); that is, they will remain after the Lord purges the wicked from the land; as confirmed by: **<<For the upright will abide in the land, and the innocent will remain in it; but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous will be rooted out of it>>** (Proverbs 2:21-22).

Those who enjoy security (v.3) will delight themselves in the Lord (v.4), commit their way to him (v.5), be still before him (v.7), and wait patiently for him (v.7);

thus they will be able to refrain from anger (v.8), i.e. from the resentment they would naturally feel toward the godless who prosper.

- 1 Do not fret because of the wicked;
do not be envious of wrongdoers,
- 2 for they will soon fade like the grass,
and wither like the green herb.

Psalm 37:1-2

Do not fret because of the wicked. Verse one is almost identical to: <<*Do not fret because of evildoers. Do not envy the wicked*>> (Proverbs 24:19); it has similarities to: <<*Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always continue in the fear of the Lord. Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off*>> (Proverbs 23:17-18). It is a common thing for the righteous to fret or be envious about the wicked. Asaph was bothered by this problem in Psalm 73, wondering why the wicked often experienced so much prosperity.

For they will soon fade like the grass. David gives the same answer Asaph came to in Psalm 73, understanding that any prosperity experienced by the workers of iniquity was only temporal: <<*A mortal, born of woman, few of days and full of trouble, comes up like a flower and withers, flees like a shadow and does not last*>> (Job 14:2), and: <<*The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass*>> (Isaiah 40:7). Grass is green for a season, and so is the herb, but they both wither quickly. In the Middle East the lush spring vegetation may lose its beauty in a few days after a hot, dry desert wind, Hebrew *hamsin*, has parched the land: <<*Their people, drained of power, are dismayed and put to shame. They are like plants in the field, like tender green shoots, like grass sprouting on the roof, scorched before it grows up*>> (2 Kings 19:26 NIV).

- 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good;
so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.
- 4 Take delight in the Lord,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:3-4

Trust in the Lord, and do good. Instead of worry and envy, David counselled the man or woman of God to simply trust God and do good for his glory. It is remarkable how quickly people can get distracted from the simple work of trusting

God and doing good, and often looking at the seeming prosperity of the wicked is one way they are often distracted.

So you will live in the land, and enjoy security. David also counselled the man or woman of God to leave aside worry and envy by simply enjoying the blessings God gives. He provided Israel a land to enjoy, and his faithfulness was like food for them every day.

He will give you the desires of your heart. This is a wonderful and even safe promise. The one who truly delights in the Lord will find their heart and desires changed, steadily aligning with God's own good desires for one's life: **<<You have given him his heart's desire, and have not withheld the request of his lips>>** (Psalm 21:2). Thus finding delight in God is the key to a happy, satisfied life: **<<But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well>>** (Matthew 6:33). This shows that God intends to fulfil the heart's desires of the redeemed man or woman of God. To be sure, it is possible for such desires to be clouded by sin or selfishness; yet even when so clouded there is almost always a godly root to the desire that is entirely in the will of God. The man or woman of God should find their rest in this, and leave aside worry and envy: **<<He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear>>** (Luke 12:22), and: **<<Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another>>** (Galatians 5:26).

The desires of your heart. Some take 'the desires' as referring to the feeling of desire, i.e. 'God will shape your heart so that it desires the right things'; but the sense is rather, 'he will give you what your heart desires.' It is safe to say this to those who embrace the advice of this psalm, because as they **delight in the Lord**, their hearts will desire the right things.

Delight in the Lord. David advised the man or woman of God to replace worry and envy with a conscious delight in the Lord. This means to cheer one's heart and mind by considering and by faith receiving the multiple goodness and blessings of God. The prophet concurs: **<<If you refrain from trampling the sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you honour it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken>>** (Isaiah 58:13-14).

The principle of v.4 is the foundation for a principle sometimes called Christian Hedonism. It is a pursuit of satisfaction and pleasure, but rooted in a delighted focus upon God.

- 5 Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him, and he will act.
- 6 He will make your vindication shine like the light,
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

Psalm 37:5-6

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. Here David explained what it meant to delight one's self in the Lord, as described in the previous verse. It means to commit one's way to him and to truly trust in Lord. It means to find peace, protection, and satisfaction in a surrendered focus upon God. The Hebrew for commit is literally 'roll', as though getting rid of a burden: <<*The Lord said to Joshua, 'Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.'* And so that place is called Gilgal to this day>> (Joshua 5:9). However, it comes to be used simply as a synonym for trust: <<*Trust your work to the Lord, and your plans will work out well*>> (Proverbs 16:3 NLV) or commit: <<*Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver – let him rescue the one in whom he delights!*>> (Psalm 22:8).

Trust in him, and he will act. The one who has this delighted focus upon God will see him bring these promises to pass. Fame and fortune are not promised, neither is good health or a long life, but the true and deep desires of the heart find their fulfilment deep within the soul.

He will make your vindication shine like the light. As God fulfils these desires of the heart it reveals the righteousness of the man or woman of God, shining forth in light like the noonday sun: <<*You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven*>> (Matthew 5:14-16).

- 7 Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him;
do not fret over those who prosper in their way,
over those who carry out evil devices.
- 8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath.
Do not fret – it leads only to evil.

Psalm 37:7-8

Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him. Because God has promised to faithfully take care of those who put their trust in him, they can rest in the Lord. They can wait patiently for him instead of fretting and fearing that God has forgotten them or intends evil for them. Rest in the Lord speaks of a particular kind of rest, the rest of silence, ceasing from words of self-defence. The idea is that believers will not speak to vindicate themselves, but will trust in God to protect them. This sentiment is reflected elsewhere: <<*Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth*>> (Psalm 46:10), and: <<*I hear, and I tremble within; my lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness enters into my bones, and my steps tremble beneath me. I wait quietly for the day of calamity to come upon the people who attack us*>> (Habakkuk 3:16).

Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath. Do not fret – it leads only to evil. David wisely advised the man or woman of God to give up anger, wrath, and worry, i.e. fret. They accomplish nothing except harm. They are the opposite of delighting one's self in the Lord and patiently waiting upon him. Paul taught this as well: <<*Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you*>> (Ephesians 4:31-32), <<*But now you must get rid of all such things – anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth*>> (Colossians 3:8).

- ⁹ For the wicked shall be cut off,
but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.
- ¹⁰ Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more;
though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there.
- ¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the land,
and delight in abundant prosperity.

Psalm 37:9-11

The contrast between the two outcomes, those who shall be cut off and those who shall inherit the land, recurs throughout this psalm. Cut off generally refers to divine judgement, which removes a person from the people of God, for example: <<*Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant*>> (Genesis 17:14), <<*But those who eat flesh from the Lord's sacrifice of well-being while in a state of uncleanness shall be cut off from their kin*>> (Leviticus 7:20); in this

psalm, it looks forward to the posterity of the wicked' (v.38), which likely refers to his afterlife, since it contrasts with one's 'hope' in: <<**Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off**>> (Proverbs 23:18), and: <<**Know that wisdom is such to your soul; if you find it, you will find a future, and your hope will not be cut off**>> (Proverbs 24:14). Wisdom Literature recognises that God may wait until the afterlife to fully display his distinction between the faithful and the godless.

Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more. The evildoers have their day of prosperity, but it is short-lived. Soon the wicked who are the famous and praised in this world will be of no notice or standing at all, i.e. though you look diligently for their place, they will not be there: <<**As the cloud fades and vanishes, so those who go down to Sheol do not come up; they return no more to their houses, nor do their places know them any more**>> (Job 7:9-10), and: <<**The merchants among the peoples hiss at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more for ever**>> (Ezekiel 27:36).

But the meek shall inherit the land. For emphasis, David repeated the idea of God's care for and reward to the meek. They, not the evildoers of this world, shall delight in abundant prosperity. Jesus uses this in the third beatitude: <<**Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth**>> (Matthew 5:5). The benefits Jesus describes there are all revealed at the last day, and it is legitimate to see v.11 referring to this in its original context. Firstly, the psalm is concerned with ultimate outcomes, not simply the benefits of this present world; and secondly, OT Wisdom Literature as a whole addresses this same concern.

Psalm 37:12-20 - The Lord Thwarts the Schemes of the Wicked.

The wicked person may hatch all manner of schemes against the righteous person (v.12), but God will see to it that they come to nothing and that the wicked will perish unfulfilled (v.20). The faithful who take this to heart can live in contentment, even with little (v.16), and confirmed by: <<**Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it**>> (Proverbs 15:16), and: <<**Better is a little with righteousness than large income with injustice**>> (Proverbs 16:8). They can be confident that the Lord knows the days of the blameless (v.18) and thus can provide for them even in the days of famine (v.19). Biblical wisdom does not have a simplistic 'just trust God and you will be well off' mentality; it speaks to the very challenging life situations that God's people often face.

¹² The wicked plot against the righteous,
and gnash their teeth at them;

¹³ but the Lord laughs at the wicked,

for he sees that their day is coming.

- 14 The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows
to bring down the poor and needy,
to kill those who walk uprightly;
- 15 their sword shall enter their own heart,
and their bows shall be broken.

Psalm 37:12-15

The wicked plot against the righteous, and gnash their teeth at them. Earlier in this psalm David contrasted the fate of the righteous with the fate of the wicked. Now he considered the inevitable conflict between the righteous and the wicked, how, without reason, the wicked plots against the just: <<*And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'>>* (Acts 4:24-26 ESV). Their gnashing of teeth shows the depth of their anger and hatred.

But the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees that their day is coming. For all the plotting and gnashing of teeth of the wicked, they accomplish nothing against the Lord and his people. God simply laughs at them, knowing their end: <<*Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the Lord God: I will put an end to this proverb, and they shall use it no more as a proverb in Israel.' But say to them, The days are near, and the fulfilment of every vision>>* (Ezekiel 12:23).

The wicked draw the sword and bend their bows. The wicked plot and gnash their teeth, but do not stop there. They work to carry out their plots and their fierce anger against God's people. Even so, God shall protect his own; as for their opponents: their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken: <<*The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength>>* (1 Samuel 2:4), and: <<*He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire>>* (Psalm 46:9).

16 Better is a little that the righteous person has
than the abundance of many wicked.

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
but the Lord upholds the righteous.

Psalm 37:16-17

Better is a little that the righteous person has than the abundance of many wicked. Because whatever the wicked have cannot last, the little that the righteous man has is better than all that the wicked possess. A God-trusting, righteous life is the best long-term investment strategy.

For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous. The reward of the wicked is to have their own arms broken. The reward of the righteous is to be upheld by God's own arms: <<*but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint*>> (Isaiah 40:31).

18 The Lord knows the days of the blameless,
and their heritage will abide for ever;

19 they are not put to shame in evil times,
in the days of famine they have abundance.

20 But the wicked perish,
and the enemies of the Lord are like the glory of the pastures;
they vanish – like smoke they vanish away.

Psalm 37:18-20

The Lord knows the days of the blameless, and their heritage will abide for ever. The apparent reward of the wicked is temporary and fleeting. The inheritance of the upright is eternal. All this is more reason to not worry or envy the wicked in their seeming yet temporal prosperity.

In the days of famine they have abundance. God can even find a way to provide for his own when others have nothing.

Like smoke they vanish away. The success, fame, and prosperity of the wicked is as temporary as smoke. It never has any real substance and soon vanishes completely: <<*For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a*

furnace>> (Psalm 102:3), and: <<Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be for ever, and my deliverance will never be ended>> (Isaiah 51:6).

Psalm 37:21-31 - Therefore Commit Yourself to Doing Good.

The person who is content is free to do good, e.g. to give generously to those in need. Without such contentment one might be greedy and envious, or else be fearful over one's own poverty. He is also free to do good (v.27), because he will not resort to unjust means of acquiring wealth. He knows that the steps of such a man are established by the Lord (v.23), and thus even though he fall, that is, probably suffer material hardship, he can recover, for the Lord upholds his hand (v.24). A person like this, with the law of his God in his heart (v.31), is one whose words are worth listening to: he utters wisdom (v.30).

Verse 25 does not deny that there may be temporary setbacks for the righteous or their children; the focus is on the ultimate outcomes, as confirmed by the mention of being young and then old, presenting a long term perspective. Further, the observation took place within Israel, which was under God's special care; as the people of God have spread over the world, there is more opportunity for them to suffer under the evil of those who oppose them.

- ²¹ The wicked borrow, and do not pay back,
but the righteous are generous and keep giving;
- ²² for those blessed by the Lord shall inherit the land,
but those cursed by him shall be cut off.

Psalm 37:21-22

The wicked borrow, and do not pay back, but the righteous are generous and keep giving. David knew that the difference between the wicked and the righteous was not only found in what they believed and in whom they trusted. The difference was also often seen in their conduct. The wicked are takers, borrowing and not repaying. The righteous are givers, full of mercy: <<*If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them; they shall live with you as though resident aliens*>> (Leviticus 25:35), <<*It is well with those who deal generously and lend, who conduct their affairs with justice*>> (Psalm 112:5), and: <<*The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is*

able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever'>> (2 Corinthians 9:6-9).

For those blessed by the Lord shall inherit the land. The promise of earth-inheritance is repeated a third time. This is a blessing for the righteous, while the wicked find themselves cursed by the Lord and cut off: <<*I have seen fools taking root, but suddenly I cursed their dwelling*>> (Job 5:3).

- ²³ Our steps are made firm by the Lord,
when he delights in our way;
- ²⁴ though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong,
for the Lord holds us by the hand.

Psalm 37:23-24

Our steps are made firm by the Lord. The reward for the righteous is not only in the age to come. In the present day, God guides the steps of good people. As they seek the Lord and delight in him, they find their life proves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, as called for by Paul in Romans 12:1-2.

When he delights in our way. Another great and present benefit for the righteous man or woman is the knowledge that God delights in them. This is especially clear for the believer under the New Covenant who knows and experiences a standing in grace, having been justified by faith: <<*Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God*>> (Romans 5:1-2).

Though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds us by the hand. David described a third great benefit for the righteous man or woman who trusts in the Lord. Although they may at times fall in the sense of stumbling, they will not fall away, that is, shall not fall headlong. This is not because of their own internal strength or goodness, but because the Lord upholds him: <<*The Lord upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down*>> (Psalm 145:14).

- ²⁵ I have been young, and now am old,
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread.

26 They are ever giving liberally and lending,
and their children become a blessing.

Psalm 37:25-26

I have not seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. David gave a testimony from his own experience. He noted that God cared for those who trusted in the Lord and walked in his righteousness. They were not forsaken and their descendants were also blessed. This was David's testimony after many years, i.e. I have been young, and now am old. He saw God's faithfulness to his people and wanted a younger generation to also trust in him, learning from David's wisdom. David knew that among his ancestors were some who left Israel, fearful in a time of famine, such as Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons in Ruth Chapter 1. When Naomi returned after several disastrous years in Moab, they found the people of Bethlehem in Israel provided for. God knew how to take care of those who trusted in him in times of famine, and has done so since then. One way that God provides for the righteous and their descendants is through the ethic of hard work that belongs to the redeemed, who know that all things should be done heartily, as to the Lord, including working for a living: *<<and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labour we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat>>* (2 Thessalonians 3:8-10).

I have not seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. This statement is troublesome to some, because they have seen or experienced instances where godly men or women, or their offspring, have been in famine, extreme poverty, or reduced to begging. It should first be noted that this psalm is a wisdom psalm, very much like Proverbs. In the Bible's wisdom literature often general principles are presented in the absolute when they are intended to be understood as general or even overwhelming principles; not as if there were not exceptions. Also note that David simply wrote of his experience. He did not write that this was an absolute principle, but his own observation.

They are ever giving liberally and lending. In times of scarcity the righteous one not only receives God's provision, but with a generous and merciful heart he lends to others in need.

Their children become a blessing. Loving parents know the personal value of their children and should regard them as a blessing from God, who also knows their value: *<<Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your livestock, both the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock>>* (Deuteronomy 28:4), *<<Their children will be mighty in the land;*

the generation of the upright will be blessed>> (Psalm 112:2 NIV), <<*But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs’*>> (Mark 10:14).

²⁷ Depart from evil, and do good;
so you shall abide for ever.

²⁸ For the Lord loves justice;
he will not forsake his faithful ones.
The righteous shall be kept safe for ever,
but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.

²⁹ The righteous shall inherit the land,
and live in it for ever.

Psalm 37:27-29

Depart from evil, and do good. The righteous man or woman trusts in God, but also receives and values moral instruction: <<*Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it*>> (Psalm 34:14), and: <<*Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God*>> (3 John 11). God’s care for them does not make them careless, but careful in pleasing him.

For the Lord loves justice; he will not forsake his faithful ones. Since God loves justice, so should his people. He is faithful to them and does not forsake them, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off. The children who follow the wicked steps of wicked parents shall, like their parents, be cut off. God’s judgements descend to posterity, as well as his mercies: <<*You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments*>> (Exodus 20:5-6).

The righteous shall inherit the land, and live in it for ever. There is clearly an emphasis in the repetition of the same promise in the same terms which ought to have been uniformly rendered throughout the psalm. And it cannot be doubted, that there is a reference to the new heavens and the new earth of Isaiah 66:17, 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1.

30 The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,
and their tongues speak justice.

31 The law of their God is in their hearts;
their steps do not slip.

Psalm 37:30-31

The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom. David again turns to the conduct of God's righteous man or woman. They are noted for their wise and just words.

The law of their God is in their hearts. The righteous man or woman is also noted by their possession of and love for the Word of God. In a way that would be truly fulfilled by the New Covenant, they have the Word of God in their heart: <<***But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people***>> (Jeremiah 31:33). Because of this knowledge of and reliance upon God's Word, their steps do not slip.

Psalm 37:32-40 - The Lord Protects the Righteous from the Plots of the Wicked.

A common theme in the psalms is that the faithful are always under threat from the devices of the wicked, but that they may trust the Lord to preserve them. In this final section the assurance comes from the fact that the Lord will not abandon the faithful to the power of the wicked (vv.32-33), but will ensure that both the righteous and the wicked receive their proper reward in due time, probably in the life yet to come.

32 The wicked watch for the righteous,
and seek to kill them.

33 The Lord will not abandon them to their power,
or let them be condemned when they are brought to trial.

Psalm 37:32-33

The wicked watch for the righteous, and seek to kill them. In considering the remarkable blessings God has appointed to the righteous, David did not think it meant their life would be easy. One danger continually faced was from the wicked who hates the righteous without cause.

The Lord will not abandon them to their power. Thankfully, the righteous man or woman is not at the mercy of the wicked. God will protect them, particularly in the ultimate judgement, i.e. or let them be condemned when they are brought to trial: <<*then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgement*>> (2 Peter 2:9).

³⁴ Wait for the Lord, and keep to his way,
and he will exalt you to inherit the land;
you will look on the destruction of the wicked.

³⁵ I have seen the wicked oppressing,
and towering like a cedar of Lebanon.

³⁶ Again I passed by, and they were no more;
though I sought them, they could not be found.

Psalm 37:34-36

Wait for the Lord, and keep to his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land. For the fifth time in this psalm David promised the people of God that they would inherit the land. As king of Israel, David had a concern for their territory, but he could also extend that thought to the age to come. God's people have their place, even a land of some sort in the coming age.

You will look on the destruction of the wicked. Also for the fifth time in this psalm, David promised that the wicked would be cut off or cut down in some sense. Their coming doom was just as certain as the coming blessing and security of the righteous: <<*Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire*>> (Revelation 20:14-15).

I have seen the wicked oppressing. David once again relied on his personal experience and testimony. He had seen wicked people rise to great security and success, only to have passed by and to know the wicked had become no more: <<*The wicked are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous will stand*>> (Proverbs 12:7), <<*You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all*>> (Isaiah 41:12), and: <<*Then he shall turn back towards the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found*>> (Daniel 11:19).

37 Mark the blameless, and behold the upright,
for there is posterity for the peaceable.

38 But transgressors shall be altogether destroyed;
the posterity of the wicked shall be cut off.

Psalm 37:37-38

Mark the blameless, and behold the upright. The righteous men and women of this world get little attention. The culture is more interested in the godless and the wicked. Yet David counselled his readers to notice the blameless and the upright ones of this world, for there is posterity for the peaceable: <<*The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous are taken away from calamity, and they enter into peace; those who walk uprightly will rest on their couches*>> (Isaiah 57:1-2).

The posterity of the wicked shall be cut off. For the sixth and final time in this psalm, David reminds his readers that the future of the wicked is no future to be desired; their lives will come to nothing.

39 The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord;
he is their refuge in the time of trouble.

40 The Lord helps them and rescues them;
he rescues them from the wicked, and saves them,
because they take refuge in him.

Psalm 37:39-40

The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord. This is a helpful thought at the end of this psalm. In David's praise and encouragement of the righteous man or woman, it is possible that one might think those ones are saved by their own righteousness. David provides a reminder that their salvation is from the Lord, and that he is their refuge in the time of trouble.

He rescues them from the wicked, and saves them, because they take refuge in him. David brings the thought back to the fundamental trust that the righteous have in God. Their place in him is secured in their trusting love of the Lord: <<*Deliverance belongs to the Lord; may your blessing be on your people!*>> (Psalm 3:8).