

Highlights from the Psalms

Psalm 37:1-40

January 24, 2021

Psalms may be grouped in a variety of ways. In addition to what type the psalm is, there are those that are addressed directly to God; for example, psalms of worship and exaltation, psalms of request and desire, psalms that reveal expressions of the heart. There are also psalms that are directed to God (most of them) and psalms that are directed to the people. Some psalms are in the form of a Hebrew acrostic such as this one—it makes memorization easier. Of these, Psalm 37 is an acrostic and is directed to the people, dealing with one of the difficult questions of the Bible:

Why do the Wicked Prosper and the Righteous Suffer?

- I. **Place your trust in God's deliverance (vv.1-6)***
 - a. Do not fret because of evildoers
 - b. Do not envy the workers of iniquity
 - c. Commit your way to the Lord and trust in Him
 - d. He will bring forth your righteousness

- II. **Rest in the Lord: Calmly surrender to Him and wait patiently for His deliverance (vv. 7-26)**
 - a. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him
 - b. Do not fret because of him [the wicked] who prospers
 - c. Cease from anger and do not contemplate ways to get even
 - d. God will cut off the wicked, but the righteous will inherit the earth
 - e. Do not worry about the wicked who plots against the righteous, God will cut him off
 - f. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, even if he stumbles he shall not fall

- III. **Turn away from evil and do good (vv. 27-33)**
 - a. Depart from evil and do good, for the Lord preserves His saints forever
 - b. The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein forever
 - c. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom and the Law of God is in his heart

- IV. **Place your hope in the Lord's deliverance and walk faithfully (vv. 34-40)**
 - a. The wicked prospers only for a season and then withers away and cannot be found
 - b. The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord
 - c. He is the strength of the righteous in their times of trouble
 - d. The Lord will help them and deliver them from the wicked and save them because they trust in Him

The essence of Psalm 37 is assurance for those who love the Lord and do right. The wicked may prosper for a season and may even plot against the righteous, but God will sustain the righteous and care for all his needs. The key phrase is **do not fret**— God is in control and will deliverance and salvation for the righteous but judgment and destruction to the wicked. So **do not fret** and do not be envious of the evil ones.

**Key points of the outline (I—IV) are from The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible, pp. 287-293*