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.


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} Commit² 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: 37/6 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: 37/7 Rest in the LORD

D2 Wait longingly for Him: and wait patiently 3 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 37/8 Cease from anger

E2 and forsake wrath;

D2 Vexation

E1 The command: Do not fret;

E2 The reason: it leads only to evil doing.

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3 37:7 - patiently: The root word chuwl (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: \(\text{For evildoers will be cut off,}\)

D2 But those who wait 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 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: But the humble will inherit the land

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

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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.


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.

C1  Yahweh's knowing sustenance of the blameless  37:18

D1  His knowledge of their life and its span:  

D2  The resultant eternality 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:  

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:  

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:  

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:  

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


C1 Yahweh's sovereign, joyful guidance of (the righteous) man 37:23
   D1 Yahweh's sovereignty: 37:23 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: 37:24 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 37:25 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: 37:26 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: 37:27 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.

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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.

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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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Verse(s)</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>The future of the righteous man and his descendants</td>
<td>37:37</td>
<td>The listener instructed to take note of the upright and blameless man: {37} Mark the blameless man, and behold the upright;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>The prediction for the man of peace -- descendants with a viable future: For the man of peace will have a posterity.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>The future of the wicked people and their descendants</td>
<td>37:38</td>
<td>The corporate destruction of the transgressors: {38} But transgressors will be altogether destroyed; The obliteration of the future wicked: The posterity of the wicked will be cut off.</td>
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**B3** Tau. Yahweh's Deliverance of the Trusting Righteous from the Wicked 37:39-40

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<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Yahweh, the source of salvation for the righteous</td>
<td>37:39</td>
<td>The source of deliverance; {39} But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>The time of deliverance: He is their strength in time of trouble.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>The description of Yahweh's salvation</td>
<td>37:40</td>
<td>The statement of His deliverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>{40} The LORD helps them</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>and delivers them:</td>
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<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>The context of His deliverance: He delivers them from the wicked and saves them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>The reason for His deliverance: Because they take refuge in Him.</td>
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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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