

Israel's Hymnal
Biblical Research Monthly
February; March, 1947
Dr. David L. Cooper

PSALM THIRTY-SEVEN

[Pss 37:1] Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness.

[Pss 37:2] For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb.

[Pss 37:3] Trust in Jehovah, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on [his] faithfulness.

[Pss 37:4] Delight thyself also in Jehovah; And he will give thee the desires of thy heart.

[Pss 37:5] Commit thy way unto Jehovah; Trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass.

[Pss 37:6] And he will make thy righteousness to go forth as the light, And thy justice as the noon-day.

[Pss 37:7] Rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for him: Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

[Pss 37:8] Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: Fret not thyself, [it tendeth] only to evil-doing.

[Pss 37:9] For evil-doers shall be cut off; But those that wait for Jehovah, they shall inherit the land.

[Pss 37:10] For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and he shall not be.

[Pss 37:11] But the meek shall inherit the land, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

[Pss 37:12] The wicked plotteth against the just, And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

[Pss 37:13] The Lord will laugh at him; For he seeth that his day is coming.

[Pss 37:14] The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, To cast down the poor and needy, To slay such as are upright in the way.

[Pss 37:15] Their sword shall enter into their own heart, And their bows shall be broken.

[Pss 37:16] Better is a little that the righteous hath Than the abundance of many wicked.

[Pss 37:17] For the arms of the wicked shall be broken; But Jehovah upholdeth the righteous.

[Pss 37:18] Jehovah knoweth the days of the perfect; And their inheritance shall be for ever.

[Pss 37:19] They shall not be put to shame in the time of evil; And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

[Pss 37:20] But the wicked shall perish, And the enemies of Jehovah shall be as the fat of lambs: They shall consume; In smoke shall they consume away.

[Pss 37:21] The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again; But the righteous dealeth graciously, and giveth.

[Pss 37:22] For such as are blessed of him shall inherit the land; And they that are cursed of him shall be cut off.

[Pss 37:23] A man's goings are established of Jehovah; And he delighteth in his way.

[Pss 37:24] Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For Jehovah upholdeth him with his hand.

[Pss 37:25] I have been young, and now am old; Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his seed begging bread.

[Pss 37:26] All the day long he dealeth graciously, and lendeth; And his seed is blessed.

[Pss 37:27] Depart from evil, and do good; And dwell for evermore.

[Pss 37:28] For Jehovah loveth justice, And forsaketh not his saints; They are preserved for ever: But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

[Pss 37:29] The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell therein for ever.

[Pss 37:30] The mouth of the righteous talketh of wisdom, And his tongue speaketh justice.

[Pss 37:31] The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide.

[Pss 37:32] The wicked watcheth the righteous, And seeketh to slay him.

[Pss 37:33] Jehovah will not leave him in his hand, Nor condemn him when he is judged.

[Pss 37:34] Wait for Jehovah, and keep his way, And he will exalt thee to inherit the land: When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

[Pss 37:35] I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil.

[Pss 37:36] But one passed by, and, lo, he was not: Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

[Pss 37:37] Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; For there is a [happy] end to the man of peace.

[Pss 37:38] As for transgressors, they shall be destroyed together; The end of the wicked shall be cut off.

[Pss 37:39] But the salvation of the righteous is of Jehovah; He is their stronghold in the time of trouble.

[Pss 37:40] And Jehovah helpeth them, and rescueth them; He rescueth them from the wicked, and saveth them, Because they have taken refuge in him.

Exhortations of Encouragement to the Righteous and Warning to the Wicked

- I. Interpretation and application.
 - A. Interpretation.
 - B. Application.
- II. The background of Psalm 37 in Leviticus 26:1-13 and its sequel in the Sermon on the Mount.
- III. Exposition of Psalm 37.
 - A. Special exhortations to the righteous (vss. 1-9).
 - B. The wicked contrasted with the righteous (vss. 10-22).
 - C. Jehovah's preservation of the righteous (vss. 23-24).
 - D. A contrast between the end of the righteous and that of the wicked (vss. 35-40).

Psalm 37 is one of the favorite selections of the Psalter. The reason for this is that it contains so very much material that is used in a devotional manner and has been of inestimable value to the saints of God through the centuries. Because of its wonderful teachings and its great value I wish to present it to my readers.

I. Interpretation and application

It is essential that the reader of the Scriptures should differentiate clearly between the interpretation of a passage and an application of the same. The interpretation is the unfolding of the exact meaning which the writer had when he made his record. In order to determine the exact significance of a passage, a person must understand, if possible, who wrote it, to whom he wrote, under what conditions he was writing, and about what the message was sent. Moreover he should know the time and the outlook if possible. The fuller the information of these points we have, the more clearly we can understand the meaning of a given passage. But we do not always have all of this information. Often times we have very little data with which to start. Very frequently we must depend upon hints that are gathered from the passage that is being studied.

In the case of Psalm 37 we know that David was the human author and that the Holy Spirit was speaking through him. Since this psalm is one of the hymns in Israel's psalm book, which she was to use in connection with her worship of God, we know that the psalm was written to and for Israel. In this connection let us remember that we must distinguish definitely and accurately between Israel and the church. I recognize the fact that the church of the New Testament may have been called in Gal. 6:16 the "Israel of God," or the spiritual Israel; but we must be very careful in taking that which was spoken to national Israel under the law and appropriating it to the spiritual Israel of the New Testament.

In order that we might interpret this psalm correctly, I wish to call attention to the fact that this hymn is nationalistic in its outlook and must be thus interpreted.

A. Interpretation

Evidence proving that this hymn is nationalistic in its scope and outlook and applies to Israel as a race is seen from the fact that repeatedly reference is made to the complete destruction of the wicked and their annihilation from human society. In verse 2 we read:

"For they [the wicked] shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb."

Again, in verse 10, we read:

"For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and he shall not be."

These references undoubtedly refer to the purging of the wicked from the world which will take place in the Tribulation, "... the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." (II Pet. 3:7)

Another indication shows that this psalm is nationalistic in its outlook. The exhortation to "Dwell in the land, and feed on *his* faithfulness" can be interpreted only as an exhortation by the psalmist to Israel to remain in the land which God gave her, Palestine, and to feast upon God's faithfulness in fulfilling the promises of the good things of life to her. Leviticus 26:1-13 shows the promises which God made to Israel

upon the condition that she would be faithful to Him in dwelling in the land. In depending upon God to fulfill these promises, she would be feeding on His faithfulness. The same exhortation recurs in verse 27.

Further evidence that this psalm is nationalistic in its outlook is seen in verse 6:

"And he [Jehovah] will make thy righteousness to go forth as the light, And thy justice as the noon day." This promise is the same as that given through Isaiah to national Israel (Isa. 62:2): "And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name."

Another bit of evidence proving that the psalm is nationalistic in its outlook is the fact that the promise is made that certain ones shall inherit the land. Those falling into this category are the righteous, the perfect, and those who wait for the Lord. For example, in verse 9, we read: "But those that wait for Jehovah, they shall inherit the land." This promise is repeated in verse 11 to the meek: "But the meek shall inherit the land ..." Again, those who are blessed of the Lord are promised that they "shall inherit the land ..." (vs. 22).

This promise again appears in verse 29, also in 34. Since this is Israel's song and since reference is made to inheriting the land, it is obvious that the land of Palestine is what is referred to. The meek, the righteous, and those who wait for Jehovah will inherit the land given to Abraham and his descendants forever.

Further evidence that the outlook of the psalm is nationalistic is seen in the fact that Israel is urged to wait for Jehovah. In verse 7 we read: "Wait patiently for him [Jehovah] ..." Again we see the promise to inherit the land is given to those who "wait for Jehovah" (vs. 9). Finally, in verse 34, we find again the exhortation, "wait for Jehovah ..." The Old Testament saints were urged to wait for Jehovah, that is, to wait for Him to appear personally upon the earth. David declared that he would have fainted had he not hoped to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living (Ps. 27:13,14). God's goodness is a synonym for His very presence (Read Exodus 33:17-34:9). When the Lord told Hezekiah to set his house in order because he was going to die, he wept and mourned saying, "I said, I shall not see Jehovah *even* Jehovah in the land of the living ..." (Isa. 38:11). Hezekiah had been living in the expectation of Jehovah's appearing "in the land of the living." When the announcement was made that he would die, he declared that that hope vanished like a light. Thus he lamented not being able to see Jehovah in his natural life. These facts show that he was expecting Jehovah and waiting for Him.

When we consider the various passages to which reference has been made, we see that Psalm 37 is purely nationalistic in its scope and must so be interpreted if we want to see exactly the message of the psalm.

B. Application

Having seen that the psalm is purely Jewish and nationalistic—not individualistic—we may examine it; and, whatever principles that are of general application which we discover there, we may apply to those who are in a relation to God analogous to that in which Israel was. The Jewish people were the chosen ones of the Lord and stood in covenant relationship with Him. Though they did not enjoy the wonderful

privileges which are given to us in Christ, they did sustain a spiritual relationship to God and were His children of that age.

Whatever principles in this psalm, as in any other portion of the Scriptures, that set forth the relationship between God and His children may be applied to those who are sons and daughters of God at the present day. For instance, the exhortation, "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers," in verse 1 may be applied to children of God today; for many of us need it. In verse 3 appears the exhortation to trust in Jehovah and to do good. Without faith it is impossible for anyone to be pleasing the Lord. We should therefore trust Him at all times. But the following entreaty, "Dwell in the land," is not applicable to us. There is no special land which God has given to Christians and in which they are urged to dwell. Thus this verse does not find an analogy in the Christian experience and should not be forced to make it apply to us today. We might, however, say to our fellow-Christians that they should have a closer walk with God daily and enjoy the fullness of His presence and blessing. Such is the teaching of the New Testament. Moreover, the exhortation to "Delight thyself also in Jehovah" is especially appropriate for us today. We are also commanded by the New Testament to commit our way unto God and to trust in Him, for He assures us that He will bring that to pass which should be with respect to each of us. We too are to rest in Jehovah, our Lord Jesus Christ, and wait patiently for His return.

As we look at this psalm we see that most of the exhortations found here are repeated in the New Testament; and Christians are urged to follow out these principles. As we study Old Testament passages, it is well for us, having seen a principle which we are confident is of universal application, to find one in the New Testament that will reinforce it. By our doing this we shall avoid making misapplications of scripture.

II. The background of Psalm 37 in Leviticus 26:1-13 and its sequel in the Sermon on the Mount.

And examination of Leviticus 26:1-13 shows that, if Israel had only been obedient to God and faithful in the observance of the ordinances, the Lord would have made Palestine a veritable Utopia—Paradise regained. The Lord would not have laid upon her the diseases of Egypt. He would have fought her battles for her. The rains would have come in their proper season. There never would have been any short crops or crop failures; but there would always have been an abundance so that the people could not consume one year's crop before the next one was ready to be harvested. The Lord would have stood guard at her borders and would not have allowed any foreign soldiers to cross them and attack Israel. Thus Israel would have lived in a modern Utopia, had she been obedient to the Lord. These promises are reiterated in the parallel passage found in Deuteronomy 28:1-16. Both of these scriptures were spoken by Moses—one at the beginning of the forty-year period of wilderness wandering and the other at the end of it.

Approximately five hundred years after Moses gave these exhortations and uttered these promises, King David reiterated the same thing in Psalm 37. Figuratively speaking, he went along in the same groove in which Moses moved in the Leviticus 26:1-13 and Deuteronomy 28:1-16. The psalmist urged them to trust in God and to do good at all times. They were, as we see from verse 3, to remain in the land which God gave them. Naturally He had a purpose in placing Israel in this key position in the land, which was and is the center of the earth (Ezek. 38:12). The thought, to remain in the land and to feast upon God's faithfulness in fulfilling these promises, is contained in the passages referred to above and in many others.

They were not to desire to be like the nations round about them and to adopt their customs and manner of life. On the contrary, they were to wait patiently for Jehovah to appear in their midst, who would destroy the wicked from the earth and establish this reign of righteousness. Thus we see that the meek of Israel were urged to wait for Jehovah's appearance in order that they might inherit the land and enjoy "the abundance of peace" (vs. 11). When a person takes a stand that the psalm is nationalistic and Jewish in its outlook, he will see that it is very intelligible and is a repetition of the promises made by Moses in the passages cited above.

When anyone studies the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7, and the parallel account in Luke 6:20-49, we will see that our Lord had the same outlook and, figuratively speaking, went in the same groove as did Moses and David in passages at which we have just been looking. When Jesus was here upon earth, Palestine, according to Josephus, was seething with unrest and discontent. Most of the populous were anxiously awaiting the signal to be given by someone who could promise success in instituting a revolt against the Roman authority. There were very many ambitious men seeking their own desires and personal glorification. Our Lord therefore in the very first beatitude showed the type of character who would enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of heaven which John had announced before Him, and which He was preaching. Thus He declared, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." A careful study of Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount shows that this was our Lord's manifesto, or declaration of the principles for which He stood. He did not want the vast multitude which were thronging Him in various sections of the country to be under any delusions or false hopes. He cleared the atmosphere by enunciating the very principles for which He was standing. The great popular crowds were expecting a political Messiah who would establish a material kingdom. Doubtless many of them were very ambitious and wanted to get in on the ground floor of the enterprise. Our Lord therefore said that such scheming politicians would have no share in this kingdom of heaven, whose coming both John and He had announced. Our Lord laid emphasis upon the state and condition of the heart of the one who was to enjoy the things of the kingdom which He was about to establish. An examination of the Beatitudes shows that He laid the emphasis upon *being*, not upon *doing*. A person must be right at heart before he can act correctly in his daily conduct. The Lord emphasized the truth that one's righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees; otherwise he could not enter this kingdom. All the exhortations and the entreaties of the entire sermon assume that the heart is right. In other words, our Lord presumed the regeneration of the heart of those who were to enjoy and share in the blessings of this kingdom.

In the third beatitude, Matthew 5:5, Jesus declared "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." This is lifted from Psalm 37:11 and has the same significance. In teaching the disciples how to pray, our Lord said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth ..." (Matt. 6:9-13). Before this time Jesus had been, with John the Baptist, proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven had come to hand. In this declaration they were absolutely correct; for the kingdom of heaven had come to hand and was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord (Acts chap. 2). Men really enter the kingdom of God by the new birth. (See John 3:5.) When they are thus born again, regenerated, they can carry out, by the power of the Spirit of God dwelling in their hearts, the principles set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. Knowing that He would establish this kingdom of heaven on Pentecost and knowing that multitudes would come into it by regeneration, our Lord taught His disciples who enter into the kingdom of heaven in its present phase to pray that the kingdom of God may come, and that His will may be done on earth as it is

being done in heaven. These facts show that the kingdom for whose coming they are urged to pray is the kingdom in its glorious manifestation which will become a reality when our Lord returns in glory at the end of the Tribulation. Thus the disciples were urged by Jesus to be content with the conditions in which they find themselves, to trust in God, and to feed upon His faithfulness. At the same time they are to wait for Jehovah to appear and to establish His reign of righteousness upon the earth. When we see all these facts standing out in bold relief in the Sermon on the Mount, we understand that our Lord was simply going in the same groove in which David had gone in Psalm 37. We also observe that in this psalm the king was simply repeating, in different words, what Moses had urged upon Israel in Leviticus 26:1-13. All of these passages—Leviticus, chapter 26, Deuteronomy, chapter 28, Psalm 37, and Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7 were delivered from the same viewpoint. If a person will thus study them from this angle, which is the only reasonable one, he will see that there is perfect harmony and unanimity in all of these chapters. Furthermore, this line of teaching opens up the way and prepares one for the proper understanding of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was God's final call to the nation of Israel of the first century to accept Jesus as Messiah before it was too late, before the period designated "Today" past.

III. Exposition of Psalm 37

Recognizing that David in Psalm 37 was urging the people of Israel to maintain a certain attitude and at the same time trusting God for the future when He will establish the kingdom of God upon the earth, we are now ready to look at each utterance and see its import.

A. Special exhortations to the righteous

"Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness.

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb.

Trust in Jehovah, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on *His* faithfulness.

Delight thyself also in Jehovah; And he will give thee the desires of thy heart.

Commit thy way unto Jehovah; Trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass.

And he will make thy righteousness to go forth as the light, And thy justice as the noonday.

Rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for him: Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: Fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil doing, For evil-doers shall be cut off; But those that wait for Jehovah, they shall inherit the land" (37:1-9)

In verses 1 and 2 the Israelites were urged not to fret themselves or to be envious of the evildoers and unrighteous who were prospering, seemingly, in their accumulation of worldly goods. Their success is only temporary, declares the psalmist; for they are soon to be cut down as the grass and wither as the green herb. The time when the wicked will be removed from human society will be during the Tribulation and its close. The appalling loss of life at this future time is set forth in the Book of Revelation and in many portions of the Old Testament. For instance, see Isaiah, chapter 24.

The righteous and those who trust God are urged to put their trust in Him and to do good. God is overruling in the affairs of nations as well as in the lives of individuals. Man is put here to do good. The one who is living for selfish interest and for the accumulation of material wealth is missing the real pleasures of life. A person's highest joy comes when he is in fellowship with God, and when he does good for others and for the advancement of the cause of the Lord among men.

Israel was exhorted to dwell in the land of Palestine; that is, she was urged to stay in the country which God gave her as her own special inheritance. He chose her from among the nations and did not want her to walk in the ways of the peoples of earth. It was His first plan for Israel that she should live in accordance with the laws delivered by Moses and thus reflect the light of the revelation of God which was given her as a torch, and which she was to hold aloft to the nations of the world.

According to verse 4 she was to delight herself in Jehovah who would give her the desires of her heart. Whenever a person thus delights in God and His Word, the Lord always gives him the things he desires. But such a one desires only those things which are best. These always say, "Not my will, but thine be done." They make God's will their will.

Verse 5 urges Israel to commit her way unto God and trust in Him, who will bring things to pass. These instructions remind one of the first twelve verses of Proverbs, chapter 3. The Lord is the one who is always overruling in the lives of His people. He it is who will bring that into the lives of His children which is best for them.

As stated before, the promise in verse 6 is purely national and cannot be appropriated by the individual. Israel's light will go forth as brightness and her salvation as the noonday sun when she accepts Him. It is true that the individual who knows God is to let his light shine before men that they may see his good works and glorify his Father which is in heaven.

David urged his brethren, the Israelites, to rest in Jehovah, to be still, quiet, and composed before Jehovah and to wait patiently for Him. At the proper time the Lord will make His appearance upon earth and will adjust all differences and introduce that regime of righteousness for which we all long and yearn. As Israel was urged to wait for Him, she was likewise exhorted not to fret because of the prosperity of the wicked who bring evil devices to pass.

In verse 8 is the exhortation to cease from anger and to forsake wrath. Those things only tend to doing evil. This thought is proved by everyday experience. The evil ones will, in the Tribulation, be cut off. But those who wait patiently for the Lord will inherit the land of Palestine, that is, the Jews.

B. The wicked contrasted with the righteous

"For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and he shall not be.

But the meek shall inherit the land, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The wicked plotteth against the just, And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

The Lord will laugh at him; For he seeth that his day is coming.

The wicked have drawn out the sword and have bent their bow, To cast down the poor and the needy, To slay such as are upright in the way.

Their sword shall enter into their own heart, And their bows shall be broken.
 Better is a little that the righteous hath Than the abundance of many wicked.
 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken; But Jehovah upholdeth the righteous.
 Jehovah knoweth the days of the perfect; And their inheritance shall be for ever.
 They shall not be put to shame in the time of evil; And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
 But the wicked shall perish, And the enemies of Jehovah shall be as the fat of lambs:
 They shall consume; in smoke shall they consume away.
 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again; But the righteous dealeth graciously, and giveth.
 For such as are blessed of him shall inherit the land; And they that are cursed of him shall be cut off (vss. 10-22).

According to verse 10 in a little while the wicked will not be; that is, they will not be in the land of the living. Thy people search for them diligently, they will not find them; because they will have been cut off out of the land of the living. David lived practically a thousand years before Christ, who came nineteen hundred years ago. Thus twenty-nine hundred years have past by and the wicked are still here. Notwithstanding this long period of time, the Lord spoke through the psalmist and said that in "a little while" the wicked would be destroyed. We think in terms of comparisons. One thing may be very small in comparison with another an extremely large when viewed beside something else. In the light of eternity and the bliss that is out before us, this period of twenty-nine hundred years is very short.

When the wicked shall be no more, the meek shall inherit the land of Canaan and will "delight themselves in the abundance of peace." Moses was the meekest of men. He was very humble, submissive, trustful. He did not feel that he had rights to defend, that he had a dignity in the sight of men to preserve. He was willing to be made a doormat for others. This method of living was the manifestation of a meek spirit. Those who are of a kindred spirit, declared the psalmist will inherit the land and will delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The expression, the abundance of peace, is a direct reference to the great Millennial Age, when there will be an abundance of all grains and edibles throughout the world. At the same time there will be great peace. This is seen in that magnificent ode concerning the great millennial reign of our Lord—Psalm 72.

In contrast with these meek ones are the wicked who plot against the just now and gnash upon them with their teeth. The unregenerated heart is desperately wicked. There is no telling what will come forth from it. Thus the wicked hate the righteous and plot against them. But the Lord, according to verse 13, will laugh at the wicked for He knows that the latter's day is coming. The stroke of judgment will one day fall upon him. "He who laughs last laughs best." Laugh, here, is used in the same sense as appears in Psalm 2:4.

According to verse 14 the wicked draw out their sword and bend their bows against the poor and needy and against those who are upright in heart. The very things which they array against the righteous will be turned against them, will prove a boomerang to them, as we see in verse 15.

David realized that the little which the righteous has is better than the abundance of many wicked. Life consists of something more than food, raiment, and material possessions. These things can never put joy in the heart. The joy of the Lord is one's strength. The wicked may accumulate and possess large holdings, but their arms will be broken, and they will leave to others what they have. But the promise is that Jehovah upholds the righteous. Israel certainly needs to learn this great truth, as well as Christians.

In verse 22 we see that those who are "blessed of God will inherit the land." The Lord knows all their days, their needs, and that which is best for them. But here the psalmist is talking about the perfect—such men as Noah, who was perfect in his generation and Job, who likewise was perfect in his day. Their inheritance is certain and sure. Such men will not be put to shame in time of calamity and will not suffer from the famine when such develops in the community. In other words, God provides for the needs of those who are thus perfect in heart and life.

But according to verse 20 the wicked will perish and the enemies of Jehovah will be consumed. This will occur, as we have learned, during the Tribulation. The Lord knows all about the actions and the motives of everyone. The wicked often borrow but do not meet their obligations; but the righteous deal graciously and give, realizing that what they have has been given to them to be used for His glory and honor.

In verse 22 we see that those who are blessed of God will inherit the land of Palestine. Of course, let us remember that the psalmist is talking about the Jewish people. Those who are accursed will be cut off at that time.

C. Jehovah's preservation of the righteous

"A man's goings are established of Jehovah; And he delighteth in his way.
 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For Jehovah upholdeth him with his hand.
 I have been young, and now am old; Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken,
 Nor his seed begging bread.
 All the day long he dealeth graciously, and lendeth; And his seed is blessed.
 Depart from evil, and do good; And dwell for evermore.
 For Jehovah loveth justice, And forsaketh not his saints;
 They are preserved for ever: But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
 The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell therein for ever.
 The mouth of the righteous talketh of wisdom,
 And his tongue speaketh justice.
 The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide.
 The wicked watcheth the righteous, And seeketh to slay him.
 Jehovah will not leave him in his hand, Nor condemn him when he is judged.
 Wait for Jehovah, and keep his way, And he will exalt thee to inherit the land:
 When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it (vss. 23-34).

The prophet assured the Hebrew people that a man's goings are established of God, and that he delights in his ways. He of course is talking about the man who is following His instructions as laid down in this psalm. A person can receive nothing except as it is given to him of God. What God places in people's hands, over and above their needs, is designed for use. He wants it consumed in blessing others and in forwarding His plans and purposes among men.

Though a righteous one should fall he will not be utterly cast down. The reason is that Jehovah upholds him with His hand of Omnipotence. The one important thing is that a person must be righteous, righteous in the sense of this passage, and trust in God to sustain and protect him.

In verse 25 is a marvelous statement which is true and which will always prove to be correct. David affirmed that he had been young, but that at the time of writing this psalm he was old. His observation over a long period of years was that the righteous are never forsaken, nor are their seed ever found begging bread. Whenever there are want, poverty, and misery, a person may be certain that there is something wrong somewhere. The only exception to this rule is such cases as that of Job. God had a purpose in permitting the servant to pass through the trials which he experienced, but they were all designed for his purification and for his advancement—as the sequel shows. In speaking of such a righteous one, David said that he always deals graciously and lends to others. As a result his seed is blessed. God is a good paymaster. He never allows one to be in debt.

In verse 27 is the exhortation to depart from evil and to do good; and to dwell in the land continually. Here again we see the national aspect of the psalm shining forth most brightly. The reason for this exhortation is that Jehovah loves justice and never forsakes His saints. The servants of God in the Old Testament are called saints. These are the Jewish saints and are not to be confused with the saints of the New Testament. These saints are preserved continually, but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off—in the Tribulation.

Once more the promise is expressed in verse 29 that the righteous shall inherit Palestine and dwell therein continually, that is, during the thousand years' reign of our Lord. Once again the psalmist, in the following verse, shows who is the righteous one, the man whose mouth "talketh of wisdom, And his tongue speaketh justice." In his heart is the law of God. He walks in God's presence; therefore his steps do not slide. Though the wicked watch the righteous and seek to slay them, the Lord will not deliver such into their hands. Nor will He condemn them when He sits in judgment. The judging here of course is that which will be done by Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ, when He returns; for in verse 34 appears the exhortation, "Wait for Jehovah, and keep his way." Jehovah, at His second coming, will cause those Israelites waiting for Him to inherit the land of their fathers. Again in this connection the psalmist assures his readers that the wicked will be cut off at this time of judgment.

D. A contrast between the end of the righteous and that of the wicked

"I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil.
But one passed by, and, lo, he was not: Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.
Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; For there is a *happy* end to the man of peace.
As for transgressors, they shall be destroyed together: The end of the wicked shall be cut off.
But the salvation of the righteous is of Jehovah: He is their stronghold in the time of trouble.
And Jehovah helpeth them, and rescueth them: He rescueth them from the wicked, and saveth them.
Because they have taken refuge in him" (vss 35-40).

The wicked are thought of in verse 35 and 36 as a spreading green tree developing in its native soil. It is seen from day to day; presently one passes by and it is not there. It is sought for but not found. Thus are the wicked. They are here upon the earth prospering and seemingly doing well; suddenly they are cut off and they are no more in the land of the living.

In contrast with such wicked, unrighteous wealthy ones is the perfect man who is upright. His end will be that of peace. He may have troubles and difficulties during this life; but, when he passes out of this life,

he goes into peace, having the peace of God in his heart and enjoying peace throughout all eternity of the future.

Once more, in speaking of the destruction of the wicked in the Tribulation, the psalmist in verse 38 says that all transgressors and wicked ones will be destroyed together. But in contrast with them the salvation of the righteous will be of Jehovah, and He will uphold them during the time of trouble. Those of Israel who turn to God during the Tribulation will be sustained by His grace and power throughout the judgments of the Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble. For, according to verse 40, "Jehovah helpeth them, and rescueth them; He rescueth them from the wicked, and saveth them, Because they have taken refuge in him."

Thus, in this running comment through our marvelous psalm, we see that it is nationalistic and is given to Israel as a people. Nevertheless there are principles that are eternally true found in this passage which are applicable to the children of God in any age of the history of the world. We can therefore take these general principles and stand upon them, looking to the Lord for the blessing. May this psalm, after we have interpreted it correctly as applying to Israel in her looking forward to the coming of the Messianic Kingdom, be to us a source of great comfort and consolation. Let us heed its exhortations and take hold of its promises, especially those that are repeated in the New Testament. But may we in the first place endeavor to get this message to Israel and tell her about the coming of Jehovah in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ who will save her and bless her if she will only accept Him and allow Him to take her case into His mighty omnipotent hands. Let us pass on the good things to others, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, as we learn them.