

THE OUTLOOK OF THE GODLY AND THE UNGODLY

BIBLE TEXT : Psalm 37:1-40

LESSON 261 **Junior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity" (Psalm 37:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Psalm 37:1-40

¹ Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

² For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

³ Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

⁴ Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

⁵ Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

⁶ And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

⁷ Rest in the LORD, 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.

⁸ Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

⁹ For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

¹⁰ For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*.

¹¹ But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

¹² The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

¹³ The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

¹⁴ The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow,

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Evildoers Soon Cut Off

David wrote: "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." They shall soon be cut down!

Some may wonder at the prosperity of the evildoers. Why do they gain so much in spite of their iniquity? One of the prophets once wrote: "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.... until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction" (Psalm 73:3, 17, 18).

The Bible tells us, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7); so, although we may see wicked men becoming rich and gaining every advantage in life, while a faithful Christian may have to struggle along with very little, we must remember that there is a time coming when scores will be settled. Every evildoer will be punished — if not in this life, in the world to come.

David said, too: "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree." He may show every sign of prosperity, and be good to look upon, "yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not."

Many wicked men become very powerful, and sometimes they even defy God. God, in His mercy, may not cut them off suddenly, but the time is coming when the transgressors shall be destroyed together.

Heirs of God

What is the end of the Christian? He is an heir of God, and will live forever with God. The Apostle Paul suffered many hardships after he gave his heart to Jesus, but he never became discouraged. He always looked beyond to the prize that he knew he would receive from the Lord. He rejoiced in the thought that the Christians are the children of God, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:17).

The Lord promised, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." When our ways please the Lord, He enjoys rewarding us. Our prayers are a delight unto Him. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

Martyrs

These are wonderful promises that God has given; yet there are times when it seems that God does not answer the prayers of the Christian and give them the desire of their heart. What about the millions of people who have given their lives for their faith, suffering every cruelty that evil men could think of? They delighted in the Lord, and yet they saw everything they had

to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation.

¹⁵ Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

¹⁶ A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

¹⁷ For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.

¹⁸ The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

¹⁹ They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

²⁰ But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

²¹ The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

²² For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and *they that be* cursed of him shall be cut off.

²³ The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

²⁴ Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.

²⁵ I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

²⁶ *He is* ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed *is* blessed.

²⁷ Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

²⁸ For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

²⁹ The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

taken from them, including their life. Did they want that suffering and heartache?

At first glance one might think that God had forsaken them. But watch them as they go to the stake. What is that light in their eyes? Do they see Jesus? The Apostle Paul wrote of Moses, that he endured "as seeing him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27). Listen to the songs the martyrs are singing as they are thrown to the lions to be eaten. They are happy that they have been accounted worthy to suffer for their Savior.

The Crown of Life

Their desire was to be crowned with their Redeemer, and that desire has been fulfilled. Today they are singing songs of victory around the throne of God. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12). The crown of life is their reward. The anticipation of that crown helped them endure the hours of agony that they were called upon to bear.

When the Apostles were beaten for preaching about Jesus, "they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41).

Strength from Heaven

Satan is mustering his forces of evil against the Christians. We do not know when we will be called upon to suffer for Christ. But we who love Him with all our heart will have that strength from Heaven that will help us to endure anything for His sake. If we should have some hard persecution in this world, we know it will soon be over. And when our last breath is gone, we shall be in Glory with Jesus. In one moment we shall step from this life into eternal life, where our joys shall never end.

The Meek

In Christ's Sermon on the Mount, He said, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). The Lord showed that fact to David way back in his day. He wrote, "The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." David said, too, "The meek shall eat and be satisfied" (Psalm 22:26).

"Be satisfied." How important those words are! We see many people in the world who have more than they need, but they are not satisfied. They always want more. No one is satisfied without Jesus in his heart. But when he has the love of God, he is satisfied, whether he has anything else or not. "Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith" (Proverbs 15:16). Paul said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11).

Paul had learned to be content. We learn contentment when we consider the love of God for us. The Christian is God's own precious treasure. Jesus has bought us with His own Blood, and He has assured us that the "very hairs" of our head are numbered. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

Success in this world is often obtained by aggressiveness, by trying to get ahead of someone else, and by making oneself more efficient than his competitor. But the Lord's rule is just the opposite. The more we humble ourselves before Him, and yield

³⁰ The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

³¹ The law of his God *is* in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

³² The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

³³ The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

³⁴ Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

³⁵ I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

³⁶ Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

³⁷ Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that man is* peace.

³⁸ But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

³⁹ But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the LORD: *he is* their strength in the time of trouble.

⁴⁰ And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

our will to Him, the more success we shall have in our Christian walk. We may have to get along with less of this world's goods than our worldly-ambitious friends have, but the day will come when we shall inherit the earth and rule with Christ. In fact, the Lord told John on the Isle of Patmos that the overcomer "shall inherit all things."

The Apostle Paul was so thrilled with the inheritance he knew he had in the life hereafter that he wrote: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Strength of the Meek

The fact that the wicked men prosper in the world does not mean that they are stronger than the power that rules for good. Jesus had the power of all Heaven back of Him, and yet He permitted Himself to be crucified by the hands of cruel men. He said He could call twelve legions of angels, who would have destroyed every Roman and Jew banded together against Him — but He did not. It was not yet the time of judgment. And because they were not stopped in their effort to destroy Jesus, the priests and soldiers thought they were strong and no one could hinder them in their greed for power.

The Lord is going to laugh when the destruction of the wicked comes. Way back in Enoch's time he prophesied of the day when the Lord will come with His saints to execute judgment in the earth, "and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed," and even for their "hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 15). God said that because the sinners refused to listen to Him, He would laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear came upon them (**Proverbs 1:26** ²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;). Now is the time to seek the Lord and have our sins forgiven. It will be too late when judgment breaks.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." Our very brief life will soon be over. What God will see in us at the end of our life is what will count. That end will really be just the beginning for the true child of God. He is preparing now for the life that is to come, where all will be joy and peace; and where he will reign with Christ as a king and priest unto God. He will see the end of the wicked; and he will glorify the Savior who saved his soul from the ways of the wicked and made him an overcomer to be with Jesus for all eternity.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What is going to happen to the wicked?
- 2 What is the reward of the Christian?
- 3 Describe the martyrs' walk to their death.
- 4 Who will inherit the earth?
- 5 What brings satisfaction in a person's life?
- 6 How can we become content?
- 7 What is the end of the "perfect man"?