

This world has no shortage of evil people who may falsely accuse us, slander our name or wish us harm. However, we are told in this psalm that we do not need to worry about these people because the LORD will ensure that the truth will eventually become known. He promises that the righteous will be vindicated and protected and that these evil doers will receive the punishment that they justly deserve.

A Psalm of David

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.

“A Psalm of David” – The words “A Psalm” (italicized in the KJV) are not in the original. The Hebrew title literally reads “By David.” The translators supplied the words “A Psalm” as the obvious filler. So we see that David is the author of this psalm.

“Fret [to become hot; become angry; incensed] not thyself because of evildoers” – It is easy to become angry or upset by “evildoers,” especially when we become the target of their evil deeds. However, David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, advises us not to become worked up by these people. As he tells us later in the psalm, we are to trust that the LORD has things under control.

“neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity” – David also urges us not to envy the workers of iniquity. It may seem that these workers of iniquity are prospering because of their evil ways and that there is no benefit to living a righteous life in obedience to the LORD, but David will show us that things are not as they might appear.

“For they shall soon [hastily; speedily] be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb” – The wicked may seem to have the upper hand but their destiny has already been determined. The verbs “cut down” and “wither” indicate that the time will come when the wicked will be destroyed, and when it does, their destruction will happen quickly.

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

“Trust in the LORD, and do good” – Rather than emulate the wicked and their apparent prosperity, we are urged to “trust in the LORD and do good.” We are to do good because it pleases the LORD – not because of any benefit it might bring us in this world. We are to trust in the LORD that doing good, while it may not always be recognized and rewarded by the world, will bring us eternal blessings because of how it pleases the LORD.

“so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed” – This statement refers to the promise that the LORD made to Israel that He would bless them and allow them to remain in the land of Canaan if they obeyed Him and remained faithful, but He would cast them out of the land if they disobeyed (**Lev. 20:22** “*Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out*”). The idea David is conveying here is that even if the world doesn’t recognize that you are doing good, the LORD will bless and provide for you.

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

“Delight [to be happy or merry] thyself also in the LORD” – To delight oneself in the LORD means that it brings you joy to seek fellowship with Him as you obey and worship Him. It’s the things of God that make you happy instead of satisfying the desires of the flesh.

“and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart” – Notice that the prerequisite of this promise is that you are delighting yourself in the LORD. If you are doing that then the desires of your heart will be in harmony with His will and the things that please Him. **1 John 5:14-15** “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*”

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

“Commit [to roll] thy way unto the LORD” – Instead of being the one to decide the direction of our life, we are to roll that burden onto the LORD and let Him guide our life. The picture is of rolling a heavy burden off of our own shoulders and onto the shoulders of another who is better capable of carrying the load.

“trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass” – When we trust in the LORD to guide our way, He will bring “it” (the “desires of thine heart” mentioned in v. 4) to pass. These are the desires that come from delighting ourselves in the LORD.

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

“And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light” – When we entrust ourselves to the guidance of the LORD, He will expose our righteousness for all to see in the daylight. He will make it obvious that it is your enemies who are guilty and not you. The truth will eventually come out.

“and thy judgment [to decide a case] as the noonday” – Judgment exposes the truth, showing the innocence of the righteous and the guilt of the wicked. The LORD will demonstrate that His judgment finds you righteous and your enemies as wicked. The accusations of your enemy will be shown to be lies.

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.

“Rest [be silent; be still] in the LORD, and wait patiently [to endure suffering] for him” – When we are being done wrong, the first thing we want to do is to protest, insult our oppressors and perhaps even plot our revenge. This psalm says that we are instead to be quiet and endure the wrong being done to us while we trust that the LORD will rescue and vindicate us when the time is right.

“fret [become angry] not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass” – We are not to become angry because it looks like our enemies are winning against us. They are accumulating more wrath against themselves for the day when the LORD brings judgment against them. **Rom. 12:19** “*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*”

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

“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath” – Do not let anger control your actions and decisions. So often anger leads us to act contrary to God’s will and do or say things that we will later regret.

“fret [become angry] not thyself in any wise to do evil [inflict injury; wickedness; mischief]” – The psalmist warns us to not let anger cause us to sin. We should never let the wickedness of others to influence us to do wicked things. It will only be a detriment to us. Moses lost the opportunity to enter the Promised Land when he allowed his anger to get the best of him.

James 1:20 *“For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”*

Num. 20:10-12 *“And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”*

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

We do not have to become distressed by evil doers because their time is limited. “Cut off” is an OT expression meaning “to die” or “to be destroyed.” On the other hand, those that “wait upon the LORD” (allow Him to handle the situation) will enjoy His blessings as citizens of His kingdom on earth. They will be around long after the destruction of these evildoers.

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

It may not be immediately, but eventually the wicked will be gone. One day you will think about the threat the wicked seemed to have posed, and you will recognize that the LORD has removed the threat and the wicked have been destroyed.

Verses 11-22: These verses contrast the righteous and the wicked. The righteous will inherit the earth but when the wicked make their plans against the righteous, the LORD laughs because He knows that the day is coming when the wicked will receive the judgment for their sins. The wicked attempt to harm the righteous but they are only harming themselves and the LORD protects and provides for the righteous.

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.

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way” – The LORD is pleased when the way that we walk in has been “ordered” (directed; established) by Him.

“Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand” – The context implies that the “fall” is not due to any sin of the good man but because of the evil deeds of his enemies. They may cause the good man to temporarily stumble and fall, but he will not be destroyed because the LORD will sustain him and help him stand back up.

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.*

“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” – This verse implies that David wrote this psalm in the later years of his life. In all the years of his life, he had never seen the LORD abandon the righteous or fail to provide for them or their children.

“He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed” – Rather than being forsaken, David has seen the righteous have enough to be able to be compassionate and give to those less fortunate than themselves. As a result, their children reap the blessings of their parents’ righteousness.

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

The psalmist urges us to turn from doing evil and instead to do good. If we do so the LORD will preserve us so that we will “dwell” (live; abide) forever. David may be referring to living a long life on earth but he could also be alluding to the eternal life that the LORD gives to those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior.

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.

We may think that the LORD has forgotten us and doesn’t care that our enemies are attempting to harm us, but David assures us that this is not true. The LORD loves “judgment” (justice) because that is when the truth comes out. As a result, the wicked are condemned and the righteous are vindicated and protected from the wicked. He is just waiting for the right time to execute justice and destroy the wicked and their descendants.

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

David is likely remembering the promise that LORD made to Israel of giving them the land of Canaan as an inheritance and that they will be allowed to dwell there as long as they remained faithful to Him (see notes on v. 3). However, David could also be looking forward to the eternal inheritance of the righteous, either in the Messiah’s kingdom on earth or in heaven (or both). David wants us to see that living in obedience to the LORD is something we will never regret.

Verses 30-40: David continues contrasting the righteous with the wicked, both in their behavior and their future destinies. The righteous obey the law of God while the wicked intend to destroy the righteous. But the LORD will help the righteous and destroy the wicked. He will never forsake those who trust in Him.