

The Steps of a Good Man - 01/12/20

How to Stay Up in a Down Time

TEXT —Psalms 37:16-24 esp. vs. 23 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

INTRO- It was written by David in his old age Ps 37:25,

SUBJECT. The great riddle of the prosperity of the wicked and the affliction of the righteous

It resembles a chapter of the book of Proverbs, most of the verses being complete in themselves. It is an alphabetical Psalm: in somewhat broken order, the first letters of the verses follow the Hebrew alphabet.

I. God Is A God Of Order

A. He designed the universe

From the furthest galaxy to the smallest life form there is order.

B. He chose the nation of Israel

C. He has order to the future

II. God Has A Plan For Every Person

A. The life of a good man is divinely planned. *ROM. 8:29*

Joseph, David, Moses, Sampson, Samuel etc.

B. The life of a good man is divinely approved. "He delighteth in his way."

Pro 16:9 *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

Pro 20:24 *Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?*

III. God Has A Plan For Troubled Times - "Though he fall."

A. The Life of a Good Man Is Divinely Protected

1. The possibility of trials.

- A good man may sink very low as to worldly circumstances;
- He may, like Job, be stripped of everything,
- Like Joseph, put in prison.

In this life disasters are to be expected, and it forms no part of God's plan to prevent them. They are intended for the benefit of the good man; they are the refiner's fire.

2. The remedy for trials. "He shall not be utterly cast down."

The good man must expect to suffer, but not perish (verses 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20).

3. The reason for trials. "The Lord upholdeth him up by his hand." God not only sustains the good man, but He is his constant and habitual upholder (verses 12, 18, 21). He has always a hold on his hand. He never lets it go.

IV. Objections to God's Plan

Objection 1. Wicked men flourish. *Solution.* A righteous man should never grieve at that, for "they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." Ps 37:2.

Objection 2. Righteous men are in distress. *Solution* --Ps 37:6. The night of their adversity will be turned into the light of prosperity; and as surely as they can believe when it is night that it shall be day, so surely may they be persuaded when crosses are upon them, that comfort and deliverance shall come.

Objection 3. But there are great plots laid against the righteous, and they are pursued with great malice, and their intended ruin is come almost to the very issue. *Solution* --Ps 37:12-15. The Lord sees all the plots of wicked men, and laughs at their spiteful and foolish malice; while they are busy to destroy the righteous, and hope to have a day against them, "The Lord seeth that their own day is coming upon them, even a day of destruction, a day of great judgment and eternal misery; "their bow shall be broken, and the sword that they have drawn shall enter into their own heart.

Objection 4. But the just have but small means. *Solution* --Ps 37:16-17. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous."

Objection 5. Heavy times are like to befall them. *Solution* --Ps 37:19. "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall have enough."

Objection 6. But the wicked wax fatter and fatter, and they prevail in vexing the righteous. *Solution* --Ps 37:20. Indeed the wicked are fat, but it is but "the fat of lambs, "their prosperity shall soon melt; and as they be like smoke in vexing the godly, so shall they be like smoke in vanishing away.

Objection 7. But the righteous do fall. *Solution* --Ps 37:24. Though he do fall, yet he falls not finally, nor totally, for he "is not utterly cast down; "and besides, there is an upholding providence of God in all the falls of the righteous.

Objection 8. We see some wicked men that do not so fall into adversity, but rather are in prosperity to their dying days. *Solution* --Ps 37:28. Though they do, yet, "their seed shall be cut off."

Objection 9. But some wicked men are strong yet, and in their seed spread also. *Solution* --Ps 37:35-36. Note also that these "spreading bay trees" many times "soon pass away; "and they and their houses are sometimes "utterly cut off."

Objection 10. But upright men are under many and long crosses. *Solution* --Ps 37:37. Yet "his end is peace."

Objection 11. But nobody stands for the godly when they come into question. *Solution* --Ps 37:39-40. "Their salvation is of the Lord; "he is their strength, he will help them and deliver them, etc.

CONCL –

1. That we must not fret at God's providence Ps 37:1.
2. We must "trust in the Lord and do good" Ps 37:3.
3. We must "delight ourselves in the Lord, "and not place our contentment on earthly things Ps 37:4.
4. We must "commit our ways to God" Ps 37:5.
5. We must get patience and humility Ps 37:7-11.
6. We must maintain an upright life Ps 37:14.
7. We must be merciful Ps 37:25-26.
8. We must "speak righteous things, "and get "the law into our hearts" Ps 37:30-31.
9. We must "keep our way, "and "wait on God" and not use ill means.