

Ps. 37:16-22 (LD 50) “Abundance in Famine”

For the Children: When you face an operation, you often have to go without food for a while. It is better for you to go hungry in a case like that. Sometimes people also go without food to raise money to feed those who are really starving. We know there are situations where it is good to be deprived of food. The Lord knows even better. Usually He puts food on our table. If He chooses not to, you can be sure it is for a good reason, and only for a while. Meanwhile, He will bless His children in many other ways. In the next life, we will receive even more blessings. No one will be able to say, “It’s not fair! God didn’t give me what I needed!” **Questions:** What are the most important blessings? What could the Lord teach us by withholding food or other things from us for a time? What does it mean to be “content” and why should God’s children be contented?

Introduction:

First Point: The Abundance of the Wicked

- 1) The Wicked Prosper: The wicked often prosper because they have fewer scruples, while God’s people struggle more. Perhaps this is to test and refine us, while the wicked are punished by being given what they want. Certainly the Lord ordains their prosperity from the position of One who sees their “day” (judgement) coming (v. 13)
- 2) The Wicked Will *Not* Prosper: Eventually, God will “break the arms” of the wicked – make them to be helpless and in pain, ultimately in hell. Their abundance will utterly vanish (v. 20), like the glory of the grass in the fields, or the smoke from the fatty-portions in the burnt-offering of the OT. We should not envy them their “success” in light of these truths
- 3) Under a Curse: The unbeliever and all he has is under God’s curse, not His blessing. If men do not use the gifts He gives them to glorify and thank and serve Him, those gifts will condemn them all the more on the last day. “Unrighteous mammon” (the abundance of v. 16) is no blessing. This curse leads to eventual shame and deprivation in hell. The covenant-curse of Dt. 28:44, that the sinner will have to borrow rather than lend (v. 21) is a foretaste of that hell. So was the covenant-curse of being cut off from the Promised Land (v. 22). See also Dt. 28:36. When we pray the fourth request we are asking God to give us the right attitude to His gifts, so we don’t end up under this curse

Second Point: The Abundance of the Righteous

- 1) Much and Little: The believer can have both little (v. 16) and much (vss. 11, 37) at the same time. For our abundance is not measured in material things alone. This might not seem fair to us, but again we remember that God knows our future, our trials and our true needs. He “knows our days” (v. 18). He weighs all these things and then gives what is best at the time
- 2) Always Sustained: Whether we have much or little the Lord will always sustain us. He gives the daily bread (and other material needs) to sustain our physical life until it is time to leave this present life – though He sometimes takes things away for a time, to teach us needed lessons. He also sustains us spiritually through it all. We pray the fourth request also to ask the Lord to teach us that lesson in all our circumstances
- 3) Abundance in Famine: The word “abundance” in v. 19 means “satisfaction.” Learning about God’s sustaining grace and abundant blessings satisfies us even when we suffer want. We are satisfied even with a “little” when it is blessed by the Lord, because *it is His blessing that satisfies us*. We would much rather that blessed little, than a lot under the curse (v. 16)
- 4) More to Come: We are also satisfied because we know that a little covenant-blessing now points to a lot more to come. The OT promise of the righteous being able to lend rather than borrow (v. 21 with Dt. 15:6, 28:12) points to this spiritual abundance in the next life. Likewise, the promise of long life in the Land (v. 18) points to our eternal inheritance in the next life. That blessing is only found in Christ. With Him, we should be content with whatever we have, or don’t have, in this life

Conclusion: