

EAST CAMBRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

"A first century church in the 21st century"

Bible Reading Plan

Week 43

- Ezekiel 1-3; *John 1*
- Eze 4-6; Ps 82; *John 2*
- Eze 7-9; *John 3*
- Eze 10-12; Ps 83; *John 4*
- Eze 13-15; Ps 136; *John 5*

Leading Services

Announcements: Mike V.

Morning:

Song Leader: Ron V.

Opening Prayer: Ben V.

Lord's Table: Larry L.

Asst By:

Closing Prayer: Brock G.

Evening:

Song Leader: Tony Y.

Opening Prayer: Ron V.

Closing Prayer: Ben V.

Scripture Reading: Brock G.
(Malachi 3.1-5)

Sermons

AM: No Other Gospel
PM: Succeeding During Trials



Watching

Psalm 37 picks up a common theme in the Psalms that harkens all the way back to Psalm 1: the contrast between the man who seeks to follow God (the righteous man) and the man who does not seek to follow God (the wicked man). This is such a timely topic given all the evil taking place in our society today. Due to limitations on time and space we will limit the scope of our study to three points.

First, with all that is happening today it is easy for those seeking to do right in God's sight to get upset and overly angry. I know I am prone to that. However, the Psalmist advises otherwise. Notice in verse 1 he says, "Do not fret because of evildoers." (cf. v. 7) Why? They will not succeed in the long run: "For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb" (v. 2). God's view of sin has not changed: the "wages of sin is death"! (Rom. 6:23) Worrying about evil doers can poison our soul.

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God is watching

Or as David says in verse 8: “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret — it only causes harm.” Why? Again, “For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth” (v. 9). God has always rewarded those who seek Him and His righteousness and punished those who do not. He did so in the Garden (Gen. 3), He did so in the ancient times of the Psalmist, and He continues to do so now! Even if the wicked seem to go unpunished in this life; they will receive their just desserts on the Day of Judgment:

“...it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe” (2 Th 1:6-10)

Second, we cannot allow evil to make us fall into despair. God is watching. God knows exactly what is going on. “The Lord knows the days of the upright” (v. 18). God knows who His enemies are, and He knows who the enemies of the righteous are (v. 20). God not only watches, the Lord cares and will not forsake the righteous. David says, “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread” (v. 25). The wicked man may deceive himself into thinking God is not watching, does not care, or will not act. However, “The Lord laughs at him, for He sees that his day is coming” (v. 13). For example, all those today who are rioting, looting, and savaging our cities (if they do not repent) will ultimately be punished by the Lord. Write it down! You can take that to the bank! Righteousness pays! (cf. vv. 16-17). But wickedness does not! “For the arms of the wicked shall be broken” (v. 17) And, there will ultimately be a “pay day” for both the righteous and the wicked: “For those blessed by Him shall inherit the earth, but those cursed by Him shall be cut off” (v. 22).

Third, how should we respond to all the evil about us? Simple! “Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore. For the Lord loves justice, and does not forsake His saints; they are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell in it forever” (vv. 27-29). What does that take on our part? First and foremost a great deal of patience. “Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you” (v. 34). We must remember what is in the future for the wicked. He will pass away and be “cut off” (v. 34) and be “no more” (v. 36) and we “shall see it” (v. 34). We too must remember what is in the future for the righteous: “the future of that man is peace” (v. 37). Let us be patient and not let evil doers and their deeds make us respond in unrighteous anger, get us down, or tempt us to “throw in the towel. The Lord is our “strength in the time of trouble” (v. 39). He will “deliver” us “from the wicked, and save [us], because [we] trust in Him” (v. 40).

- Craig Thomas