**The Book of Psalms—Study Guide (Psalms 34-37)**

The Bible always takes precedence in our study of God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). This guide is just a “help” compiled from the Soncino commentary, Ambassador College notes, & personal study.

**Psalm 34: A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech** (Achish)**, who drove him away, and he departed.** (The story is found in 1 Samuel 21:11-15). Soncino titles this Psalm: “Hymn of Praise.” This is an acrostic Psalm (where each verse begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet).

1: David said that he would bless (honor and extol) the Lord at all times (in joy and in sorrow), and God’s praise would be in his mouth continually.

2-4: His soul would boast in the Lord. The humble would hear of it and be glad. Oh, let us all magnify the Lord as David did, and exalt the name of the Lord together. David sought the Lord, and God heard and delivered him from all of his fears.

5-6: Those who look to the Lord are radiant. Their faces are not ashamed. The poor (afflicted) man, in this case it was David, cries out and the Lord hears and saves him out of his troubles.

7: The Angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear God and He delivers them. The Angel of the Lord protected Israel. See Exodus 14:19 and Isaiah 63:9-10.

8-9: Taste and see (consider and try it out) that the Lord is good. (See 1 Peter 2:1-3, and Hebrews 6:4-6 for a warning). Blessed is the one who trusts in Him. Oh fear the Lord, you His saints (holy ones). We are to be holy. See Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:14-16. There is no lack (of blessings) to those who fear Him.

10: The young lions lack and suffer hunger, but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing. God is both our Provider and Protector. See also Psalm 84:11-12.

11-12: The following instructions teach us—as pupils, what the fear of the Lord is (which is the beginning of wisdom: Proverbs 1:7). A man who desires life, and loves many days must fear God by doing the following:

13-14: He needs to keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit (Ephesians 4:25). He must depart from evil, and do good (Isaiah 1:16-17), and he needs to seek peace and pursue it (Hebrews 12:14).

15-16: The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous. His ears are open to their cries. His face is against those who do evil—to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. (These verses are also quoted in 1 Peter 3:10-12).

17-18: The Lord hears when the righteous cry out. He delivers them out of all their troubles. He is near to those who have a broken (repentant) heart, and saves those who have a contrite spirit (See Isaiah 57:15; 66:2).

19-20: Many are the afflictions of the righteous (Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12), but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones, and not one is broken. (This verse is a prophecy about Christ—John 19:36).

21-22: Evil will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned (Psalm 94:23). On the other hand, the Lord redeems the soul of His servants and no one who trusts in Him will be condemned.

**Psalm 35: A Psalm of David.** Soncino titles this Psalm: “Prayer under persecution”—which has some similarities with Psalm 7 and Psalm 22.

1-3: David asked God to plead his cause (as his advocate) against those who were striving with him--to fight against those who fought against him, to hold the shield and to stand up for his help. He asked God to draw out the spear and stop those who were pursuing him, and that God would reassure him that He was his salvation.

4-6: David also asked that those who sought after his life, be put to shame and dishonor, and be brought to confusion. Let them be like chaff in the wind. (see Job 21:17-18). Let their way be dark and slippery (see Jeremiah 23:11-12), and let the Angel of the Lord chase them.

7-8: For without cause they hid a net in a pit which they had dug for him to fall into (Psalm 57:6-7). He asked that destruction come upon them; to be caught in the very net and destruction they had planned for him.

9-10: David wanted to be joyful in the Lord, and to rejoice in His salvation. He wanted his bones to say:
“Lord, who is like the You?”—who delivers the poor from the one who plunders (Proverbs 22:22-23).

11-12: Violent unrighteous witnesses rose up and accused David of things he didn’t do. (For instance, he was falsely accused of plotting against Saul’s life--1 Samuel 24:9-10). David’s goodness toward those people was repaid with evil, and it was sorrowful to him.

13: As for David, when his accusers were sick, he had compassion on them. He humbled (afflicted) himself with fasting. (This is a key scripture along with Isaiah 58:3, which links affliction to fasting). He asked that God would humble him as well (that his prayer would return to his own heart), while he prayed for his enemies.

14-16: He showed love by adopting the outward signs of mourning. He was concerned for them as he would have been for his brother or mother. But, they rejoiced and plotted to attack him. They mocked and gnashed at him with their teeth (libelous tongues, likened to fangs of an animal, which tore his reputation to shreds).

17-18: David asked how long would God look on (the enemies) and see these events without intervening. He asked to be rescued from destruction and from the lions (Psalm 57:4; 1 Peter 5:8). He wanted to praise God in the assembly and among many people.

19-20: He asked that his enemies, who didn’t have cause, would not rejoice over him or wink (gloat over their success) at him. They didn’t seek for peace, but devised deceitful matters against the quiet ones of the land.

21-22: They opened their mouths wide (with contempt) against him, and said—“our eyes have seen it.” But, this is what God had seen as well, and David asked God not to keep silent any longer and not be far from him.

23-24: David also asked God to stir Himself up and vindicate him, according to His righteousness, and asked that none of his enemies rejoice over him.

25-26: He also asked that his enemies not say in their hearts—“this is as we would have it.” Let them not say, “We have swallowed him up (prevailed against him).” Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion.

27-28: On the other hand, let them shout for joy and be glad who favored his righteous cause. Let them say continually—“the Lord be magnified, who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.” Our tongues should speak of God’s righteousness and praise Him all day long, as King David did.

 **Psalm 36: To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord.** Soncino titles this Psalm: “The Divine Lovingkindness.”

1: David thought (as an oracle from deep within his heart) about what causes the wicked to transgress. The answer: They have no fear (in this case, the dread) of God before their eyes.

2-4: The wicked, despite his iniquities, flatters himself in his own eyes. (“Sin deludes the godless with the smooth assurance of immunity”—Soncino). Because of this delusion, their false thinking leads to wickedness and deceitfulness. They devise wickedness on their beds, and do not abhor evil.

5-6: In contrast to the wicked, God’s mercy is in the heavens. His faithfulness reaches to the clouds. (These phrases emphasize the limitless magnitude of God’s qualities). His righteousness is like the great mountains (immovable and eternal). His judgments are like the deep sea--unfathomable). God preserves man and beast.

7-9: God’s lovingkindness is precious. Therefore the children of men are to put their trust under the shadow of His wings (Psalm 57:1). God will abundantly satisfy them with the fullness of His house, and they will drink from the river of His pleasures (Psalm 16:11). The fountain of living waters is from God (Jeremiah 2:13).

10-12: David asked God that His lovingkindness would continue to be toward those who know Him. David also asked that the foot of the proud would not come against him, and that the hand of the wicked would not drive him away. David believed that the workers of iniquity would fall and be humbled and not be able to rise again.

**Psalm 37: A Psalm of David.** Soncino titles this Psalm: “The Problem with Evil.” A parallel Psalm about the wicked is found in Psalm 73. This is an acrostic Psalm where each letter in the Hebrew alphabet (minus one letter) introduces two verses.

1-2: Don’t fret because of evil doers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. They will be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb. See Proverbs 24:19-20.

3-4: Trust in the Lord, and do good. Dwell in the land (stand firm) and feed upon His faithfulness. Delight in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 145:19.

5-6: Commit (Hebrew: roll upon) your way to the Lord. Trust in Him, and He will bring it (promises) to pass. He will bring forth your righteousness (vindication) as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

7-8: Rest (Hebrew: be silent; resign yourself) in the Lord. Wait patiently for Him. Don’t fret because of him who prospers in the way and of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, forsake wrath, and don’t fret (over what the wicked are doing) as it only causes harm (Ephesians 4:31).

9-10: Evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait on the Lord will inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and then the wicked will be no more. You will look for his place, but it shall be no more.

11-12: The meek shall inherit the earth—not heaven (See Matthew 5:5). The meek will also delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes at him with his teeth.

13-14: The Lord laughs (in derision) at the wicked for He sees that their retribution is coming. The wicked have drawn the sword and have bent the bow (emblems of a violent attack) to cast down the poor and the needy and to slay those who are of upright conduct.

15-16: However, their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows will be broken. A little that a righteous man has is better than the abundance (literally: tumult or noisy opulence) of the wicked.

17-18: The arms of the wicked will be broken (hence they will be incapable of inflicting harm on others), but the Lord upholds (and cares for) the righteous. The Lord knows the days of the upright (especially the evils which befall them day by day) and yet their inheritance shall be forever.

19-20: The righteous shall not be ashamed in an evil time and they will be satisfied in the days of famine. But the enemies of the Lord shall perish and vanish away into smoke. See Psalm 104:35. (The fate of the wicked is death, and will not stay in existence to be tormented forever in hellfire).

21-22: The wicked borrows, and doesn’t repay (because he is unable to do so). On the other hand, the righteous has plenty and shows mercy and gives. Those blessed by God shall inherit the earth (not in heaven, as verses 9 and 11 also state), but the cursed shall be cut off.

23-24: The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and (when he follows God’s direction) God delights in his way. Though the righteous falls, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholds him with His hand.

25-26: David noted that ever since he was young, he had not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread (even in times of suffering or in trials). See Proverbs 10:3. The righteous are ever merciful (literally, “all the day”). They lend to others, and their descendants are blessed (Psalm 25:12-13).

27-28: Depart from evil and do good and dwell forever (Psalm 34:14). The Lord loves justice, and doesn’t forsake His saints (those loyal to God’s will). They are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off.

29-30: The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell in it forever (Proverbs 2:21-22).The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice.

31-32: The law of his God is in his heart, and none of his steps shall slide (from the path of integrity). The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him.

33-34: The Lord will not leave the righteous in the hand of the wicked, nor will God condemn him when he is judged by (the bribery and corruption of) the wicked. Wait on the Lord and keep His way. He will exalt you to inherit the land when the wicked are removed—it will be seen when it happens (see verse 9).

35-36: David saw the wicked in great power (acting the tyrant), spreading out like a tree in its native soil (as a fixture never to be removed). But eventually, the wicked were no more, and could not be found. (In verse 25, David had presented another personal testimony regarding God’s mercy).

37-38: Mark (take note of) the blameless and upright man (full of integrity), for the future of that man is peace. Notice Isaiah 32:17. The transgressors will be destroyed together (as in verse 20). The future of the wicked is not peace and they will be cut off (Isaiah 48:22; 2 Peter 3:7).

39-40: The summary of this Psalm: The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord. God is their strength in times of trouble, no matter how bitter and prolonged the troubles last. The Lord will help and deliver them. He will deliver them from the wicked, and save them because they trust in Him.