

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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A Study for Judaism • Christianity • Islam

DOCUMENT 295

AND HE WILL ACT

A Covenant Deep Dive into Psalms 37:5, 8 — *gol al-Yahweh darkekha* (roll your way upon Yahweh), גול על־יהוה דַּרְכֶּךָ,

What Does It Mean to Commit a Way to Yahweh, What Is He Promised to Do, Why Must Anger and Wrath Be Let Go, What Is the Fretting That Leads Only to Evil, and How Does the Covenant Believer Wait Without Giving Up Justice? — A Three-Religion Covenant Response

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The Message is Sent to the World

REACHING JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	✠ ISLAM
Rashi explains the first word of Psalms 37:5 as <i>“Roll upon Him all your needs,”</i> and reads the psalm’s <i>“do not fret”</i> as <i>“do not compete”</i> with evildoers by doing as they do (Rashi on Psalms 37:1, 5, 7). The Talmud asks whether the verse forbids contending with the wicked at all (Berakhot 7b). Maimonides ranks anger among the worst of traits (Mishneh Torah, De’ot 2:3). The written verse comes first.	Jesus quotes this psalm in the Beatitudes: <i>“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”</i> (Matthew 5:5; Psalms 37:11). Peter echoes its companion verse, <i>“casting all your anxiety on Him”</i> (1 Peter 5:7; Psalms 55:22 [Hebrew 55:23]), and Paul writes, <i>“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger”</i> (Ephesians 4:26; Psalms 4:4 [Hebrew 4:5]). In each place the Tanakh is the source.	The Qur’an cites this psalm by name: <i>“We have written in the Psalms, after the Reminder, that My righteous servants shall inherit the earth”</i> (Q. 21:105; Psalms 37:29). It praises <i>“those who restrain anger and pardon people”</i> (Q. 3:134) and commands <i>tawakkul</i> (reliance): <i>“when you have decided, put your trust in Allah”</i> (Q. 3:159). The Prophet’s counsel to a man who asked for advice was, <i>“Do not become angry”</i> (Sahih al-Bukhari 6116).

DOCTRINAL AUTHORITY — STANDING RULE OF MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the *Tanakh* — the written covenant of **Yahweh**. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. Miqdash Bethel uses the Written Tanakh as its sole source for four reasons: it is the only text Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize as originally given by **Yahweh**; it predates and underlies the Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an, so testing those traditions against it follows the evidentiary direction of **Deuteronomy 19:15** — the earlier witness governs the later commentary; every later tradition that departs from the Tanakh does so by addition or reinterpretation, never by overturning the text itself, so the text remains the fixed standard; and **Yahweh's** own words declare the covenant unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Psalms 119:89), making the written covenant — not evolving institutional interpretation — the only stable ground for doctrine. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because **Yahweh's** covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it. The **Deuteronomy 19:15** two-or-three-witness evidentiary standard governs all textual claims in this document.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document applies the sole authority of the written *Tanakh* to five questions about **Psalms 37:5, 8**: what it means to commit a way to **Yahweh**, what He is promised to do, what anger and wrath are and why they must be let go, what the fretting is that leads only to evil, and how the covenant believer waits without giving up justice. **Yahweh** (יהוה) and **Elohim** (אֱלֹהִים) appear in bold throughout. Tanakh books and personal names are given in English. Hebrew transliterations and their English meanings appear together in *bold italic*. Scripture references are bold. **Verse numbers follow the English version. In a few chapters the Hebrew Bible divides the chapter at a different point, so the same verse carries a different number in the Hebrew text. Where that happens, the Hebrew number is given in brackets on first citation, for example Numbers 30:13 [Hebrew 30:14]. In the Psalms this happens most often where a psalm has a heading, which the Hebrew text counts as a verse.** Scripture is rendered in a literal working translation from the Hebrew. Each finding is graded under the two-or-three-witness standard as **Corroborated** (two or more independent Tanakh witnesses), **Single witness**, or **Not in the text**. Three audiences are

addressed simultaneously: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Rabbinic literature, the ancient translations, the New Testament, and the Qur'an and hadith are cited as historical and comparative reference only. This is a covenant study, not counseling or medical advice; where a wrong involves abuse, danger, or crime, the reader should seek the protection of qualified help and lawful authority where he lives. The Written Tanakh governs all conclusions.

TANAKH BOOKS CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

DIVISION	BOOKS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Torah	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	Cain at the door; the stone rolled from the well; the sea; the law against the grudge; Moses at Meribah; the Name proclaimed as slow to anger; the promise that Yahweh will not let go and will not forsake
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Malachi	Gilgal; Gideon's soft answer; Hannah; Saul; David and Nabal; Ziklag; Elijah at Horeb; Naaman; Hezekiah's letter; quietness and trust; why the wicked prosper; brought out to the light
Ketuvim (Writings)	Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Nehemiah, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles	The governing psalm and its companions; the man of wrath; the end of the wicked; waiting in silence; Nehemiah's ruled anger; the furnace; Asa and the seer; Jehoshaphat

COMPARATIVE TEXTS CITED — HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE REFERENCE ONLY

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Ancient translations	Septuagint (Greek) Psalm 36:5–11, which is Psalm 37 in the Hebrew numbering	How the verses were read in Greek: <i>“Reveal your way to the Lord”; “do not be provoked so as to do evil”; “the meek shall inherit the earth”</i>
Dead Sea Scrolls	The Qumran commentary on the Psalms (4Q171)	The oldest surviving commentary on this psalm, read by its community of itself

CATEGORY	TEXTS CITED	PURPOSE IN THIS STUDY
Rabbinic literature	Rashi on Psalms 37:1, 5, 7, 8; Talmud Berakhot 7b; Mishnah Avot 4:1; 5:11; Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, De'ot 2:3; Bahya ibn Paquda, Duties of the Heart, Gate of Trust	The readings <i>“roll upon Him all your needs”</i> and <i>“do not compete”</i> ; contending with the wicked; anger as a trait; the duty of trust
New Testament	Matthew 5:5; 6:25–34; 27:43; Romans 12:19; Ephesians 4:26–27, 31; Philippians 4:6–7; James 1:19–20; 1 Peter 2:23; 5:7	Where this psalm and its companions are quoted or echoed in Christian scripture
Qur'an and hadith	Q. 3:134, 159; 16:127; 21:105; 42:37; 65:3; Sahih al-Bukhari 6114, 6116; Sahih Muslim 2609; Jami at-Tirmidhi 2517	The citation of this psalm in the Qur'an; reliance; the restraint of anger
Present practice	Prosperity teaching (<i>“name it and claim it”</i>); the slogan <i>“let go and let God”</i> ; psalms recited as a means to a wished-for result; violence in the name of offended religion	How each community has misused or broken the passage, tested in Section X

I. FRAMING THE QUESTION — TWO VERSES, ONE PSALM

I-A. The Question as It Is Asked

Two verses from one psalm of David are set side by side in this study. The Hebrew text:

גֹּל עַל־יְהוָה דְּרָכְךָ וּבִטָּח עָלָיו וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה
הָרָף מֵאָף וְעִזָּב חֲמָה אֶל־תִּתְחַר אֶךְ־לְהָרֶעַ

The two verses in the familiar English:

“Commit your way to Yahweh; trust in Him, and He will act... Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret — it leads only to evil” (Psalms 37:5, 8)

The first verse tells a person what to do with his way. The second tells him what to do with his anger. They stand three verses apart, and the psalm joins them. A man who has truly handed his way to **Yahweh** can let his anger go, and a man who will not let his anger go has not yet handed over his way.

The passage is usually quoted as comfort. It is also a command, with a warning attached. The question has five parts:

First: what does it mean to “*commit*” a way to **Yahweh**, and what is the “*way*”?

Second: what is **Yahweh** promised to do, and what is He not promised to do?

Third: what are the anger and the wrath of verse 8, and is all anger forbidden?

Fourth: what is the “*fretting*” that the psalm forbids three times, and how does it lead “*only to evil*”?

Fifth: how does the covenant believer wait for **Yahweh** without giving up justice, and without doing nothing?

This study builds on earlier work in the Library and does not repeat it. **Doc 293** (*Nor Bear a Grudge*) studied the law against vengeance and the grudge in **Leviticus 19:17–18** and quoted this passage as its counsel to the wronged (Section VIII-B). **Doc 273** (*Not in Your Heart*) quoted verse 8 against letting another man’s hatred become one’s own. **Doc 277** (*Better a Corner of the Roof*, Sections IV-E to IV-G) studied the man of wrath in Proverbs. **Doc 263** (*For Three Transgressions and for Four*) set this psalm before the nations. **Doc 238** (*Delivered and Kept*) drew on its promise that **Yahweh** upholds the one who falls. The present document takes the two verses themselves, word by word, and follows their words through the rest of the Tanakh. Corrections and refinements to earlier material are set out in Section XI.

I-B. The Psalm and Its Shape

Psalms 37 is headed *le-David (of David)*, and its author speaks as an old man: “*I have been young, and now I am old*” (**Psalms 37:25**). It is not a prayer. It never addresses **Yahweh**. From its first line to its last it is one believer counseling another, in the manner of Proverbs, and its opening line appears almost word for word in that book (**Proverbs 24:19**).

The psalm is an alphabetic acrostic: each stanza, usually two verses long, begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The two verses of this study each open a stanza, and the verse between them opens the stanza that joins them:

LETTER	VERSE	OPENING WORD	THE COMMAND
Gimel ג	Psalms 37:5	<i>gol (roll)</i> , גול	Roll your way upon Yahweh
Dalet ד	Psalms 37:7	<i>dom (be still)</i> , דום	Be still before Yahweh , and wait
He ה	Psalms 37:8	<i>heref (let go)</i> , הֵרֵף	Let go of anger, and forsake wrath

Three stanzas in a row give three commands: roll, be still, let go. The occasion is stated in the psalm's first line and repeated twice: ***“Do not fret because of evildoers; do not be envious of those who do wrong”*** (Psalms 37:1). The believer who is addressed has done right and is watching someone else do wrong and succeed. In its first eight verses the psalm gives him eleven things to do and forbids him two:

PSALMS 37:1-8	
Commanded	Trust in Yahweh ; do good; dwell in the land; feed on faithfulness (verse 3). Delight in Yahweh (verse 4). Roll your way upon Yahweh ; trust upon Him (verse 5). Be still before Yahweh ; wait for Him (verse 7). Let go of anger; forsake wrath (verse 8).
Forbidden	Fretting — three times (verses 1, 7, 8). Envy of those who do wrong (verse 1).

Finding — The two verses open the third and fifth stanzas of an acrostic psalm of counsel, addressed to a believer troubled by the success of evildoers. With verse 7 between them they form three commands in a row: roll, be still, let go. **Corroborated** (Psalms 37:1, 5, 7–8; Proverbs 24:19).

II. THE TEXT — PSALMS 37:5 WORD BY WORD

גֹּל עַל־יְהוָה דִּרְכְּךָ וּבְטַח עָלָיו וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה

Word for word: ***“Roll upon Yahweh your way, and trust upon Him, and He — He will act.”***

II-A. “Roll Your Way upon Yahweh”

The first word is **gol** (roll), גֹּל. It is the command form of **galal** (to roll), H1556, the ordinary verb for rolling something heavy. Jacob ***“rolled the stone from the mouth of the well”*** (Genesis 29:10) — וַיִּגֹּל אֶת־הָאֶבֶן מֵעַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר. Joshua ordered great stones rolled against the mouth of a cave (Joshua 10:18). Amos uses the verb of water: ***“let justice roll down like waters”*** (Amos 5:24). The English ***“commit”*** gives the sense fairly, but the picture in the Hebrew is physical. A way too heavy to carry is rolled, as a stone is rolled, onto someone who can bear it.

The verb appears as a command five times in the Tanakh. Twice it is about stones (Joshua 10:18; 1 Samuel 14:33). Three times what is rolled goes to **Yahweh**:

TEXT	THE HEBREW	WHAT IS ROLLED	WHAT FOLLOWS
Psalms 37:5	גול על־יהוה דרךך <i>gol al-Yahweh darkekha (roll upon Yahweh your way)</i>	Your way	<i>“and He will act”</i>
Proverbs 16:3	גל אל־יהוה מעשיך <i>gol el-Yahweh ma’asekha (roll to Yahweh your works)</i>	Your works	<i>“and your plans will be established”</i>
Psalms 22:8 [Hebrew 22:9]	גל אל־יהוה <i>gol el-Yahweh (roll it to Yahweh)</i>	Spoken as a taunt by the sufferer’s enemies	<i>“Let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, since He delights in him”</i>

Two things should be noticed.

First: the preposition. In **Proverbs 16:3** and **Psalms 22:8** the rolling is *el (to / toward) Yahweh*. In **Psalms 37:5** it is *al (upon) Yahweh*. The burden is not sent in His direction. It is laid on Him. The same preposition stands in the companion verse:

“Cast your burden upon Yahweh, and He will sustain you” (Psalms 55:22)

The Hebrew is הַשְׁלֵךְ עַל־יְהוָה יְהִבְךָ וְהוּא יְכַלְכֶּלְךָ, *hashlekh al-Yahweh yehavekha ve-hu yekhalkalekha (cast upon Yahweh your burden, and He will sustain you)*. The two verses are built alike: a command, the words *“upon Yahweh,”* the thing handed over, and then *ve-hu (and He)* with what He will do.

Second: the taunt in **Psalms 22:8** shows that this was a known saying about David, and that it was used against him. His enemies said, in effect: this is the man who rolls everything onto **Yahweh**; let us see whether **Yahweh** takes it. Two verses later David answers them with the same preposition: *“Upon You I was cast from the womb”* (Psalms 22:10 [Hebrew 22:11]) — עָלֶיךָ הַשְׁלַכְתִּי, *alekha hoshlakhti (upon You I was cast)*. What they mocked as a habit, he claimed as his whole life from birth.

The verb also runs in the other direction. At Gilgal **Yahweh** said, *“Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from upon you”* (Joshua 5:9) — גָּלוּתִי אֶת־חֲרַפַּת מִצְרַיִם מֵעָלֶיךָ — and the place was named *Gilgal (rolling)* for it. A psalmist prays, *“Roll away from upon me reproach and contempt”* (Psalms 119:22). The same verb moves both ways between a man and **Yahweh**. The man rolls his way *upon Yahweh*, and **Yahweh** rolls the reproach *from upon* the man.

Finding — To “*commit*” a way in **Psalms 37:5** is to roll it, as a weight, upon **Yahweh**, so that He and not the believer bears it. **Corroborated** (**Psalms 37:5; 55:22; 22:10; Proverbs 16:3**).

II-B. “Your Way”

What is rolled is *darkekha* (*your way*), דַּרְכְּךָ, from *derekh* (*way / road*), H1870. A way in the Tanakh is a person’s course: where he is going, how he conducts himself, and what becomes of him. It includes his cause, as when Israel complains, “*My way is hidden from Yahweh, and my justice is passed over by my Elohim*” (**Isaiah 40:27**). The word runs through this psalm five times, and the five uses tell the story of the passage:

VERSE	WHOSE WAY	WHAT IS SAID
Psalms 37:5	Yours	Roll it upon Yahweh
Psalms 37:7	The schemer’s	He “ <i>makes his way prosper</i> ” — do not fret over it
Psalms 37:14	The upright	The wicked draw the sword against “ <i>the upright of way</i> ”
Psalms 37:23	The man Yahweh upholds	“ <i>From Yahweh the steps of a man are made firm, and He delights in his way</i> ”
Psalms 37:34	Yahweh’s	“ <i>Wait for Yahweh and keep His way</i> ”

The passage begins with “*your way*” and ends with “*His way*.” In between stands the thing that tempts a believer to take his way back into his own hands: another man’s way is prospering. Proverbs say the same of every plan.

“*The heart of man plans his way, but Yahweh establishes his step*” (**Proverbs 16:9**). “*In all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight*” (**Proverbs 3:6**) — בְּכָל־דַּרְכֶּיךָ דַּעְהוּ וְהוּא יִישֹׁר אֶרְחֶיךָ. That proverb, too, has the emphatic *ve-hu* (*and He*).

Finding — The “*way*” of **Psalms 37:5** is the whole course of a person’s life and cause, and the psalm moves it from “*your way*” to “*His way*.” **Corroborated** (**Psalms 37:5, 23, 34; Proverbs 3:5–6; 16:9; Isaiah 40:27**).

II-C. “And Trust upon Him”

The second command is *u-vetach alav* (*and trust upon Him*), וּבִטַּח עָלָיו. The verb is *batach* (*to trust*), H982: to lean one’s weight on something and feel secure there. Verse 3 has already said *betach ba-Yahweh* (*trust in Yahweh*), בִּטַּח בַּיהוָה. Verse 5 repeats the verb and uses *al* (*upon*) a second

time: roll your way **upon Yahweh**, and trust **upon** Him. The way is laid on Him, and then the man himself leans there too. David uses the same phrase of himself:

“But I trust upon You, Yahweh; I say, You are my Elohim. My times are in Your hand” (Psalms 31:14–15 [Hebrew 31:15–16])

The Tanakh is exact about what this trust excludes. It is not trust in oneself: *“Trust in Yahweh with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding”* (Proverbs 3:5).

It is not trust in men: *“Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm... Blessed is the man who trusts in Yahweh, and whose trust Yahweh is”* (Jeremiah 17:5, 7); *“It is better to take refuge in Yahweh than to trust in princes”* (Psalms 118:9).

And it has a result that bears directly on verse 8. Jeremiah’s tree planted by water *“does not fear when heat comes... and in the year of drought is not anxious”* (Jeremiah 17:8) — לֹא יִדְאָג, *lo yid’ag* (it is not anxious).

Isaiah says, *“The steadfast mind You keep in peace, in peace, because it trusts in You”* (Isaiah 26:3).

The psalm of the righteous man says, *“He will not fear evil tidings; his heart is firm, trusting in Yahweh”* (Psalms 112:7) — נֶכֶן לְבוֹ בְּטַח בַּיהוָה.

Trust and fretting do not fill the same heart. Where one is settling in, the other is leaving.

Finding — Trust in Psalms 37:5 is the leaning of the whole person upon Yahweh after the way has been laid on Him, and its fruit is a heart that is not ruled by anxiety. Corroborated (Psalms 37:3, 5; 31:14–15; 112:7; Proverbs 3:5; Jeremiah 17:7–8; Isaiah 26:3).

II-D. “And He Will Act”

The verse ends *ve-bu ya’aseh* (and He will act), וְהוּא יַעֲשֶׂה. Two details of the Hebrew matter.

First: the pronoun is emphatic. Hebrew does not need the word *bu* (He); the verb already says *“he will do.”* When the pronoun is written, it carries weight: **He** is the one who will act, and by implication not you. The believer has just been told to hand the matter over. This word tells him whose hand it is now in.

Second: the verb has no object. *Asah* (to do / to act), H6213, ordinarily says what is done. Here it says only that He will do. The Tanakh uses the verb this way of **Yahweh** when His people have reached the end of what they can do:

TEXT	THE WORDS	THE SETTING
Psalms 52:9 [Hebrew 52:11]	<i>“I will thank You forever, because You have acted”</i> — כִּי עָשִׂיתָ	David, after Doeg informed on him to Saul
Psalms 119:126	<i>“It is time for Yahweh to act”</i> — עַתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת לַיהוָה	When the Torah is being broken
Isaiah 64:4 [Hebrew 64:3]	An Elohim <i>“who acts for the one who waits for Him”</i> — יַעֲשֶׂה לְמַחֲכֶה-לוֹ	Israel in ruins
Jeremiah 14:7	<i>“Yahweh, act for Your Name’s sake”</i>	Drought, and sin confessed
Daniel 9:19	<i>“O Lord, attend and act; do not delay”</i>	The exile

The third line of the table gives the verse its other half. **Isaiah 64:4** says for whom He acts: *li-mechakkeh lo (for the one who waits for Him)*. The psalm will say the same in verses 7 and 9.

What He will do is left open at the end of verse 5 and stated in verse 6. Abraham had already asked the question on which the whole psalm rests: *“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justice?”* (Genesis 18:25) — הֲשֹׁפֵט כָּל-הָאָרֶץ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט. The verb is the same: *asah (to do)*.

Finding — *“He will act”* places the outcome in Yahweh’s hand by an emphatic *“He,”* and the Tanakh joins His acting to the waiting of His people. **Corroborated** (Psalms 37:5, 7; 52:9; Isaiah 64:4; Daniel 9:19; Genesis 18:25).

II-E. What He Does — Verse 6

“And He will bring out your righteousness like the light, and your justice like the noonday” (Psalms 37:6)

וְהוֹצִיא כְּאוֹר צְדִיקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט כְּצַהֲרִים

The promise is specific. It is not wealth, and it is not victory over a rival. It is *tsidqekha (your righteousness)* and *mishpatekha (your justice)*: that the believer was in the right and that his cause is just, brought out where it can be seen. The verb is *hotsi (to bring out)*, from *yatsa (to go out)*, H3318. What was hidden in the dark is led out into daylight. The time is not given. The certainty is given by the picture: light comes, and noon follows morning.

Micah, speaking for a people who sit in darkness under a judgment they admit they deserved, uses the same words:

“until He pleads my cause and does justice for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon His righteousness” (Micah 7:9)

The Hebrew is **וַעֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּטִי יוֹצִיאֲנִי לְאוֹר אֶרְאֶה בְּצִדְקָתוֹ**. To do, to bring out, light, justice, righteousness: the vocabulary of **Psalms 37:5–6** is in the mouth of a prophet. The verse before it gives his posture: *“But as for me, I will watch for Yahweh; I will wait for the Elohim of my salvation”* (Micah 7:7).

Isaiah promises the same daylight to those who do justice: *“Then your light shall break out like the dawn... and your gloom shall be like the noonday”* (Isaiah 58:8, 10).

Finding — What **Yahweh** is promised to do in this passage is to vindicate: to bring the righteousness and the just cause of the one who trusts Him into the light. **Corroborated** (**Psalms 37:6; Micah 7:7–9; Isaiah 58:8, 10**). That the passage promises the particular outcome a believer has chosen for himself is **Not in the text** (Section VI-C).

II-F. The Bridge — Verse 7

“Be still before Yahweh, and wait longingly for Him; do not fret because of the one who makes his way prosper, because of the man who carries out schemes” (Psalms 37:7)

Between the two verses of this study stands the dalet stanza, and it explains how a man gets from one to the other. It opens **דוֹם לַיְהוָה וְהִתְחוֹלֵל לוֹ**, *dom la-Yahweh ve-hitcholel lo* (*be still before Yahweh, and wait longingly for Him*).

Dom (*be still*) is the command form of *damam* (*to be silent / still*), H1826. It is the word Joshua spoke to the sun: *“Sun, stand still at Gibeon”* (Joshua 10:12) — **שָׁמַשׁ בְּגִבְעוֹן דוֹם** — *“and the sun stood still”* (Joshua 10:13).

It is the word of David’s counsel for the night: *“Tremble, and do not sin; speak in your heart upon your bed, and be still”* (Psalms 4:4).

It is the word of his own resolve: *“Only for Elohim be still, my soul, for from Him is my hope”* (Psalms 62:5 [Hebrew 62:6]) — **אֲךָ לֵאלֹהִים דּוֹמִי נַפְשִׁי**.

Its noun names what Elijah met at Horeb after the wind, the earthquake, and the fire: **קוֹל דִּמְמָה דַּקָּה**, *qol demamah daqqah* (*a sound of thin silence*) (1 Kings 19:12).

And Lamentations uses the word for the one posture left to a people in ruins: *“It is good that one should wait, and be still, for the salvation of Yahweh”* (Lamentations 3:26) — **טוֹב וַיְחַל וְדוּמָם לְתַשׁוּעַת יְהוָה**.

The second verb, *hitcholel* (*wait longingly*), וְהִתְחַלֵּל, is rare. This form occurs three times in the Tanakh. In the other two it describes a whirling storm (**Jeremiah 23:19**) and a man writhing in pain (**Job 15:20**), and the root is used for the pains of birth. The lexicons render it here “*wait longingly*,” and some connect it instead with a like-sounding root for hoping. Either way the verse is honest. The stillness it commands is not the stillness of a man who feels nothing. It is the stillness of one who is in pain and holds his place, as a woman in labor waits for what the pain is bringing.

The verse then names the pressure exactly: the other man *matsliach darko* (*makes his way prosper*), בְּמַצְלִיחַ דַּרְכּוֹ.

Jeremiah brought the same words to **Yahweh** as a complaint: “*Why does the way of the wicked prosper?*” (**Jeremiah 12:1**) — מַדּוּעַ דֶּרֶךְ רָשָׁעִים צִלְחָה, *maddua derekh resha'im tsalechah* (*why does the way of the wicked prosper?*). Section IV takes up that complaint.

Finding — Between the handing over of the way (verse 5) and the letting go of anger (verse 8) the psalm sets stillness and waiting before **Yahweh**, and the waiting it describes is not painless. **Corroborated** (**Psalms 37:7; 4:4; 62:5; Lamentations 3:26**). That *hitcholel* (*wait longingly*) here carries the picture of labor pains resting on the root alone and is graded **Single witness**; the text does not settle it.

III. THE TEXT — PSALMS 37:8 WORD BY WORD

הָרָף מֵאֵף וְעָזַב חֵמָה אֶל־תִּתְחַר אֶף־לְהָרַעַ

Word for word: “*Let go from anger, and forsake wrath; do not kindle yourself — only to do evil.*”

III-A. “Cease from Anger”

The words are *heref me-af* (*let go from anger*), הָרָף מֵאֵף. *Heref* (*let go*) is a command from the verb *raphab* (*to sink / relax / let drop*), H7503, in the form that means to let something drop or to leave it alone. The verb is used for hands that go slack. This command form appears nine times in the Tanakh, and the other uses show its force:

TEXT	WHO SPEAKS	THE WORDS
Deuteronomy 9:14	Yahweh to Moses	“ <i>Let Me alone</i> ”
1 Samuel 15:16	Samuel to Saul	“ <i>Stop!</i> ”
2 Samuel 24:16	Yahweh to the destroying messenger	“ <i>Enough! Now let your hand drop</i> ”

TEXT	WHO SPEAKS	THE WORDS
Psalms 46:10 [Hebrew 46:11]	Elohim to the warring nations	<i>“Let go, and know that I am Elohim”</i>
Psalms 37:8	David to the believer	<i>“Let go from anger”</i>

The familiar *“Be still, and know that I am Elohim”* (Psalms 46:10) is this verb — הָרַפוּ וְדַעוּ, *harpu u-de’u* (let go, and know) — and it is spoken in a psalm of war, to nations whose bows He is breaking (Psalms 46:9 [Hebrew 46:10]). It means: drop it; put it down. The word in Psalms 37:8 is the same word, and what is to be dropped is named: *af* (anger), אַף, H639.

Af (anger) is first the word for the nose and the nostrils. Anger is named for where it shows: the flared nostril and the hard breath. It is anger as it appears on the face and comes out in the moment.

The grammar of the command should be noticed. No one can let go of what is not in his hand. The verse does not say *“never be angry.”* It speaks to a man who is already angry and tells him what to do with it. Section VI returns to this.

The same verb is used once in a narrative for the very thing commanded here. The men of Ephraim contended sharply with Gideon (Judges 8:1). He answered them softly and gave them the greater credit, and *“then their spirit relaxed from upon him, when he spoke this word”* (Judges 8:3) — אַז רַפְּתָה רוּחָם מֵעָלָיו, *az rafetah rucham me-alav* (then their spirit relaxed from upon him). Anger can be let go, and a soft word helps another man let it go (Proverbs 15:1).

III-B. “And Forsake Wrath”

The words are *va-azov chemah* (and forsake wrath), וְאַזּוֹב חֶמָה. *Chemah* (wrath), חֶמָה, H2534, is from a root for heat. It is the word used for the venom of a serpent (Deuteronomy 32:33; Psalms 58:4 [Hebrew 58:5]). If *af* (anger) is anger on the face, *chemah* (wrath) is anger in the blood: hot, inward, and poisonous to the one who carries it. Naaman, offended at Elisha’s plain instruction, *“turned and went away in wrath”* (2 Kings 5:12), and he would have carried his leprosy home with him if his servants had not reasoned with him (2 Kings 5:13–14).

Azov (forsake) is from *azav* (to leave / abandon), H5800: to walk away from something and leave it behind. One lets go of what is in the hand. One forsakes a place where one has been living. Wrath is something a man can dwell in. Doc 293 (Section V-A) showed from Ecclesiastes 7:9 that anger *“rests in the bosom of fools”*; it is given a room. This verse tells the believer to move out.

Finding — Verse 8 names anger in two forms, the outward flare and the inward heat, and commands two acts toward them: let go, and leave. Both verbs assume that anger has already come. **Corroborated** (Psalms 37:8; Judges 8:3; Ecclesiastes 7:9; Proverbs 15:1; 29:22).

III-C. “Do Not Fret”

The words are *al titchar (do not fret)*, אַל־תִּתַּחַר. The verb is *charah (to burn / be kindled)*, H2734, the common verb for anger kindling: “*the anger of Moses burned*” (Exodus 32:19). Here it stands in a rare form that turns the action back on the one who does it: do not heat yourself; do not kindle yourself. This form of the verb occurs four times in the whole Tanakh. Three of the four are in this psalm (Psalms 37:1, 7, 8), and the fourth is the proverb that repeats the psalm’s first line (Proverbs 24:19).

The older English word “*fret*” was well chosen. It once meant to eat away, as a moth frets a garment. The Hebrew picture is of heat: a fire a man keeps feeding in himself. David describes it from the inside in another psalm, with the wicked standing in front of him:

“*My heart grew hot within me; while I mused, the fire burned*” (Psalms 39:3 [Hebrew 39:4])

חִם־לִבִּי בִקְרָבִי בִהְגִּי תִבְעַר־אֵשׁ

He had resolved to say nothing (Psalms 39:1–2 [Hebrew 39:2–3]). The silence of the mouth did not help, because the fire was being fed by the musing. Fretting is anger rehearsed. It is the case argued again at night, the wrong reviewed, the other man’s success counted. The first two times the psalm forbids it, the object is another person: “*because of evildoers*” (Psalms 37:1); “*because of the one who makes his way prosper*” (Psalms 37:7). The third time, in verse 8, there is no object at all. By then the fire no longer needs one.

The Tanakh has other words for the anxious side of the same condition, and they point the same way: “*Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it down*” (Proverbs 12:25); “*When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your comforts delight my soul*” (Psalms 94:19).

One more form of this verb should be reported. Twice Jeremiah uses a related form to mean “*compete*”: “*how will you compete with horses?*” (Jeremiah 12:5; 22:15). On that ground some read the psalm’s command as “*do not vie with evildoers*”: do not try to match them. The form in the psalm is not the form in Jeremiah, and this study follows the ordinary sense, “*do not kindle yourself.*” The other reading is noted in Section X.

Finding — The fretting forbidden in Psalms 37 is self-kindled heat over another’s wrongdoing or success: anger fed by rehearsal. **Corroborated** (Psalms 37:1, 7–8; 39:1–3; Proverbs 24:19).

III-D. “It Leads Only to Evil”

The verse ends *akh le-bare’a* (*only to do evil*), אַךְ-לְהָרַע. *Akh* (*only / surely*), H389, restricts: nothing else comes of it. Proverbs uses the same construction: “*everyone who is hasty comes only to want*” (Proverbs 21:5) — וְכָל-אִישׁ אַךְ-לְמַחְסֹר, *akh le-machsor* (*only to want*). *Le-bare’a* (*to do evil*) is from *ra’a* (*to be evil / do evil*), H7489, in the form that means to do evil or to do harm.

The word can be taken two ways, and both are in the Tanakh. It can mean to do wrong: “*Cease to do evil*” (Isaiah 1:16) — חֲדָלוּ הָרַע.

It can mean to bring harm, even on oneself: the righteous man “*swears to his own hurt and does not change*” (Psalms 15:4) — נִשְׁבַּע לְהָרַע.

On the first reading the verse says that fretting ends in sin. On the second it says that fretting ends in damage. The two do not compete; a man who does wrong in his heat has also harmed himself.

The psalm itself tips the balance toward the first, by a repetition that English hides:

VERSE	THE HEBREW	THE ENGLISH
Psalms 37:1	אַל-תִּתְּחַר בַּמֵּרָעִים <i>al titchar ba-mere'im</i>	Do not fret because of evildoers
Psalms 37:8	אַךְ-לְהָרַע <i>akh le-bare'a</i>	it leads only to do evil
Psalms 37:9	כִּי-מֵרָעִים יִכָּרְתוּן <i>ki mere'im yikkaretun</i>	for evildoers shall be cut off

Mere'im (*evildoers*) and *le-bare’a* (*to do evil*) are the same verb in the same form. The psalm begins by telling the believer not to burn over the evildoers. Eight verses later it tells him where the burning leads: to doing what they do. The next line says what becomes of those who do it. The man who frets over evildoers is on the road to joining them, and to sharing their end.

David had reason to know. On the road to Nabal’s house, with his sword on, he was stopped by Abigail, and he blessed **Yahweh**, “*who has held me back from doing evil to you*” (1 Samuel 25:34) — מִנְעָנִי מֵהָרַע אֹתָךְ, *mena’ani me-hara otakh* (*He held me back from doing evil to you*). The word is the word of the psalm. Section V sets out that day in full.

There is one more witness, from the other side. A psalm of ascents says that **Yahweh** Himself limits how long the wicked may rule, and gives this as the reason:

“For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to wrong” (Psalms 125:3)

Yahweh knows what prolonged injustice does to those who suffer under it. He does not excuse the wrong they might do. He shortens the trial.

Finding — Fretting over evildoers leads the one who frets into evil of his own; the psalm says so with the same word it uses for the evildoers themselves. **Corroborated (Psalms 37:1, 8–9; 125:3; 1 Samuel 25:34; Proverbs 29:22)**. Whether *le-hare’a (to do evil)* in this verse means to do wrong or to do harm is not finally settled by the grammar; the repetition in verses 1 and 9 favors the first.

III-E. Two Verbs Yahweh Never Does to His Own

The two commands of verse 8 are *heref (let go)* and *azov (forsake)*, from the verbs *raphah (to let go)* and *azav (to forsake)*. The Tanakh uses these two verbs together, in the same order, in one other setting. They are the promise spoken at every handing over of leadership in Israel:

SPOKEN BY	SPOKEN TO	THE WORDS	TEXT
Moses	All Israel	<i>“He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you”</i>	Deuteronomy 31:6
Moses	Joshua	<i>“He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you”</i>	Deuteronomy 31:8
Yahweh	Joshua	<i>“I will not let you go, and I will not forsake you”</i>	Joshua 1:5
David	Solomon	<i>“He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you, until all the work is finished”</i>	1 Chronicles 28:20

The Hebrew is **לֹא יִרְפֶּךָ וְלֹא יַעֲזֹבֶךָ**, *lo yarpekha ve-lo ya’azvekka (He will not let you go, and He will not forsake you)*. The verbs are the verbs of the psalm. What the believer is commanded to do to his anger is exactly what **Yahweh** has sworn never to do to the believer. Let go of the wrath; you yourself are not let go. Forsake the heat; you yourself are not forsaken.

David, who gave that promise to Solomon, wrote both halves into this psalm. *Azav (to forsake)* appears in it four times:

VERSE	WHO FORSAKES	WHAT IS SAID
Psalms 37:8	The believer	<i>“forsake wrath”</i> — וְעָזַב חֶמָּה
Psalms 37:25	No one	<i>“I have not seen the righteous forsaken”</i> — צַדִּיק נֶעְזָב
Psalms 37:28	Not Yahweh	<i>“He will not forsake His faithful ones”</i> — וְלֹא יַעֲזֹב אֶת־חֲסִידָיו
Psalms 37:33	Not Yahweh	<i>“Yahweh will not forsake him into his hand”</i> — יְהוָה לֹא־יַעֲזֹבֵנוּ

In another psalm he prays the other verb back to **Yahweh**: *“Yahweh will complete what concerns me... do not let go the works of Your hands”* (Psalms 138:8) — מְעַשֵׂי יָדַי אֶל־תִּרְךָ, *al teref* (do not let go). A man can open his hand and drop his anger because another hand is holding him.

Finding — The two verbs commanded toward anger in **Psalms 37:8** are the two verbs **Yahweh** promises never to do toward His people, and the psalm itself sets *“forsake wrath”* beside *“He will not forsake.”* Corroborated (Psalms 37:8, 25, 28, 33; Deuteronomy 31:6, 8; Joshua 1:5; 1 Chronicles 28:20; Psalms 138:8).

III-F. The Word Study

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>gol</i> (roll) גּוֹל	H1556	Command of <i>galal</i> (to roll): to roll a weight	Psalms 37:5; Proverbs 16:3; Genesis 29:10
<i>darkekha</i> (your way) דֶּרֶכְךָ	H1870	From <i>derekh</i> (way / road): course of life; one's cause	Psalms 37:5, 23, 34; Proverbs 16:9
<i>u-vetach</i> (and trust) וּבִטַּח עָלַיו	H982	From <i>batach</i> (to trust): to lean on and be secure	Psalms 37:3, 5; Jeremiah 17:7; Isaiah 26:3
<i>ya'aseh</i> (He will act) יַעֲשֶׂה	H6213	From <i>asah</i> (to do / to act); of Yahweh , with no object	Psalms 37:5; 52:9; Isaiah 64:4
<i>hotsi</i> (to bring out) הוֹצִיא	H3318	From <i>yatsa</i> (to go out): to lead out into the open	Psalms 37:6; Micah 7:9
<i>tsidqekha</i> (your righteousness) צִדְקָךָ	H6664	From <i>tsedeq</i> (righteousness): being in the right	Psalms 37:6

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>mishpat (justice)</i> מִשְׁפָּט	H4941	Judgment; a just cause; justice done	Psalms 37:6, 28, 30; Genesis 18:25
<i>dom (be still)</i> דָּוָם	H1826	Command of <i>damam (to be silent / still)</i>	Psalms 37:7; 4:4; 62:5; Joshua 10:12
<i>bitcholel (wait longingly)</i> וְהִתְחוּלֵל	H2342	From <i>chul (to whirl / writhe)</i> ; here, to wait in longing	Psalms 37:7; Jeremiah 23:19; Job 15:20
<i>heref (let go)</i> הֵרֵף	H7503	Command of <i>raphah (to relax / let drop)</i>	Psalms 37:8; 46:10; Deuteronomy 31:6
<i>af (anger)</i> אַף	H639	Nostril; anger as it flares	Psalms 37:8; Proverbs 29:22
<i>va-azov (and forsake)</i> וְעָזַב	H5800	From <i>azav (to leave / abandon)</i>	Psalms 37:8, 25, 28, 33; Deuteronomy 31:6
<i>chemah (wrath)</i> חֲמָה	H2534	Heat; wrath; venom	Psalms 37:8; Proverbs 15:1; 2 Kings 5:12
<i>al titchar (do not fret)</i> אַל-תִּתְחַר	H2734	From <i>charah (to burn)</i> ; in this form, to kindle oneself	Psalms 37:1, 7, 8; Proverbs 24:19; Genesis 4:5
<i>le-hare'a (to do evil)</i> לְהַרְעַ	H7489	From <i>ra'a (to be evil)</i> : to do evil; to do harm	Psalms 37:1, 8, 9; 1 Samuel 25:34; Isaiah 1:16
<i>teqanne (be envious)</i> תִּקְנָא	H7065	From <i>qana (to be jealous / envy)</i>	Psalms 37:1; 73:3; Proverbs 23:17
<i>qavveh (wait)</i> קָוָה	H6960	From <i>qavah (to wait)</i> : to wait with expectation	Psalms 37:9, 34; 27:14; Proverbs 20:22
<i>yirshu arets (shall inherit the land)</i> יִירְשׁוּ-אֶרֶץ	H3423	From <i>yarash (to take possession / inherit)</i>	Psalms 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34
<i>yikkaretun (shall be cut off)</i> יִכָּרְתוּן	H3772	From <i>karat (to cut)</i> : to be cut off	Psalms 37:9, 22, 28, 34, 38
<i>anavim (the humble)</i> יַעֲנִוִים	H6035	The lowly, humble, afflicted	Psalms 37:11

HEBREW TERM	STRONG'S	CORE MEANING	KEY TEXT
<i>acharit (end / future)</i> אַחֲרִית	H319	The after-part; the outcome	Psalms 37:37–38; 73:17; Proverbs 23:18
<i>erekh appayim (slow to anger)</i> אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם	H750 / H639	Long of nostrils: slow to anger	Exodus 34:6; Proverbs 14:29; 16:32

IV. WHY THE PSALM IS NEEDED — WHEN THE WICKED PROSPER

The psalm is not addressed to a man who is angry without cause. It is addressed to a man who is right about what he sees. Evildoers do prosper (**Psalms 37:7**). The wicked do plot against the righteous, draw the sword, and borrow without repaying (**Psalms 37:12, 14, 21**). The Tanakh does not ask the believer to pretend otherwise.

IV-A. The Complaint Is Honest — Five Witnesses

Witness One — Asaph. *“But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled... for I was envious of the arrogant, when I saw the peace of the wicked”* (Psalms 73:2–3). *“Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure”* (Psalms 73:13).

Witness Two — Jeremiah. *“Righteous are You, Yahweh, when I contend with You; yet I would speak with You of judgments: Why does the way of the wicked prosper?”* (Jeremiah 12:1).

Witness Three — Habakkuk. *“Why do You look on the treacherous, and keep silent when the wicked swallows one more righteous than he?”* (Habakkuk 1:13).

Witness Four — Job. *“Why do the wicked live, grow old, and grow mighty in power?”* (Job 21:7).

Witness Five — the generation of Malachi. *“It is vain to serve Elohim... And now we call the arrogant blessed; the doers of wickedness are built up; they even test Elohim and escape”* (Malachi 3:14–15).

Four of these five are counted among the righteous, and none of the four is rebuked for asking. Each took the question to **Yahweh**. That is already the beginning of **Psalms 37:5**: the complaint is rolled onto Him instead of being fed in the dark.

Ecclesiastes states the danger if it is not: *“Because sentence against an evil deed is not carried out quickly, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil”* (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

Delay tempts the wicked to more wickedness and the righteous to despair.

Finding — The Tanakh records the complaint that the wicked prosper in the mouths of its own prophets and psalmists, and it does not treat the question as sin. **Corroborated** (Psalms 73:2–3, 13; Jeremiah 12:1; Habakkuk 1:13; Job 21:7; Malachi 3:14–15).

IV-B. The Psalm’s Answer — Their End

The psalm answers with time. *“For like grass they will quickly wither”* (Psalms 37:2).

“Yet a little while, and the wicked is no more” (Psalms 37:10) — וְעוֹד מְעַט, *ve-od me’at* (and yet a little).

“The Lord laughs at him, for He sees that his day is coming” (Psalms 37:13).

The old man gives his own testimony: *“I have seen a wicked man, ruthless, spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil. And he passed away, and behold, he was not”* (Psalms 37:35–36).

The key word is *acharit* (end / future), אַחֲרִית, H319: *“Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace. But transgressors shall be destroyed together; the future of the wicked shall be cut off”* (Psalms 37:37–38).

Every witness of Section IV-A was given the same answer:

WITNESS	THE ANSWER HE RECEIVED	TEXT
Asaph	<i>“Until I came into the sanctuary of El; then I perceived their end”</i>	Psalms 73:17
Jeremiah	A harder road is still ahead: if running with footmen has wearied you, how will you compete with horses?	Jeremiah 12:5
Habakkuk	<i>“Though it tarry, wait for it... the righteous shall live by his faithfulness”</i>	Habakkuk 2:3–4
Job	Yahweh Himself answered him, and <i>“Yahweh blessed the end of Job more than his beginning”</i>	Job 38:1; 42:12

WITNESS	THE ANSWER HE RECEIVED	TEXT
Malachi's generation	<i>"A book of remembrance was written before Him... Then you shall again see the difference between the righteous and the wicked"</i>	Malachi 3:16, 18

Asaph's words are **עַד-אַבּוֹא אֶל-מִקְדָּשֵׁי-אֵל אֲבִינָה לְאַחֲרֵיתָם**, *ad avo el miqdeshei El, avinah le-acharitam* (until I came into the sanctuary of El; I perceived their end).

The envy did not leave him by argument. It left when he went into the sanctuary and looked from there.

Afterward he named what the fretting had made of him: *"When my heart was soured... I was brutish and did not know; I was a beast before You"* (Psalms 73:21–22).

And he named what he had in place of what the wicked had: *"But as for me, the nearness of Elohim is my good"* (Psalms 73:28).

The word in **Job 42:12** is the same word, *acharit* (end / future).

Proverbs gives the answer in that word twice: *"Let not your heart envy sinners... for surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off"* (Proverbs 23:17–18);

"Do not fret because of evildoers... for there will be no future for the evil man" (Proverbs 24:19–20).

Finding — The psalm's answer to the prosperity of the wicked is their end and the believer's future, and the Tanakh gives that answer to each one who brought the complaint. **Corroborated** (Psalms 37:2, 10, 35–38; 73:17; Habakkuk 2:3–4; Malachi 3:16–18; Proverbs 23:17–18; 24:19–20).

IV-C. The Reason Given — Verse 9

"For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for Yabweh, they shall inherit the land" (Psalms 37:9)

Verse 8 is a command, and verse 9 is its stated reason. It opens with *ki* (for). Two phrases in it run through the whole psalm. *"Shall inherit the land"* — **יִרְשׁוּ-אֶרֶץ**, *yirshu arets* — is said five times (Psalms 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34). *"Shall be cut off"* is said five times (Psalms 37:9, 22, 28, 34, 38). The ones who inherit are named differently each time:

VERSE	WHO INHERITS THE LAND
Psalms 37:9	Those who wait for Yahweh
Psalms 37:11	The humble
Psalms 37:22	Those blessed by Him
Psalms 37:29	The righteous
Psalms 37:34	The one who waits for Yahweh and keeps His way

No line in the list says the angry, the strong, or the quick. The first and the last say those who wait. The second says *anavim (the humble)*, וְעֲנָוִים, who “*shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace*” (Psalms 37:11).

Doc 263 (Section V-B) set this before the nations: the land is not inherited by the side with the hotter anger. Nor is the inheritance riches: “*Better is the little of the righteous than the abundance of many wicked*” (Psalms 37:16). It is a settled place in what **Yahweh** gives, held in peace.

Finding — The believer is to let go of anger because the outcome is already decided: evildoers are cut off, and the land is inherited by those who wait for **Yahweh**, the humble, and the righteous.
Corroborated (Psalms 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34; Proverbs 24:20; Malachi 3:18).

V. WHERE FRETTING LEADS — SIX WITNESSES

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, the claim of verse 8 — that fretting leads only to evil — is tested against the record. **Doc 293** (Section III) gave six witnesses of vengeance taken by the injured man’s own hand. The six below stand one step earlier, at the kindling. In three of them the Tanakh uses the psalm’s own verb, *charah (to burn)*, and in the last it uses the psalm’s other word, the doing of evil.

Witness One — Cain: the question asked at the door. “*And it burned in Cain greatly, and his face fell*” (Genesis 4:5) — וַיִּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד.

Before anything was done, **Yahweh** came to him with a question and a warning: “*Why has it burned in you?... Sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must rule over it*” (Genesis 4:6–7).

The Hebrew of the question is לָמָּה חָרָה לָךְ, *lammah charah lakh (why has it burned in you?)*. Cain gave no answer. The next verse is the murder (**Genesis 4:8**). The first anger in the Tanakh is anger

at a brother who was accepted, and it was met with the counsel of **Psalms 37:8** before the psalm was written: you must rule over it.

Witness Two — Saul: one song. The women sang that David had struck his ten thousands. *“And it burned in Saul greatly, and the thing was evil in his eyes”* (1 Samuel 18:8) — וַיַּחַר לְשָׁאוּל מְאֹד וַיֵּרַע בְּעֵינָיו.

Both words of **Psalms 37:8** are in the sentence: the burning, and the evil. *“And Saul eyed David from that day and onward”* (1 Samuel 18:9).

The next day he threw the spear (1 Samuel 18:10–11). Doc 277 (Section VII) followed that enmity to its end. It began as fretting over another man’s success.

Witness Three — Moses at Meribah: the righteous man provoked. The people contended with Moses for water, as they had for forty years.

He said, *“Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?”* and struck the rock twice (Numbers 20:10–11).

Yahweh said, *“Because you did not believe in Me, to sanctify Me... you shall not bring this assembly into the land”* (Numbers 20:12).

A psalm gives the cause: *“they embittered his spirit, and he spoke rashly with his lips”* (Psalms 106:33).

The provocation was real, and it was theirs. The rash word was his. The Torah calls Moses *“very humble, more than any man on the face of the earth”* (Numbers 12:3), and the word is *anav* (*humble*), the word for those who inherit the land in **Psalms 37:11**. If that man could be carried by heat into the one act that kept him out of the Land, no believer is safe in it.

Witness Four — Jonah: anger at mercy. When Yahweh spared Nineveh, *“it was evil to Jonah, a great evil, and it burned in him”* (Jonah 4:1) — וַיֵּרַע אֶל-יֹנָה רָעָה גְדוֹלָה וַיַּחַר לוֹ.

Again both words stand together. Jonah was angry because Yahweh is *“slow to anger”* (Jonah 4:2). Twice he was asked the question that had been asked of Cain: *“Is it right for you to burn?”* (Jonah 4:4, 9) — הֲהִיטֵב חָרָה לָךְ. Jonah answered, *“It is right for me to burn, even to death”* (Jonah 4:9). The book ends with the question still open. A man can fret over mercy shown to a hundred and twenty thousand people (Jonah 4:11) and call his heat righteousness.

Witness Five — Asa: anger at reproof. King Asa had relied on the king of Aram and not on Yahweh, and Hanani the seer told him so (2 Chronicles 16:7). *“And Asa was vexed with the seer*

and put him in the house of the stocks, for he was in a rage with him over this. And Asa crushed some of the people at that time” (2 Chronicles 16:10).

A true word was answered with heat, and the heat went straight to a prisoner and to oppression. The rebuke had been about trust: *“the eyes of Yahweh run to and fro through all the earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is whole toward Him”* (2 Chronicles 16:9).

The king who would not lean on **Yahweh** could not let go of his anger either.

Witness Six — David on the road to Carmel: the author himself. Nabal answered David’s men with contempt and sent them away empty (1 Samuel 25:10–11). David said, *“Gird on every man his sword”* (1 Samuel 25:13), and on the road he rehearsed his case: *“Surely in vain I have guarded all that this man has in the wilderness... and he has returned me evil for good”* (1 Samuel 25:21).

He swore to leave no male alive by morning (1 Samuel 25:22). The grievance was real. The fretting had carried him in a few hours from an insult to a planned massacre. Abigail met him and reasoned with him, and he said:

“Blessed is your discernment, and blessed are you, who have kept me this day from coming into bloodguilt, and from saving myself with my own hand” (1 Samuel 25:33)

He said that **Yahweh** had *“held me back from doing evil”* (1 Samuel 25:34).

When Nabal died about ten days later, he said that **Yahweh** *“has kept His servant back from evil”* (1 Samuel 25:38–39) — וְאֶת-עַבְדּוֹ חָשָׁה מִרָעָה. **Yahweh** acted. David did not have to. The man who wrote “it leads only to evil” had once been four hundred swords from proving it. Doc 293 (Section IV-D) cited this day for vengeance refused. It belongs here for what came before the refusal.

WITNESS	WHAT KINDLED IT	WHERE IT LED	TEXT
Cain	A brother’s offering accepted	Murder	Genesis 4:5–8
Saul	A song praising another man	The spear, and years of pursuit	1 Samuel 18:8–11
Moses	A contentious people	A rash word; the Land closed to him	Numbers 20:10–12; Psalms 106:32–33
Jonah	Mercy shown to an enemy	A wish to die; a quarrel with Yahweh	Jonah 4:1–9

WITNESS	WHAT KINDLED IT	WHERE IT LED	TEXT
Asa	A true rebuke	A seer in the stocks; the people crushed	2 Chronicles 16:9–10
David	An insult and a kindness unrepaid	Four hundred swords, stopped by Abigail	1 Samuel 25:13–34

Proverbs states the rule these six illustrate: *“A man of anger stirs up strife, and a master of wrath abounds in transgression”* (Proverbs 29:22) — אִישׁ־אַף יִגְרֶה מְדוֹן וְבַעַל חֵמָה רַב־פָּשַׁע.

“One short of temper does folly” (Proverbs 14:17).

“For vexation kills the fool” (Job 5:2).

And of the heart that turns its heat upward when its own choices fail: *“A man’s folly subverts his way, and his heart rages against Yahweh”* (Proverbs 19:3).

Finding — Kindled anger over another’s favor, success, offense, or rebuke leads the angry one into evil of his own. It did so in the unrighteous and in the righteous alike. **Corroborated** (Genesis 4:5–8; 1 Samuel 18:8–11; Numbers 20:10–12; Psalms 106:32–33; Jonah 4:1–9; 2 Chronicles 16:10; 1 Samuel 25:13–34; Proverbs 29:22). That a real grievance makes the heat safe is **Not in the text.**

VI. WHAT THE COMMAND DOES NOT SAY

Because this passage is used to quiet the wronged and to excuse the idle, its limits must be stated from the text.

VI-A. It Does Not Forbid All Anger

The verbs of verse 8 are let go and forsake. They are speaking to one who is already angry. The Tanakh records anger at evil without blame: *“the anger of Moses burned”* at the golden calf (Exodus 32:19), and he went out from Pharaoh *“in burning anger”* (Exodus 11:8). Doc 293 (Section V-A) drew the line from Ecclesiastes 7:9 and Psalms 4:4: anger is not the sin; keeping it is. This study adds the form of the psalm’s verb. What is forbidden three times is the kindling of oneself: the feeding of the fire.

Nehemiah shows the whole sequence done rightly. When he heard that the nobles were enslaving their brothers, *“it burned in me greatly”* (Nehemiah 5:6) — וַיִּחַר לִי מְאֹד, the psalm’s verb. ‘

The next words are *“and my heart took counsel within me”* (Nehemiah 5:7) — וַיִּמְלֶךָ לְבִי עָלַי.

Then he acted, openly and lawfully: *“I contended with the nobles and the officials... and I set a great assembly against them”* (Nehemiah 5:7).

The anger came. It was ruled. It was turned into a just act, and then it was finished.

Moses did the same when Korah’s company slandered him: *“it burned in Moses greatly, and he said to Yahweh...”* (Numbers 16:15). The heat went up, in words, to the One who judges.

Yahweh’s own anger is the measure. He is *erekh appayim* (slow to anger), אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם (Exodus 34:6).

“His anger is but a moment; His favor is for a lifetime” (Psalms 30:5 [Hebrew 30:6]).

“He will not always contend, nor will He keep His anger forever” (Psalms 103:9).

He is *“an El who is indignant every day”* (Psalms 7:11 [Hebrew 7:12]),

and yet *“many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath”* (Psalms 78:38).

That last line has both words of Psalms 37:8, *af* (anger) and *chemah* (wrath), and it says what He does with them. **His anger is real, slow, brief, and governed. The believer is to be like it.**

Finding — Psalms 37:8 forbids kept, fed, and self-kindled anger. It does not forbid the anger that rises at evil, is ruled, and is turned into reproof, prayer, or lawful action. **Corroborated** (Psalms 37:8; 4:4; Exodus 32:19; Nehemiah 5:6–7; Numbers 16:15; Exodus 34:6; Psalms 103:8–9). That the verse makes every feeling of anger a sin is **Not in the text.**

VI-B. It Does Not Command Inaction

“He will act” has been taken to mean *“therefore you need not.”* The psalm says otherwise in its own lines. The same stanza that says *“trust in Yahweh”* says *“and do good”* (Psalms 37:3). The command is repeated: *“Turn from evil and do good”* (Psalms 37:27) — סוּר מִרָע וַעֲשֵׂה-טוֹב. The righteous man of the psalm *“is gracious and gives”* (Psalms 37:21), lends all day long (Psalms 37:26), and *“his tongue speaks justice”* (Psalms 37:30). He is busy. What he has laid down is the outcome and the anger, not his work.

The witnesses agree. At the sea Moses said, *“Yahweh will fight for you, and you shall be silent”* (Exodus 14:14), and the very next word from Yahweh was, *“Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward”* (Exodus 14:15) — דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּסְעוּ. Nehemiah wrote, *“we prayed to our Elohim, and we set a guard”* (Nehemiah 4:9 [Hebrew 4:3]). Proverbs holds the two together in one line: *“The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but*

the victory belongs to Yahweh” (Proverbs 21:31). The believer readies the horse. He does not mistake the horse for the victory.

Finding — The trust and stillness of **Psalms 37** stand beside commanded action: doing good, giving, speaking justice, going forward. **Corroborated** (**Psalms 37:3, 21, 26–27, 30; Exodus 14:14–15; Nehemiah 4:9; Proverbs 21:31**). That committing a way to **Yahweh** releases a believer from doing what is in front of him is **Not in the text**.

VI-C. It Does Not Promise the Outcome You Chose

The verse says *“He will act.”* It does not say *“He will do what you planned.”* Three limits are in the text.

First: what is promised is vindication and a kept inheritance (**Psalms 37:6, 9**), not a named result. **Proverbs 16:3** is often quoted as a formula: commit your works, and your plans will succeed.

Six verses later the same chapter corrects that reading: *“The heart of man plans his way, but Yahweh establishes his step”* (**Proverbs 16:9**).

And again: *“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but the counsel of Yahweh, it shall stand”* (**Proverbs 19:21**).

A way that has been rolled onto **Yahweh** is no longer the believer’s to direct. **Doc 229** (*Master Key or Master’s Voice?*) tested the teaching that belief or expectation draws results to itself, and found it not in the text.

Second: the psalm does not say that the righteous never fall. *“Though he fall, he shall not be hurled down, for Yahweh upholds his hand”* (**Psalms 37:24**). It expects evil times, famine, and the sword (**Psalms 37:14, 19, 39**). **Doc 238** (Section V-C) studied this verse: the Tanakh draws the line not at whether the righteous fall but at whether they rise.

Third: trust does not wait for a guarantee. The three men before Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace said, *“our Elohim whom we serve is able to deliver us... But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods”* (**Daniel 3:17–18**).

Habakkuk said, *“Though the fig tree does not blossom... yet I will exult in Yahweh”* (**Habakkuk 3:17–18**).

Finding — *“He will act”* promises that **Yahweh** will vindicate and keep the one who trusts Him. That committing a way obliges **Yahweh** to give the outcome the believer has chosen, or spares the believer from loss, is **Not in the text** (**Psalms 37:24; Proverbs 16:9; 19:21; Daniel 3:17–18; Habakkuk 3:17–18**).

VI-D. It Does Not Silence the Wronged

Doc 293 (Section IV-B) showed that the law against vengeance does not forbid reproof, lawful justice, restitution, the defense of life, protective distance, or truthful memory. The same holds here. The psalm that says *“be still”* also says that **Yahweh “loves justice” (Psalms 37:28)** and that the righteous man speaks it (**Psalms 37:30**). To report a crime, to testify, to seek the protection of the law, and to keep distance from a dangerous person are not fretting. They are among the good the psalm commands (Psalms 37:3, 27). What the passage asks of the wronged is narrower: not to live in the heat.

Finding — That **Psalms 37:5, 8** requires a wronged person to keep silent or to forgo lawful justice is **Not in the text (Psalms 37:28, 30; Deuteronomy 16:18–20).**

VII. “HE WILL ACT” — FIVE WITNESSES

The promise of verse 5 is tested the same way. In each account below, someone under real pressure did what the passage commands — handed the matter to **Yahweh**, held still, and did the good in front of him — and **Yahweh** acted.

Witness One — Israel at the sea. With the sea ahead and Egypt behind, Moses said: *“Do not fear; stand firm, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which He will do for you today... Yahweh will fight for you, and you shall be silent”* (Exodus 14:13–14).

The verb is the verb of the psalm: *asher ya’aseh lakhem (which He will do for you)*. They were silent, they went forward at His word (Exodus 14:15), and *“Yahweh saved Israel that day”* (Exodus 14:30).

Witness Two — Hannah. Provoked year after year until she wept and would not eat (**1 Samuel 1:6–7**), she did not answer her rival. She said, *“I have poured out my soul before Yahweh”* (**1 Samuel 1:15**). Nothing in her house had changed when she rose, yet *“her face was no longer sad”* (**1 Samuel 1:18**). She had rolled it. Then *“Yahweh remembered her”* (**1 Samuel 1:19**).

Witness Three — David at Ziklag. David came back to a burned town and stolen families, and his own men spoke of stoning him. *“But David strengthened himself in Yahweh his Elohim”* (**1 Samuel 30:6**) — וַיִּתְחַזֵּק דָּוִד בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהָיו. He did not answer his men’s bitterness with his own. He inquired of **Yahweh** (**1 Samuel 30:8**), pursued, and recovered all (**1 Samuel 30:18–19**). In those same hours he could have turned on his men or sat down in despair. The verse says what he did first.

Witness Four — Hezekiah. The Assyrian field commander stood at the wall and mocked **Yahweh** in the people’s hearing. *“But the people were silent and answered him not a word, for the king’s*

command was, Do not answer him” (2 Kings 18:36). When the written threat came, Hezekiah *“went up to the house of Yahweh, and Hezekiah spread it before Yahweh”* (2 Kings 19:14) — *וַיִּפְרֹשֶׁהוּ חֶזְקִיָּהוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה*. That is Psalms 37:5 acted out with a letter. Of this king it is written, *“He trusted in Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel”* (2 Kings 18:5). That night Yahweh acted (2 Kings 19:35).

Witness Five — Jehoshaphat. Three people were marching on Judah. The king prayed before all the assembly: *“we have no strength before this great multitude that is coming against us, and we do not know what to do; but our eyes are upon You”* (2 Chronicles 20:12) — *כִּי עָלֵינוּ עֵינֵינוּ*.

The answer came by a prophet: *“the battle is not yours, but Elohim’s... station yourselves, stand, and see the salvation of Yahweh... Tomorrow go out before them”* (2 Chronicles 20:15, 17). They went out singing, and the invaders destroyed one another (2 Chronicles 20:21–23).

WITNESS	WHAT WAS ROLLED ONTO YAHWEH	WHAT THE BELIEVER STILL DID	HOW YAHWEH ACTED
Israel at the sea	An army behind, the sea ahead	Went forward	He saved Israel that day (Exodus 14:30)
Hannah	Years of provocation and grief	Rose, ate, and went home	He remembered her (1 Samuel 1:19)
David at Ziklag	Loss, and his own men’s bitterness	Inquired, then pursued	All was recovered (1 Samuel 30:18–19)
Hezekiah	A letter of threats	Kept silence, and prayed	The siege was broken in a night (2 Kings 19:35)
Jehoshaphat	Three armies	Stood, then went out	The enemy fell by its own hand (2 Chronicles 20:23)

One man stands as the opposite witness. Saul was told to wait seven days at Gilgal for Samuel. He waited the seven days, watched his army scatter, and then said, *“I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering”* (1 Samuel 13:12) — *וַאֲתַפֵּק*.

Samuel arrived as he finished (1 Samuel 13:10). *“You have acted foolishly... now your kingdom shall not stand”* (1 Samuel 13:13–14).

Saul’s reasons were all true: the people were scattering, the Philistines were gathering, and Samuel was late. He lost the kingdom over the one thing verse 7 commands.

Isaiah gives the rule: *“he who believes will not make haste”* (Isaiah 28:16) — הַמֵּאֲמִין לֹא יַחֲשֵׁשׁ.

A psalm names the wilderness generation’s failure in the same terms: *“They quickly forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel”* (Psalms 106:13).

Finding — When His people have handed a matter to Him, held still, and done what was theirs to do, **Yahweh** has acted, by means they did not choose and could not have arranged. **Corroborated** (Exodus 14:13–15, 30; 1 Samuel 1:15–19; 30:6–8, 18–19; 2 Kings 19:14, 35; 2 Chronicles 20:12–23). That haste secures what waiting would lose is contradicted by 1 Samuel 13:8–14 and Isaiah 28:16.

VIII. HOW A WAY IS ROLLED UPON YAHWEH

A command that only said *“stop fretting”* could not be kept for long. The Tanakh gives the believer things to do. Six stand on more than one witness.

VIII-A. Say It to Him, in Words

“Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him” (Psalms 62:8 [Hebrew 62:9]).

“I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare my trouble before Him” (Psalms 142:2 [Hebrew 142:3]).

Hannah poured out her soul. Hezekiah spread the letter. Moses, when it burned in him, *“said to Yahweh”* (Numbers 16:15). The psalms of complaint are this practice written down: *“How long, Yahweh?”* is asked four times in two verses (Psalms 13:1–2 [Hebrew 13:2–3]). A way is rolled onto **Yahweh** by being told to Him, plainly and in full. What has been told to Him is no longer being fed in secret.

VIII-B. Be Still — the Mouth First

The people on Hezekiah’s wall were commanded, *“Do not answer him”* (2 Kings 18:36). David resolved, *“I will guard my mouth with a muzzle while the wicked is before me”* (Psalms 39:1). The first stillness is the withheld reply: the answer not sent, the word not said in the heat. But **Psalms 39** also records that silence alone is not enough. The fire burned on in his musing until he turned and spoke to **Yahweh**: *“And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You”* (Psalms 39:7 [Hebrew 39:8]). The still mouth must be joined to the poured-out heart.

VIII-C. Do the Good in Front of You

“Trust in Yahweh and do good; dwell in the land and feed on faithfulness” (Psalms 37:3). The psalm’s first answer to the sight of evildoers prospering is an ordinary day’s faithfulness: stay where you are placed, and do the next right thing.

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your strength” (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

The one who is doing good has less room for the fire. Isaiah joins the two: *“the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the service of righteousness, quietness and trust forever”* (Isaiah 32:17).

VIII-D. Let It Go — and Do Not Pick It Up Again

Heref (let go) is an act, and like any act it can be repeated. The Tanakh marks three moments for it.

At the first heat: *“A soft answer turns away wrath”* (Proverbs 15:1).

“The beginning of strife is like letting out water; so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out” (Proverbs 17:14).

At night: *“speak in your heart upon your bed, and be still”* (Psalms 4:4).

The same psalm ends, *“In peace I will both lie down and sleep”* (Psalms 4:8 [Hebrew 4:9]).

When it returns: it will return, and the command stands each time.

Ecclesiastes adds a word for the one who is under another person’s anger: *“If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness lays great offenses to rest”* (Ecclesiastes 10:4).

The word for calmness there is *marpe (calmness / healing)*, and Proverbs uses it of the heart: *“A calm heart is life to the flesh, but envy is rottenness to the bones”* (Proverbs 14:30) — לֵב מְרַפֵּא.

Several lexicons derive the word in these two verses from *raphah (to relax)*, the verb of *heref (let go)*. On that derivation a heart that has let go is called, in so many words, a relaxed heart, and it is life to the body.

VIII-E. Go Into the Sanctuary and Look at the End

Asaph’s envy broke *“when I came into the sanctuary of El”* (Psalms 73:17). He changed where he was standing, and from there he could see the end. For the covenant believer today this is the assembly, the Sabbath, the appointed times, and the open Tanakh: the places where the measure is **Yahweh’s** and not the day’s news. *“Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace”* (Psalms 37:37).

The psalm tells the believer to look, and tells him what to look at.

VIII-F. Wait

“Wait for Yahweh and keep His way” (Psalms 37:34) — קַוֵּה אֶל־יְהוָה וּשְׁמֶר דְּרָכּוֹ. The verb is *qavah* (to wait), H6960, and the Tanakh attaches promises to it. *“Wait for Yahweh; be strong, and let your heart take courage”* (Psalms 27:14).

“Those who wait for Yahweh shall renew their strength” (Isaiah 40:31).

“Yahweh is good to those who wait for Him” (Lamentations 3:25).

“Do not say, I will repay evil; wait for Yahweh, and He will save you” (Proverbs 20:22).

Isaiah states the whole passage in one sentence, and records the answer it usually receives:

“In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. But you were not willing” (Isaiah 30:15)

בְּהַשְׁקֵט וּבְבִטְחָה תִּהְיֶה גְבוּרַתְכֶם

Three verses later the prophet says who else is waiting: *“Therefore Yahweh waits to be gracious to you... blessed are all who wait for Him”* (Isaiah 30:18).

Finding — A way is rolled upon Yahweh by telling it to Him, withholding the heated reply, doing the good at hand, letting the anger go as often as it returns, looking at the end from His sanctuary, and waiting. Corroborated (Psalms 62:8; 142:2; 39:1–7; 37:3, 34, 37; 4:4, 8; Proverbs 15:1; 17:14; Isaiah 30:15, 18; 40:31; Lamentations 3:25–26). That *marpe* (calmness / healing) in Proverbs 14:30 comes from the verb of Psalms 37:8 is a lexical judgment, not a statement of the text.

IX. WHAT THE PASSAGE MEANS TODAY FOR THE MODERN BELIEVER

IX-A. The Modern Forms of Fretting

The evildoers of the psalm are still prospering, and the means of watching them have multiplied. The table sets each modern form beside Tanakh’s answer.

MODERN FORM	WHAT IT IS IN THE TEXT'S TERMS	THE COVENANT ANSWER
The news and the feed: hours spent watching the wicked succeed	Fretting <i>“because of the one who makes his way prosper”</i> (Psalms 37:7)	<i>“He will not fear evil tidings; his heart is firm”</i> (Psalms 112:7); look at the end (Psalms 37:37)
Outrage shared, reposted, and answered in kind	The fire fed by musing (Psalms 39:3)	<i>“Do not answer him”</i> (2 Kings 18:36); a soft answer (Proverbs 15:1)
Envy of those who cut corners and get ahead	<i>“I was envious of the arrogant”</i> (Psalms 73:3)	<i>“Better is the little of the righteous”</i> (Psalms 37:16); there is a future (Proverbs 23:17–18)
The case argued again at night	<i>“While I mused, the fire burned”</i> (Psalms 39:3)	Speak in your heart upon your bed, and be still (Psalms 4:4, 8)
The plan held so tightly that every delay is a crisis	A way not yet rolled (Psalms 37:5)	<i>“Yahweh establishes his step”</i> (Proverbs 16:9); <i>“My times are in Your hand”</i> (Psalms 31:15)
Forcing the matter because waiting feels like losing	<i>“I forced myself”</i> (1 Samuel 13:12)	<i>“He who believes will not make haste”</i> (Isaiah 28:16)
Anger at a true correction	Asa and the seer (2 Chronicles 16:10)	<i>“Let the righteous strike me; it is kindness”</i> (Psalms 141:5)
Anger at mercy shown to someone who wronged you	Jonah outside Nineveh (Jonah 4:1–4)	<i>“Is it right for you to burn?”</i> (Jonah 4:4)
Rage at a ruler, a party, or a nation	Fretting because of evildoers (Psalms 37:1)	<i>“The Lord laughs at him, for He sees that his day is coming”</i> (Psalms 37:13)
Anger at Yahweh when one’s own choices fail	<i>“His heart rages against Yahweh”</i> (Proverbs 19:3)	<i>“The indignation of Yahweh I will bear, for I have sinned against Him”</i> (Micah 7:9)

IX-B. For the One Waiting on Justice

Some who read this are waiting for a court, an investigation, a confession, or a repayment that has not come. The passage is written for them. It does not tell them that their cause is small. It promises that

their righteousness and their justice will be brought out like the noonday (**Psalms 37:6**). It tells them to keep doing what is lawful and right (**Psalms 37:3, 27**; Section VI-D). And it asks one thing of them: not to spend the waiting in heat.

Ecclesiastes speaks to the one who watches injustice in high places: *“do not be astonished at the matter, for one high official watches over another, and there are higher ones over them”* (Ecclesiastes 5:8 [Hebrew 5:7]). *“Elohim will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter”* (Ecclesiastes 3:17).

This is a covenant study, not counseling or medical advice. Those who are in danger should seek qualified help and lawful protection where they live, and those whom anger or anxiety has made ill should not be ashamed to seek care.

IX-C. In the Household and the Assembly

Doc 277 applied the Proverbs on wrath and contention to husband and wife, and its findings stand. This passage adds the root beneath them. Much of the heat in a house is not about the matter being argued. It is about a way that someone is still carrying alone — the money, the child, the illness, the future — and the anger is what the weight feels like when it is pressed. A husband and wife who roll that way onto **Yahweh** together, aloud, have taken fuel from the fire.

In the assembly the same holds among brothers. A man who labors faithfully and sees another prosper by flattery, or by teaching what people want to hear, stands exactly where the psalm begins. The counsel is not to compete with him and not to burn over him: *“Trust in Yahweh and do good... and feed on faithfulness”* (**Psalms 37:3**). An elder’s charge is the work in front of him. The outcome of another man’s work is not his to carry.

IX-D. For Those Who Watch the Nations

The psalm’s evildoers are not only private persons. They *“draw the sword and bend their bow, to bring down the poor and needy”* (**Psalms 37:14**). The believer who follows wars, corrupt courts, and the suffering of peoples has the right to grieve and the right to speak; **Doc 259** and **Doc 263** did so. The passage sets one guard on that work. A witness who has been taken over by rage has begun to resemble what he opposes; the psalm’s own wordplay says so (Section III-D). The prophets bore witness against nations for decades, and they could, because they were not the ones carrying the outcome. *“Their sword shall enter their own heart”* (**Psalms 37:15**) is **Yahweh’s** to bring about. The believer’s part is to speak the truth, to do justice, and to keep his own heart from the fire.

IX-E. A Covenant Believer's Checklist

#	WHAT THE PASSAGE ASKS	TEXT
I	Name the way you are carrying: the matter, the person, and how long	Psalms 37:5; 139:23–24
II	Tell it to Yahweh in plain words, and leave the outcome with Him	Psalms 62:8; 2 Kings 19:14
III	Withhold the heated answer, whether spoken, written, or posted	2 Kings 18:36; Psalms 39:1; Proverbs 15:1
IV	Ask whether the matter calls for a lawful step. If it does, take it, and then stop	Nehemiah 5:6–7; Deuteronomy 16:18
V	Do the good in front of you today	Psalms 37:3, 27; Ecclesiastes 9:10
VI	When the heat returns, let it go again; do not rehearse the case	Psalms 37:8; 4:4; Proverbs 17:14
VII	Stop measuring yourself against those who prosper by wrong	Psalms 37:1, 7, 16; Proverbs 23:17
VIII	Go where the end can be seen: the assembly, the Sabbath, the open Tanakh	Psalms 73:17; 37:37
IX	Wait, and keep His way while you wait	Psalms 37:34; Isaiah 30:15; Lamentations 3:26

X. THREE-RELIGION AUDIT — HOW EACH TRADITION KEEPS PSALMS 37:5, 8

The table sets the three traditions against Tanakh's findings. Comparative texts are cited as historical reference only.

ELEMENT	☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☉ ISLAM
Committing the way	Rashi explains <i>gol (roll)</i> as <i>“roll upon Him all your needs”</i> (Rashi on Psalms 37:5). Bahya ibn Paquda gave <i>bitachon (trust)</i> a full treatise (Duties of the Heart, Gate of Trust), teaching that a man must still use the means in front of him while his heart rests on the Creator. The Greek translators read the first word differently: <i>“Reveal your way to the Lord”</i> (Septuagint).	<i>“Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you”</i> (1 Peter 5:7) restates Psalms 55:22. <i>“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer... let your requests be made known to God”</i> (Philippians 4:6). Jesus’ own conduct is described in the psalm’s terms: <i>“when he suffered, he did not threaten, but kept entrusting himself to Him who judges justly”</i> (1 Peter 2:23). His mockers quoted Psalms 22:8 at him (Matthew 27:43).	<i>Tawakkul (reliance): “whoever relies upon Allah, He is sufficient for him”</i> (Q. 65:3); <i>“when you have decided, put your trust in Allah; Allah loves those who trust”</i> (Q. 3:159). A man asked whether he should tie his camel or leave it and trust. The answer was, <i>“Tie it, and trust”</i> (Jami at-Tirmidhi 2517).
Anger and wrath	Maimonides calls anger <i>“an exceedingly bad trait”</i> from which a man should keep to the far extreme (Mishneh Torah, De’ot 2:3). The Mishnah asks, <i>“Who is mighty? He who subdues his inclination,”</i> citing Proverbs 16:32 (Avot 4:1), and calls the one who is <i>“hard to anger and easy to appease”</i> pious (Avot 5:11). Rashi takes the anger of Psalms 37:8 as the anger of Yahweh , which the wicked deed would bring upon a man.	<i>“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger”</i> (Ephesians 4:26), citing Psalms 4:4 from the Greek. <i>“Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God”</i> (James 1:19–20). <i>“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger... be put away from you”</i> (Ephesians 4:31).	The Qur’an praises <i>“those who restrain anger and pardon people”</i> (Q. 3:134) and those who, <i>“when they are angry, forgive”</i> (Q. 42:37). <i>“The strong man is not the one who overcomes people by his strength, but the one who controls himself while in anger”</i> (Sahih al-Bukhari 6114; Sahih Muslim 2609). <i>“Do not become angry”</i> (Sahih al-Bukhari 6116).

ELEMENT	☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	☾ ISLAM
Fretting over evildoers	Rashi and the Talmud read <i>al titchar (do not fret)</i> as “ <i>do not compete</i> ”: do not vie with evildoers by doing as they do (Rashi on Psalms 37:1, 7 ; Berakhot 7b). The Talmud sets the verse beside the teaching that one may contend with the wicked, and assigns each to its case (Berakhot 7b). The Qumran commentary on this psalm, the oldest that survives, applied it to its own community as “ <i>the congregation of the poor</i> ” (4Q171).	“ <i>Do not be anxious about tomorrow</i> ” (Matthew 6:34). “ <i>Never avenge yourselves, but leave room for wrath</i> ” (Romans 12:19). The Greek Psalter renders the verse “ <i>do not be provoked so as to do evil</i> ,” taking its last words of wrongdoing.	“ <i>Be patient... and do not grieve over them, and do not be in distress over what they plot</i> ” (Q. 16:127).
Covenant strength	Rashi’s “ <i>roll upon Him all your needs</i> ” keeps the picture the Hebrew gives. The teaching that trust still uses ordinary means matches “ <i>trust in Yahweh and do good</i> ” (Psalms 37:3). The warning against anger matches Proverbs 16:32 and Ecclesiastes 7:9 .	The New Testament’s counsel here is the Tanakh’s counsel in the Tanakh’s words: Psalms 55:22 , Psalms 4:4 , and Psalms 37:11 are each quoted or echoed. “ <i>Slow to anger</i> ” is Exodus 34:6 asked of the believer.	“ <i>Tie it, and trust</i> ” holds together what Psalms 37:3 holds together. Restraining anger and pardoning stands close to Psalms 37:8 and Proverbs 19:11 .
Covenant departure	Read only as “ <i>do not compete</i> ,” the verse can leave the believer’s own heat unaddressed. Where psalms are recited as a means of securing a wished-for result, the practice goes beyond the verse, which promises vindication and not a chosen outcome.	The “ <i>name it and claim it</i> ” teaching turns Psalms 37:4–5 into a formula for getting what one wants (Section VI-C). “ <i>Let go and let God</i> ” has been used to counsel passivity and to tell the wronged to be silent; the psalm commands doing good and speaking justice (Psalms 37:3, 30). Teaching that all anger is sin goes beyond Psalms 4:4 .	Fatalism that neglects ordinary means is rejected by the hadith itself. Mob violence and killing in the name of offended religion break the Qur’an’s own command to restrain anger (Q. 3:134), and they break Psalms 37:8 .

ELEMENT	☆ JUDAISM	† CHRISTIANITY	C• ISLAM
Covenant witness	This community has kept, sung, and studied the psalm in Hebrew without a break. Every other tradition received it from them.	Jesus carried Psalms 37:11 to the nations: <i>“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”</i> (Matthew 5:5). In Greek his words are the words of the Greek Psalter.	The Qur’an cites this psalm by name as scripture (Q. 21:105; Psalms 37:29). A third community is thereby sent back to David’s psalm, and to all of it (Doc 263 , Section V-B).

XI. CORRECTIONS TO EARLIER LIBRARY MATERIAL

The Library’s own earlier work is tested by the same standard as everyone else’s. Ten earlier documents that quote this psalm, or the verses set beside it in this study, were checked: **Docs 182, 238, 249, 259, 263, 273, 277, 286, and 293**, and the May 2026 study on Buddhism.

Correction 1 — Doc 238 (*Delivered and Kept*), Section V-C, Witness One. Doc 238 quoted **Psalms 37:23** as *“The steps of a good man are ordered by Yahweh.”* The word “good” is not in the Hebrew. The verse reads כֹּנְנֵה מַצְעָדֵי־גִבֹּר כֹּנְנֵה, *me-Yahweh mits’adei gever konanu* (*from Yahweh the steps of a man are made firm*). Older English versions supplied the word from the context. The point bears on the doctrine of that section: the verse names **Yahweh**’s upholding, not the man’s goodness, as the reason he is not hurled down. The wording has been corrected in the Google Doc to *“The steps of a man are ordered by Yahweh.”* The finding of that section stands.

Correction 2 — Doc 182 (*Acharit HaYamim, Part II*), Section X. Doc 182 quoted **Psalms 46:1** [Hebrew 46:2] as *“Yahweh is our refuge and strength.”* The Hebrew has *“Elohim is our refuge and strength.”* The Name **Yahweh** does appear in that psalm, in its refrain and in verse 8. The quotation has been corrected in the Google Doc. **Doc 182** also predates the standing rules of September 2026 (it uses Hebrew book names and the old contact line); bringing it into the present format is left for Elder Kepha’s decision.

Correction 3 — the May 2026 study *Buddhism: Emptiness, Mandalas, Eastern Metaphysics and the Covenant Standard*, Part Three, V-D. That study said that **Psalms 46:10** *“calls for precisely the quality of present-moment awareness that Buddhist mindfulness cultivates.”* The verb is *harpu* (*let go*), from *raphah* (*to let drop*) (Section III-A of this study), and it is spoken to nations at war whose weapons **Yahweh** is breaking (**Psalms 46:8–10** [Hebrew 46:9–11]). It commands them to stop and to acknowledge Him. It is not an instruction in a state of awareness. **Doc 182** (Section X) had already read the verse correctly, as a word to the nations. The sentence in the

Buddhism study should be reworded or removed. Because that study is in the old format throughout, the change is left for Elder Kepha’s decision.

Refinement 1 — Doc 277 (*Better a Corner of the Roof*), Section IV-E. The word table there lists *ish chemah* (*a man of wrath*) for both **Proverbs 15:18** and **Proverbs 22:24**. **Proverbs 22:24** has the plural, *ish chemot* (*a man of wraths*): a man of repeated outbursts. The observation drawn in that section, that these terms name a settled character, is strengthened by the plural. Two copies of **Doc 277** stand in the Drive folder, so the table has not been changed; the point is noted here for Elder Kepha.

Refinement 2 — Doc 263 (*For Three Transgressions and for Four*), Scripture Index. The closing verse of **Doc 263** is **Psalms 37:8–9, 11**, but its index entry omitted verse 9. The entry has been corrected in the Google Doc.

Confirmation — Doc 273, Section VIII-F; Doc 293, Sections IV-D and VIII-B; Doc 263, Section V-B. Each quotes **Psalms 37:8** as “*do not fret — it leads only to evil*,” and **Doc 293** quotes verse 5 as “*Commit your way to Yahweh*.” Both renderings are sound. This study adds the literal sense beneath them, “*roll*” and “*do not kindle yourself*,” and reports the two readings of the verse’s last word (Section III-D). No change is needed. **Docs 249, 259, and 286** cite the psalm only for the inheritance of the land and the upholding hand, and no change is needed there.

XII. SEVEN COVENANT DECLARATIONS

Per the **Deuteronomy 19:15** standard, each declaration rests on more than one witness.

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
I	To commit a way to Yahweh is to roll its whole weight upon Him and to lean there oneself.	Psalms 37:5; 55:22; Proverbs 16:3; 3:5–6
II	Yahweh acts for those who wait for Him. What He has promised is to bring their righteousness and their just cause into the light.	Psalms 37:5–7; Isaiah 64:4; Micah 7:7–9
III	Anger and wrath are to be let go and left. The command assumes that anger will come; it forbids keeping it and feeding it.	Psalms 37:8; 4:4; Ecclesiastes 7:9; Nehemiah 5:6–7
IV	Fretting over evildoers leads only to evil. The one who burns over the wicked is on the road to doing as they do.	Psalms 37:1, 8–9; Genesis 4:5–8; 1 Samuel 25:13, 34; Proverbs 29:22

#	COVENANT DECLARATION	BASIS
V	The complaint that the wicked prosper is honest and may be brought to Yahweh . The answer He gives is their end.	Psalms 73:3, 17; Jeremiah 12:1; Habakkuk 2:3–4; Psalms 37:35–38
VI	Stillness is not idleness. The one who trusts Yahweh does good, speaks justice, and goes forward at His word.	Psalms 37:3, 27, 30; Exodus 14:14–15; Nehemiah 4:9
VII	Yahweh does not let go of His people and does not forsake them. On that ground they can let go of wrath.	Deuteronomy 31:6, 8; Joshua 1:5; Psalms 37:28, 33; 138:8

XIII. THE COVENANT RESPONSE — WHAT THE TANAKH SAYS TO THE BELIEVER WHO ASKS

Behind this passage there is usually a weight and a face. The weight is a way that will not come right: a case, a child, a marriage, a debt, an illness, a calling that has not opened. The face belongs to someone who is doing wrong and doing well. Tanakh's answer is fivefold.

First: roll it. Say the whole of it to **Yahweh**, and leave it on Him. *“Cast your burden upon Yahweh, and He will sustain you”* (Psalms 55:22).

Second: be still, and do the next good thing. Withhold the answer you want to give. Stay at your post. *“Trust in Yahweh and do good”* (Psalms 37:3).

Third: open your hand. The anger is real, and it is not yours to keep. *“Let go from anger, and forsake wrath”* (Psalms 37:8). When it comes back, open your hand again.

Fourth: stop watching the one who prospers. Go into the sanctuary and look at the end (Psalms 73:17). *“Yet a little while, and the wicked is no more”* (Psalms 37:10).

Fifth: wait for Him. *“Wait for Yahweh and keep His way”* (Psalms 37:34). He has not said when. He has said that He will act.

The One who says *“let go”* is the One who has said, *“I will not let you go”* (Joshua 1:5). He asks His people to put down what is burning them, and He does not put them down.

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REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
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1 Samuel 13:8–14	Saul could not wait at Gilgal	VII; IX-A
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REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
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Psalms 31:14–15	I trust upon You; my times are in Your hand	II-C; IX-A

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Psalms 37:1–2	Do not fret because of evildoers; like grass they wither	Opening; I-B; III-C; III-D; III-F; IV-B; IX-A; IX-E; X; XII
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Psalms 37:5–6	Roll your way upon Yahweh ; He will act; righteousness like the light	Throughout
Psalms 37:7	Be still and wait; the one who makes his way prosper	Opening; I-B; II-B; II-D; II-F; III-C; III-F; IV; IX-A; IX-E; X; XII
Psalms 37:8	Let go of anger; forsake wrath; do not fret	Throughout
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Psalms 103:8–9	Slow to anger; He will not keep His anger forever	VI-A
Psalms 106:13	They did not wait for His counsel	VII
Psalms 106:32–33	Moses embittered at Meribah	V
Psalms 112:7	He will not fear evil tidings	II-C; IX-A
Psalms 118:9	Better to take refuge in Yahweh than to trust in princes	II-C
Psalms 119:22	Roll away from me reproach	II-A
Psalms 119:126	It is time for Yahweh to act	II-D
Psalms 125:3	Lest the righteous stretch out their hands to wrong	III-D
Psalms 138:8	Do not let go the works of Your hands	III-E; XII
Psalms 139:23–24	Search me, and know my anxious thoughts	IX-E

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Psalms 141:5	Let the righteous strike me; it is kindness	IX-A
Psalms 142:2	I pour out my complaint before Him	VIII-A; VIII-F
Proverbs 3:5–6	Trust with all your heart; He will make your paths straight	II-B; II-C; XII
Proverbs 12:25	Anxiety weighs the heart down	III-C
Proverbs 14:17, 29–30	Short of temper; slow to anger; a calm heart	III-F; V; VIII-D; VIII-F
Proverbs 15:1, 18	A soft answer; the man of wrath	III-A; III-B; III-F; VIII-D; VIII-F; IX-A; IX-E; XI
Proverbs 16:3, 9	Roll your works to Yahweh ; Yahweh establishes the step	II-A; II-B; III-F; VI-C; IX-A; XII
Proverbs 16:32	Slow to anger, better than the mighty	III-F; X
Proverbs 17:14	Abandon the quarrel before it breaks out	VIII-D; VIII-F; IX-E
Proverbs 19:3	His heart rages against Yahweh	V; IX-A
Proverbs 19:11	It is his glory to pass over a transgression	X
Proverbs 19:21	The counsel of Yahweh shall stand	VI-C
Proverbs 20:22	Wait for Yahweh , and He will save you	III-F; VIII-F
Proverbs 21:5	The hasty comes only to want	III-D
Proverbs 21:31	The horse made ready; the victory is Yahweh's	VI-B
Proverbs 22:24	The man of wraths	XI
Proverbs 23:17–18	Do not envy sinners; there is a future	III-F; IV-B; IX-A; IX-E
Proverbs 24:19–20	Do not fret because of evildoers; no future for the evil man	I-B; III-C; III-F; IV-B; IV-C

REFERENCE	SUBJECT	SECTION
Proverbs 29:22	A master of wrath abounds in transgression	III-B; III-D; III-F; V; XII
Job 5:2	Vexation kills the fool	V
Job 15:20	The wicked man writhes	II-F; III-F
Job 21:7	Why do the wicked live?	IV-A
Job 38:1; 42:12	Yahweh answers Job; his end is blessed	IV-B
Lamentations 3:25–26	Good to wait, and be still	II-F; VIII-F; IX-E
Ecclesiastes 3:17	Elohim will judge the righteous and the wicked	IX-B
Ecclesiastes 5:8	Higher ones watch over the high	IX-B
Ecclesiastes 7:9	Anger rests in the bosom of fools	III-B; VI-A; X; XII
Ecclesiastes 8:11	Sentence not carried out quickly	IV-A
Ecclesiastes 9:10	Whatever your hand finds to do	VIII-C; IX-E
Ecclesiastes 10:4	Calmness lays great offenses to rest	VIII-D
Daniel 3:17–18	<i>“But if not”</i>	VI-C
Daniel 9:19	<i>“Attend and act; do not delay”</i>	II-D
Nehemiah 4:9	We prayed, and we set a guard	VI-B; XII
Nehemiah 5:6–7	Nehemiah’s anger, ruled and turned to a just act	VI-A; IX-E; XII
1 Chronicles 28:20	David to Solomon: He will not let you go	III-E
2 Chronicles 16:7–10	Asa and the seer	V; IX-A
2 Chronicles 20:12–23	Jehoshaphat: <i>“our eyes are upon You”</i>	VII

“Commit your way to Yahweh; trust in Him, and He will act. And He will bring out your righteousness like the light, and your justice like the noonday... Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret — it leads only to evil.”

Psalms 37:5–6, 8 — The Written Covenant of Yahweh

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION

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