

A photograph of a dark, curved tunnel. The road is paved and has white double lines curving to the right. The walls are made of concrete and feature several sets of reflective chevron markers. The ceiling is dark with several small, recessed lights. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and somewhat unsettling.

**FUTUREPHOBIA**

# WHAT DO YOU FEAR?

- What unexpected bills await me? Will my job get outsourced? Will the company get bought out? Will I find myself obsolete someday?
- Will my loved ones be safe? What calamity awaits me tomorrow?
- Will my kids be saved? Will they stay faithful? Am I up to the task?
- What does the future hold for our congregation? Are we just one ugly giant drama away from all of this falling apart?
- Is our country doomed? No matter who is president, half of our country always believes we're swirling down history's toilet bowl.

**Our fears about the future are often abstract. Our worst calamities could not have been predicted, while our most dire predictions rarely come true!**

**(Ecclesiastes 9:11-12)**

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- The people of Jerusalem, for example, knew that Babylon was coming to take them into captivity. It was decided. Their fate was sealed (Jeremiah 32:1-5, 37:6-10, 37:17). But God promised through the prophet that if they peacefully surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar, they would be spared. Although they would endure captivity and subjugation, they would come out of the experience as a refined, more faithful people. Resist the Babylonians, and only death awaited them (38:17-18). A similar offer was "on the table" even after the initial capture of Jerusalem (chapter 42).

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- A second example is the apostle Paul, who always had some sense that his life would end in persecution and martyrdom (Acts 9:15-16). He was warned by his friends not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:12-14). He was told by prophecy that suffering awaited him (Acts 21:10-11). Yet he pressed on, accepting that his future would include chains, pain, and eventual death (Philippians 1:19-21, 2 Timothy 4:6-8).

**We are not told specific events from our future like they were, but we have the same lessons to apply — “stay where God tells you to stay”, “don’t fight things that are in God’s hands”, “trust that God sees the big picture and is working for our ultimate spiritual good”, “stay the course, even when others lose their cool”, “look beyond immediate circumstances to the final destination.”**

# PSALM 37

A photograph of a tunnel with a winding road. The road is paved and has white double lines marking the curve. The tunnel walls are made of concrete and have several small lights along the base. The ceiling is dark with recessed lights. The text 'PSALM 37' is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

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- Practicing charity (vv. 21, 25-26) — kindness fosters peace and fellowship
- Accepting help and rejecting self-reliance (vv. 23-24)
- Having a little perspective (vv. 9-15, 25-26, 35-38)



**TWO FINAL  
POINTS FOR  
CONSIDERATION**

A photograph of a modern, curved tunnel. The tunnel has a smooth, light-colored concrete or stone interior. The road is paved and curves to the right, marked with white lines. The ceiling is dark with several recessed lights. The walls are also dark, with a series of white and black chevron-shaped markers on the right side. The overall atmosphere is clean and futuristic.

A black and white photograph of a nuclear mushroom cloud. The cloud is massive, with a thick, billowing base that stretches across the horizon. Above the base, several distinct, rounded plumes of white smoke or steam rise into a dark, overcast sky. In the foreground, a calm body of water reflects the sky. The horizon line is low, showing a few palm trees and a distant shoreline. The overall mood is somber and ominous.

# **WE ARE SOMEBODY ELSE'S FUTURE**

**(Ecclesiastes 1:4-8, Matthew 24:4-13)**

# “DISNEYLAND PARKING LOT SYNDROME”

(2 Timothy 4:8, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Philippians 3:11-14)

