

says in another place, "then did I pay that which I took not away;" he will also repay my enemies, as I am not able to repay them by punishing them. "Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever;" has no end, and, therefore, I ask you, "do not despise the work of thy hands." Do not give up the work you have commenced in your mercy, through the inspiration of faith, hope, and charity, but complete it by preserving, by increasing, by perfecting it. With great propriety he says, "the works of thy hands," not of our hands, because whatever good we have, we have it from God's bounty; without whom we are not only unable to do anything, but even "we are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves." 2 Corinthians 3.

END OF PSALM 137

You are Psalms

Some people think you never get discouraged, but the fact is, when you do, you know where to run. Your prayers are open and honest because you realize that God already knows your heart, He's just waiting to hear you spill it. And when you do, what starts out as heavy ends up becoming a song of praise. You may struggle... and often you do... but each time, you grow in your understanding of God's faithfulness. You're just a song waiting to happen.

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PSALMS (SONGS OF PRAISE)

TRUST
IN THE
LORD *and do good;*
dwell in the land and
enjoy safe pasture.
PSALM 36: 3

PSALM NUMBER: 137

Thanksgiving to God for His benefits.

1. I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: for thou hast heard the words of my mouth. I will sing praise to thee in the sight of the angels.
2. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and I will give glory to thy name: For thy mercy, and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy holy name above all.
3. In what day soever I shall call upon thee hear me: thou shalt multiply strength in my soul.
4. May all the kings of the earth give glory to thee: for they have heard all the words of thy mouth.
5. And let them sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.
6. For the Lord is high, and looketh on the low: and the high he knoweth afar off.
7. If I shall walk in the midst of tribulation, thou wilt quicken me: and thou hast stretched forth thy hand against the wrath of my enemies and thy right hand hath saved me.
8. The Lord will repay for me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever: O despise not the works of thy hands.

The Psalms are songs of praise and cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.). They deal with selected events of that period and provide us with the thoughts and feelings of those who went through the experiences recorded. After being made a Cardinal by Pope Clement VIII, Saint Robert Bellarmine, prepared for posterity his very own commentary on each of the Psalms. Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.

PSALM NUMBER: 137

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: for thou hast heard the words of my mouth I will sing praise to thee in the sight of the angels."

2. "I will worship towards the holy temple, and I will give glory to thy name: for thy mercy, and for thy truth for thou hast magnified thy holy name above all." The Prophet commences by promising a sacrifice of praise, and that with his whole heart, inasmuch as he was about to return thanks for his own everlasting, and that of the whole peoples salvation. "I will praise thee, O Lord;" I will give you a tribute of praise and thanksgiving; no lip one; but from the deepest recesses of my heart; quite alive to it, with my affections engaged on it; "for thou hast heard the words of my mouth;" in other words, the prayer I put before you. "I will sing praise to thee in the sight of thy angels." He declares that his praise will be commensurate to the dignity of the audience. As he is to sing before the Angels who attend on the Almighty, he will be more careful of what he will sing, as he knows before whom he has to sing. Undoubtedly, if we, when we recite the same Psalms, would consider or reflect that we are seen and heard by the holy angels, who praise our attention and devotion, or who note our carelessness and our distractions, we would recite them much better than we usually get through them. "I will worship towards thy holy temple," in thy material temple, while singing to your name; I will turn in spirit to your temple aloft, and, fixed therein by prayer and contemplation, "I will give glory to thy name. For thy mercy and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy holy name above all." Here will be the subject of my song. I will praise you with my whole heart, for your great mercy, and your truth in adhering to what you promised our fathers, by virtue of which you took pity on the human race, and thus magnified Christ, who is your holy Word and name, inasmuch as you gave him a name that is above every name. For, by such an act you showed your unspeakable mercy – mercy we should never cease to laud – when you exalted mankind, that had been degraded even to hell by sin, above all the heavens and all created things, through Christ, and you thus more than carried out the truth that always marks your promise.

3. "In what day soever shall I call upon thee, hear me: thou shalt multiply strength in my soul." From the fact of your having so magnified thy holy name, I ask you to hear me whenever I shall put my wants before you; for your Holy One has said, "whatever you ask of the Father in my name he will give you." "Thou shalt multiply strength in my soul." What I earnestly beg of you is to multiply, which means to increase, not the number of my years, nor my wealth, nor my children, nor anything else of the sort; "but strength in my soul," so as to enable me to resist my evil desires, to bear all crosses with patience, to tread in the path of justice without fatigue, to offer violence to the kingdom of heaven, that thus I may ultimately come to him, "whom thou hast magnified."

4. "May all the kings of the earth give glory to thee: for they have heard all the words of thy mouth." As he said previously, "thou hast magnified thy holy name above all," making use of

the past, instead of the future tense, inasmuch as, by the spirit of prophecy, he looked at the future as if it were actually gone by, so he now predicts the conversion of the Gentiles, in the imperative mood. Your Holy One having been magnified by his Resurrection and Ascension, may all the kings of the earth, (as they will,) "give glory to thee;" because, through the preaching of the apostles, "they have heard all the words of thy mouth;" that is, all you chose to reveal to the world through the prophets and apostles, words which were at first confined to Judea; "because the words of God were committed to them," but were afterwards heard by all the kings and people of the world, through the apostles; "for their sound went all over the earth."

5. "And let them sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord." He goes on with the explanation of the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles, "and let them sing in the ways of the Lord;" that is, the kings and people aforesaid will tread in the ways of the Lord, which are mercy and truth; for it is by them that God comes down to man, and man gets up to God; his mercy being exercised by mercifully forgiving the penitent, and justly punishing the impenitent; and our mercy being exercised by freely forgiving those who injure us, by dealing justly with all, and by giving to God and the neighbor what we owe to both. Such people will set about their work in no lazy, grudging manner, but in joy and good spirits; for they will sing, "great is the glory of the Lord." For they will every other day have a better knowledge of, and will more admire the great things God will have accomplished, and how wonderfully he will have glorified his Christ, who is our head, and the extent of the riches of the glory of the inheritance to the Saints.

6. "For the Lord is high, and looketh on the low: and the high he knoweth afar off." The great glory of the Lord consists in this, that high as he is, nay, even the very highest, by reason of his nature, dignity, power, wisdom, and authority; still, "he looketh on the low," for he came down from heaven to them, for "he was seen upon earth, and conversed with men;" "and the high he knoweth afar off," because he draws far away from the proud, or cast them far away from him as he cast the devil, the prince of the proud, from heaven into hell. This doctrine of holy humility is most necessary to all, especially to all in any responsible position, for such people run a great risk of being carried away by their pride. But why does God, the High One, love the lowly instead of the high, whereas all love what is similar to themselves? God loves those who are truly raised on high, and not those who place themselves on a false elevation; for the former are very like, the latter most unlike him. And thus, the humble, conscious that they have nothing from themselves, are replenished with all manner of good, and are raised by God to the highest dignity; while the proud, "who thought they were something when they were nothing," remain empty, and being filled and distended with vanity alone, are utterly discarded.

7. "If I shall walk in the midst of tribulation, thou wilt quicken me: and thou hast stretched forth thy hand against the wrath of my enemies: and thy right hand saved me." As God, who is on high, regards the low with the greatest kindness, David, fully cognizant of his own low position, confidently promises himself God's assistance in every trouble. "If I shall walk in the midst of tribulation," so as to be surrounded on all sides by it, still "thou wilt quicken me;" you will preserve me alive, unhurt, unharmed. "And thou hast stretched forth thy hand against the wrath of my enemies;" when my enemies surrounded me and sought to devour me, you interposed and protected me, "and thy right hand hath saved me;" your strength and power, Christ, hath saved me.

8. "The Lord will repay for me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever: O despise not the works of thy hands." He explains how God's "right-hand saves us," because "the Lord," who is your right-hand, "will repay for me;" was satisfy you, the Father, for my sins; as he