

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: 27

David's prayer that his enemies may not prevail over him.

1. Unto thee will I cry, O Lord: O my God, be not thou silent to me: lest if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down in to the pit.
2. Hear, O Lord, the voice of my supplication, when I pray to thee; when I lift up my hands to thy holy temple.
3. Draw me not away together with the wicked; and with the workers of iniquity destroy me not: who speak peace with their neighbor, but evils are in their hearts.
4. Give them according to their works, and according to the wickedness of their inventions. According to the works of their hands give thou to them: render to them their reward.
5. Because they have not understood the works of the Lord, and the operations of his hands; thou shalt destroy them, and shalt not build them up.
6. Blessed be the Lord, for he hath heard the voice of my supplication.
7. The Lord is my helper and my protector: in him hath my heart confided, and I have been helped. And my flesh hath flourished again, and with my will I will give praise to him.
8. The Lord is the strength of his people, and the protector of the salvation of his anointed.
9. Save, O Lord, thy people, and bless thy inheritance; and rule them and exalt them forever.

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: 27

Explanation of the Psalm

1. “Unto thee will I cry, O Lord: O my God, be not thou silent to me: lest if thou be silent to me, I become like to them that go down into the pit.” Words spoken by Christ as he hung on the cross, asking for a speedy resurrection. “Be not thou silent;” do not turn from me, as if you were deaf, and did not hear me. He asks in a few words, that he may be heard, and get an answer from God that his prayer would be heard. “Lest if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit;” he wishes for an answer, because if God will not hear him, and give him a favorable answer, he will be like all other mortals who die and go to the lower regions, never to return therefrom. “Lest if thou be silent to me;” for fear you may not hear me, and I may, in consequence, become like those “That go down into the pit,” never to come out of it but on the day of judgment. Another explanation may be offered, viz., If you do not hear me, I will be like the dead; for, as the dead can do nothing whatsoever, so man, without God’s assistance, can do nothing.

2. “Hear, O Lord, the voice of my supplication, when I pray to thee; when I lift up my hands to thy holy temple;” The expression, “Be not silent,” is more clearly expressed, for now he says, “Hear, O Lord, the voice of my supplication,” for he wished for an answer from God, to show he had been heard. “When I pray to thee;” the Hebrew implies, that when he did pray, he had his hands stretched out, for both Hebrews and Gentiles were wont so to extend their hands in prayer; and, in using this expression, the Prophet had before him the hands of our Lord extended on the cross and raised to heaven; for then, with the greatest truth, could he say, “When I pray to thee, when I lift up my hands;” when he prayed from the cross.

9. "Save, O Lord, thy people, and bless thy inheritance; and rule them and exalt them forever." Christ, the head of the Church, having been glorified, it remains that his body, the people of God, who are his peculiar inheritance, he having acquired it with his blood, should be equally glorified. Christ then says to his Father, or the Prophet says to Christ, "Save thy people," and, in order to save them, "Bless them," by justifying them "Rule them," by shielding, by protecting them on the road; "Exalt" them, by glorifying them, by glorifying them to eternity.

END OF PSALM 27

3. "Draw me not away together with the wicked; and with the workers of iniquity destroy me not: who speak peace with their neighbor, but evils are in their hearts." Christ alone could say truly what this verse contains, because, he was the only one, in every respect, "separated from sinners." And, being the only person in whom sin could find no place, he, with the greatest justice, asks that he may not be judged; that he may not perish with sinners, but that he should rather slay death itself; and, by rising from the dead, bear away a most triumphant victory from the prince of death, and from death itself. The meaning, then, is: Do not drag me to death with others who are sinners, for I am no sinner. "Who speak peace with their neighbor, but evils are in their hearts." He describes sinners in general from the sin most common and most universal among them, as he says in Psalm 115, "Every man is a liar;" and in Psalm 42, "Deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man;" and, speaking of Christ, 1 Peter 2, says, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;" as if sin and guile in his mouth were nearly synonymous terms. And there are very many who wish to appear friends, to be full of good will to their neighbor; and are so blinded by self love, that they have malice in their heart, and are entirely absorbed in hatred or envy towards the same neighbor.

4. "Give them according to their works, and according to the wickedness of their inventions. According to the works of their hands give thou to them: render to them their reward." This is not an imprecation, but a prophecy, as we before observed. The meaning is that the wicked will have a wretched end of it, unless, from being wicked, they become good; and the meaning is: You will give them the punishment their works deserve; "And according to the wickedness of their inventions;" which means, that as they, in their malice, invented and devised various modes of harassing the just, so you, in your wisdom, will find various ways of tormenting the sinner. "Render to them their reward." As they give the just evil for good, retort such conduct on them, by bringing down the evil they intended for the just, on their own heads.

5. "Because they have not understood the works of the Lord, and the operations of his hands; thou shalt destroy them, and shall not build them up." From this verse it is clear that the preceding verse was a prophecy, and not an imprecation; for, he does not say destroy them, but thou shalt destroy them, in the future tense. Here the root of all evil is declared, that root being an unwillingness to understand the works of the Lord, the non-appliance of one's mind to learn, know, and reflect upon the wonderful things God was pleased to do in the creation, redemption, and government of the human race; for any one reflecting on them could not fail to be wonderfully inflamed with the love of God. Hence, Saint Paul, 1 Cor. 2, says, "For if they had known it, they never would have crucified the Lord of glory." And the Lord himself says, Luke 19, "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are for thy peace... They shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." "Because they have not understood the works of the Lord, and the operations of his hands;" the latter words would seem to imply that in speaking of God's works he means those that were directly done through himself, and not through secondary causes, such as the creation, the Incarnation, the miracles, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord, and the like; and he says, as sinners did not understand the works of the Lord, and particularly those produced by his own hands, namely, what he directly produced; therefore you, O Lord, "will destroy them;" and when you will destroy them, you will not regret having done so; and thus you will never "build them up." The Prophet takes up the words, "the operation of his hands," as if it were a building God had in his hands, and he says: As they did not understand the building of God, he will destroy them, and never again build them up; a thing that directly applies to the city, the temple, and the very kingdom of the Jews, which God, on account of their infidelity, destroyed, and which he will never build up again. It applies also to every sinner who does not bear in mind that he is an edifice raised by God, made to his own image, redeemed by his own blood, enriched with innumerable favors of nature and grace; but, nevertheless, will be so destroyed that they will never be rebuilt, and not more than a ruin of the edifice will be left, so that their punishment may be eternal.

6. "Blessed be the Lord, for he hath heard the voice of my supplication." He now passes to fortell the glory of the Lord's Resurrection, and in the person of Christ he thanks God in this verse.

7. "The Lord is my helper and my protector: in him hath my heart confided, and I have been helped. And my flesh hath flourished again, and with my will I will give praise to him." He explains in what respect his prayer was heard, and says, "The Lord is my helper," as he is wont to be. Therefore, "In him hath my heart confided;" which means, relying on the help and protection of God, I have not refused to engage in combat with the devil, and with death itself; nor have I been disappointed in my hope, for God's help was such, that I had a very easy victory, "And my flesh hath flourished again." He describes the effect of God's help and protection, namely, his glorious Resurrection, for which he praises God with his whole heart. My flesh, that had withered up in death, is not only restored to life, but to the bloom of youth, health, joy, and beauty. Therefore, "With my will, I will give praise to him" in praise and thanksgiving.

8. "The Lord is the strength of his people, and the protector of the salvation of his anointed." Such is to be the matter, the subject of the praise of which he spoke in the preceding verse, namely, "The Lord is the strength of his people," a thing he proved when he so effectually protected the "salvation of the anointed," (Christ,) who is the head of the whole people, and on whom the strength and safety of the whole people depend.