

END OF PSALM 150

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: 150

An exhortation to praise God with all sorts of instruments.

1. Praise ye the Lord in his holy places: praise ye him in the firmament of his power.
2. Praise ye him for his mighty acts: praise ye him according to the multitude of his greatness.
3. Praise him with sound of trumpet: praise him with psaltery and harp.
4. Praise him with timbrel and choir: praise him with strings and organs.
5. Praise him on high—sounding cymbals: praise him on cymbals of joy: let every spirit praise the Lord. Alleluia.

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: 150

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "Praise ye the Lord in his holy places: praise ye him in the firmament of his power." You saints and elect, praise the Lord who dwell in the heavenly sanctuary, "praise him in the firmament of his power," a repetition of the first part of the verse, praise him who resides in the heavens as he would in a highly fortified palace or on a splendid throne, for the Lord says in Matthew 5, "swear not by heaven for it is God's throne."
2. "Praise ye him for his mighty acts: praise ye him according to the multitude of his greatness." He now teaches that God is to be praised, not because he simply resides in heaven, but because he resides there as the all-powerful Ruler and Lord of all things. Praise him for his mighty acts, for his great strength and power, "praise ye him according to the multitude of his greatness," praise him beyond measure, for such is his greatness, being simply an absolutely great.
3. "Praise him with sound of trumpet: praise him with psaltery and harp." Praise him with all manner of instruments, wind instruments such as the trumpet, and stringed such as the psaltery and harp.
4. "Praise him with timbrel and choir: praise him with strings and organs." All sorts of instruments are now enumerated, for though there is no certainty what sort of instrument their organ was, the probability is, that it was an instrument composed of a number of pipes joined together, such as our organ of the present day.
5. "Praise him on high sounding cymbals: praise him on cymbals of joy: let every spirit praise the Lord. Alleluia." Cymbals are musical instruments, whose music is elicited by shaking them; and they are called "cymbals of joy," as being used on festive occasions, as peals of bells are with Christians. "Let every spirit praise the Lord." Various are the interpretations offered of this sentence; but in my mind, the most satisfactory is to take the words, "every spirit," as comprehending everything that has life, be it spiritual, such as, that of the angels, or animal, such as that of animals, or both united, such as that of man; or even a figurative life, such as that of material objects, which, inanimate as they may be, are still said "to live" in reference to God; because they serve and obey him, as if they had sense and feeling, and understood the commands of the Creator. Hence the invitatory, "the king to whom all things live;" and in Baruch, "the stars were called, and they said: here we are."

Such is also the expression in the Gospel, "he commanded the fever, and it left her;" and, in Mark 4, "and he rebuked the wind, and said to the sea: peace, be still. And the wind ceased; and there was made a great calm." The Prophet, then, after having summoned a number of persons and things to praise God, and finding that he could not severally enumerate and invite every person and thing in one general invitation, he comprehends all, and calls upon them to praise the Lord. "Let every spirit praise the Lord." But, then, if he wanted to include everything, why not say: let everything, instead of every spirit, praise the Lord? The reason is, because it is only the living that are able to praise, and it would appear absurd to invite dead things or souls to join in choir, especially when the same Prophet said, in Psalm 113, "the dead shall not praise thee, O Lord;" and Ezechias exclaims, "the living, the living, he shall give praise to thee." David, then, preferred the expression, every spirit or living things, to everything existing, to show that he invited everything that has life in any respect to unite in praising God. Here, then, is the end of this Commentary. I pray Almighty God, that, as he enabled us to explain those divine Psalms somehow, so he may grant us, in his mercy, after this our pilgrimage here below, to arrive at our true country, where, face to face, we may love him with our whole heart, and praise him without end. Amen. Praise be to God. "But piety with sufficiency is great gain." (1 Timothy 6).