

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: 20

Praise to God for Christ's exaltation after His passion.

1. In thy strength, O Lord, the king shall joy; and in thy salvation he shall rejoice exceedingly.
2. Thou hast given him his heart's desire and hast not withheld from him the will of his lips.
3. For thou hast prevented him with blessings of sweetness; thou has set on his head a crown of precious stones.
4. He asked life of thee: and thou hast given him length of days forever and ever.
5. His glory is great in thy salvation: glory and great beauty shalt thou lay upon him.
6. For thou shalt give him to be a blessing forever and ever: thou shalt make him joyful in gladness with thy countenance.
7. For the king hopeth in the Lord: and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.
8. Let thy hand be found by all thy enemies: let thy right hand find out all them that hate thee.
9. Thou shalt make them as an oven of fire, in the time of thy anger: the Lord shall trouble them in his wrath, and fire shall devour them.
10. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth: and their seed from among the children of men.
11. For they have intended evils against thee: they have devised counsels which they have not been able to establish.
12. For thou shalt make them turn their back: in thy remnants thou shalt prepare their face.
13. Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thy own strength; we will sing and praise thy power.

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: 20

Explanation of the Psalm

1. "In thy strength, O Lord, the king shall joy; and in thy salvation he shall rejoice exceedingly." Having obtained a victory, "The King," Christ, "shall joy in thy strength," for the strength and power he got from you to triumph so successfully over his enemies; "And in thy salvation," the salvation you gave him, "shall rejoice," nay, even "rejoice exceedingly." One part of the verse thus explains the other.

2. "Thou has given him his heart's desire: and hast not withheld from him the will of his lips." Words corresponding to "May he give thee according to thy own heart," in the last Psalm, a Hebrew idiom, by which granting a petition means giving the thing asked for as we read in 1 Kings 1. The priest Heli says to Anna, "The God of Israel grant thee thy petition which thou hast asked of him;" thus, "Thou hast given him his heart's desire" means, Thou hast given him what he desired; "And hast not withheld from him the will of his lips;" you have not refused him what he, by the expression of his lips, showed he wished for and desired. In one word that Christ got all he wished for in his heart and expressed with his lips.

3. "For thou hast prevented him with blessings of sweetness: thou hast set on his head a crown of precious stones." How justly Christ must have rejoiced to find he not only got what he asked, but that God even anticipated his wishes, bestowed the greatest favors on him, without his even asking them. "Thou hast prevented him (anticipated) with blessings of sweetness;" and the meaning is that Christ, without his asking them, was liberally endowed with God's gifts, such as being conceived by the Holy Ghost, the being united in person with the Word, the infusion of all knowledge and virtue, and the beatific vision, all of which he got at the very instant of his conception, and was therefore "prevented (anticipated) with the blessings of sweetness." "Thou hast set on his head a crown of

13. "Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thy own strength: we will sing and praise thy power." The Psalm concludes with a pious effusion of praise to Christ our King, with a prediction of what is to happen after the final destruction of all the wicked. "Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thy own strength." You that once appeared so humble, so infirm even, as to suffer crucifixion, now, in your strength and power, after subduing your enemies, and shoving them into Gehenna, "be exalted" to the very highest heavens; meanwhile, "we," thy elect, "will sing," with our voice, and with all manner of musical instruments will celebrate thy power and glory, in the hope of one day coming to thy kingdom, there to praise thee forever and ever.

END OF PSALM 20

precious stones," would seem to refer to his royalty and his priesthood, which, too, he had from his conception, and hence the name Christ; for a crown of gold marks the king as well as the priest.

4. "He asked life of thee: and thou hast given him length of days forever and ever." He got the above-named gifts by anticipation, without asking them; but corporeal glory and immortality and other gifts, he afterwards asked and got. "He asked life," which he did on the eve of his passion. "He offered up prayers and supplications to him that was able to save him from death," Heb. 5, "but God gave him length of days, forever and ever," meaning life everlasting, that "rising again from the dead, he may die no more, death shall have no more dominion over him," Rom. 6. Jansenius would have David alluded to here; Euthymius and Theodoret, before him, say Ezechias was meant; but this verse disproves both, for neither David nor Ezechias got that length of days here mentioned.

5. "His glory is great in thy salvation: glory and great beauty shalt thou lay upon him." God not only gave him life "forever and ever: but he also "exalted him, and gave him a name which is above every name," Phili. 2; for that was truly "the great glory he had in thy salvation," the salvation through which God saved him; and hence, "thou wilt lay upon him glory and great beauty," in lieu of the ignominious crown of thorns his enemies put upon him, rendering him, as Isaias 53, has it, "without beauty or comeliness."

6. "For thou shalt give him to be a blessing forever and ever: thou shalt make him joyful in gladness with thy countenance." Having been "exalted to the right hand of the Father," with "a name above every name," a universal benediction of those "that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell," will follow. "Thou shalt give him to be a blessing;" you will set him up as a common, a universal subject for thanksgiving, that all may bless him. "Thou shalt make him joyful in gladness with thy countenance;" signifying the joy consequent on the enjoyment of all those blessings; "With thy countenance" means in thy presence, or before thee.

7. "For the king hopeth in the Lord: and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved." The aforesaid blessings will be fixed and firm for eternity, "For the king hopeth in the Lord;" in the infinite power of God, and not in the strength of man; "And through the mercy of the Most High," through the infinite goodness of him who is above all, and to whom all are subject; "He," therefore, "shall not be moved;" he will not waver, but remain secure for eternity.

8. "Let thy hand be found by all thy enemies: let thy right hand find out all them that hate thee." Proving that neither Christ nor his kingdom will be disturbed, because all his enemies will be destroyed. "Let thy hand be found by all thy enemies, to punish them, which he repeats in the second part of the verse. He would seem now to address Christ rather than the Fathers because Christ was the special object of the hatred of the Jews, and of his other persecutors; and it is of him Psalm 109 speaks, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool."

9. "Thou shalt make them as an oven of fire, in the time of thy anger: the Lord shall trouble them in his wrath, and fire shall devour them." The punishment of his enemies described, "Thou shalt make them," namely, his enemies, "as an oven of fire," to burn on all sides, like "a lighted oven," "in the time of thy anger;" in the day of thy wrath, viz., the day of judgment. For Christ our Lord "Shall trouble them in his wrath," and then, at his command, everlasting fire will devour them, and make them "like an oven of fire."

10. "Their fruit shall thou destroy from the earth and their seed from among the children of men." For fear any one may object that the posterity of Christ's enemies would, one time or another, stand up for their fathers, and offer violence to Christ, the Prophet now adds, that not only will his enemies be destroyed, but the same destruction will extend to their children, and to all their posterity.

11. "For they have intended evils against thee: they have devised counsels which they have not been able to establish." Most justly shall they be punished, because they unjustly sought to injure you. With great propriety and accuracy David says, "They have intended evils against thee." They could only intend them, for Christ, "in whom there was no sin," could not be directly subject to punishment; but these wicked men "intended," and, as it were, distorted such evils against him, such as contumelies, wounds, stripes, death itself, seeking to turn the innocent Christ from his path. "They have devised counsels which they have not been able to establish." They had the evil intention of destroying Christ, and of obstructing his kingdom; a thing they could not accomplish, because God converted all these persecutions to the good of Christ himself, and of his faithful servants.

12. "For thou shalt make them turn back: In thy remnants thou shalt prepare their face." The great misfortune of the wicked is here described; scourging alone is to be their lot; and, to add to their misfortune, they will have a view of God's elect, in the highest glory and happiness. "Thou shalt make them turn their back." Nothing but their back shall be seen; they shall be all back, to be scourged all over. "In thy remnants thou shalt prepare their face;" the word "prepare" signifies "to direct," in the Hebrew; and then the meaning is: You will direct their countenance, that is, of the wicked, to look "at thy remnants;" that is, the elect, whom you have left to yourself, and of whom it is written, Rom. 9, "The remnants will be saved." This is a very difficult passage. Theodoret and Euthymius explain it thus: "Thou shalt make them turn their back:" rout them, make them fly, turn their back. "In thy remnants:" that is, in those that remain after them, their children. "Thou shalt prepare their face:" thou shalt satisfy thy anger. Let the reader choose between the two interpretations.