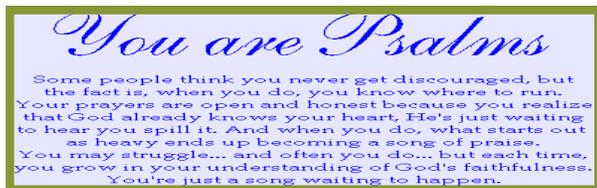


thought he might prevail; and, though he may seem to do so for a time, the end will prove that he had to yield, instead of prevailing; “when the just shall stand in great constancy against those who hemmed them in,” Wisdom 5.

8. “But I, as a fruitful olive tree in the house of God, have hoped in the mercy of God forever, yea, forever and ever.” He concludes the Psalm by showing that he has taken quite a different path; for I will not be plucked up, nor rooted out as a withered tree, like Doeg; but I will send down my roots deeper and deeper, like “a fruitful olive tree,” always in bloom, always bearing fruit; and, being such, I have, consequently, “hoped in the mercy of God forever;” hoped that God would assist me forever, and to eternity. Observe the contrast he draws between himself and Doeg, the Idumean, comparing him to a dry log, and himself to a fruitful olive tree; he predicts that Doeg will be rooted out of the land, while himself will be rooted in the house of God. Doeg put his trust in his own riches, David in God’s mercy.

9. “I will praise thee forever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name, for it is good in the sight of thy saints.” He returns thanks for anything that happen, as if it had actually been done; for the future, as regards God and the prophets, is a matter of certainty, of the past. “I will praise thee forever; “I will always praise thee, “because thou hast done it;” have come to the determination of confounding him that trusteth in his riches, and consoling and comforting him that hopeth in thee. “And I will wait on thy name;” I will always hope in thee; such is the meaning of “wait on thee;” and the name of God is used here for God himself. “For it is good and the sight of thy saints.” I would justly hope in your name, for your name is most sweet to the saints who have tasted of his sweetness.

END OF PSALM 51



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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: 51

David condemns the wickedness of Doeg, and foretells his destruction.

1. Why dost thou glory in malice, thou that art mighty in iniquity?
2. All the day long thy tongue hath devised injustice: as a sharp razor, thou hast wrought deceit.
3. Thou hast loved malice more than goodness; and iniquity rather than to speak righteousness.
4. Thou hast loved all the words of ruin, O deceitful tongue.
5. Therefore will God destroy thee forever: he will pluck thee out, and remove thee from thy dwelling place; and thy root out of the land of the living.
6. The just shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him, and say:
7. Behold the man that made not God his helper. But trusted in the abundance of his riches; and prevailed in his vanity.
8. But I, as a fruitful olive tree in the house of God, have hoped in the mercy of God forever, yea, forever and ever.
9. I will praise thee forever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name, for it is good in th sight of thy saints.

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: 51

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. “Why dost thou glory in malice, thou that art mighty in iniquity?” Cicero, in his oration against Catiline, thus commences, “how long, Catiline, will you trifle with our patience?” And in the same style David commences with a similar interrogation, for the purpose of sharpening his rebuke. “Why dost thou glory in malice, thou that art mighty in iniquity?” Doeg, the Idumean, boasted that by his accusations he had ruined a priest of the Lord, and his entire family; from when Saul heard from Doeg that David had been hospitably received by Achimelech the priest, he burst into such a rage, that he not only ordered Doeg to put Achimelech said that, but also eighty-five other priests that were along with him; he then sacked their city, slaying men and women, babes and sucklings, nay, even the sheep, cows, and asses. See what a torrent of evil flowed from the calumny; so that he justly deserved to be styled “Mighty in iniquity.”

2. “All the day long thy tongue hath devised injustice: as a sharp razor, thou hast wrought deceit.” He draws a highly wrought picture of Doeg’s false information, first saying that it was not a sudden, but a long premeditated information. “All the day long thy tongue hath devised injustice.” You were constantly turning in your mind how to frame the false accusation, and, at length, when the opportunity offered, your tongue brought forth what it had been hatching for such a length of time; for, though thoughts are produced by the mind, David poetically attributes them to the tongue, as if the tongue was so radically bad in itself, that though apparently silent it was, in thought, speaking to itself. He then adds that the thing was put into execution with as much speed as a sharp razor would cut; elegantly contrasting the delay in forming the resolution with the celerity of putting it into execution; and, in fact, he lost very little time, when he got the opportunity, of carrying out what he had so long been hatching; for, in a very few words, he persuaded Saul that Achimelech the priest had entered into a conspiracy with David, which was a grievance deceit and imposition; and he, therefore, says, “as a sharp razor, thou hast wrought deceit;” that is, you deceived Saul, just as easily as a sharp razor cuts through the hair.

3. “Thou hast loved malice more than goodness; and iniquity rather than to speak righteousness.” He tells us the source of that calumnious accusation, and says that it did not proceed from ignorance or accident, but from the perversity of the man; who always preferred evil to good, and lies to truth. “Thou hast loved malice more than goodness;” you were always more pleased to injure than to serve your neighbor; “and iniquity rather than to speak righteously,” to tell lies rather than truth. Observe, that instead of opposing falsehood to “speaking righteously,” he opposes “iniquity” to it, insinuating thereby, that Doeg’s falsehood was not one simply so, or a mere lie; it was more, because it caused the death of Achimelech, and was thus an “iniquity.”

4. “Thou hast loved all the words of ruin, O deceitful tongue.” He assigns further reason for calling Doeg’s conduct a lie and an iniquity, and says it was a truly fatal, pernicious falsehood, causing, as it did, the ruin of so many innocent people. “Thou hast loved all the words of ruin;” all the language by which you could hurry innocent people headlong to their ruin and perdition; and it appears from the first book of Kings, that Doeg’s lies caused the destruction of an entire city. “O deceitful tongue –of Doeg.

5. “Therefore will God destroy thee forever: he will pluck thee out, and remove thee from thy dwelling place; and thy root out of the land of the living.” He predicts that Doeg’s sin will not go unpunished, but that everlasting ruin is in store for him, in return for the temporal ruin of the priests, of which he was the cause. “Therefore will God destroy thee forever.” For this your sin God will utterly destroy you, not only in this world, but in the next; so that you shall be ruined for eternity, left absolutely desolate in this world, and damned forever in the world to come; such being the just retribution of the wicked, who, in seeking to injure others, injure themselves forever. He then explains in particular what he had laid down in general, saying, “he will pluck thee out.” The first stage of your punishment will be your banishment, the loss of your home, prosperity, and country, sending you abroad an exile and a wanderer; “and thy root out of the land of the living,” will eradicate you and all your posterity from the earth; for children are like roots, shot out by the parents, which afterwards support and nourish him in turn.

6. “The just shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him, and say:

7. “Behold the man that made not God his helper but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and prevailed in his vanity.” Many will profit and be instructed by the punishment of the wicked informer. “The just shall see and fear;” just and holy people will consider his case, and be horrified; “and shall laugh at him, and say: behold the man who made not God his helper, but trusted in the abundance of his riches;” will laugh at him for having acted most foolishly, for not putting his trust in God, who is all-powerful, instead of the frail riches of this world, which are so easily lost. “And prevailed in his vanity;” will jeer him for having endeavored to advance by fraud and lies, instead of true and solid virtue. The expression “prevailed,” does not imply that he really did prevail, but that he