

END OF PSALM

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: 65

An invitation to praise God.

1. Shout with joy to God, all the earth,
2. Sing ye a psalm to his name: give glory to his praise.
3. Say unto God: How terrible are thy works, O Lord! In the multitude of thy strength thy enemies shall lie to thee.
4. Let all the earth adore thee, and sing to thee: let it sing a psalm to thy name.
5. Come and see the works of God: who is terrible in his counsels over the sons of men.
6. Who turneth the sea into dry land, in the river they shall pass on foot: there shall we rejoice in him.
7. Who by his power ruleth forever: his eyes behold the nations; let not them that provoke him be exalted in themselves.
8. O bless our God, ye gentiles: and make the voice of his praise to be heard.
9. Who hath set my soul to live: and hath not suffered my feet to be moved.
10. For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us by fire, as silver is tried.

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11. **Thou hast brought us into a net, thou hast laid afflictions on our back:**
12. **Thou hast set men over our heads. We have passed through fire and water, and thou hast brought us into a refreshment.**
13. **I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,**
14. **Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.**
15. **I will offer up to thee holocausts full of marrow, with burnt offerings of rams: I will offer to thee bullocks with goats.**
16. **Come and hear, all ye that fear God: and I will tell you what great things he hath done for my soul.**
17. **I cried to him with my mouth: and I extolled him with my tongue.**
18. **If I have looked at iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.**
19. **Therefore hath God heard me, and hath attended to the voice of my supplication.**
20. **Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his enemy from me.**

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: 65

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "Shout with joy to God, all the earth."
2. "Sing ye a psalm to his name; give glory to his praise." He invites the whole earth, that is, all the elect therein, to be glad, if to sing to God; all having common reason to rejoice in the resurrection of the just. He wishes three things to be exhibited in doing so: jubilation of gladness; the sound of the psaltery; and the human voice. Jubilation or gladness, which consists more in the interior affections than in words, is properly given to God. "Shout with joy to God;" for God, being a spirit, naturally regards such spiritual desire. The sound of the psaltery is due to his name; that is, to his fame, his glory. Finally, the human voice is to be employed in his praise. "Give glory to his praise;" take no glory to yourselves, give all to his praise.
3. "Say unto God, how terrible are thy works, O Lord! In the multitude of thy strength thy enemies shall lie to thee." The subject of God's praise is to be the works of his supreme power and wisdom. "Say unto God," when you wish to praise him, "how terrible are thy works, O Lord!" That is, thy works, by reason of their magnitude, strike terror into all. "In the multitude of thy strength thy enemies shall lie to thee;" such is thy power and strength, that you make liars of all your enemies,

17. "I cried to him with my mouth: and I extolled him with my tongue." Here is the first gift of God conferred on the soul, as announced by the assembly of the elect, supposed to speak here. This much God "has done for my soul; "given me faith and the spirit of prayer. For, "how shall they invoke him in whom they have not believe?" Through faith, then, I learned the wretched captivity in which I was held, and I learned who was my Savior and my Redeemer; and thus, "I cried to him with my mouth." He now mentions a second favor, "and I extolled him with my tongue;" I not only prayed to my God, but I praised him, returned him thanks for the favors conferred, that thereby I may get fresh ones, sadly wanting to me. And all these acts of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving were the work of God's own grace.

18. "If I have looked at iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The third favor received from the Lord consisted in light to know the obstacles to his prayers being heard. "If I have looked at iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." To look at iniquity in the heart means to love it in secret, or to indulge in secret concupiscence, as we find in the Gospel, "whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her." For very many, by their words and their acts, seem to have a thorough horror of sin, reprove and chastise sinners, and yet, in their hearts, where nobody can be a witness, they cherish sinful desires, and would gratify them if they could with impunity. Such hypocrites are not heard by God; he hears those only who hate iniquity in their heart, and, if they should chance to sin, confess it, and seek the physician who can heal them; and, whereas all the elect consist of such persons, the Prophet therefore adds, in their name:

19. "Therefore hath God heard me, and hath attended to the voice of my supplication." Because he is a searcher of hearts, God saw me sincerely sorry for my sins, and, so far from "looking at iniquity in my heart," that I turned away from it in perfect horror. "And hath attended to the voice of my supplication;" because he saw me attending the voice of his commandments, and not to the voice of the evil one, prompting me to wickedness.

20. "Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy for me." May that God be praised and blessed forever who heaped such unbounded favors on me, the principal one being that he "hath not turned away my prayer," nor taken away "his mercy for me." Thus, through his mercy, I have persevered in the way of his commandments, have already obtained the reward of such perseverance, namely, deliverance from captivity, and a return to the heavenly Jerusalem.

its fury; and that water, while it extinguishes our thirst, will not take away our life. We will thus be refreshed by both in their own way; that is to say, in heaven we shall have the fire of charity, which will heat without harming, perfecting instead of destroying; transforming us into God, instead of turning us into ashes. There will be an abundance of water; the real and eternal truths, the immense joys, and the ineffable pleasures; but such as will not enervate or weaken the soul, or stir up the concupiscence of the flesh against the spirit; and finally, will delight it by refreshing it, without suffocating it by excess.

13. "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows." This verse seems to be a conclusion from the preceding; as if he said: as you have brought us through fire and water, into place of refreshment, "I will go into thy house," for you led me to it, protected me in the way; and I will go "with burnt offerings;" I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving, for holocausts were offered only in thanksgiving. And, in fact, in no place is a more perfect holocausts offered than in heaven, where all the saints, lighted up with the fire of the purest love, and with the full affections of the soul, offer themselves unreservedly to God; for the whole study, the whole business of the just in heaven will be to praise God. "I will pay thee my vows." Such a holocaust is due to you, for I promised it when I was in trouble. I will, therefore, enter into your house with burnt offerings, that I may discharge the vows that have been made; not by anyone else, but which I distinctly promised with my own lips.

14. "Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble."

15. "I will offer up to thee holocausts full of marrow, with burnt offerings of rams: I will offer to thee bullocks with goats." He tells what were the vows he promised in his trouble, and says he promised the richest sacrifices of cattle that could be made according to the law. These were three: rams, cows, and goats. Rams, included lambs, cows included heifers, and goats, kids. "And my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble; " that is to say, I said "I will pay thee my vows," which my lips have uttered when I was in trouble, and needed the divine assistance, and, with tears, implored his help. "Holocausts full of marrow, with burnt offerings of rams." I will sacrifice fat lambs full of marrow, with a fragrant odor from the rams that will be slain along with them, and burnt as a holocaust. "I will offer to thee bullocks with goats;" to the holocaust of lambs and rams I will add another of bullocks and goats.

16. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God: and I will tell you what great things he hath done for my soul." Speaking in the person of God's elect, the Prophet now exhorts us all to understand God's favors, conferred by him on the saints, and their return for them, that in imitation of them we, too, may receive similar favors, and thus, in the end, arrive at the same rest and glory. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what great things he hath done for my soul." Come, all you who fear God, and hear me, and I will tell you what he has done for me. Observe the invitation given to those only "who fear God," because, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" he loosens the feet, opens the ears; and, therefore, he who has no fear of God will be called to no purpose, neither to come nor to hear.

who boasted of your inability to do things of no great consequence. Numerous examples of this occur in the Scriptures. In Psalm 77 we read, "and they spoke ill of God, they said: "can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" Yet God, in his supreme power, sent such a quantity of quails into the desert as abundantly sufficed to feed them all; thus proving them liars, and for which he inflicted dreadful punishment on them. In like manner, when Eliseus the prophet, on the occasion of a most grievous famine, said, "hear ye the word of the Lord: tomorrow, about this time, a bushel of fine flour shall be sold for a starter, in the gate of Samaria;" and one of the lords replied, "if the Lord should make floodgates in heaven, can that possibly be which thou sayest?" Yet God in his power proved him a liar, too; for it turned up that on the following day a bushel of fine flour was actually sold for a starter, and that lord, who so contradicted the Prophet, was trampled on at the gate by the people, and met a miserable end. Such also with the lies of the Jews, when they insulted the Savior, as he hung on his cross, saying, "if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross." Yet he, in his supreme power, wrought a much greater miracle; for he rose from the grave, which was a much greater work than to descend from the cross.

4. "Let all the earth adore thee, and sing to thee: let it sing a psalm to thy name."

5. "Come, and see the works of God: who is terrible in his counsels over the sons of men." The Prophet again stirs up all mankind to adore and praise God in the sincerity of their hearts; and, to do so with greater affection, he exhorts them to reflect on God's works, and how terrible he is in his dealings with mankind.

6. "Who turneth the sea into dry land, in the river they shall pass on foot: there shall we rejoice in him." He gives two examples of God's wonderful acts, such as never could have been accomplished by human design. "Who turneth the sea into dry land." The first miracle, recorded in Exodus, "and the children of Israel went through the midst of the sea dried up;" "in the river they shall pass on foot." The second miracle, recorded in Joshua 3, where God so dried up the Jordan, that the children of Israel required neither bridge nor boat to pass over, but went across dry on foot. "There shall we rejoice in him;" where those things have been done; there we have rejoiced in him, not taking any credit to ourselves as if they were our acts, but rejoicing and glorying in God, and have praised them, as may be seen in Exodus 15 and Joshua 3. The Prophet uses the future for the past, unless, perhaps, he meant to insinuate that these miracles would be succeeded by much greater ones, of which they were only the types and figures. A much greater miracle is that men should pass over the bitter sea of this life, and cross the river of mortality, that never ceases to run, and which swallow up and drown so many; and still come safe and alive to the land of eternal promise, and there rejoice in God himself, beholding him face-to-face; and yet this greater miracle is so accomplished by God, that many pass through this sea as if it were dry land, and cross this river with dry feet; that is to say, having no difficulty in despising all things temporal, be they good or be they bad;

that is to say, being neither attached to the good things, nor fearing the evil things of this world that they may arrive in security at the heavenly Jerusalem, where we will rejoice in him, not in hope, but in complete possession, for eternity.

7. "Who by his power ruleth forever: his eyes behold the nations; let not them that provoke him be exalted in themselves." This seems a digression addressed to the wicked, who despise submission to God, and refuse to praise him, for he reminds them of the omnipotence and the omniscience of God, "who by his power ruleth forever." He rules with universal sway, and that of himself, and not by reason of having received power from any other; and also, "his eyes behold the nations," sees them all, and from aloft notes what they are doing; and, therefore, "let not them that provoke him be exalted in themselves," let them not be proud, or glory in their own strength, because they will not escape the hands of an all-powerful, all seeing God."

8. "O bless our God, ye Gentiles; and make the voice of his praise to be heard." After such digression, he now repeats the exhortation he made in the first and fourth verses, and now (the third time) he invites all nations to bless our God, who is the only true God, and to chant his praise with a voice so loud that it may be heard by all.

9. "Who hath set my soul to live: and hath not suffered my feet to be moved." He now tells us the reason why he is so extremely anxious that God should be praised by all, and that is, because he saved him from the greatest dangers. "Who hath set my soul to live." I wish God should be praised, because he saved my soul, and suffered me not to stumble or to fall. Such is the language of the elect on their arrival, through many and various temptations, at the port of safety. "My soul," means the entire man, which is a most common expression in the Scriptures. "Who hath set," signifies, preordained or predestinated to life eternal, or set me in the number of those who are to live forever. "And hath not suffered my feet to be moved;" has given me the gift of perseverance, which especially belongs to the predestined, for God protects and directs, so that they may not fall to the right or to the left, those whom he predestines.

10. "For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us by fire, as silver is tried." The Prophet explains the tribulations of the just by various metaphors, the first taken from the furnace in which silver is refined, to show that God suffers the just to undergo persecution, not for the purpose of harming them, but to prove them, that they may be shown to be proved, and pure, faithful, and sincere. For fire consumes straw, makes gold and silver more pure. Straw smokes in the fire, silver shines. Hence, the angel said to Tobias, "because thou wert acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee;" and in Wisdom 3, "God tempted them and found them worthy of him, like gold in a furnace he proved them;" and in Eccles. 27, "the furnace trieth the potter's vessels, and the trial of affliction just men; most will and 1 Peter 1, "that the trial of your faith, much more precious than gold which is tried by the fire, may be found unto praise, and glory, and honor, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

11. "Thou hast brought us into a net, thou hast laid afflictions on our back." He now enters into particular afflictions, making use of various metaphors. "Thou hast brought us into a net," you have handed us over to our enemies, who bound us with chains, manacles, and fetters, and threw us into prison; for as birds and wild beasts, we caught in a snare, are deprived of their liberty, so it may be said, that men, when deprived of their liberty, and shut up in prison, are bound with chains and fetters, "thou hast laid afflictions on our back;" suffered us to be loaded and lashed, like so many wild beasts of burden, alluding to the various labors and hardships imposed by the wicked on the just, when they were forced to go down into mines, to hew marble, to carry heavy loads, and be stripped and lashed while so harassed and tormented.

12. "Thou hast set men over our heads. We have passed through fire and water, and thou hast brought us out into a refreshment." You made men trample on our heads, as if we were captives of war; which also is metaphorical, to give us an idea of the tyranny and cruelty exercised by princes over their wretched subjects. Just and considerate princes are placed on the heads, or rather over their subjects; but they press so lightly on them, that the weight of obedience is scarcely felt; while cruel tyrants and inhuman princes, such as were the early persecutors of the Jews, such as Pharaoh of Egypt, and Nabuchodonosor of Assyria, so oppress their subjects by exactions, by edicts, pains and punishments, that they can scarcely breathe. The Prophet shows most skillfully in this verse, how no part of the persons of the just is free from suffering; the hands and feet suffer from the snares; the back from the heavy loads; and the head from being trampled on. "We have passed through fire and water;" the last of those beautiful figures made use of by the Prophet, the give us an idea of the sufferings of the saints. Fire and water are two opposites; fire burns, water gets congealed; the former is most active; the latter, most soft and easy. Fire dries up water, and water extinguishes fire; and therefore, when a man gets burned, water is applied to cool and to heal him; and yet, where there is question of afflicting the servants of God, both fire and water seem to conspire; the one to consume him, the other to suffocate him. By fire, then, we are to understand the more active punishments, such as stripes, wounds, burning, etc.; and by water, the slow, but constant punishments, such as exile, imprisonment, nakedness, and hunger. But, as fire will consume wood, and will not consume gold, so also water will cause wood to rot and decay, and will not harm gold; and, as gold is purged of its dross by fire, so it is cleansed of all exterior dirt by fire. The just and the holy, then, who may be compared to gold, pass through fire and water without suffering any harm; because, in their tribulation, they keep their patience; and in their prosperity, their moderation; but the children of this world, like rotten timber, are consumed in the fire, or crumbled in the water; because, being unable to bear their troubles with patience, they murmur, they rail, they blaspheme; while, in their prosperity, they revel in all manner of luxury pride and effeminacy. The elect, therefore, say, "we have passed through fire and water; and thou hast brought us out into a refreshment;" because in our heavenly country there will be no lack of fire and water; that fire, however, in warming will refresh us, instead of destroying us in