

overcharged with the wind of self conceit and opinion. But the time will come when such reproach and contempt will revert on themselves, when, on the day of judgment, they will cry out, as we read in Wisdom, "these are they, whom we had some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. What hath pride profited us? Or, what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All these things are passed away like a shadow."

END OF PSALM 122

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: 122

A prayer in affliction, with confidence in God.

1. to thee have I lifted my eyes, who dwellest in heaven.
2. Behold, as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters, as the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress: so are our eyes unto the Lord our God, until he have mercy on us.
3. Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us; for we are greatly filled with contempt.
4. For our soul is greatly filled: we are a reproach to the rich, and contempt to the proud.

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: 122

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "To thee have I lifted up my eyes, who dwellest in heaven." The Prophet, speaking at one time in the person of a pilgrim, and at another time in his own, as being pilgrim indeed, says, that whatever difficulties he was placed in, he had recourse to no one for help but to God alone; because he alone dwells in the highest heavens, whence he beholds and rules all things under him; and because it is from him all our evils come for the purpose of chastising us; and, therefore, that it is idle for us to have recourse to anyone else, for no one can take us out of God's hands.

2. "Behold, as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters, as the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress: so are our eyes unto the Lord our God, until he have mercy on us." He tells us why he raised his eyes to God. It was to look upon God scourging him; in the hope that his wretched appearance may move God to mercy, and cause him to desist from scourging him. He illustrates it by the example of the servants, who, when flogged by their masters, look with a sorrowful countenance on the hand that flogs them, hoping by their looks to move their masters to pity. He applies the simile to maid, as well as the men servants; for they, too, are pilgrims, and are scourged as they prosecute their pilgrimage. These scourges consist not only of open persecutions and public calamities, but also of secret temptations that daily torment the soul, as also of those fears, sorrows, perplexities, and other troubles, from which no one in this life is exempt; and, therefore, the Psalm does not fix stated times for us to raise our eyes to God, but says it must be done incessantly, "until he have mercy on us," which will not be accomplished until we shall have arrived at our country; for then "God will crown us with mercy and compassion, when he shall have healed all our diseases, and satisfied our desires with good things."

3. "Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us; for we are greatly filled with contempt." Not content with having implored God's mercy, by fixing his eyes on God, the Prophet now, with the voice of his heart and his body, cries out, and redoubles the shout, as he prays for himself and fellow pilgrims, saying, "have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy." And, truly, anyone that attentively considers, and properly reflects on the next sentence, "for we are greatly filled with contempt," will see at once that such is the extent of our misery that we should never cease our cries to that effect. Because man, created to God's image, placed over all created things by him, very often even adopted by him as a son, and predestined to enjoy the kingdom

of heaven, is so despised in this our pilgrimage, not only by men and demons, and so constantly annoyed, not only by the aforesaid, but even by animals, even to the minutest of them, and even by the very elements, that the Prophet could say with the greatest truth, not only that we are despised, but that we are "greatly filled with contempt." For what is there that does not look down upon man, even on the just and the holy, in this valley of tears? However, the contempt principally meant by the Prophet here is that which they just suffer from the unjust, and the good from the bad; because most true and universal is that expression of the apostle, "and all who live piously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" as well as those words of the Lord, "if you had been of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." This is easily understood; the good and evil, being essentially opposed to each other, they cannot possibly be at peace. And, as the just are patient and mild, and have learned of their Master to turn the other cheek to him who strikes on one, and thus to make no resistance to injuries, they are, in consequence, proudly despised, harassed, and ridiculed by the wicked.

4. "For our soul is greatly filled: we are a reproach to the rich, and contempt to the proud." In this last verse David informs us that the aforesaid scorn and contempt of the poor and humble pilgrims proceeds from the wealthy and the proud. The Prophet says, "our souls are greatly filled;" which is but a repetition of a previous sentence. "For we are greatly filled with contempt." However, in this passage he says it is the soul that is so filled, contempt being more applicable to the soul; but they who have no soul may be, and are, subject to pain, but not to contempt. The word "filled" signifies, in the Hebrew, filled to repletion, which adds great force to the expression; because if they who are filled to repletion, instead of deriving any pleasure for more food, are pained and overburdened by it, however rare and good it may be, how would the case be with those who may chance to be overdosed with bad food, such as contempt and reproaches. The next sentence, "we are a reproach to the rich, and a contempt to the proud," signify the same, reproach and contempt being synonymous, as are the rich and the proud. All proud people are inflated, and are, therefore, rich; but it is in wind, add not in any solid good, that is to say, they abound in high notions and extravagant opinion of themselves. Should they enjoy the riches of this world, they look upon them as their own, never reflecting for a moment that they will have "to render an account of them." Should they be in high position and power, they attribute the whole to themselves, never thinking for a moment that they were placed in such positions in order to be useful to and to serve others, that they will have to render a most strict account for such favors; and that when they got them, they got nothing but a load and a burden; in which they are just as absurd as would be the stick in a man's hand that would boast of carrying the person that owned it. Should they excel in talent and learning, they form most exaggerated notions of their abilities, and attribute to themselves what they only got from God. Finally, should they not have those riches, dignities, and honors, and, on the other hand, should they be scourged and punished, they look upon themselves as aggrieved, blaspheme and murmur against God, and all in consequence of their being full, or rather,