

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: 58

A prayer to be delivered from the wicked, with confidence in God's help and protection. I agrees to Christ and His enemies the Jews.

1. Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; and defend me from them that rise up against me.
2. Deliver me from them that work iniquity, and save me from bloody men.
3. For behold, they have caught my soul: the mighty have rushed in upon me.
4. Neither is it my iniquity, nor my sin, O Lord; without iniquity have I run, and directed my steps.
5. Rise up thou to meet me, and behold; even thou O Lord the God of Hosts, the God of Israel. Attend to visit all the nations: have no mercy on all them that work iniquity.
6. They shall return at evening and shall suffer hunger like dogs; and shall go round about the city.
7. Behold thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt bring all the nations to nothing.
8. But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them: thou shalt bring all the nations to nothing.
9. I will keep my strength to thee: for thou art my protector.
10. My God, his mercy shall prevent me.

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11. **God shall let me see over my enemies: slay them not, lest at any time my people forget. Scatter them by thy power: and bring them down, O Lord, my protector:**
12. **For the sin of their mouth, and the word of their lips: and let them be taken in their pride. And for their cursing and lying they shall be talked of,**
13. **When they are consumed; when they are consumed by thy wrath, and they shall be no more. And they shall know that God will rule Jacob and all the ends of the earth.**
14. **They shall return at evening, and shall suffer hunger like dogs: and shall go round about the city.**
15. **They shall be scattered abroad to eat, and shall murmur if they be not filled.**
16. **But I will sing thy strength; and will extol thy mercy in the morning. For thou art become my support, and my refuge, in the day of my trouble.**
17. **Unto thee, O my helper, will I sing; for thou art God, my defense; my God, my mercy.**

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: 58

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; and defend me from them that rise up against me." David, hemmed in by soldiers of Saul in his own house, as if he were in a prison, prays to Almighty God. It is also applicable to Christ as he lay in the sepulcher, with guards on it; and is also applicable to any just person in danger of death.
2. "Deliver me from them that work iniquity, and save me from bloody men." An explanation of the preceding verse. "My enemies," in the first verse, are here called the "workers of iniquity," for the just have no other enemies than such persons who can assign no reason for being so, but that they are wicked, and the others just. "They that rise up against me," in the first verse, are called here "bloody men;" homicides, who rise up against their neighbor to spill their blood.
3. "For behold, they have caught my soul: the mighty have rushed in upon me." He assigns a reason for asking for deliverance, being in extreme danger, as he was, of losing his life. He was like a wild beast "caught" in the toils, and about to be destroyed. "The mighty have rushed in upon me;" such as Saul, Abner his general, and people of that class, to show he was persecuted, not by a few soldiers, but by a most powerful

17. "Unto thee, O my helper, will I sing; for thou art God my defense; my God, my mercy." The same repeated, but differently expressed, the show his affection and gratitude to so great a benefactor. The word "helper" implies God's power; "my defense" refers to his goodness, which causes him to take his elect under his protection. The words "my God" imply that he is our supreme good, and the final object of all our desires; finally, "my mercy" comprehends all God's gifts, that enable us to come to him as the supreme good; for, as St. Augustine properly observes, it is of much more importance to us that he should be "our mercy," than our salvation, our life, or our hope. For it was his mercy that made us to live and to exist, to be delivered from evil, and advanced in virtue. By the mercy of God we were predestined, called, justified, and will be finally glorified; for, though glorification depends on merit, of very merits are gifts of God, because, without his previous grace, they would be of no value. Justly, therefore, the Prophet, and Psalm 102, says, "who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion."

no trace of them, neither of kingdom nor of people; they will be miserably dispersed and scattered, as we actually see accomplished. "And they shall know that God will rule Jacob;" when the Jews shall have been scattered throughout the world, then "they shall know" and clearly see that the true God is the God not only of Jacob, of the people of Israel, but he is also the God of "all the ends of the earth," of the whole world, and all the nations thereon. Hitherto "God was known to Judea and in Israel, great was his name," Psalm 75; and, in Psalm 78, was said, "pour out thy wrath upon the nations that have not known thee; and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name;" but, after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the preaching of Christ's Gospel through the world, the dispersed Jews saw the true God worshiped everywhere, idols broken, the Psalms of David chanted; and thus they learned that God was not the God of the Jews alone, but also of the Gentiles.

14. "They shall return at evening, and shall suffer hunger like dogs: an shall go roundabout the city." They will never see more clearly the truth of the preceding verse, "that God will rule Jacob and all the ends of the earth," then on the last day, when "we shall also stand before the tribunal of Christ," and "every knee shall bend to him;" then "they shall return" to penance, but too late; for it will be in the "evening," when the hour mercy shall have passed; "they shall suffer hunger like dogs," prowling and "going roundabout the city" of the elect, looking in vain for admission or consolation.

15. "They shall be scattered abroad to eat, then shall murmur if they be not filled." The same Jews, in their appeal to their patriarchs and prophets, will not be heard by them; but will be dispersed, looking for food like so many dogs; and, when they meet no consolation, get nothing, and are not acknowledged as children, they will begin to murmur and complain of their unhappy state.

16. "But I will sing thy strength; and will extol thy mercy in the morning. For thou art become my support, and my refuge, in the day of my trouble." Hitherto those impious persecutors had been his subject; he now, in his own person, or rather, in the person of Christ and the Church, which is his body, gives expression to his joy and gladness, accompanied by thanksgiving and praise of God, "but I will sing thy strength." Those wretched beings may howl and grumble; but I, on the other hand, "will sing" and praise "thy strength," so displayed by you in the total destruction of the wicked; "and will extol thy mercy;" with great delight will I praise thee for the mercy you displayed in the liberation and glorification of the just, and I will do so "in the morning," before I turn to any other business or occupation. "For thou art become my support and my refuge in the day of my trouble." He tells the effect of the mercy he promised to sing of, and that is, God becoming "his support;" undertaking to protect him, and affording him "a refuge in the day of this trouble."

king, having a numerous army at his command.

4. "Neither is it my iniquity, nor my sin, O Lord, without iniquity have I run, and directed my steps." These words, when referred to David, do not convey that he was absolutely free from sin, but that he was not guilty of the sin laid to his charge, that of rebellion against Saul. If referred to Christ, they are absolutely true, for "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;" 1 Peter 2. "Neither is it my iniquity nor my sin, O Lord; that is to say, "though the mighty have rushed in upon me," it is not my iniquity, nor my sins, nor any injury offered them by me that has provoked them. Because "without iniquity have I run;" my life has been a most inoffensive one. "And directed my steps;" have turned neither to the right nor to the left: to the right, to ingratiate myself with the rich; to the left, to oppress the poor and the humble.

5. "Rise up thou to meet me, and behold: even thou, O Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel. Attend to visit all the nations: have no mercy on all them that work iniquity." He said that "he ran," and that "he directed his steps." Now, he that "directs his steps" will, undoubtedly, run to God, to whom, as to their last end, all good things are directed; and he, therefore, says, I, by my good acts, have directed my course to you; and do you, therefore, in return, protect me "by rising up to meet me." "And behold" the danger I am in, and consider for the trouble I am in; nor can you plead inability or ignorance for you are the "Lord God of hosts;" and, as Lord, you can do everything; and, as God, you see and know everything; as Lord of Hosts you have thousands of angels to do your bidding, and whom you can employ in helping me; you are, finally, "the God of Israel;" and, therefore, we have a special claim on your protection, by virtue of the compact you entered into with our fathers. "Attend to visit all the nations." Let the day of universal judgment arrive, and then "have no mercy on all them that work iniquity;" spare no sinner; punish them all according to their deserts. These expressions should be understood in a prophetic, rather than an and imprecatory sense, making the meaning to be: the great day of general retribution will come, at length, when all shall have to render an account to God, the supreme Judge; and God wilt then spare no wicked person, but "will bring all evil men to an evil end." Heaven, however, St. Augustine raises question; how can it be true that God "will have no mercy on them that work iniquity," when it is certain that he had mercy on David himself, though guilty of adultery and homicide; on Peter, who denied Christ; and on Paul, who so persecuted the Church. In thus extending his mercy, God acts, not as a Judge, but, as the Father of mercies: through which mercy he softens the heart, and moves it to penance. But in this passage David speaks of God purely as Judge, "who will render unto everyone according to their works;" and especially, on the last day, when he will neither spare nor have mercy on any wicked person.

6. "They shall return at evening, and shall suffer hunger like dogs: and shall go round about the city." He continues describing the wretched condition of the wicked on the last day. "They shall return at evening;" their conversion will be too late; they let the day pass, in which they might have worked and been

converted, and now turn to penance of no value; such penance as Wisdom 5 describes, "saying within themselves repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit." "And shall hunger like dogs;" for that justice they disregarded, when they could have had their fill of it, or for the rest and quite they cannot now hope for; "and shall go round," as the dogs do, "about the city" of God; the assembly of the elect, seeking in vain for admission; trying to move those within to look with mercy on them, but to no purpose; for none of the saints will, on that day, have the slightest pity on the workers of iniquity. Such retribution will be an essentially just one; for, in this life, the wicked "returned at evening;" sought the darkness of night, instead of the light of day. "And suffered hunger," indulged in carnal passions with all the eagerness that hungry dogs devour their meat; and as the dogs "go round about the city" in quest of the carrion thrown into the trenches, so did they seek in all quarters for the gratification of their carnal desires. Others explain this passage as applying to the soldiers coming, like dogs, in the evening to destroy David. Others apply it to the conversion of the Jews in the end of the world.

7. "Behold, they shall speak with their mouth, and a sword is in their lips: for who, said they, hath heard?" He reverts to the malice of the wicked, speaking of it alternately with their punishment. "Behold," they who sought my life "shall speak with their mouth," in an undertone, for fear they may be heard; "and a sword is in their lips," for it all turned on my death, and they did so with the greatest security, for they said to each other, "who hath heard us?" Nobody.

8. "But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them: thou shalt bring all the nations to nothing." They thought they were not heard, when they plotted to privately, and propose doing wonders. "But thou, O Lord," from whom nothing is secret, "shalt laugh at them," for their folly; for you cannot only baffle their designs with the greatest ease, but, even though they had the whole world to support them, "thou shalt bring all the nations to nothing."

9. "I will keep my strength to thee: for thou art my protector."

10. "My God, his mercy shalt prevent me." Remembering God's omnipotence, compared with which all nations are reputed as nothing, he humbled himself before him with a view to merit his grace. "I will keep my strength to thee," whatever strength I have is from you, and not from myself; and it is not possible, therefore, for me to keep it, but you will keep it because you gave it, "for thou art my protector." I have the best reasons for thus confiding in you, for you have undertaken my protection from my infancy, being peculiarly my God who alone I worship. "His mercy shall prevent me." I do not speak idly, for God's mercy, as it has hitherto attended me, will (as I trust) continue to attend me, and not allow me to be oppressed by my enemies. David could say so, with great justice, for, from his very youth, the grace of God was with him, and it strengthened him, especially when he killed the bear and the lion, and afterwards Goliath the giant, without a weapon, and while still a boy when he was anointed king by Samuel. All this is much more applicable to Christ, because not only from his boyhood or his infancy was he anointed, but even from his very conception. "He was anointed with the Holy Ghost,

and with power," Acts 10.

11. "God shall let me see over my enemies: slay them not, lest at any time my people forget. Scatter them by thy power and bring them down, O Lord, my protector." He now reverts to his enemies, and predicts their punishment, speaking in the person of Christ. "God shall let me see over my enemies;" will let me see the punishment in store for them. He has already revealed it to me, and when it shall have been accomplished, I will see the punishment they shall justly suffer. But I pray God to "slay them not," not to extinguish the Jewish race entirely. "Lest at any time my people may forget," he still has regard to his people, and wishes them not to be forgotten entirely. What I ask, therefore, is that you would "scatter them by your power," by that power that no one can resist; to scatter them all over the world, and "bring them down" from that pitch of glory they enjoyed when they were God's peculiar people, and that their kings and their priesthood. All of which was literally accomplished in regard of the Jews

12. "For the sin of their mouth, and the word of their lips: and let them be taken in their pride. As for their cursing and lying they shall be talked off." He tells us now why the Jews were so scattered, "for the sin of their mouth," when they said, "we have no king but Caesar," and "his blood be on us and on our children," for God, with great justice, gave them the benefit of their prayer, according to Daniel 9, "and the people that shall deny him shall not be his." "And let them be taken in their pride," be led captives by the Romans, humbled and cast down on account of their pride, that made them boast of being children of Abraham, and of never having been slaves to anyone, as may be seen in John 8. It was, in fact, their pride and contumacy that provoked the anger of the Roman people, as appears from Josephus. That, however, was the occasion; the real cause of their ruin was their pride, then made them despise the Son of God. "And for their cursing and lying they shall be talked off." The cursing consisted in that dreadful imprecation quoted above, "his blood be on us;" and the other expression, "we have no king but Caesar," was a palpable lie and a falsehood, for it is certain that they resisted paying tribute to him, and boasted they were a free people, never subject to anyone, which was a downright falsehood, for they were subject to Pharaoh in Egypt, Nabuchodonosor in Babylon, to the Philistines in the land of promise, and, at the very time of their boasting, to the Romans.

13. "When they are consumed; when they are consumed by thy wrath, and they shall be no more. And they shall know that God will rule Jacob, and all the ends of the earth." The Prophet predicts that, in consequence of their cursing and lying, "they will be talked off;" published, proclaimed all over the world as such. "When they are consumed;" when, on the destruction of the city, all the power and glory of the Jewish people will be destroyed forever. "When they are consumed by thy wrath;" not by any chance or fortuitous destruction, but by the destruction arising from God's anger; which will, therefore, be a destruction so complete and entire, that the Jews can never again hope for a king or a seat of government; and, therefore, he adds, "and they shall be no more;" there will be