

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: 7

David, trusting in the justice of his cause, prayeth for God's help against his enemies.

1. O Lord, my God, in thee have I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me.
2. Lest at any time he seize upon my soul like a lion, while there is no one to redeem me, nor to save.
3. O Lord, my God, if I have done this thing, if there be iniquity in my hands:
4. If I have rendered to them that repaid me evils, let me deservedly fall empty before my enemies.
5. Let the enemy pursue my soul, and take it, and tread down my life, on the earth, and bring down my glory to the dust.
6. Rise up, O Lord, in thy anger: and be thou exalted in the borders of my enemies. And arise, O Lord, my God, in the precept which thou hast commanded.
7. And a congregation of people shall surround thee. And for their sakes return thou on high.
8. The Lord judgeth the people. Judge me, O Lord, according to my justice, and according to my innocence in me.
9. The wickedness of sinners shall be brought to nought; and thou shalt direct the just: the searcher of hearts and reins is God.
10. Just is my help from the Lord: who saveth the upright of heart.
11. God is a just judge, strong and patient: is he angry every day?
12. Except you will be converted, he will brandish his sword: he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.
13. And in it he hath prepared the instruments of death; he hath made ready his arrows for them that burn.
14. Behold he hath been in labor with injustice: he hath conceived sorrow, and brought forth iniquity.
15. He hath opened a pit and dug it: and he is fallen into the hole he made.
16. His sorrow shall be turned on his own head; and his iniquity shall come down upon his crown.
17. I will give glory to the Lord according to his justice; and will sing to the name of the Lord the Most High.

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: 7

Explanation of the Psalm

1. "O Lord my God, in thee have I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me." "In thee have I put my trust," because nearly all have deserted me, so that my very son Absalom, and my father-in-law Saul, seek to put me to death. I have no one to trust in but you, my God. "Save me from all them that persecute me." Numerous were his persecutors — some by their advice, some by their maledictions, some by war and arms.
2. "Lest at any time he seize upon my soul like a lion, while there is no one to redeem me, nor to save." Meaning the leader of the persecution; for fear, says he, Saul or Absalom "seize upon my soul," that is, take my life without any mercy, just as the lion seizes on other animals, "while there is no one to redeem me, nor to save," that is, if you do not redeem and save me; for David knew that all human industry, without God, was of no avail. The word "redeem" is used in the Scripture for any sort of deliverance, though, properly speaking, it supposes something to be paid on redemption. For, as God is said to sell those he alienates from his mercy, and delivers to the ministers of his justice for punishment; so he is said to redeem those whom, in his mercy, he liberates, after rescuing them from the same ministers.
3. "O Lord my God, if I have done this thing, if there be iniquity in my hands:"
4. "If I have rendered to them that repaid me evils, let me deservedly fall empty before my enemies." A reason assigned for asking deliverance of God, namely, on account of God's knowledge of his innocence, thereby refuting Saul and Semei's calumny of his plotting against Saul, and his invasion of the kingdom: for he asserts that he not only did not return evil for good, nor even evil for evil, but, on the contrary, that he returned good for evil. He first asserts that he did not return evil for good. "If I have done this," that is, if I have conspired against the king, or invaded the kingdom by any fraud or force;" "if there be iniquity in my hands," that is, if I have done evil, returning it for good, I who was treated with such honor by Saul, adopted as his son-in-law, placed over a

follow. By the words then, "he hath been in labor with injustice," is meant a summary of the entire, of which conception and bringing forth is an explanation.

15. "He hath opened a pit and dug it: and he is fallen into the hole he made." After saying that the sinner had brought forth iniquity against the just, he adds, that "he opened a pit" giving us to understand by such similes, that the wicked plot against the just sometimes privately, sometimes openly; and as parturition and delving are sometimes troublesome and laborious enough, so are the evil doings of the sinner — hence the exclamation of the damned, Wisd. 5, "We have walked the difficult ways." "And he is fallen into the hole he made." The Prophet now begins to show that the evil doings of the sinner hurt themselves alone, and that they are the sword and the arrows of God; and having finished with the latter, he takes it up again, saying: "He hath opened a pit," in the hope that the just man, ignorant of its existence, may fall into it, but instead thereof himself fell in.

16. "His sorrow shall he turned on his own head: and his iniquity shall come down upon his crown." Not only occult sins, such as the opening of the pit, but even public, such as hatred or envy externally manifested, and the sins springing from hatred and envy, such as bloodshed and rapine and the like, will, by the divine dispensation, recoil on the evil doer; we have examples in Saul and David; the Jews and Christ; the persecutors and the martyrs.

17. "I will give glory to the Lord according to his justice: and will sing to the name of the Lord the Most High." The Psalm concludes in praise to God. Literally it is, "I will confess," which expression in the Scriptures is constantly used for praise, for he who praises him confesses he is worthy of such praise "according to his justice." I will give him not more praise than he merits who so wonderfully delivers the just and punishes the sinner. "And I will sing to the name of the Lord the Most High;" the same idea in different language, viz., I will sing a hymn to the highest God, to the supreme Judge, who sits on a most lofty throne above all other judges. **END OF PSALM 7**

vessels are most frequently used in the Scriptures to signify arms or instruments; thus, in Psalm 70, "Vessels of psalms;" Is. 22, "Vessels of music;" Jer. 50, "Vessels of anger; Jer. 51, "Vessels of war."

14. "Behold, he hath been in labor with injustice: he hath conceived sorrow, and brought forth iniquity." In the three following verses the Prophet shows that such weapons, being really fiery weapons, are sent with the greatest force, and sure to be unerring. For God's providence so arranges that the very evil the sinners prepare for the just should prove fatal to themselves; for such is the wonderful hatred of God for sinners as to cause all their machinations to retort upon themselves. The sinner, says he, "hath conceived sorrow and brought forth iniquity; and dug a pit" and dug it deeply, that he might take away the life of the just man, either publicly or privately; but, through God's intervention, the sinner fell into his own pit, and "the sorrow he conceived," and the "iniquity he brought forth," have redounded on his own head. To explain in detail, "He hath been in labor with injustice." That is to say, the sinner has been guilty of some act of violence or injustice to the just man. The word, "He has been in labor" is not to be looked upon here as different from the word "brought forth," in the end of the verse; they both mean the same, as he presently explains more clearly what seed it is that he has been in "labor with," or "brought forth." "He hath conceived sorrow, and brought forth iniquity." The seed as well as the fetus is conceived. "Conception of sorrow," means conception of hatred, or envy of the neighbor, which are the seed of all evil; and hatred and envy are most properly designated by conception of sorrow, for hatred and envy distort and destroy the mind of the person possessed by them. From the bad seed thus conceived spring the bad actions, such as murder, rapine, detraction, false testimony, and the like; and though some may consider the three expressions, "He hath been in labor with injustice;" "He hath conceived sorrow," and "Brought forth iniquity?" to refer to three different things and parturition would seem to be midway between conception and birth; but, in reality two things only, as I said before, are implied, because two only apply to the verse 2; next, "His sorrow shall be turned on his own head, and his iniquity shall come down upon his crown;" again, if "the conceiving of sorrow" be distinct from the "being in labor with injustice," it ought to precede, not to

thousand soldiers — if I have been, as he asserts, the person to conspire against him, "If I have rendered to them that repaid me evils;" that means, when Saul and Semei, for all the favors I conferred on them, would only give evil in return, even to seek my death, I did not seek theirs, though I might easily, and could with impunity have done so. "Let me deservedly fall empty before my enemies," which means, if such calumnies of theirs be not false, I don't murmur at, nor refuse to fall "empty" in battle, that is, without any military glory, having inflicted no injury on the enemy, and after having suffered a great deal.

5. "Let the enemy pursue my soul, and take it, and tread down my life on the earth, and bring down my glory to the dust." The evils he imprecates on himself, if the calumnies of Saul or Semei be true. See how they rise. First, "Let the enemy pursue my soul," that is, endeavor to kill me. Second, "And take it," in such way that I cannot possibly escape when he takes me to kill me. Third, "And tread down my life on the earth;" put me to an ignominious death, such as the death of those who are trampled under foot, and bruised to atoms. Fourth, "And bring down my glory to the dust;" that my memory, instead of being exalted and revered, may be forever infamous and opprobrious.

6. "Rise up, O Lord, in thy anger: and be thou, exalted in the borders of my enemies. And arise, O Lord my God, in the precept which thou has commanded." Having asserted his innocence, he justly asks of God to defend him. And as God is metaphorically said to sleep when he does not help; and to rise from sleep when he begins to help, as in Psalm 44, "Rise, why sleepest thou, O Lord?" he now says, "Rise in thy anger;" that is, be angry with my enemies; repel and terrify them, lest they hurt me. "And be exalted in the borders of my enemies," means much the same, for the meaning is: Appear aloft in the borders of my enemies, that all may see you, and be sensible of your presence. "And arise, O Lord my God, in the precept which thou hast commanded." Hitherto he had simply asked of God help against his enemies; he now assigns a reason for Gods granting it; and that is, because God had ordered the judges of the land to free the innocent

from their oppressors; whence it follows that God, who is the supreme Judge over all judges, ought to do so too. "Rise in the precept thou has commanded;" that is, agreeably to the order you gave.

7. "And a congregation of people shall surround thee. And for their sakes return thou on high." Your interference in reducing my enemies and defending me, will bring many to know you, to confess to you, to praise you, and to surround you with a congregation; for wherever any are congregated in thy name, there art thou in the midst of them. Having asserted that "A congregation of people would surround him," he now adds, "and for their sakes return on high." As you have exalted yourself in the territory of my enemies, terrifying them from the throne of your justice, on my account, do the same when necessary — return on high again, for the sake of the congregation that praise thee.

8. "The Lord judgeth the people. Judge me, O Lord, according to my justice, and according to my innocence in me." A reason assigned for standing by and supporting the congregation of people that adhered to him; he, being the supreme Judge and Sovereign, to whom it properly appertained to protect and govern those under his charge. "Judge me, O Lord, according to my justice, and according to my innocence in me." The conclusion of the whole imprecation. Conscious of the falsehood of the calumny of Saul and Semei, and having God witness thereto, he asks him, as the supreme Judge, to judge his cause according to its justice and his innocence, and to give to every one their desert.

9. "The wickedness of sinners shall be brought to naught; and thou shalt direct the just: the searcher of hearts and reins is God." This may be called the second part of the Psalm, in which the Prophet teaches evil doers that they harm themselves; and exhorts all to be converted from iniquity to justice. "The wickedness of sinners shall be brought to naught;" that is, let them do all that in them lies — use all their efforts to injure the just — it will be all in vain, to no purpose; because "You direct the just;" by your providence you guide him, so that he shall neither turn to the right nor to the left. You alone can

do so, for to you alone are the truly just known, inasmuch as it is you that search their hearts; that is, know their thoughts and their loins, that is, their desires.

10. "Just is my help from the Lord: who saveth the upright of heart." From a universal opinion he infers, in particular, that it is right for him to expect help from the Lord; for it is just that God should help the just, for it belongs to him, as searcher of hearts, to save those that are upright of heart, that is, those who are truly just before God.

11. "God is a just Judge, strong and patient: is he angry every day?" God is a just judge, both strong and patient; but not at all times angry or threatening, only when he is driven thereto by the evil doings of those who know how severely he prohibits certain actions to sinners; and yet they hesitate not in doing them.

12. "Except you will be converted, he will brandish his sword: he hath bent his bow, and made it ready." To prove that God is not always angry or threatening, but that he only sometimes gives way to his wrath, and carries out the threats he menaced, he adds, "Except you will be converted, he will brandish his sword," that is, he will so wield it in destruction, that it will appear to emit light; and he will use the bow as well as the sword, for, "he hath bent his bow, and made it ready." The sword and the bow are introduced to show that God strikes from near and from afar. When the sin committed is proximate and patent, then God strikes at once, and openly, as if with a sword. When the sin is remote, or occult, then he seems to strike from a distance, as if with an arrow.

13. "And in it he hath prepared the instruments of death, he hath made ready his arrows for them that burn." For fear we should suppose that the divine weapons could be easily repelled or avoided, he says those weapons are "instruments of death," that the arrows are made of inflammable matter, so as to become weapons of fire, penetrating and consuming, with the greatest rapidity, everything they strike. The literal translation would be, "Vessels of death;" but