

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: 35

The malice of sinners, and the goodness of God.

1. The unjust hath said within himself, that he would sin: there is no fear of God before his eyes.
2. For in his sight he hath done deceitfully, that his iniquity may be found unto hatred.
3. The words of his mouth are iniquity and guile: he would not understand that he might do well.
4. He hath devised iniquity on his bed: he hath set himself on every way that is not good; but evil he hath not hated.
5. O Lord, thy mercy is in heaven: and thy truth reacheth even to the clouds.
6. Thy justice is as the mountains of God: thy judgments are a great deep. Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord:
7. O, how hast thou multiplied thy mercy, O God: but the children of men shall put their trust under the cover of thy wings.
8. They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure.
9. For with thee is the fountain of life: and in thy light we shall see light.
10. Extend thy mercy to them that know thee, and thy justice to them that are right in heart.
11. Let not the foot of pride come to me: and let not the hand of the sinner move me.
12. There the workers of iniquity are fallen: they are cast out, and could not stand.

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: 35

Explanation of the Psalm

1. “The unjust hath said within himself, that he would sin: there is no fear of God before his eyes.” The Prophet tells us the two primary roots of sin, one of which is the will, whereby we determine on committing sin; the other is in the understanding, that does not consider the fear of the Lord forbidding sin. “The unjust hath said within himself,” that is, with himself, in his heart he determined to sin; that is, consented in his heart to sin. “The fear of God is not before his eyes.” He so consented, because in his heart he did not think of the fear of the Lord, who sees everything. Fear is used here for the object of it; that is, he did not think that God was just, powerful, and all-seeing; for if he did he would be more afraid of one so powerful. When we fear anyone, we are afraid to do anything bad in his presence; and thus, he who fears God, dares not to sin interiorly, for God searches even our hearts.
2. “For in his sight he hath done deceitfully, that his iniquity may be found unto hatred.” In this verse he proves his assertion, that the unjust man does not possess the fear of the Lord. For in his sight he hath done deceitfully with God himself, and with all men, “so that his iniquity may be found unto hatred,” and not for pardon, a thing he certainly would not have done had he feared God. For who would dare to transgress in the presence of a judge for whom he entertained the slightest fear?
3. “The words of his mouth are iniquity and guile: he would not understand that he might do well.” He said the wicked man acted deceitfully; he now says he speaks deceitfully, and will presently add that he even thinks deceitfully, to show how remarkable is the perversity of him that feareth not God. The words of his mouth are in accordance with his acts; unjust, nay even so unjust that they are nothing but “iniquity and guile;” whatever he says tends to open injury or to deceive. “He would not understand that he might do well.” He cannot offer ignorance as an excuse, because it was voluntary; for he took no trouble to ascertain the law of justice, by self investigation, or by inquiring of others; having determined to lead a bad life, he despised the science of living well, that he may live badly.
4. “He hath devised iniquity on his bed: he hath set himself on every way that is not good; but evil he hath not hated.” In a retrograde order, he describes unjust acts, then sinful words, and now evil thoughts and affections; for though it is from the heart, as we read in the Gospel, that bad words and actions spring, still it is from the

which he bestows on those he condescends to omit to the beatific vision. The first explanation, however, is more literal.

10. “Extend thy mercy to them that know thee, and thy justice to them that are right in heart.” He now tells us that these great favors, of which he had been speaking, belong to the just alone, designated by him as the “children of men,” to distinguish them from the wicked, whom he called “beasts.” He uses the imperative for the indicative mood, a thing not infrequent with the prophets. “Extend thy mercy to them that know thee;” that is, those alone who are familiarly and intimately acquainted with you, who live with you, who invoke you, who fear you in your commandments, and whom you hear in their prayers, in which style of language we have in the gospel, “Amen, I say unto you, I know you not” — “and thy justice to them that are right in heart,” and hold out or extend the same mercy which is also a crown of justice “to them that are right in heart,” to the just and the pious, whose heart is right and agreeable to thy righteousness and are, therefore, delighted with thy commandments and thy judgments, for the prophets as usual, put up the same prayer in different terms.

11. “Let not the foot of pride come to me: and let not that hand of the sinner move me.” Solicitous for himself, fearful of missing such blessings, he now prays for the gift of perseverance, especially against a vice to which persons of his rank are very much exposed. “Let not the foot of pride come to me.” Do not, pray thee, let the proud come near me, for fear they may, by words, or by example, or through any other channel, draw me from the state of grace into the mire of sin. By the proud and the sinner, whose hand and foot, that is, whose approach and power he fears, is meant, principally, the devil; who is the king of all the children of pride; and after him, his servants and ministers. St. Augustine’s explanation also will suit; which is, “let not the foot of pride come to me.” Let me not have the gait, the affectation of pride; “and let not the hand of the sinner move me;” let not the sinner have any influence over me that may bring me to sin; and thus, through my own fault, or through the temptation of others, be brought down from my position, and miserably fall.

12. “There the workers of iniquity are fallen: they are cast out, and could not stand.” He assigns a reason for his fear of pride; because, as Tobias says, chapter 4, “from pride all perdition took its beginning;” for the angels and our first parents fell through pride, and through them sin entered into the world; and, after having so fallen from justice to iniquity, were banished from eternal happiness, and consigned to everlasting misery; for, “God resists the proud, and to the humble he gives his grace.” “And could not stand,” in that place of happiness where they had been put by God, with a view of promoting them to better, should they persevere in virtue.

End of Psalm 35

bad acts and words that we see and hear that we know the bad thoughts and desires that we can neither see nor hear. “He hath devised iniquity in his bed;” the bad actions and words were not produced or given utterance to suddenly without premeditation, but devised long before in the privacy of his chamber. “He hath set himself on every way that is not good, but evil he hath not hated.” While he was thinking in his heart, and devising serious plans of operation, he approved of every bad counsel, and thus began to set himself, to enter on “every way that is not good;” and, his will being corrupted, instead of hating malice, he rather loved it, not because of its badness, but because of its utility. “Every way that is not good,” means every way that is bad; as if he said: no good counsel pleased him; on the contrary, he chose to follow every bad counsel; and thus stood in every way not good; that is, in every bad way.

5. “O Lord, thy mercy is in heaven: and thy truth reacheth even to the clouds.”

6. “Thy justice is as the mountain of God: thy judgments are a great deep. Men and beast thou wilt preserve, O Lord:” He now passes to another part of the Psalm, and shows that, however great the malice of some, still the goodness of God, which consists of his justice and his mercy, is greater. Of his mercy he says, “Thy mercy is in heaven.” So great is it that it reaches from the earth to the heavens, and fills all things, as is more clearly set forth in Psalm 107, “for thy mercy is great, above the heavens.” To mercy he unites truth; that is, faithfulness, by virtue of which he carries out whatsoever he promises in his mercy, and of which he says, in Psalm 144, “The Lord is faithful and all his words” — “and thy truth even to the clouds.” Mercy reaches even to the heavens with its attendant truth, which, too, reacheth to the clouds, that is, to heaven, where the clouds are. Nor is his justice, by virtue of which he gives to everyone according to his works, less in God. For “thy justice is as the mountains of God;” great, like lofty mountains that sometimes out-top the very clouds. Great things are often called “things of God;” as, “like the cedars of God.” To his justice he unites his judgments, being acts of justice, and says, “thy judgments are a great deep;” profound and inscrutable, like the deepest gulf, that is called an abyss, impenetrable to human eye. By all these similes of the height and the depth of the divine mercy and justice, as well as of his truth and judgments, we are given to understand that as our corporal eyes cannot scan those things above the clouds or below the earth, no more can we understand the greatness of the justice and of the mercy of God. “Men and beasts thou wilt preserve, O Lord.” The Prophet now shows how boundless is God’s mercy, extending as it does to man and beasts; preserving, nourishing, filling with the gifts of this world, not only men, rational beings, but even beasts; that is, men who, like beasts, are led by their appetites and sensuality only — whose malice he had already explained. Truly infinite and stupendous is the mercy and goodness of God, who, when he could, with the greatest justice, destroy and reduce to nothing the wicked and the blasphemer; yet, at the very time that they are blaspheming, railing at, and breaking through all his commandments, is actually supporting, nourishing, feeding them, filling them with his delights, making his sun to shine on them, and watering their fields and their gardens with his rain from heaven.

7. "O how hast thou multiplied thy mercy, O God: but the children of men shall put their trust under the cover of thy wings." The first part of the verse is a burst of admiration. Having spoken of God's mercy to be wicked and the carnal, whom he designates as beasts, he now speaks of his mercy towards the pious and the spiritual, called by him "the children of men," which may be called justice, in regard of the wicked too, who, he justly decreed, should have no share in such blessings. "The children of men shall put their trust under the cover of thy wings." The beast ought to be contented with the safety of their bodies; it was the only thing they knew, sought, or cared for. But the children of men will be, like the chickens under the wings of the hen, O most loving God, gathered together in quiet, expecting all happiness from you alone. Such words tend to give us some idea of the special Providence, and the singular benevolence of God towards the pious; and, on the other hand, of the perfect and unbounded confidence they have in God, like the solicitude of the hen in regard of her chickens, and their confidence when under her wings. Nothing can be more to the purpose than the same simile, and it is frequently used by the Psalmist, as in Psalm 62, "in the covert of thy wings will I hope, my soul adhered to thee;" and in Psalm 90, "he will overshadow thee with his shoulders, and under his wings shall thou trust." How delightful it is, and how preferable to all earthly delights, to be fostered under God's wings; to experience the love that exceeds that of a father or a mother, is a thing that no one knows, until they have experienced it.

8. "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure." Protection under the wings of God is had in this world, when there is danger from birds or beasts of prey; but he now speaks of the future rewards, and gives the best description he can of those unspeakable rewards, by similes drawn from corporal objects; the first is taken from the recipient, the second from the thing received. The recipient of anything is then content when he is so full and laden, that he can desire no more. That plenty, satisfying the entire appetite, is most happily described here as inebriation. He that is fond of drink is never fully satisfied until he shall have got inebriated, for, instead of coveting more drink, he then falls asleep. So it is with us; we are never satisfied in this life, we never rest, no matter what the amount of our prosperity may be; then only do we become full, saturated, content, and therefore happy, when we "get inebriated with the plenty of God's house;" for then, our appetite being thoroughly satisfied, we sink into the sleep of eternal rest. Observe, he says, "shall be inebriated with the plenty," not by the wine, to give us to understand that the word is not to be taken in its literal sense or meaning. Then next simile is drawn from the thing received: "thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure." Three things are to be observed in a torrent. A great body of water rolling down from the mountains; a sudden inundation, a great river, all of a sudden, appears where a drop of water was not to be seen a few moments before; the force of the rolling water, carrying everything before it. Such will be the happiness of heaven! A great body of wisdom and knowledge will come down from the mountain, of which Ecclesiasticus writes, "the word of God is high in the fountain of wisdom;" that means, in the high mountain of the Deity is the word of God, the fountain of wisdom, from which

mountain and fountain the blessed are suddenly inundated; for we who, through great labor, find after a long time in this world, imbibed wisdom in the minutest drops, will then, on a sudden, all at once, in one moment, after a clear vision of God, so abound in all knowledge, not only of things created, but of the very attributes of the creator, that by the abundance of such wisdom and knowledge the soul will be hurried on to the love and the enjoyment of the supreme good. For in our heavenly home, we will not be free to love, or not to love, to enjoy, or not to enjoy, a blessing so great, but, through a most felicitous necessity, we will be driven to adhere to our supreme good, and, by a most intimate attachment, to revel in its sweetness.

9. "For with thee is the fountain of life: and in thy light we shall see light." He assigns a reason for the great inundation of wisdom and knowledge that will pour in upon the blessed from the vision of the Deity. Simply because "he is the fountain of life," which is the same as the fountain of wisdom. God then, from the fact of his being the fountain of wisdom, is the fountain of life, for wisdom is life to the wise; and being the fountain of life he is the fountain of existence, because, life is existence to those that do exist. God, then, is called the fountain of wisdom, of life, of existence, because he derives his wisdom, his life, his essence, from no one, but is himself wisdom, life, existence; and all other things, whatever wisdom, life, existence they have, derive it from him. David uses the word fountain here to keep up the metaphor, as if he said, "thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure, for with thee is the fountain," from which it rises. He calls it "the fountain of life," when one would think he should have called it the fountain of wisdom, because he wanted to show that the eternal life promised to the just, and desired by all as a supreme good, consisted entirely in this supreme wisdom, according to the Lord himself, John 17, "this is life everlasting, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He then adds, "and in thy light we shall see light," to explain, in plainer language, what he had metaphorically expressed; for it means through you, who are the light and the source of light, we shall see you the inaccessible and never failing light. We see God now, but reflected through his creatures; we see him in our mind, but by reasoning, by inference from his works; finally, we see him in faith, but not in form; but then we will see God in himself, and, as the apostle has it, face-to-face, or as St. John has it "we will see him as he is," and not in a picture. And, as the same St. John has it, "God is light, there is no darkness in him." He therefore most properly says here, "in thy light," that is, in thy divinity, which is light, and not in types and figures, "shall we see light," that is, yourself who art the true light that "enlighteneth every man coming into the world." From this passage theologians properly infer, that there is a light of glory necessary to see God. For, though God is light, according to St. Paul, he is an "inaccessible light;" and, therefore, unless the mind gets a certain elevation, and be strengthened by a certain gift of God, called the light of glory, it cannot fix its gaze on that uncreated light. We shall, therefore, see the light which is God, but it will be "in his light;" that is, assisted by the light of his glory