

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: 45

The church, in persecution, trusteth in the protection of God.

1. Our God is our refuge and strength: a helper in troubles, which have found us exceedingly.
2. Therefore we will not fear, when the earth shall be troubled: and the mountains shall be removed into the heart of the sea.
3. Their waters roared, and were troubled: the mountains were troubled with his strength.
4. The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful; the Most High hath sanctified his own tabernacle.
5. God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved: God will help it in the morning early.
6. Nations were troubled, and kingdoms were bowed down: he uttered his voice; the earth trembled.
7. The Lord of armies is with us: the God of Jacob is our protector.
8. Come, and behold ye the works of the Lord: what wonders he hath done upon earth.
9. Making wars to cease even to the end of the earth. He shall destroy the bow, and break the weapons: and the shield he shall burn in the fire.
10. Be still and see that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, and I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of armies is with us: the God of Jacob is our protector.

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: 45

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "Our God is our refuge and strength: a helper in troubles, which have found us exceedingly." The soldiers of Christ overcome temptation as often by flight as by patience. When they must fly, God is their safest "refuge;" when they have to suffer, God is their "strength" and support; in both cases he is "their helper in troubles," by affording a refuge when they fly, and enabling them to conquer when they stand. The expression, "which have found us exceedingly," gives us to understand that the persecutions suffered by the Church, in her infancy, with both grievous and severe, and the more so, because sudden and unexpected; for, as we read in the Acts of the apostles, after the Ascension of our Lord, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Church was progressing and increasing in Jerusalem in great peace and tranquility; "continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house; they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart; praising God together, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added daily to their society such as should be saved." In a short time, however, a most violent persecution arose, the apostles were scourged, Stephen was stoned, and all the disciples, with the exception of the apostles, were scattered.
2. "Therefore we will not fear, when the earth shall be troubled: and the mountains shall be removed into the heart of the sea."
3. "Their waters roared, and were troubled: the mountains were troubled with his strength." Two most obscure verses; but we have only to follow St. Basil and St. Chrysostom. Having declared "God their refuge and strength," he thinks he will remain unmoved, even though the sea and the land were to be turned upside down, and change places in fearful confusion. "Therefore," say the people of God, "we will not fear when the earth shall be troubled;" whatever commotion may arise in it; "and the mountains shall be removed into the heart of the sea;" even though the very mountains, firmly fixed and planted by God himself, in such a way as to be looked upon as immovable, even though they may be tossed and rocked, and even cast into the deep; even in such cases "we will not fear," because God Almighty is "our refuge and our strength." "Their waters roared and were troubled;" that, too, however great the roaring and confusion, did not make us fear. "The mountains were troubled with his strength." Even though the very mountains, shaken from their foundations by the divine strength and power, should be hurled into the sea. For it is God alone who can so confuse the earth, hurl the mountains into the sea, and make it and the

true happiness in heaven. David was constantly occupied in governing his kingdom; St. Gregory, as well as many other holy popes, in discharging the duties of the pontificate, and yet they could enter into the most sublime contemplation, because they kept the wings of their souls unfettered and unsullied by the mire of concupiscence. The great apostle himself, burdened as he was by the “solicitude of all the Churches,” obliged to seek a living by the “labor of his hands,” still being untrammelled, free from worldly desires, he, too, could “be still,” “and see,” and was carried up to the third heaven, and “heard the secret words which it is not granted to man to utter.” On the other hand, there are many idle persons, as far as the business of this world is concerned, but from their carnal desires and pursuits know not how to “be still.” “Be still,” look out for holy retirement, bring to it a pure and tranquil mind, “and see,” on deep reflection, “that I am God,” that I alone am God; that no created thing, however great or sublime, is God: I alone am him: that is, I alone am he, “from whom, through whom, and in whom are all things,” Romans 11. I alone, am he, without whom you can do nothing, and are nothing; but in whom, and through whom, you can do everything. “I will be exalted among the nations, and I will be exalted in the earth;” that is to say, when I shall have done the wonderful things just enumerated, I will appear exalted before all nations, before the whole world, so “that every knee shall bend, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell.” In the end of the world, nobody will be found hardy enough to despise God, for all, with or against their will, will acknowledge his supreme dominion, and will be subject to him. He concludes the Psalm by repetition of verse 7, to show that the divine exhortation had the effect of stirring up and renewing the pious affections of the faithful.

END OF PSALM 45

mountains along with it to tremble, according to Psalm 76, “the waters saw thee, O God, and they were afraid; and the depths were troubled;” and again, Psalm 103, “he looketh upon the earth, and maketh it tremble;” and, Isaiah 51, “but I am the Lord thy God, who trouble the sea, and the waves thereof swell.” Thus, in these verses, God’s people declare how great is their confidence in him, when they would not entertain the slightest fear; even in the event of the whole world tumbling to atoms; from which also we may form some idea of the immense power of God, who can so shake and confuse all nature, as he really will previous to the last judgments, as we read in Luke 21, “when there shall be great earthquakes in various places, and by reason of the confusion of the sea and the roaring of the waves, men shall be withering away from fear.” Then will God’s people not only suffer no fear, but they will even look up, “and lift up their heads,” as it is expressed in the Gospel: for “their redemption is at hand.” All this may have a figurative meaning – taking the earth to represent men of earthly views, and the mountains to represent men not only of earthly views, but also proud, insolent characters, such as the kings of old, so hostile to the Church of God; and the sea to represent that abyss of trouble and confusion, in which all such characters will be hustled on the day of judgment. Thus, “the earth shall be troubled,” when the impious lovers of it “shall be troubled with terrible fear,” Wisdom 5; and “the mountains shall be removed into the heart of the sea;” that is, when the mighty kings, who formerly persecuted the Church, shall be overwhelmed in the deep abyss, and then “the waters roared, and were troubled;” when the last scourge shall so confound and confuse the wicked and their rulers, when God’s strength shall be brought to bear on them in his anger.

4. “The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful; the Most High hath sanctified his own tabernacle.”

5. “God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved: God will help it in the morning early.” He now shows how it will happen that God’s people shall entertain no fear, even when “the earth shall be troubled, and the mountains removed it to the heart of the sea;” because, instead of the immense confusion with which the wicked will be overwhelmed, an abundance of pleasure to gladden the Church, will be poured in upon it; and instead of the unsteadiness of the mountains, that will be cast into the heart of the sea, the Church will enjoy an everlasting stability, because God will be in the midst of it. “The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful.” That is to say, God’s people will have no fear, “when the earth shall be troubled;” because, instead of the fierce waves of the rude sea dashing against his Church, the sweet, somniferous, plentiful, bright, and pleasant waters of the purling river will, in great abundance, wash it, and glide by it in pleasant streams. “The Most High hath sanctified his own tabernacle.” No wonder the city of God should be joyful, when God saluted it, sanctified it, made it his own dwelling place, as we read in Apocalypse 21, “behold, the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people.” God is in the midst thereof, it shall not be moved. “A contrast to the instability of the earth and the mountains; they will be moved and shaken, but the city of God need have no fear thereon, for “God is in the

midst thereof; “that is, he never leaves it, is always present there,” in the midst of it, “in its inmost recesses, in its heart; and, therefore, instead of being moved or shaken, it will remain fixed and firm forever. He concludes by showing how all this is to be effected, and when; by adding, “God will help it in the morning early;” the city of God must have all joy and gladness, and that forever, because God will help it early in the beginning of the day, in the opening day of everlasting happiness. The Scripture calls the time of infidelity the darkness of the night, and the time of faith the morning, as St. Paul, Romans 13, says, “the night hath passed, and the day appeareth;” and 2 Peter 1, “and we have the word of prophecy more firm; to which you do well to attend, as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn, and the morning star rise in your hearts;” and the spouse in Canticle 2, calls the beloved, “till the day break, and the shadows retire;” at the prophet Malachias, chapter 4, says, “but unto you that fear my name the sun of justice shall arise.”

6. “Nations were troubled, and kingdoms were bowed down: he uttered his voice; the earth trembled.” He now expresses in plain language what he had hitherto expressed in figurative, namely, the ruin of the enemies of the Church, and the universal and lasting peace consequent thereon. He used the words earth and mountains before; he now speaks more clearly of nations and kingdoms. “Nations were troubled,” because their dissolution was approaching, “and kingdoms were bowed down,” tumbled from their glory, laid prostrate; “he uttered his voice;” God thundered from heaven, “and the earth trembled.” This destruction of the kingdoms of the world was more clearly predicted by Daniel 2, where he says that the kingdom of Christ “shall consume all these kingdoms, and itself shall stand forever,” which has been explained by the apostle, 1 Corinthians 15, when he says, “afterwards the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God and the Father, when he shall have abolished all principality, and authority, and power.”

7. “The Lord of armies is with us: the God of Jacob is our protector.” In the midst of all this destruction of nations and kingdoms, God’s people will have no fear whatever, because they can always say, “the Lord of armies is with us.” “The God of Jacob is our protector, he has undertaken it. He is called the Lord of armies,” because his angels who are most numerous and most powerful, obey his commands as we have in Psalm 102, “mighty in strength, and executing his word;” and not only has he the angels to carry out his orders, but, as we have it in Psalm 118, “fire, hail, snow, ice, strong winds, which fulfill his word,” are also at his command, as we read in Psalm 118, “all things obey him.” Thus this verse advances to arguments to prove clearly that God’s people should entertain no fear; the first, from the fact of there being under the protection of God, who is all-powerful to help them. The second, from the fact of his being most ready and willing to help them, as is clear from his styling himself the God of Jacob, the holy patriarch, and friend of God, from whose family he chose his only Son to assume human flesh.

8. “Come, and behold ye the works of the Lord: what wonders he hath done upon earth.” He now exhorts all nations to reflect on God’s wonderful doings, and especially on the fact that will turn up at last; namely, that when all the enemies of Christ shall be removed, or rather, “laid under his footstool,” there will be an end to all war; and God alone will reign supreme, with no one to resist or gainsay him. That is the kingdom we expect and pray for, when we say daily, “thy kingdom come.” “Come, and behold ye,” with the eye of faith and contemplation, and reflect on “the works of the Lord what wonder he hath done upon earth;” reflect upon God’s works, (using the past for the future, in prophetic style,) and this world, so wonderful and stupendous as to deserve the name of prodigies. And these prodigies will include his “making wars to cease even to the end of the earth,” a really wonderful thing to say he could so put an end to all war, as to preclude the possibility of its being ever renewed.

9. “Making wars to cease even to the end of the earth. He shall destroy the bow, and break the weapons: and the shield he shall burn in the fire.” He explains how he will “make the wars to cease,” for the Lord will destroy all their offensive arms, such as the bow and the lance and the arms of defense, viz., the shield; and without arms, war cannot be waged. Some will have these verses apply to the temporary peace the Church enjoyed, under Augustus or Constantine; but they are much more applicable to the everlasting peace in store for the Church, when she shall cease to be militant, and become triumphant, having conquered and subdued all her enemies.

10. “Be still and see that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, and I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of armies is with us: the God of Jacob is our protector.” Having just invited all to “come, and behold the works of the Lord,” he now tells them how they are to come, if they wish really to understand them; and to impress the necessity of it, as well as to induce them to come, he speaks in the person of the Lord himself, saying “be still, and see that I am God.” For to contemplate things divine, the mind must need to be disengaged from all worldly care, and avarice is at the bottom of all care; because it is from the lust of riches, dainties, honors, pleasure, and the like, that all troublesome thoughts are engendered, and never leave anyone troubled with them at ease. Hence Jeremias says of the contemplative, Lam. 3, “he shall sit solitary, and hold his peace; because he hath taken it upon himself,” and the Lord commands us, Matthew 6, “but thou when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy father in secret.” And he explains by his practice what he meant by “shutting the door,” for, generally speaking, when he wanted to pray, he went up on a mountain, and went alone, to shut himself out from all the cares, noise, and concerns of this world. But, as we said, the principal stillness we require is, abstraction from the desire of anything earthly; for when anyone will not wrap himself up in, or covet what he sees, however occupied he may be in helping his neighbor, he will easily collect himself when he chooses, and when necessary, and he will “be still and see,” that the Lord only “is God.” He is the beginning and the end; he is the entire hope of the faithful on earth, and their