

returns thanks to God, and says, "I will freely sacrifice to thee;" with all my heart I will give the sacrifice of praise; and he repeats it in other words; "and I will give praise to thy name;" which means, to thyself; "because it is good;" for God's name, which means God himself, is the best of all; so that Christ said, "one is good, God." St. Augustine, taking up the word "freely," properly observes, that God should be loved purely on his own account; not with a view to any reward, but for his supreme and unspeakable goodness; and he who so loves him, does so in adversity as well as in prosperity; for God is just as good when he chastises, as when he nourishes and refreshes.

7. "For thou hast delivered me out of all troubles: and my eye hath looked down upon my enemies." He proves God's goodness for what happened, in having so speedily heard his servant; "for thou hast delivered me out of all trouble." In revealing my certain deliverance to me, you have, already in hope, "delivered me from all trouble." "And my eye hath looked down on upon my enemies;" by virtue of the same revelation I have looked upon my enemies as already destroyed and prostrate; or, perhaps, they were actually so when the Prophet was thus praying. This Psalm is daily recited in the canonical hour of Prime, in order that, in imitation of David, we may learn to strengthen ourselves with the arm of prayer against all our persecutors, at the beginning of each day, recollecting, "that all who wish to live piously in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution."

END OF PSALM 53

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: 53

A prayer for help in distress.

1. Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me in thy strength.
2. O God, hear my prayer: give ear to the words of my mouth.
3. For strangers have risen up against me: and the mighty have sought after my soul; and they have not set God before their eyes.
4. For behold, God is my helper: and the Lord is the protector of my soul.
5. Turn back the evils upon my enemies: and cut them off in thy truth.
6. I will truly sacrifice to thee, and will give praise, O God, to thy name: because it is good;
7. For thou hast delivered me out of all trouble: and my eye hath looked down upon my enemies.

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: 53

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me in thy strength." In defect of all human help, he prays to God for his help. "Save me, O God, by thy name," in thy power, to which all things succumb, and he afterwards adds, "in thy strength," expressing the same in different language. "Judge me," that is, be my judge, defend me as I deserve, and avenge me of my enemy, for David had then none to appeal to but God alone to protect him from the king. This should serve as an example to us, never to despair of God's help, even though death should appear to be at our doors, for God is everywhere, has everything in his power, and never despises his clients when they may have recourse to him.

2. "O God, hear my prayer: give ear to the words of my mouth." Having acknowledged the power of the Lord, he now begs of him to apply his power to himself. "O God, hear my prayer;" I know you can do anything but I pray that you may wish to do it. I, therefore, ask that you may hear the prayer I put up to you, to exercise your power in saving me. He repeats it, "give ear to the words of my mouth;" that is, turn not away your ears, and do not despise my prayer.

3. "For strangers have risen up against me: and the mighty have sought after my soul; and they have not set God before their eyes." He explains the dangers from which he desires to be delivered, saying, "for strangers have risen up against me;" that is, the Ziphites, who, though seemingly neighbors, had their hearts far from me; rose up against me, urging Saul to persecute me; "and the mighty have sought after my soul." Saul, with a force in arms, sought to have my life. Saul's persecution was entirely grounded on his fears that David would, at one time come to the throne, and, therefore, sought to have his life at any risk; for though he knew to be innocent, yet, so blinded was he by the desire of keeping the sovereignty in his own family, that he looked upon as fair and honorable, what, in reality, was the height of injustice; "and they have not set God before their eyes;" neither the Ziphites nor Saul and his satellites had the fear of God before them; the former preferring the king's favor to

God's law; and the latter choosing to indulge in their ambition and lust for power, in preference to a love of justice, which God commands us to observe at all times. In fact the diverging one's mind from God and the natural law known to all, is the beginning of all evil.

4. "For behold, God is my helper: and the Lord is the protector of my soul." They "had not God before their eyes," but God had them before his eyes; saw their evil designs, and did not suffer them to carry them into effect. The word "behold" implies a sudden light from God of his assurance that he would not be wanting in the time of need; and he speaks in the present tense, to show his being as certain of it, is if the thing had been actually accomplished. And, in fact, God's interference was most sudden and unexpected; for, when Saul so surrounded David with his army, that his escape seemed impossible, a messenger suddenly came to Saul, bringing news of the Philistines having come in a great body to ravage his kingdom; on hearing which he was obliged to give up the pursuit of David; who, in spirit, foresaw all this, and was, possibly, at the very moment pronouncing the words, "for behold, God is my helper; and the Lord is the protector of my soul."

5. "Turn back the evils upon my enemies: and cut them off in thy truth." Such imprecations, as we have more than once remarked, are to be read as predictions: and so this reads in the Hebrew; and, in fact, it then and there turned up; for Saul, who was pursuing David, was now pursued by the Philistines; and thus, the "evils" that hung a short time before over David, were now pouring in upon Saul. The second part of the verse, "and cut them off in thy truth," was also carried out soon after for Saul and his army, among whom, no doubt, were many of David's persecutors, perished in the mountains of Gelboe; "in thy truth," means according to your promise, or your justice, by virtue of which you give unto everyone according to his works.

6. "I will freely sacrifice to thee, and will give praise, O God, to thy name, because it is good. Whether it was that the Prophet foresaw his immediate escape from Saul or that Saul, by reason of the Philistines' incursion, departed while David was actually praying; he