

END OF PSALM 95

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: 95

An exhortation to praise God for the coming of Christ and His kingdom.

1. Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
2. Sing ye to the Lord, and bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day.
3. Declare his glory among the Gentiles; his wonders among all people.
4. For the Lord is great, and exceedingly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.
5. For all the gods of the Gentiles are devils: but the Lord made the heavens.
6. Praise and beauty are before him; holiness and majesty in his sanctuary.
7. Bring ye to the Lord, O ye kindreds of the Gentiles, bring ye to the Lord glory and honor.
8. Bring to the Lord glory unto his name. Bring up sacrifices, and come into his courts:
9. Adore ye the Lord in his holy court. Let all the earth be moved at his presence.
10. Say ye among the Gentiles: The Lord hath reigned. For he hath corrected the world, which shall not be moved: he will judge the people with justice.
11. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: let the sea be moved, and the fullness thereof:
12. The fields and all things that are in them shalla be joyful. Then shall all the trees of the woods rejoice.
13. Before the face of the Lord, because he cometh; because he cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with his truth.

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: 95

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: sing to the Lord, all the earth." He begins by exhorting the whole world to unite in thanksgiving to God for the favors bestowed on them in general. He repeats the expression, "Sing ye," three times, as he also in a subsequent part of the Psalm repeats another expression, "bring ye to the Lord," three times, in order to glance remotely at a mystery, that of the most holy Trinity, that was to be openly promulgated in the New Testament. "Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle," praise and thank him in joy and song, and it must be "a new canticle," a beautiful canticle, and elegantly composed; also a canticle for fresh favors; in like manner, a canticle befitting men who have been regenerated, in whom avarice has been supplanted by charity; and, finally, a canticle not like that of Moses, or Deborah, or any of the old canticles that could not be sung outside the land of promise according to Psalm 136, "how shall we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?" But a new Canticle that may be sung all over the world; and he, therefore, adds, "sing to the Lord all the earth," not only Judea, but the whole world.

2. "Sing ye to the Lord, and bless his name: show forth his salvation from day to day." Having promised this general exhortation, he proceeds to tell the subject of his praise and song, which is the advent of the Savior. "Sing to the Lord and bless his name," in song, praise the power and bless the name of him, "whose salvation you are to show forth from day to day;" that is, every day be sure to celebrate the coming salvation or Savior.

3. "Declare his glory among the Gentiles; his wonders among all people." Having said he should be praised at all times, he now adds, that he should be praised in all places. "Declare his glory among the Gentiles." Make known God's glory, not only to the Jews, as did the prophets of old, but also to the Gentiles, which he expresses more clearly, when he says, "his wonders among all people," tell all nations of the wonderful works of God, that so manifest his glory. Though this exhortation applies to all who know his wonders, it specially applies to the apostles of the Lord, for it was they that made God's glory known to all nations, as well as the wonderful works, not only of the Creator, but also of the Redeemer, and of the Sanctifier; that is, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Judgment will be, at once, most terrible and most joyous; terrible to the wicked, a source of unbounded joy to the just. Hence, in the sacred Scripture, the Last Judgment is sometimes ascribed as a fearful, frightful, and saddening occasion, for, according to St. Luke, “there will be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves. Men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved.” At other times it is described as something pleasant and delightful, by reason of the glory of the elect, which will produce a certain effect on the very heavens, earth, and sea, all of which will be renovated and placed in a better position, and, therefore, in a few verses after, in the same chapter, our Savior says, “but when these things come to pass, look up, and lift up your head, because your redemption is at hand.” – “He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with his truth.” He concludes by predicting what sort the judgment will be; one that will be in accordance with the justice and the truth that always characterized him, and by virtue of which he always fulfills what he promises, and he has promised to reward everyone according to his works; to have no regard of persons, and to judge in all justice. Such will be his mode of judging, and in no other way will he judge. Such an expression ought to knock the sleep out of men’s eyes and arouse them; nor should we imagine, for a moment, that because God deals patiently with us, and defers the sentence, that we will escape the judgment for he that promised so much, and was so true to his promises, cannot possibly lead us astray in this one thing of so much importance. It is possible, says St. Augustine, that God could have been so faithful in everything, and so false as to the day of judgment?

4. “For the Lord is great, and exceedingly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.”

5. “For all the gods of the Gentiles are devils: but the Lord made the heavens.” He now informs us what glory of the Lord, and what wonderful works of his deserve such praise as he just spoke of. “For the Lord is great and exceedingly to be praised.” In this consists his glory, that he is absolutely great, whether in regard of his power, his wisdom, his goodness, his authority, his riches, or in any other point of view, and that he should be, and is actually praised in proportion to such greatness, and hence the heavens and the earth are full of his glory. Then, “he is to be feared above all gods;” that is, that he rises so far above all who have the remotest claim to be called gods, that they rather tremble like slaves or serfs before his majesty. The Church, is speaking of the good angels, who are sometimes called gods, says, “the Angels praise, the dominations adore, the powers tremble before thy Majesty;” and of the fallen Angels, who, too, are improperly called gods by the ignorant, St. James says, “the Devils also believe and tremble;” and, as David alludes to false gods, especially in this Psalm, he, therefore, assigns a reason for our God being feared above all gods, when he says, “for all the gods of the Gentiles are devils; but the Lord made the heavens;” that is to say, God is to be feared above all false gods, erroneously adored by the Gentiles, because the gods of the Gentiles are not true gods, but demons, who, through pride, have revolted from the God who created them, and have been doomed by him to eternal punishment, “but the Lord,” instead of being a spirit created, is a creating spirit, who “made the heavens,” the greatest and the most beautiful things in nature, as well as everything under its canopy, that is, all things created.

6. “Praise and beauty are before him; holiness and majesty in his sanctuary.” Having said that God was great and to be feared; he now adds, that he is most worthy of praise in all points of view, that he is most beautiful, glorious, and holy; and that all this is particularly seen in his heavenly sanctuary, where he shows himself to the Angels and other blessed spirits. The first and second verses of Psalm 103 will throw some light on this verse, which is rather obscure; those verses are, “thou hast put on praise and beauty, and art clothed with light like a garment;” for God is said to have put on praise and beauty, because from every point of view, he is seen to be worthy of praise, and that by reason of his being all fair and beautiful, both in his essence, his attributes, his judgments, his thoughts, or his works; which St. John briefly summed up, when he said, “God is light and there is no darkness in him.” The Prophet, then, says of God, “praise and beauty are before him;” that is, praise, or matter of praise, and beauty, or comeliness, and glory, are enriching God, for he has put on praise and beauty, and, therefore, sees his own praise and beauty about him, and it is seen by all; just as the sun, if it had the sense of seeing, would see all the rays of his own light; as they are seen by all, bright and beautiful. “Holiness and majesty in his sanctuary;” the holiness, or the purity, and magnificence, or the majesty and glory with which God is clothed, as it were, with vestments, is seen in his sanctuary, of in the holy temple, which he has in heaven.

7. "Bring ye to the Lord, O ye kindred's of the Gentiles, bring ye to the Lord glory and honor." He had already prophesies that the knowledge of God would be preached to all nations, through the coming of Christ; and he now predicts that all nations will be converted, and will glorify God. And, as he predicted the former by way of exhortation, saying, "declare his glory among the Gentiles," he now predicts the latter in the same form, saying, "bring to the Lord, O ye kindred's of the Gentiles;" ye families of Gentiles scattered all over the world, as soon as the glory of the Lord, who descended from heaven, and, after having accomplished your redemption, returned again in glory to heaven, shall have been announced to you, be not incredulous, nor slow in acting thereon, but run in all haste to the tabernacle of the Lord, and bring him glory and honor, by glorifying and honoring God and his holy name in your actions and in your words. He calls upon them to come in kindred's of families, in allusion to the Jewish custom of families coming by themselves on the several festival days to worship in Jerusalem, and the Holy Ghost gives us here to understand that such custom was to serve as a model for Christians, whose families should unite in coming to the Church to give glory and honor to God for all the wonderful things he accomplished in the redemption of man; for it was not by our own industry, or by our merits, that we have come to grace, and to be the adopted children of God, but through God's mercy, to whom, therefore, is due all honor and glory.

8. "Bring to the Lord unto his name. Bring up sacrifices, and come into his courts." He alludes here to a custom of the Jews, who, when they went up to the temple, offered their victims, and after having adored God, returned to their homes. Now, as the Gentiles are here invited to come to the Church of the Lord, such sacrifices are to be understood of those spiritual sacrifices of which Saint Peter speaks, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Those spiritual sacrifices are, the sacrifices of a contrite heart, confession of sins, prayer, fasting, alms, and the like. This may also apply to the Eucharistic sacrifice, that took the place of all the Jewish sacrifices, according to the prophecy of Malachi, and which is offered, "from the rising of the sun even to the going down," to God, by the converted Gentiles, through the hands of the priests of the New Testament.

9. "Adore ye the Lord in his holy court. Let all the earth be moved at his presence." He had hitherto seen, as it were, from afar; the kingdom of the Messiah, and he exhorted preaches to announce, and people to acknowledge, the coming King; he now beholds him, as it were, at hand, sees him approaching; and, exulting in spirit, he calls upon not only all nations, but even the heavens and the earth, the seas, to exult, and to adore him; not that he looked upon such things as imbued with reason, but in order to express the extent of his own feelings, and the universal joy that will be felt over the world on the coming of Christ; but we see no reason why it should not take in both. He, therefore, says, "let all the earth be moved at his presence." Let all the inhabitants of the earth be full of fear and reverence on the approach of the Lord.

10. "Say ye among the Gentiles: the Lord hath reigned. For he hath corrected the world, which shall not be moved: he will judge the people with justice." In order to stir the people up, preach to them that the coming Lord has taken possession of his

Kingdom, which kingdom means his spiritual one, through which he reigns by faith in the hearts of men. God always reigns in heaven, and he reigns on earth through his power and majesty; but he began to reign, through faith, among the Gentiles, from the coming of the Messiah, where the devil previously reigned, through the errors of idolatry; hence the Lord himself said, "now is the prince of this world cast out." "For he hath corrected the world, which shall not be moved." He proves that this kingdom belongs to Christ, by two arguments. The first is, because it was Christ, as God, that made, confirmed, and established the world, so that it cannot be moved, and that is only just that he who made it should reign in it. This, then, may have reference to the creation of the world; and the word "corrected" means that he established the world so firmly that it cannot, even for a minute, go out of its place. The word "corrected" may also apply to correctional of morals, and the wholesome reformations introduced by the Gospel, and then the meaning would be that Christ should justly and deservedly reign upon earth, because, when it had gone astray, and fallen into the pernicious errors of the Gentiles, he, by his evangelical precept, that prohibits all manner of vices, corrected, reformed, and so established it that it can never possibly lapse into error, so long as he rules and precepts shall be observed. One precept alone, that of love, if properly observed, would correct the whole world, and keep it in profound peace. The second reason is contained in the words, "he will judge the people with justice;" that is, he has not only corrected the world by his most holy laws, but he will also, in the fitting time, judge the world with the greatest justice; for, to those who shall have observed the precepts of the Gospel, he will give most ample rewards, and to those who shall not, most condign punishment.

11. "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: let the sea be moved, and the fullness thereof."

12. "The fields and all things that are in them shall be joyful. Then shall all the trees of the woods rejoice." He calls upon all creation to be glad and to rejoice, by reason of the first as well as the second coming of the Messiah, for while the first coming consecrated, the second will glorify, all things. "For we know that every creature groaneth and is in labor even till now, but it shall afterwards be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." Therefore, "let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad," as being the principal parts of the world; "let the sea be moved" with the same feelings of joy and exultation; and the fullness thereof," all the living things of which it is full, the fishes. "The fields and all things that are in them shall be joyful," whether cattle or plants, nay, even the very "trees of the woods," however barren and uncultivated, "shall rejoice."

13. "Before the face of the Lord, because he cometh; because he cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with his truth." All the things above named will rejoice in the presence of the Lord, "because he cometh" to redeem the world in his mercy, and because he will come again to judge it in his justice. Then they will have to say that the Last