

14. "Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord." He concludes by an apostrophe to himself, to have patience and confidence in God, saying: My soul, as you desire to dwell in the house of God, as you have so many pledges of his love, as you "believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living," do not be disheartened in your trouble, do not look for any earthly consolation, but "wait patiently," take courage in the Lord, act the part of a man, until the evil days shall have passed away, and the good ones shall have arrived.

**END OF PSALM 26**

*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: 26**

***David's faith and hope in God.***

1. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
2. Whilst the wicked draw near against me, to eat my flesh. My enemies that trouble me, have themselves been weakened, and have fallen.
3. If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident.
4. One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life. That I may see the delight of the Lord and may visit his temple.
5. For he hath hidden me in his tabernacle: in the day of evils, he hath protected me in the secret place of his tabernacle.
6. He hath exalted me upon a rock: and now he hath lifted up my head above my enemies. I have gone round, and have offered up in his tabernacle a sacrifice of jubilation: I will sing, and recite a psalm to the Lord.
7. Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to thee; have mercy on me, and hear me.
8. My heart hath said to thee: My face hath sought thee: thy face, O Lord, will I still seek.
9. Turn not away thy face from me: decline not in thy wrath from thy servant. Be thou my helper, forsake me not; Do not thou despise me, O God my Savior.

***(continued)*** >

*(continued from cover page)*

10. For my father and my mother have left me: but the Lord hath taken me up.
11. Set me, O Lord, a law in thy way, and guide me in the right path, because of my enemies.
12. Deliver me not over to the will of them that trouble me: for unjust witnesses have risen up against me; and iniquity hath lied to itself.
13. I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.
14. Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord.

*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: 26**

### **Explanation of the Psalm**

1. "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Tribulation brings on darkness, prosperity brings light and serenity; for tribulation confuses and confounds the soul, so that it cannot easily see how it ought to act, and thence is provoked to impatience, or to some other sin. But should God, by his divine light, dispel the darkness, the soul at once sees that the tribulation, which in the darkness of the night brought such horrors with it, was temporary and trifling; and sees, at the same time, that tribulation, when God protects us, can not only do us no harm, but even tends marvelously to our good. David, having learned this by experience, exclaims, therefore, for himself, and in the person of all the elect, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" In other words, ignorance and infirmity made me timid in my tribulation, but once the Lord "enlightened" my mind, he made me clearly see that no temporal calamity can be grievous or continuous, and healed my soul with the ointment of divine love. "I fear no one," for truth expels darkness, and "perfect charity casteth out fear," 1 John 4. "The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" another reason why he should no longer fear. The Lord not only is "my light and my salvation," he will not desert me when enlightened and saved, but will constantly protect me with the shield of his providence and benevolence. "Of whom shall I be afraid," then? "If God be for us, who is against us?" If a king,

he had just declared to be the only wish and desire of his heart. "And guide me in the right path, because of my enemies;" that is, direct me in the way of your commandments, which is truly "the right path;" the most just, however narrow it may be. Others will have it that "Teach me thy way" is a request for internal inspiration; and "Direct me in the right path," means a petition for a loving desire of observing the commandments. The Words, "Because of my enemies," imply the necessity of the grace of God in this pilgrimage here below, to protect us from our visible, as well as from our invisible enemies, who are in daily ambush, watching us, seeking to divert us from the straight road of virtue to the rugged and difficult passes of vice.

12. "Deliver me not over to the will of them that trouble me: for unjust witnesses have risen against me; and iniquity hath lied to itself." The same petition continued. He asks to be saved from being delivered up to "the will" of his enemies, especially his invisible ones. A similar expression occurs in Luke 23, "He gave Jesus up to their will." "For unjust witnesses have risen up," is by many referred to the false witnesses that so calumniated David; not an improbable explanation; but I consider that the sentence will be more in accordance with what preceded, as well as with what follows, and also with the subject of the whole Psalm, if we interpret these words as applying to the temptations, whether of demons or of men, who, by false promises, or by threats, seek to bring the just to impatience, or to any other sin, as we have in Psalm 118, "The wicked have told me fables, but not as thy law."

13. "I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living." He tells us why "iniquity hath lied to itself." For I, in spite of all my enemies, "believe," have the strongest confidence, that "I will see the good things of the Lord;" that is, those good things which, before God, are good; which make man happy, which alone are really good; and that "in the land of the living," in that land where death hath no place, no dominion.

absence, to be able to offend with impunity, and, therefore, would not make use of the expression, "Decline not," but would rather say, Go away, and decline; but holy fear, that truly loves the beloved, fears nothing more than his departure. "Be thou my helper." Having asked God "not to decline in his wrath from his servant," and that from a consideration of the impossibility of his avoiding, by his own strength, the sins that provoke the anger of God, he cries out to him to continue helping him. The just man, then, asks God's help to avoid sin; but should he unfortunately fall, he begs he may not be discarded entirely, but that he may, in mercy, be pardoned and cured; and he, therefore, adds, "O God, my Savior;" for a Savior's duty is to heal and to cure, instead of rejecting and despising the unfortunate.

10. "For my father and my mother have left me: but the Lord hath taken me up." A very urgent reason assigned for God's assisting him, there being none that loves us so ardently. Observe the third person used for the second in the end of the verse; instead of saying, Thou hast taken me up, he says, "The Lord hath taken me up," and that through reverence for God. A similar change of person occurs in Genesis, where Rachel says to her father, "Let not my Lord be angry at my not being able to rise before you;" and, in Kings, Nathan says to David, "Has this word gone out from my Lord the king?" The expression, then, "The Lord hath taken me up," is the same as, You, O Lord, have taken me up. These words beautifully express the goodness of God, for David was then no child to feel the want of parents; nor could it have been any great loss to him to be without his parents, who then would rather have been a burden than a loss to him; the meaning, then, is: I am like a newborn babe, deserted, abandoned by its natural parents, and thus exposed in all manner of danger; but when so cast away and deserted, you, O Lord, have, in the excess of your goodness, taken me up, fostered, nourished, and cherished me. And, in fact, any one that will only reflect on the frailty of human nature, the power of our invisible enemies, and how much we need the grace of God in all our actions, will not deny that we are, with the greatest justice, compared to infants exposed and abandoned by their parents. So convinced was Ezechias, the prophet, of his infirmity in this respect, that it was not to an exposed infant, but to a swallow's young, unfledged, that he compared himself, Isaias 38, "Like the young of a swallow, so will I cry."

11. "Set me, O Lord, a law in thy way, and guide me in the right path, because of my enemies." Having compared himself to an exposed, deserted infant, adopted by God, he anon fairly asks to be shown how to walk. He asks the grace of being able to observe all his holy commandments, which he never loses sight of through the whole one hundred and fifty psalms. What else could he do? When it was the only path to that heavenly house of God, which

with a powerful armed escort, has no reason to fear, why should a servant of God, protected by his powerful and immortal master, have any fear about him? "Protected by the sign of the cross, instead of shield and helmet, I will securely penetrate the ranks of the enemy," says Saint Martin; for he was one of those who could confidently say, "The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

2. "Whilst the wicked draw near against me, to eat my flesh. My enemies that trouble me, have themselves been weakened, and have fallen." He describes the effects of God's protection, and, as is usual with the prophets, makes use of the past for the future tense, to show the certainty of the matter. The meaning is: God will so protect me, that when they who wish me harm, "shall draw near against me," like dogs or lions, "seeking to eat my flesh," "these enemies that so trouble me" will become "so weak" and "so fallen" by their efforts, that, instead of harming me, they will only damage themselves. That such is the case is clear from the example, not only of David himself, but of Christ, and the martyrs, and of all the saints.

3. "If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident." To show what unbounded confidence he has in God, he now says that he not only despises his enemies individually, but that he even fears not "armies in camp" of his enemies, and not only so encamped but even in actual battle.

4. "One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. That I may see the delight of the Lord, and may visit his temple." This "one thing," so asked, is thought by some to mean the house where the Ark of the Covenant lay; who will have it that he asks to return from exile, that he may be near the Ark. I prefer the opinion of Saint Augustine, who understands it of heaven, which seems to be not only the true, but even the literal meaning. For David does not ask to dwell near "the house of the Lord," but "in the house of the Lord;" and it is well known that David never lived in the house of the Lord, but in his own palace, which was a good distance from the tabernacle, more so before the tabernacle was brought to Mount Sion; and he could, had he chosen it, when he was king, have lived as near as he pleased to the tabernacle. Along with that, this verse is a counterpart of one in Psalm 83, "blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord; they shall praise thee forever and ever;" a phrase that can only be applied to those that dwell in God's house in heaven. Finally, David, holy

and perfect as he was, would never have so ardently desired or asked for any temporal favor in such terms as, “one thing I have asked of the Lord,” as if nothing else was to be asked. The Prophet then, in this passage, tells us what is the real foundation of his confidence in God, and why he fears no temporal calamity. The foundation is a fervent love of God, for he that fervently loves the supreme and everlasting good, sets no value whatever on the things of this world. “One thing I have asked of the Lord; this I will seek after.” I ask for nothing temporal; I care not for the loss of the whole world, provided I be found worthy of possessing one thing; for that one thing alone do I care; that one thing alone have I asked; that one thing alone will I ask; namely, “to dwell in the house of the Lord;” not for a while, but, “For all the days of my life;” that is, during the life of the saints with God, which will certainly have no termination. Observe the point in the words, “That I may dwell in the house of the Lord;” for while here on earth we are the children, as well as the friends of God; however, we do not dwell with, but rather walk with God; nor do we rest in his house, but in his tent. “That I may see the delight of the Lord, and may visit his temple.” He tells us why he longs to dwell in the house of the Lord, because there perfect happiness reigns. For there is to be seen the beauty of God’s house and of the heavenly host; where nothing profane can enter, but where there is a daily sacrifice of jubilation and praise.

5. “For he hath hidden me in his tabernacle: in the day of evils, he hath protected me in the secret place of his tabernacle.” He assigns a reason for having so boldly asked for a place in the house of the Lord, and a sight of his beauty; because he had already got a taste of his sweetness, and a pledge of his love: as if he briefly said: Having received the grace, I dare to ask for the glory: The whole is metaphorical; for, correctly speaking, David was not “hid in the tabernacle” of the Lord, when Saul was in pursuit of him; but the whole passage means, in the evil days of the present time God has defended and protected me as effectually as if he had placed and hidden me in the inmost recesses of his tabernacle, and from such condescension on God’s part, I confidently hope that I will one day arrive at his house, “The one thing I have asked;” the one thing “I will seek after.” The second part of the verse is, in other words, a repetition of the first.

6. “He hath exalted me upon a rock: and now he hath lifted up my head above my enemies, I have gone round, and have offered up in his tabernacle a sacrifice of jubilation: I will sing, and recite a psalm to the Lord.” By another metaphor he conveys the same idea; namely, that he was so defended and protected by God’s providence as if he were in a lofty and well fortified tower, Isais uses the same metaphor when he says, 33:16, “He shall dwell on high; the fortifications of rocks shall be his highness.” The meaning then is:

“He hath exalted me upon a rock;” placed me in an elevated, fortified position, and hence, “My head is lifted up above my enemies;” I have subdued and vanquished them all. Thus is described not only the protection and defense of the just, who cannot possibly be injured by any machinations of the enemy, according to 1 Peter 3, “And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good?” but even we are told how the just arrived at such security; namely, by elevating the mind in contemplation to God and to eternity. For he that seriously meditates on eternity, and has an ardent love for God, is placed on a very lofty and well fortified tower, so that nothing can harm him, all earthly things having now become so vile in his sight. “I have gone round.” The Prophet having spoken of contemplation, is himself now wrapped in it; is raised up above everything earthly, and breaks out in admiration of God’s works, and of the Almighty producer of them. “I have gone round.” I have taken a mental survey of God’s works in heaven and on earth; “And have offered up in his tabernacle a sacrifice of jubilation;” in this great tabernacle of God, the heavens, which I have ascended in spirit; in a loud voice, proceeding from intense admiration, I have offered my tribute of praise to God, the most agreeable sacrifice I could possibly offer him, as we read in another Psalm, “Offer to God the sacrifice of praise;” and, in the same Psalm, “The sacrifice of praise shall glorify me,” a thing I have not only already done, but will do daily, for “I will sing and recite a psalm to the Lord.”

7. “Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to thee: have mercy on me, and hear me.” He reverts to “One thing I have asked of the Lord,” which one petition he asks may be granted, burning as he is with a vehement desire of beholding his beloved. “Hear, O Lord, my voice with which I have cried to thee;” namely, when I asked for the “One thing.” “Have mercy on me,” suffering as I am in my exile, “and hear me.”

8. “My heart hath said to thee: my face hath sought thee: thy face, O Lord, will I still seek.”

9. “Turn not away thy face from me: decline not in thy wrath from thy servant. Be thou my helper, forsake me not; do not thou despise me, O God my Savior.” These verses require more to be reflected on and put into practice than to be explained. “My heart hath said to thee.” My desires have spoken to thee. “My face hath sought thee.” My interior eyes, fixed in the face of my soul, look for thy beauty— despise everything else. “Thy face, O Lord, will I still seek.” It shall be always my study to look for a sight of thee, in the hope not only of seeing thee face to face in the world to come; but that also, in this world, too, I may study one thing only, to catch your looks, and through them to be enlightened and inflamed. “Turn not away thy face from me.” Keep your eyes constantly on me, for fear my light may grow dark, and my charity grow cold. “Decline not in thy wrath from thy servant.” Allow me not to fall into sin, for fear you may desert me in your anger. Saint Augustine justly observes that the fear alluded to here is not servile, but holy fear. Servile fear wishes for the master’s