

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: 40

**The happiness of him that shall believe in Christ,
not withstanding the humility and poverty in which He shall come:
the malice of His enemies, especially of the traitor Judas.**

1. Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day.
2. The Lord preserve him and give him life, and make him blessed upon the earth; and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies.
3. The Lord help him on his bed of sorrow: thou hast turned all his couch in his sickness.
4. I said: O Lord, be thou merciful to me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.
5. My enemies have spoken evils against me: when shall he die, and his name perish?
6. And if he came in to see me, he spoke vain things: his heart gathered together iniquity to itself. He went out, and spoke to the same purpose.
7. All my enemies whispered together against me: they devised evils to me.

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8. They determined against me an unjust word: shall he that sleepeth rise again no more?
9. For even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, half greatly supplanted me.
10. But thou, O Lord, have mercy on me, and raise me up again: and I will requite them.
11. By this I know that thou hast had a good will for me: because my enemy shall not rejoice over me.
12. But thou hast upheld me by reason of my innocence; and hast established me in thy sight forever.
13. Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, from eternity to eternity. So be it. So be it.

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: 40

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day." That is to say, blessed is he who reflects with care on Christ in his poverty, he will find him to have been poor from choice, not from necessity, and chose it to enrich us through the same poverty. He will find him also, while poor to all appearance, internally rich; for in him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" of God. Col. 2. He will also find him to have been poor in the flesh, while rich in his kingdom; for, while he was the "heir of the universe," King of kings, and Lord of lords, he was so poor as sometimes not to have "a place where on to lay his head." Furthermore, "Blessed is he that understandeth" Christ, the poor man, naked, hanging on his cross; that is, blessed is he who deeply meditates on his passion; for Jeremias had already said, "attend and see if there be sorrow like my sorrow;" and the apostle repeats the same, Heb. 12, "for think diligently upon him who endureth such opposition from sinners against himself." For they who understand, and seriously meditate on the passion of Christ, have an unspeakable treasure prepared for them. Finally, "Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor;" that is, Christ in his members, of whom he says, "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me." Observe however, the Psalm does not say, blessed is he that gives alms to the poor;

while dying on the cross, and immediately after “raise me up again,” and then, “I will requite them,” punish them as they deserve. And so he did punish them, and well. They have been dispersed and scattered all over the world, without a king, without a priest, without God, as Christ himself predicted, “the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;” again, “your house shall be left to you desolate;” and in another place, “and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone.”

11. “By this I know that thou hast had a goodwill for me: because my enemy shall not rejoice over me.” He states his prayer was heard, and could be known to have been heard, because “his enemy shall not rejoice over him.” Literally fulfilled in Judas, who hanged himself before the death of Christ, and before he could make any use of his ill-gotten bribe. This may also be applied to all his enemies, whose triumph was so short that it could highly be called a triumph.

12. “But thou hast upheld me by reason of my innocence; and hast established me in thy sight forever.” He informs his enemies that their joy on his death will be very brief, because he has been “upheld and exalted by God by reason of his innocence.”

13. “Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, from eternity to eternity. So be it. So be it.” The conclusion which may be either that of Christ or the Prophet, conveys no more than all honor and glory being due to Christ by reason of his exaltation and the confusion of his enemies forever and ever. So be it, so be it, are merely expressions in confirmation and acclamation.

END OF PSALM 40

but, “blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor;” that is to give us to understand that he only is “blessed” who prudently considers the necessities of the poor, and gives to the proper person at the proper time, and the proper amount of relief; and that not from vainglory, or in the hope of any temporal reward, but from the pure love of God. “The Lord will deliver him in the evil day.” The reason why “he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor is blessed,” is because he will be saved from poverty himself; for “the evil day” signifies the day of want and need. By the “evil day,” however, in this passage, is meant the day of judgment, which will be a day of justice alone, and on which there will be extreme want of mercy and grace. On that day the lovers of the cross of Christ, and who, for his sake, had been generous to the poor, will be quite secure; for to them will be said, “come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me.” Not only that, but even in this world will God deliver the merciful in “the evil day,” as we saw in Psalm 36, “they shall not be confounded in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be filled.” God is delighted beyond measure when he sees his children, in imitation of their Father, freely sharing with others what they have freely received, and, therefore, returns with interest what is given to the poor, according to Proverb 19, “he that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord.”

2. “The Lord preserve him and give him life, and make him blessed upon the earth: and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies.” He now explains the expression, “the Lord will deliver him in the evil day;” and, in the form of a prayer, predicts the blessings that will follow him “that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor.” The Lord “will preserve him,” watch him while he lives, “and give him life;” on his death will bring him to life again, by causing him to rise with the just; “and make him blessed upon the earth,” make him truly, perfectly, and completely happy in the land of the living, “and deliver him not up to will of his enemies;” will neither in this world, nor in the next, subject him to the will or power of his enemies, be they men or demons.

3. “The Lord help him on his bed of sorrow: thou hast turned all his couch in his sickness.” As he promised so many blessings to the merciful, to those who “understand concerning the needy and the poor,” from which one may suppose that pious souls of that sort would have no troubles to encounter in this world, he now prepares them for many tribulations and temptations in this their exile, but not without an assurance of divine help and consolation. “The Lord help him on his bed of sorrow.” Should such a holy soul be struck down by any corporal or spiritual disease, “the Lord will help him;” will so console him to bear it with patience, and to feel it as a probation, from which probation such hope will arise, that he will be highly rejoiced, so as to glory in his troubles, saying, with the apostle, “I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.” To prove that this would happen, he then brings an example from

the past, saying, “thou hast turned all his couch in his sickness.” Such, my sweet and merciful God, has been your treatment of all your faithful; for when you saw any poor soul weighed down by temptations or afflictions, you tended and consoled him with all the care that a nurse turns and makes up the bed of a patient, seeking thereby to refresh and to relieve him.

4. “I said: O Lord, be thou merciful to me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.” Christ now begins to declare himself the “needy and the poor man.” “I said: O Lord, be thou merciful to me;” have mercy on my mystic body, my weak members; “heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee;” I implore thy mercy, to heal the wounds of my faithful, who sins I charged myself with, as if I had actually committed them. Another explanation of this verse 4 may be to make Christ speak of his passion; thus, “be thou merciful to me” in my trouble, and quickly raise me, and thus free me from suffering; “heal my soul” which is “sorrowful even unto death,” and thus is sad, dejected, languishing, fearing, grieving; “for I have sinned against thee,” for I have taken the sins of the whole world upon myself. That Christ does not speak of sins committed by himself is quite clear from verse 12, where he says, “but thou hast upheld me by reason of my innocence;” and, therefore, the person speaking here is not David, nor anyone else, but he who alone was innocent, as far as his own acts were in question, while he bore the sins of others.

5. “My enemies have spoken evils against me: when shall he die, and his name perish?” Evidently intended for the Pharisees and priests of the Jews, who thirsted intensely for the death of Christ, and had frequent conferences on the subject of it.

6. “And if he came in to see me, he spoke vain things: his heart gathered together iniquity to itself. He went out, and spoke to the same purpose.” From the Jews he passes to Judas, “and if he came in to see me,” to see if the time had come for betraying me, “he spoke vain things;” invented some falsehood, for fear his purpose may be detected. This may refer also to others who came to Christ, “tempting him, to ensnare him in his speech.” That person, however, “spoke vain things” to Christ, while, in the meantime, “his heart gathered together iniquity to itself;” that means, his heart was full of deceit, and he, therefore, multiplied and “gathered together iniquity” to himself, to his everlasting ruin. Such is the just reward of the liars and the deceivers. While they seek to deceive others, they are themselves deceived by Satan; and while they are plotting the destruction of others, are, in reality, planning their own ruin. “He went out and spoke to the same purpose.” Judas, having assumed to be the friend of Christ, went out to his enemies, and assumed to be their friend.

7. “All my enemies whispered together against me: they devised evils to me.” Having got the proposal of the traitor Judas, his enemies began to whisper in conference with each other, fearing, if they spoke out, they may be heard, and they discussed the amount of the reward for betraying the Savior. “They devised evils to me;” took measures for my capture and subsequent death.

8. “They determined against me an unjust word: shall he that sleepeth rise again no more?” The consequence of the whispering among the Jews was, a fixed resolution to put Christ to death, because, “they determined against me an unjust word.” They passed a most unjust sentence and decree, that they would put me, no matter how innocent, to death. But he says immediately, “shall he that sleepeth rise again no more?” Which means, however unjust their decree may be, can they deprive me of the power of rising again? He calls his death sleep, because he can as easily rise from the dead as one can rouse his neighbor from sleep; a thing he foretold long before when he said, John 10, “no man taketh my life away from me; but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again.”

9. “For even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me.” He assigns now a reason for his enemies having “determined an unjust word against him,” and puts the blame on Judas. “For even the man of my peace,” with whom I was on the terms a master would be with his servant, or a teacher with his disciple, that man, “in whom I trusted,” in whom I could confide as a friend and an associate. “Who ate my bread;” who sat at my table as a child or a domestic; “hath greatly supplanted me;” in so insidiously betraying me to my enemies. Our Lord quotes this passage in John 13, “I speak not of you all. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled: he that eateth bread with me, shall lift up his heel against me.” Observe here, with St. Augustine, that Judas is called “the man of peace,” because the Prophet foresaw that Christ would be betrayed by a kiss, the sign of peace; which even our Savior alludes to, when he said, “friend, to what art thou come?” And, “Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” In like manner the Prophet says, “who ate my bread;” who sat at my table. We may also notice the expression, “in whom I trusted;” alluding to Christ’s confidence in Judas, so that he made him his treasurer. Observe again, the Prophet’s sense of the aggravations; for he calls Judas “the man of my peace;” to show there was no quarrel, no cause of anger or enmity, between Christ and Judas; quite the reverse, for he adds, “in whom I trusted,” and made him treasurer of all I possessed in consequence. Finally, he adds, that Judas was not only not his enemy, but was his friend; nay, more than his friend, on most intimate terms with him, loaded with favors by him. For, on the very night that he betrayed Christ, he not only partook of his ordinary meal with him, but even received the bread of Angels from him; had his feet washed by him: and, thus, had got the most convincing proofs of his extreme humility and love for him.

10. “But thou, O Lord, have mercy on me, and raise me up again: and I will requite them.” He now prays to his Father, and in the form of a prayer prophesies what was to happen; and, in fact, after his Resurrection, he punished the Jews as they deserved. “But thou, O Lord, have mercy on me, and raise me up again, and I will requite them,” that means, they surely did “determine against me an unjust word” and by the treachery of my own disciple, “who supplanted me,” they will have my life; “but thou, O Lord, have mercy on me,”