

PSALM 3

1 *A psalm by David, when he fled from the face of his son, Absalom. †*

2

O Lord, why do those who afflict me multiply?
Many are those who rise up against me.

3

Many are those who say to my soul,
"There is no salvation for him in his God." (Pause)

4

But You, O Lord, are my protector,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head.

5

I cried to the Lord with my voice,
And He heard me from His holy hill. (Pause)

6

I lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the Lord will help me.

7

I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people
Who set themselves against me all around.

8

Arise, O Lord, and save me, O my God,
For You struck all those who were foolishly at enmity with me;
You broke the teeth of sinners.

9

Salvation is of the Lord,
And Your blessing is upon Your people.

A Psalm of David, when he fled from the presence of his son Absalom in the wilderness.

REARDON: In Eastern Orthodox practice this psalm is prayed, not only on Saturday Vespers as part of the first kathisma, but also daily in the Hexapsalmos, that special selection of six psalms prayed each morning at the beginning of Orthros.

AGUSTINE: The words of this Psalm... Lead us to believe that we must apply them to the Person of Christ. For they are more in keeping with our Lord's passion and resurrection than with the account which history gives to David's flight before the face of his own rebel son. And since it is written of Christ's disciples: 'Can the children of the bridechamber mourn [fast], as long as the bridegroom is with them? (Mt 9:15), it need not surprise us that the disloyal son should be the figure of the disloyal disciple who betrayed his Master...

Now Absalom, according to some interpreters, signified in Latin patris pax, "peace of his father," can be appropriate, either in the history of kingdoms

where Absalom is at war with his father, or in the history of the New Testament where Judas is the betrayer of our Lord. But a careful reader will perceive in the first instance that during the struggle there was peace in David's heart towards the son whose death he even bewailed with bitter grief: 'Absalom my son,' he cried, 'would God I had died for thee' (2Kings 18:33). And when the history of the New Testament shows us the great, the truly wonderful forbearance of our Lord, who bore with Judas so long just as though he were up right, and although He was aware of his designs yet admitted him to the feast in which He set before and entrusted to His disciples His own body and blood under a figure, who finally in the other's very act of betrayal accepted his kiss, we can easily see that Christ showed nothing but peace towards the man who betrayed Him, although the traitor's heart was prey to intentions so criminal. Absalom, then, is termed "peace of his father" because his father cherished the peace which the son lacked.

1. O Lord, why do those who afflict me multiply?

2. Many are those who rise up against me.

**3. Many are those who say to my soul,
"There is no salvation for him in his God." (Pause)**

Many, in fact are the enemies of every kind who assail me from all sides; but more numerous are those who trouble me by their mockery and their claims that I am bereft of your providence. Yet I know that you would not persist in ignoring me, despite my many feelings. On the contrary, you will raise up the one who now humbles himself for the sin he has committed and make him appear stronger than his foes. In fact, he intimated as much by saying, the following:

**4. But You, O Lord, are my protector,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head.**

THEODORET: That is to say, I have confidence neither in kingship nor in sovereignty; instead, I trust in you to be my glory...

REARDON: Conflict we have here, and the distress that conflict brings, for fighting battles is one of the major motifs of the Book of Psalms. This is not a prayer book for the noncombatant, and unless a person is actually engages in hostilities it is difficult to see how he can pray this psalm...

The warfare has to do with the themes inaugurated in the two preceding psalms—God's wisdom against wickedness in Psalm 1, and the Messiah against ungodly mutiny in Psalm 2. The first tells us that the Psalter's battle is moral; the second tells us that it is theological. Thus, the many conflicts described in the psalms are engagements of the spirit, struggles of the heart, wrestlings of the mind.

To pray the psalms correctly it is very important that we properly identify the enemies. Some modern Christians, not understanding this, have even gone so far afield to exclude certain of the psalms from their prayer, attempting to justify the exclusion by an appeal to Christian charity and the spirit of forgiveness.

This is unmitigated nonsense. The enemies here are the real enemies, the adversaries of the soul, those hostile forces spoken of in the very first

verse of the Book of Psalms—"the counsel of the ungodly." "For we do not wrestle," after all, "against flesh and blood, but against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12) To relinquish any one of the psalms on the excuse that its sentiments are too violent for a Christian is a clear sign that a person has also given up the very battle that a Christian is summoned from his bed to fight. The psalms are prayers for those engaged in an ongoing spiritual conflict. No one else need bother even opening the book.

GLORY OF THE SAINTS. ORIGEN: Certainly, people place their glory in various places, some in their country, some in family line, some in beauty, some in the strength of their bodies and in their skill of competing in the contest, being very elated they have overcome these people or those by their physical struggling. And why is it necessary to recount all the things through which those unknown gods are glorified, "whose glory is in their shame," as the apostle said? God is the glory of the saint who trusts him, glory, I say, not blindly credited but credited through faith that is reckoned as righteousness, through which one is enabled to see the signs of a present God and participate in his strength. So, God was the glory of Moses who loved the prophet so much that he revealed himself to the point of showing his face both before all the Hebrew people and before the Egyptians. God was the glory of the prophet Elijah, who revived the son of the widow and begged for the rain to be held back, and who continually was heard. God was speaking truth, therefore, when he said, "I will only honor them honoring me." God is the glory of them who are magnified in their strength, which no one other than the Father places in them, who hand themselves over to him for sustaining their souls.

GLORY OF THE SAINTS. ORIGEN: Certainly, people place their glory in various places, some in their country, some in family line, some in beauty, some in the strength of their bodies and in their skill of competing in the contest, being very elated they have overcome these people or those by their physical struggling. And why is it necessary to recount all the things through which those unknown gods are glorified, "whose glory is in their shame," as the apostle said? God is the glory of the saint who trusts him, glory, I say, not blindly credited but credited through faith that is reckoned as righteousness, through which one is enabled to see the signs of a present God and participate in his strength. So, God was the glory of Moses who loved the prophet so much that he revealed himself to the point of showing his face both before all the Hebrew people and before the Egyptians. God was the glory of the prophet Elijah, who revived the son of the widow and begged for the rain to be held back, and who continually was heard. God was speaking truth, therefore, when he said, "I will only honor them honoring me." God is the glory of them who are magnified in their strength, which no one other than the Father places in them, who hand themselves over to him for sustaining their souls. SELECTIONS FROM THE PSALMS 3.4.

STRENGTH FROM HOPE. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: The strength of a stable spirit that is greatly tested in adversity must be considered because, since it possesses hope, even amidst the greatest anguish it does not yield. Those, I say, who mock me say such things to increase my grief. I will not stop hoping in what I have believed because you, Lord, help me as I labor. You guard my step from the danger of evil. You restore my honor and worth. COMMENTARY ON PSALMS 3.4.

**5. I cried to the Lord with my voice,
And He heard me from His holy hill. (Pause)**

THEODORET: My reason, of course in offering my prayers to you in all confidence is my knowledge that you grant our requests without delay. Now, the verse is not to be understood as referring to a loud cry but to earnestness of spirit. Thus the God of all spoke to blessed Moses [as they were preparing to flee Egypt], who said not a word, "Why do you cry out to me? (Exod 14:15) calling silence a cry on account of the earnestness of his mind [H told him to raise his rod and part the eaters.]. Now those words, "He harkened to me from His holy mountain," are said in accord with the view held once upon a time: it was thought the God of all lived in his dwelling, since he even delivered oracles to the priests from there.

FAITH DOES NOT DELAY. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: It is the greatest faith that allows no hesitation for seeking the help of God for himself and that approaches with confidence of his demand. COMMENTARY ON PSALMS 3.5.

**6. I lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the Lord will help me.**

THEODORET: Frequently the divine Scripture calls disasters night because those who fall into extreme darkness think they are living in a kind of darkness. On the other hand, sleep is associated with nights; so it suggests troubles and release from them at the same time. You see, the words, "I awoke because the Lord will defend me," mean this, I benefited from divine intervention and so proved superior to the evils that befell me.

REARDON: For the believer in Christ the very act of rising from sleep is full of significance. Sleep itself is symbolic of death, and to arise from sleep, unto the praise of God, is a kind of first taste of that final and definitive rising that sustains our hope. "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." (Eph 5:14)

And just what is wrong with sleep? Very simply, that is normally renders prayer impossible. As the one virtually insuperable obstacle to constant prayer, sleep has often been a bit vexing, as it were, a sort of mild embarrassment for those who take seriously the biblical mandate that they pray without ceasing.

Obviously, one must sleep. It is a debt that we owe to our nature. Yet, like any other debt, there can be something burdensome about the thing, and a number of the saints seem to have felt toward sleep a kind of resentment, the impatient reluctance that one might feel toward any other demanding creditor. This slight pique they felt toward their obligation to

sleep doubtless explains why some of the saints have been so begrudging about it, so stingy in the matter, handing it only such minimum payment as would suffice to settle an inconvenient debt.

THIS MUST REFER TO CHRIST. AUGUSTINE: The prophetic psalms are by no means silent on the subject of [Christ's] resurrection. . . . What other meaning can be taken from these words in Psalm 3, sung in the person of Christ? . . . For, unless one sees in this sleep the death, and in this awaking the resurrection of Christ thus prophesied, one is reduced to the silly supposition that the prophet wished to communicate to us the really remarkable news that he himself fell asleep and later on woke up! CITY OF GOD 17.18.

**7. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people
Who set themselves against me all around.**

AN EXPERIENCED FAITH. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: In this verse the psalmist is not moved by his own trials to the point of despairing of the help of God, nor is he dissuaded from a position of faith by words of reproach. He, having learned by experience the fullness of previous help, cries out most confidently after the kindnesses of God toward him through which he is freed from all of the entangling of his troubles: "I will not fear ten thousands surrounding me." COMMENTARY ON PSALMS 3.7.

NO HINDRANCE. EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA: He predicts that there are going to be many thousands [OT Vol. VII, p. 23] of adversaries who will wish to hinder the resurrection of the saints because they are jealous of their salvation: which ones I will regard as nothing, he said. I have trusted my defender, the victor over death, who, after the bronze gates were torn down and the iron bolts thoroughly broken, opened the gates of death that had been closed for ages, and with those people known to him, from which number was David, he prepared for the resurrection life. COMMENTARY ON PSALMS 3.7.

**8. Arise, O Lord, and save me, O my God,
For You struck all those who were foolishly at enmity with me;
You broke the teeth of sinners.**

THEODORET: By your mere presence you succeed in scattering the countless thousands... make me as sharer in your complete salvation: just as you made those pay the price of their injustice who wrongly made me the butt of the enmity many times—neighbors and foreigners, Israelites, and Amalekites, and of course Saul in particular—now reward me with salvation... The phrase "breaking their teeth," means depriving them of all strength, is by comparison to wild animals which when bereft of their teeth are quite undaunting and open to attack

TEETH TO TEETH. AUGUSTINE: The phrase "the teeth of sinners" can also be understood as those sinful leaders by whose authority a person is cut off from the community of those who live upright lives and is incorporated, so to speak, into those who live corruptly. Opposed to these teeth are the teeth of the church, by whose authority believers are cut clean away from the error of the heathen and of a whole range of heterodox opinions and are brought over into that society that is Christ's

body. Peter was told to slaughter animals and eat them with teeth like this, which means to kill in the Gentiles what they were and changed it into what he himself was. . . . “You have broken the teeth of sinners,” should, [OT Vol. VII, p. 24] therefore, be understood in the sense, “you have brought to nothing the chief sinners, by striking down all who oppose me without good cause.” For it was the leaders who, according to the Gospel story, persecuted him, while the inferior rabble held him in honor.

EXPOSITIONS OF THE PSALMS 3.7.

**9. Salvation is of the Lord,
And Your blessing is upon Your people.**

THEODORET: I have no hope in human beings, he says; rather I expect salvation from you. And not myself alone, but also your people, who are fighting with me. Yet I am distressed also for those who are fighting; after all they bear the name of your people. So grant the blessing of peace, Lord, to both sides. He intimated as much, in fact, in the words, “ may your blessing be on your people. Blessed Moses, remember, associates peace with blessings (Num 6:22-26), and even if in history we find blessed David very concerned for the people and even his parricide son, he was more anxious for peace than for victory against people.

PSALM 37

1 *A psalm by David; for remembrance concerning the Sabbath. †*

2

O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, Nor chasten me in Your anger.

3

For Your arrows are fixed in me,
And Your hand rests on me;

4

There is no healing in my flesh because of Your wrath;
There is no peace in my bones because of my sins.

5

For my transgressions rise up over my head;
Like a heavy burden they are heavy on me.

6

My wounds grow foul and fester
Because of my folly.

7

I suffer misery, and I am utterly bowed down;
I go all the day long with a sad face.

8

For my loins are filled with mockeries,
And there is no healing in my flesh.

9

I am afflicted and greatly humbled;
I roar because of the groaning of my heart.

10

O Lord, all my desire is before You,
And my groaning is not hidden from You.

11

My heart is troubled; my strength fails me,
And the light of my eyes, even this is not with me.

12

My friends and neighbors draw near and stand against me,
And my near of kin stand far off;

13

And those who seek my soul use violence,
And those who seek evil for me speak folly;
And they meditate on deceit all the day long.

14

But I like a deaf man do not hear,
And I am like a mute who does not open his mouth.

15

I am like a man who does not hear,
And who has no reproofs in his mouth.

16

For in You, O Lord, I hope;
You will hear, O Lord my God.

17

For I said, "Let not my enemies rejoice over me,
For when my foot was shaken, they boasted against me."

18

For I am ready for wounds,
And my pain is continually with me.

19

For I will declare my transgression,
And I will be anxious about my sin.

20

But my enemies live, and are become stronger than I;
And those who hate me unjustly are multiplied;

21

Those who repaid me evil for good
Slandered me, because I pursue righteousness;
And they threw away my love as though it were a stinking corpse.

22

Do not forsake me, O Lord;
O my God, do not depart from me;

23

Give heed to help me,
O Lord of my salvation

A Psalm of David: for a remembrance of the Sabbath.

ATHANSIUS: When you feel the Lord's displeasure, if you see that you are troubled by this, you can say Psalm 37. ATHANASIUS ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALMS 15 [OIP 66]say to

REARDON: With its heavy emphasis on sin and suffering, Psalm 37 is one of the rougher parts of the Psalter, and its thematic conjunction of sin and suffering is also manifest key to its meaning.

Suffering and death enter into the world with sin. To humanity's first sinners the Lord said; "I will greatly multiply your sorrow," and "Cursed is the ground for your sake" (Gen 3:16, 17). So close is the Bible's joining of suffering to sin that some biblical characters (such as Job's friends and the questioning disciples in John 9:2) entertained the erroneous notion that each instance of suffering was brought about by certain specific sins.

1. O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, Nor chasten me in Your anger.

REARDON: The present Psalm commences with a prayer for deliverance from divine anger...

THEODORET: [He is] asking to be disciplined in the manner of a surgeon, not a judge and to be treated not with harsh remedies but with mild ones.

AMBROSE: The prophet . . . acknowledges his fault, recognizes his wounds and asks to be cured. One who wants to be cured does not shrink from correction. Still, he does not want to be chastised in the fury of indignation but in the word of God. God's word is healing. As we read, "He sent his word and healed them." David does not want to be corrected in wrath but to be disciplined in doctrine. It is as though you were to ask the surgeon not to apply his knife to your wound but to pour in ointment. He begs for the remedy but not for the knife. There is pain but not beyond measure. The remedy stings, but the patient's blood does not flow. COMMENTARY ON TWELVE PSALMS 38.19.

3. For Your arrows are fixed in me, And Your hand rests on me;

REARDON: Already the poet feels overwhelming pain which he describes, whether literally or by way of metaphor, in the most physical terms...

THEODORET: It is not without purpose that I make this supplication, he is saying; rather, it is because I see clouds of arrows directed at me, and your hand sorely threatening me and severely chastising me. The phrase, "you have fastened your hand upon me," he used by analogy with those tormenting and inflicting blows.

AMBROSE: We observe . . . that when Scripture speaks of "the Lord's hand," it refers to temptation that a person undergoes from the attacks of Satan. . . . When the devil wounds him, the arrows are the Lord's, and it is the Lord who has given Satan the power of hurting him. . . . There is, too, that . . . reason why the Lord gives power to the tempter; it is so that one's love might be tested by temptations. That is why there are persecutions, so that faith may shine out and virtue excel and the inner thoughts of one's heart may be made manifest to all. COMMENTARY ON TWELVE PSALMS 38.21.

**4. There is no healing in my flesh because of Your wrath;
There is no peace in my bones because of my sins.**

REARDON: Whether physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual—or all of them together—what we suffer in this life are the incursions of death, and death is simply sin becoming incarnate and dwelling among us, for "through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12).

THEODORET: Pricked by punishment, he is saying, I remember sin, and memory of it arouses in me wailing and weeping; from these things ill treatment and misery come upon me.

**5. For my transgressions rise up over my head;
Like a heavy burden they are heavy on me.**

CHRYSOSTOM: If you wish to learn the foulness of sin, think of it after it has been committed, when you are rid of the evil desire, when its fires no longer cause disturbance, and then you will perceive what sin is.

HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 52.

AMBROSE: Now look at some lascivious (sexually driven) youth openly displaying his debauchery; his life is spent in love affairs; he lounges

around like that rich man who was clothed in fine linen and purple; daily he enjoys the most sumptuous dinners; his pavements swim in wine; the ground is covered with flowers and strewn with fish bones; and the dining room is filled with the perfume of sweet-smelling incense. He is perfectly delighted with himself and flatters himself that he smells sweetly. . . . He does not know that his soul is bleeding and festering, and he will not accept that his wounds are foul-smelling. . . . But the holy prophet David found for himself a remedy of everlasting salvation. For he freely spoke of his own wounds and confessed that his sores were foul and festering because of his foolishness. . . . This world covers up its wounds and does not show them to the Lord. Better the foolishness that has eyes to see its sores than wisdom that has not. COMMENTARY ON TWELVE PSALMS 38.30–31.

6. My wounds grow foul and fester Because of my folly.

7. I suffer misery, and I am utterly bowed down;

I go all the day long with a sad face.

THEODORET: The weighty burden of my sin cast me down, he is saying, the stench of my putrid wounds, which I sustained when I rejected good sense and became a slave to folly, also distressed me. This is the reason that I am bereft of all satisfaction, I grieve and am constantly sorrowful, and find no change in my distress.

GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS: The very best order of beginning every speech and action is to begin from God and to end in God. IN DEFENSE OF HIS FLIGHT TO PONTUS, ORATION 2.1

8. For my loins are filled with mockeries, And there is no healing in my flesh.

THEODORET: By reference to entrails [loins] he implies lust...So he means, My handling of desire not fittingly but wastefully proved the cause of these troubles.

9. I am afflicted and greatly humbled; I roar because of the groaning of my heart.

THEODORET: From the desire I garnered the fruit, which was my stooping to earth, he is saying, and constant bewailing on account of my heart's bitter pangs.

10. O Lord, all my desire is before You, And my groaning is not hidden from You.

THEODORET: For this reason I changed the force of desire and made it minister to the divine will...since once I used it wrongly, I shall always apply it to the benefit of your commands.

**11. My heart is troubled; my strength fails me,
And the light of my eyes, even this is not with me.**

THEODORET: Do you see my wailing and weeping, Lord, do you see me confused, deprived of strength, and bereft of accustomed light, living as though in darkness at midday? Now by these statements he implies two things, both the extraordinary degree of depression, by which the light does not even seem to be light, and the deprivation of divine care, which he rightly called the "light of my eyes."

12. My friends and neighbors draw near and stand against me, And my near of kin stand far off;

THEODORET: Ahithophel [a traitor counselor of David] not only moved away but also came up with deadly schemes against him. Others, as is likely, did what he did—or, rather, the majority of Israel and even the very tribe of Judah waged war on Absalom's [David's son] side. Immediately after the killing of the parricide [relative], therefore, they urged one another to anticipate the other tribes and return King David to the palace.

13. And those who seek my soul use violence, And those who seek evil for me speak folly; And they meditate on deceit all the day long.

THEODORET: Seeing me deprived of friends, the enemies continually hatched plots, longing for my slaughter.

14. But I like a deaf man do not hear, And I am like a mute who does not open his mouth.

THEODORET: History teaches this more clearly. Even when Absalom [his son] mounted a case against his father and drew to his side those who had lost cases in judgment, blessed David was long-suffering. When Shimei [supporter of His son who stoned and cursed him] berated him with voice and hand upraised, he took the abuse in silence; and he forbade Abishai [loyal son of his sister] to try and exact justice against the culprit in the works, "Let him curse me because the Lord bade him curse David."
" (Cf. 2Sam 16:9-11)

AMBROSE: The just person will want to conform his life to the image and likeness of Jesus, and though accused, he will be silent; if he is hurt, he will forgive. Wrongs done to him he will cover up, not opening his mouth. In this way he will be imitating him who like a lamb was led to the slaughter, never opening his mouth. Though he could have made an answer, he preferred silence to speech. For the Lord Jesus was silent when they accused him, and when they struck him he did not strike back. . . . You too, my friend, if you are given cause to answer back with a sharp rebuke, be silent. It will be better so. If you answer back in the same tone as your aggressor, it could lead to uproar and loud wrangling. Better to hide the injury done to you than, by arguing back, to gain some point or other. Good is the dumb person who knows not how to speak evil and from whose lips no injurious words can pass. Truly blessed is this dumb person, for inwardly he is saying, "Lord, give me a learned tongue when it

is my duty to break into speech.” COMMENTARY ON TWELVE PSALMS 38.45.

15. I am like a man who does not hear, And who has no reproofs in his mouth.

JOHN CASSIAN: You should walk as one that is deaf and dumb and blind, so that, putting aside the contemplation of him who has been rightly chosen by you as your model of perfection, you should be like one who is blind and not see any of those things that you find to be unedifying. Nor should you be influenced by the authority or fashion of those who do these things and give yourself up to what is worse and what you formerly condemned. If you hear anyone disobedient or insubordinate or disparaging another or doing anything different from what was taught to you, you should not go wrong and be led astray by such an example to imitate him, but, “like one who is deaf,” as if you had never heard it, you should pass it all by. INSTITUTES 4.41.

16. For in You, O Lord, I hope; You will hear, O Lord my God.

17. For I said, “Let not my enemies rejoice over me, For when my foot was shaken, they boasted against me.”

THEODORET: But employing this patience, he is saying, I continued to have hope in you, to entrust judgment of me to you, and to entreat that I not become an object of rejoicing to the enemy nor my defeat prove an occasion of arrogance for them.

18. For I am ready for wounds, And my pain is continually with me.

THEODORET: Sin made me deserve whipping, he is saying; hence I submit myself to punishment. I long for treatment at your hands, pricked as I am by the pangs of sin.

19. For I will declare my transgression, And I will be anxious about my sin.

THEODORET: Now for this reason I become my own accuser, and shall give full attention to my cure

REARDON: The proper response to sin and suffering? Confession of sins and the sustained cultivation of repentance, for “if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1John 1:8)...Notwithstanding a widespread heresy that says otherwise, repentance (metanoia) is not something done once, and all finished; according to one of the petitions of the litany it is something to be perfected (ektelesai) until the end of our lives This sorrow for sin, says our psalm, is continual, ongoing(tamid). Every suffering we are given in this life is a renewed call to repentance. Every pain is, as it were, the accusing finger of Nathan [first child of Bathsheba]: “You are the man” (2Sam 12:7).

20. But my enemies live, and are become stronger than I; And those who hate me unjustly are multiplied;

THEODORET: "Against you alone have I sinned, Lord," he says, "and done evil in your sight." (Ps 51:4) Those who often received many favors from me, however, repay me with the opposite, and gained better health than I.

REARDON: Finally there are the enemies. As I have insisted all through these meditations, the demons are the only enemies of the man who correctly prays the Book of Psalms. Nowhere does Holy Scripture exhort us to forgive or pity the demons. They are the only true enemies that our prayer recognizes. Unlike human enemies who are to be prayed for, the demons are always to be prayed against. Our fight with them is unsleeping, as is their fight with us, plotting our ruin:

21. Those who repaid me evil for good Slandered me, because I pursue righteousness; And they threw away my love as though it were a stinking corpse.

THEODORET: Once again he indicated Absalom [his son who rebelled] in this, calling his unjust judgments "calumniating." Since he was a son striving to become parricide [killed by a parent], it was right for the psalmist to add, "though I was beloved, they rejected me, loathed like a corpse:" though he should have been loved according to the laws of nature, he was disgusted with him as though a putrid corpse. Now this is relevant also to the ungrateful people, who though beneficiary of countless kindnesses from David, and thanks to him proven victorious oftentimes over foreigners, emerged ungrateful to their benefactor

22. Do not forsake me, O Lord; O my God, do not depart from me;

AMBROSE: Lord, you heal and are not polluted; you help and are not contaminated; for you are a God who saves. Your hands, O Lord, do not lose those that are your own but heal them. COMMENTARY ON TWELVE PSALMS 38.57.

23. Give heed to help me, O Lord of my salvation.

THEODORET: Washed about with so many griefs, he is saying, I beseech you, my God and Lord, not to deprive me of your customary providence, but allow me to share in your grace and grant me salvation.

AUGUSTINE: This is the salvation the prophets sought to discover, as the apostle Peter says. They did not receive what they sought, but they inquired about it and foretold it, and now we have come along and found what they sought. Yet we have not received it either, and others will be born after us who will also find yet not receive, and they too will pass away, so that at the day's end we may all receive together, along with the patriarchs and prophets and apostles, . . . everlasting salvation.

Contemplating God's glory and seeing him face to face we shall be enabled to praise him forever, without wearying, without any of the pain of iniquity, without any of the perversion of sin. We shall praise God, no longer sighing for him but united with him for whom we have sighed even

to the end, albeit joyful in our hope. For we shall be in that city where God is our good, God is our light, God is our bread, God is our life. Whatever is good for us, whatever we miss as we trudge along our pilgrim way, we shall find in him. EXPOSITIONS OF THE PSALMS 38.28.