

# PSALMS

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALMS

The title of this book may be rendered “the Book of Praises”, or “Hymns”; the psalm which our Lord sung at the passover is called an “hymn”, (<sup><4250></sup>Matthew 26:30); and the one hundred forty fifth Psalm is entitled **hl ht**, “an Hymn of David”; and the psalms in general are called “hymns” by Philo the Jew <sup>f1</sup>, and songs and hymns by Josephus <sup>f2</sup>; and to these several names of this book the apostle manifestly refers in (<sup><459></sup>Ephesians 5:19) (<sup><5016></sup>Colossians 3:16). The Jews divided the writings of the Old Testament into three parts: the first division is the Law, or five books of Moses; the second is the Prophets, former and latter; and the third, the “Hagiographa”, or holy writings; to which division Christ has a regard in (<sup><244></sup>Luke 24:44); and because the book of Psalms stand first in the last division, the whole goes by its name. This book by the Apostle Peter is entitled as here, (<sup><4020></sup>Acts 1:20); the title in the Syriac version is,

“the Book of the Psalms of David, King and Prophet,”

with which agrees the Arabic version. As to the divine authority of it, that it was written by inspiration of God, we have not only the testimony of David, who says, “the Spirit of God spake by me”, (<sup><122></sup>2 Samuel 23:2); but the testimonies of Christ and his apostles, (<sup><123></sup>Matthew 22:43 <sup><4016></sup>Acts 1:16 4:24,25); and, as Aben Ezra <sup>f3</sup> observes the whole of it was spoken **çdīwqh j wrb**, “by the Holy Ghost”. Concerning the penman or amanuensis, employed by the Spirit of God in writing it, there are different opinions. The Jews make mention of ten, which are differently reckoned by them. According to Jarchi <sup>f4</sup>, they were Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. According to Kimchi <sup>f5</sup>, they were Adam, the first, Melchizedek, Abraham, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, Moses, and the three sons of Korah; Asir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. Some ascribe all the Psalms to David <sup>f6</sup>, and think that those which are said to be a psalm of Asaph, or of Heman, etc. should be rendered “a psalm to Asaph”, etc. and only signify that they were psalms delivered to them, to be sung in a public manner. But the truest opinion

seems to be, that the greater part of them were written by David, and for the most part those that have no title; and the rest by those whose names they bear. Some were written at and after the Babylonish captivity, as (~~<BIB>~~Psalm 126:1-6) and (~~<BIB>~~Psalm 137:1-9). The manner or form in which they were written was metre<sup>f7</sup>, though some deny it that the Jews had metre: as appears by the different accentuation of them from other writings, and from their being sung vocally and on musical instruments. Josephus<sup>f8</sup>, the Jewish historian, says, that

“David being free from war, and enjoying a profound peace, composed songs and hymns to God, of various metre; some trimeter, and some pentameter;”

that is, some of three feet, and others of five feet: for the Psalms of David are thought to be of the “lyric” kind; and Gomarus, in his *Lyra*, has given many instances out of them, which are of the “iambic”, “trochaic” kind, etc. though the Jews for many years have lost the knowledge of the sacred poetry. R. Benjamin<sup>f9</sup> indeed says, that in his time there were at Bagdad R. Eleazar and his brethren, who knew how to sing the songs, as the singers did when the temple was standing. The subject matter of this book is exceeding great and excellent; many of the psalms respect the person, offices, and grace of Christ; his sufferings and death, resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God; and so are exceeding suitable to the Gospel dispensation. The whole book is a rich mine of grace and evangelical truths, and a large fund of spiritual experience; and is abundantly suited to every case, state, and condition, that the church of Christ, or particular believers, are in at any time.

# PSALM 1

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 1

This psalm, though without a title, may reasonably be thought to be a psalm of David; since the next psalm, which is also without a title, is ascribed to him, (<sup><4025></sup>Acts 4:25); and since both are joined together as one psalm by the Jews <sup>f10</sup>; (see Gill on “<sup><4133></sup>Acts 13:33”); and since this is the general preface to the whole book, which is chiefly of David’s penning, it is entitled, in the metaphrase of Apollinarius,

*“a Song of David, the Prophet and King.”*

**Ver. 1.** *Blessed [is] the man*, etc.] This psalm begins in like manner as Christ’s sermon on the mount, (<sup><4018></sup>Matthew 5:3); setting forth the praises and expressing the happiness of the man who is described in this verse and (<sup><3900></sup>Psalm 1:2). The words may be rendered, “O, the blessednesses of the man”, or “of this man” <sup>f11</sup>; he is doubly blessed, a thrice happy and blessed man; blessed in things temporal and spiritual; happy in this world, and in that to come. He is to be praised and commended as a good man, so the Targum:

“the goodness, or, Oh, the goodness of the man;”

or as others,

“Oh, the right goings or happy progress, or prosperous success of the man” <sup>f12</sup>,”

who answers to the following characters; which right walking of his is next observed, and his prosperity in (<sup><3900></sup>Psalm 1:3). Some have interpreted this psalm of Christ, and think it is properly spoken of him <sup>f13</sup>;

*that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly*: all men are by nature and practice ungodly, without God, without the true knowledge, fear, and worship of God and are at enmity against him. It is a character that belongs to God’s elect as well as others, while in a state of nature; and is sometimes used illustrate the love of Christ in dying for them, and the grace of God in the justification of them, (<sup><5045></sup>Romans 4:5 5:6). But here it

describes not such who are wicked in heart and life in common only, but the reprobate part of mankind, profligate and abandoned sinners, such as Jude speaks of, (~~6004~~Jude 1:4); and for whom the law is made, and against whom it lies, (~~5000~~1 Timothy 1:9). The word <sup>f14</sup> here used signifies such who are restless and continually in mischief; who are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, ever casting up mire and dirt: they are always disquieted themselves, and are ever disquieting others; nor do they cease from being so till they are laid in their graves. And to these “counsel” is ascribed, which supposes capacity and wisdom; as, generally speaking, such are wise and prudent in natural and civil things, and are wise to do evil, though to do good they have no knowledge: and counsel implies consultation and deliberation; they act deliberately in sinning, they cast about in their minds, form schemes, and contrive ways and means how to accomplish their vicious purposes; and sometimes they enter into a confederacy, and consult together with one consent, and their counsel is generally against the Lord, though it does not prosper and prevail; and against his Christ, his people, truths and ordinances: it takes in both their principles and practices; and the sum of their counsel is to indulge themselves in sin, to throw off all religion, and to cast off the fear and worship of God, (~~1214~~Job 21:14,15). Now “not to walk” herein is not to hearken to their counsel, to give into it, agree with it, pursue it, and act according to it; and happy is the man, who, though he may fall in the way of it, and may have bad counsel given him by ungodly men, yet does not consent to it, take it, and act upon it. This may be applied to the times of the Messiah, and the men of the age in which he lived; and the rather, since the next psalm, in which mention is made of the counsel of the ungodly, manifestly belongs unto them. The men of that generation were a set of ungodly men, who consulted against Christ to take away his life; and blessed is the man, as Joseph of Arimathea, who, though he was in that assembly which conspired against the life of Christ, did not walk in, nor consent unto, their counsel and their deeds, (~~1251~~Luke 23:51);

*nor standeth in the way of sinners*; all men are sinners through Adam’s disobedience, and their own actual transgressions, and such were the elect of God, when Christ died for them; and indeed are so after conversion, for no man lives without sin. But here it intends notorious sinners, who are open, bold, and daring in iniquity; the word <sup>f15</sup> signifies such, who in shooting miss the mark, and go aside from it, as such sinners do from the law of God; proceed from evil to evil, choose their own ways, and delight in their abominations. Now their “way” is not only their “opinion”, as the

Syriac version renders it, their corrupt sentiments, but their sinful course of life; which is a way of darkness, a crooked path, and a road that leads to destruction and death: and happy is the man that does “not stand” in this way, which denotes openness, impudence, and continuance; who, though he may fall into this way, does not abide in it; (see <sup><501></sup>Romans 6:1,2). The Pharisees in the time of Christ, though they were not openly and outwardly sinners, yet they were secretly and inwardly such, (<sup><403></sup>Matthew 23:28); and the way they stood in was that of justification by the works of the law, (<sup><501></sup>Romans 9:31,32): but happy is the man, as the Apostle Paul and others, who stands not in that way, but in the way Christ Jesus, and in the way of life and righteousness by him;

*nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful*; by whom may be meant proud and haughty persons, in opposition to the humble and lowly, as in (<sup><103></sup>Proverbs 3:34); such who are proud of their natural abilities, knowledge, and wisdom, of their honours and riches, or of their own righteousness, and despise others; or such who are desperate in wickedness, of whom there is no hope; (see <sup><107></sup>Proverbs 9:7,8); and Deists and atheists, who scoff at divine revelation, and mock at a future state, at death, hell, and judgment, as in (<sup><204></sup>Isaiah 28:14,15 <sup><603></sup>2 Peter 3:3). Now happy is the man that does not sit or keep company with such persons; who comes not into their secret and into their assembly; does not associate himself with them, nor approve of their dispositions, words, principles, and actions; (see <sup><304></sup>Psalms 26:4,5). Such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ’s time; they derided him and his doctrines, scoffed at him when he hung upon the cross, and despised him and his apostles, and his Gospel; but there were some that did not join with them, to whom he, his ministers, and truths, were precious and in high esteem, and to whom he was the power and wisdom of God.

**Ver. 2.** *But his delight [is] in the law of the Lord*, etc.] Not the law of nature, which was inscribed on Adam’s heart in innocence, but now greatly impaired by sin, and become very imperfect and very insufficient to make men happy, or to lead them to true felicity; nor the law of Moses, which is a fiery law, and works wrath, accuses of sin, pronounces guilty, curses and condemns to death; and therefore cannot be delighted in by a sensible sinner, unless as it is in the hands of Christ, and as fulfilled by him, who is the end of it; and as it is written on the heart of a regenerate man, who, so far as it is, delights in it after the inward man, and serves it with his spirit: but rather the Scriptures, as much and as many parts of them as were written in David’s time; particularly the five books of Moses, which are

called the Law and the Testimony of the Lord; which being inspired by God, were profitable and delightful to read, and to hear explained; and as they were David's delight, and the men of his council, (<sup><1984></sup>Psalm 119:24); so they were the delight of every good man, there being many things in them concerning the Messiah, his grace and kingdom; (see <sup><2244></sup>Luke 24:44 <sup><4072></sup>Acts 26:22,23). Moreover the word **hrwt**, here used, signifies "doctrine", and may intend the evangelic doctrine, as it does in (<sup><1987></sup>Psalm 19:7); which is a psalm concerning the doctrine of the apostles that went into all the world; and in like sense is the word used in (<sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 2:3 42:4); of the doctrine of the Messiah, that is, the Gospel; and is the same with the law, or doctrine of faith, in (<sup><4187></sup>Romans 3:27). And this may be called the doctrine of the Lord, because he is the author of it; it came by him, he revealed it; and because he is the subject of it; it is concerning him, his person, office, grace, and righteousness; and so far as it was published in the times of David, it was a joyful sound, good news and glad tidings, and the delight of good men;

*and in his law doth he meditate day and night*; as Joshua was directed to do, and David did, (<sup><6108></sup>Joshua 1:8 <sup><19397></sup>Psalm 119:97). This is to be understood of a diligent reading and serious consideration of it; and of the employment of the thoughts, and of deep study upon it, in order to find out the sense and meaning of it; and which is to be done constantly, every day, as often as there is leisure and opportunity for it; or, as Kimchi on the place observes, whenever a man is free from the business of life; unless this should be taken figuratively, of the day of prosperity and night of adversity, whether in things temporal or spiritual, which are each of them proper seasons to meditate in, upon the word of God and Gospel of Christ.

**Ver. 3.** *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water*, etc.] Or, "for then shall he be", etc. as Alshech renders the words; and the Hebrew "vau" is often used for "then"<sup>f16</sup>. As (<sup><19008></sup>Psalm 1:1,2) describe the man who is blessed, this points at his blessedness, and shows and proves him to be an happy man; for he is comparable to a "tree": not to a dry tree, or a tree without fruit, or whose fruit is withered, but to a fruitful tree, a green and flourishing one; green olive tree, or a palm tree, or a cedar in Lebanon; to which David compares himself and the righteous, (<sup><4618></sup>Psalm 52:8 92:12); and here such an one is compared to a tree "planted"; not to one that grows of itself, a wild tree, a tree of the wood; but to one that is removed from its native place and soil, and planted elsewhere; and so designs such who are broken off of the wild olive tree, and are grafted into

the good olive tree; who are planted in Christ Jesus, and in the church, the house of the Lord; of which transplantation the removal of Israel into Canaan's land was an emblem, (<sup><4918></sup>Psalm 80:8); and such a spiritual plantation is of God the husbandman; whose planting the saints are efficiently, (<sup><2422></sup>Isaiah 60:21 61:3) (<sup><4153></sup>Matthew 15:13). And it is owing to the word, the ingrafted word, (<sup><3012></sup>James 1:21), which is the means of this ingrafture, and to the ministers of it instrumentally; some of whom plant, and others water, (<sup><4416></sup>1 Corinthians 3:6,7). Moreover, the happy man before described is like a tree that is situated "by the rivers of water", or "divisions"<sup>f17</sup> and rivulets of water; which running about the plants, make them very fruitful and flourishing; (see <sup><2304></sup>Ezekiel 31:4); and which may intend the river of the love of God, and the streams of it, the discoveries and applications of it to regenerate persons; and also the fulness of grace in Christ, who is the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters and streams from Lebanon, to revive, refresh, supply, and comfort his people, (<sup><2045></sup>Song of Solomon 4:15); as well as the graces of the Spirit of God, which are near the saints, and like rivers of water flow out of them that believe in Christ, (<sup><4078></sup>John 7:38); to which may be added the word and ordinances of the Gospel, which are the still waters, to which they are invited and led, and by which and with which they are greatly refreshed, and made fruitful. Arama interprets it of the waters of the law; it is best to understand it of the Gospel; (see <sup><2810></sup>Isaiah 55:1); it follows,

*that bringeth forth his fruit in his season*; and so appears to be a tree of righteousness, filled with the fruits of righteousness, the graces of the Spirit, and good works; which are brought forth by him under the influence of grace, as he has opportunity, and according to the measure of grace bestowed. His leaf also shall not wither; neither tree, nor fruit, nor leaf shall wither, but shall be always green; which is expressive of the saints' perseverance: the reasons of which are, they are ingrafted in Christ the true vine, and abide in him, from whom they have their sap, nourishment, and fruit, (<sup><4151></sup>John 15:1,2); they are rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith of him; and so they hold fast the profession of it without wavering;

*and whatsoever he doth shall prosper*; meaning not so much in things temporal, of which Arama interprets it, for in these the good man does not always succeed, but in things spiritual: whatever he does in faith, from love, to the glory of God, and in the name of Christ, prospers; yea, those things in which he is concerned, that are adverse, and seem for the present

to be against him, in the issue work for good to him: in short, such a man is blessed with grace here, and glory hereafter; and therefore must needs be an happy man.

**Ver. 4.** *The ungodly [are] not so*, etc.] They are not as the good man is; their manner and course of life are different; they walk in the counsel of ungodly men, like themselves, and take counsel against the Lord, his Anointed, and his people: they stand in the way of sinners, and steer their conversation according to the course of the world, and sit in the seat of the scornful; laugh at divine revelation, lampoon the Scriptures, deride good men, make a jest of religion and a future state: they have no delight in the law of the Lord, they cast it away from them, and despise it; and are so far from a constant meditation on it, that they never read it, nor so much as look into it, nor is it ever in their thoughts. They are not like to a tree, as described in (<sup>490B</sup>Psalm 1:3): if they are like to trees, it is to dry trees, and not green ones, to trees without any sap, moisture, and verdure, and which are only fit fuel for the fire; to the trees of the wood, to wild olive trees; to trees on an heath, in a desert, in parched land, and not to trees by rivers of water, but to trees that have no root, and are without fruit, (<sup>491B</sup>Jude 1:12). And though they may be in a seeming prosperous condition for a time, may be in great power, riches, and honour, and spread themselves like a green bay tree; yet suddenly they are cut down as the grass, and wither as the green herb; and even their outward prosperity destroys them; so that not anything they have or do in the issue prospers: and therefore they are not blessed or happy as the good man is; yea, they are wretched and miserable, nay, cursed; they are cursed now, and will be hereafter; they are cursed in their basket and store, their blessings are curses to them; the law pronounces them cursed; and they will hear, “go ye cursed”, at the day of judgment, (see <sup>492B</sup>Matthew 25:41). The Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Arabic versions, repeat the words “not so”, and read “not so the ungodly, not so:” which seems to be done for the confirmation of the truth of it:

*but [are] like the chaff which the wind driveth away*; they are like chaff, which has no root, moisture, greenness, nor fruitfulness; they have nothing in them solid and substantial; they are destitute of all that is good; are vain and empty; without the knowledge of God and Christ; without faith in Christ and love to him; and are sensual, not having the Spirit, his graces and fruits: they are like chaff for lightness, vain in their imaginations, light in their principles, frothy in their words, and unstable in all their ways: they are never long in any position, unsettled, disquieted, and tossed to and fro;



and there is no peace unto them: they are like chaff, useless and unprofitable, nothing worth, fit only for everlasting burnings, which will be their case. For when Christ will gather his wheat, the righteous, which are of value, into his garner, the heavenly glory, he will burn the chaff, the wicked, with unquenchable fire. They are now like chaff, driven and carried about with every wind of doctrine, with divers and strange doctrines, and entertain every light and airy notion; and are easily drawn aside and carried away by the force of their own lusts, and with every temptation of Satan, who works effectually in them: and particularly they are like chaff before the wind of terrible judgments and calamities in this life, and of the awful judgment hereafter, when they will be driven away from the presence of the Lord into everlasting destruction. The metaphor is often used in this sense; (see <sup><18217></sup>Job 21:17 <sup><21713></sup>Isaiah 17:13,14 29:3 <sup><31313></sup>Hosea 13:3); and denotes the secret, sudden, sure, and easy ruin of the ungodly, which comes upon them like a whirlwind, in an instant, which they cannot avoid; and they can no more stand before God and against him, than chaff before the wind. It follows,

**Ver. 5.** *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment*, etc.]

Neither in temporal judgment, when God comes forth in a way of wrath and sore displeasure; for who can stand before him when he is angry? what are chaff and stubble, thorns and briars, to consuming fire? nor in the last and great day of judgment, so the Targum and Kimchi interpret the words; for that day will burn like an oven the wicked, who will be as stubble, and leave neither root nor branch, (<sup><30013></sup>Malachi 4:1): when the great day of the Lamb's wrath is come, who will be able to stand? (<sup><41616></sup>Romans 6:16,17); there will be no standing for the wicked when he appears; they will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to take their trial and hear their sentence, (<sup><47510></sup>2 Corinthians 5:10); but they shall not stand in the same place with the righteous, not at Christ's right hand, but at his left; they shall not stand with an holy confidence, with intrepidity, and without shame, as the blessed man will; they will not stand, but fall in judgment; they will not be acquitted and discharged, but be condemned to everlasting punishment, (<sup><42510></sup>Matthew 25:30); and this sense the Targum on the place expresses, "the ungodly shall not be justified in the great day"; the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions render the words, "the ungodly shall not rise again in judgment"; from whence some have concluded there will be no resurrection of the wicked: which seems, to be the sense of Kimchi and other Jewish writers; who assert that the souls of the wicked perish with

their bodies at death, and that the latter rise not, contrary to (<sup><2117></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:7 <sup><2712></sup>Daniel 12:2); but that the wicked will, rise may be concluded from the justice of God, which requires that the bodies which have sinned should be punished; and from the general judgment of good and bad, and from the account of the punishment of hell, which will be inflicted on the body as well as on the soul: besides, the contrary doctrine is a licentious one, and is calculated to harden wicked men in their sins, and is directly repugnant to the assertions of Christ, and the Apostle Paul, (<sup><415></sup>John 5:28,29 <sup><4215></sup>Acts 24:15); nor has it any foundation in this text, even admitting such a version; which does not absolutely affirm that the wicked shall not rise again, but that they shall not rise again in, judgment, in the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just, and so as to be acquitted and discharged, but they shall rise to the resurrection of damnation;

*nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous*; who are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and have a work of grace and holiness wrought in them; and who, under the influence of grace, live soberly, righteously, and godly; these are the same with the blessed man, (<sup><3900></sup>Psalm 1:1); and who at the day of judgment will be perfectly holy, and free from all sin; and they will be all gathered together by the holy angels; the dead saints will be raised, the living ones will be changed, and both will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and will make up one general assembly and church of the firstborn; and among these, and in this assembly, there will not be a single sinner; there are now sinners in Zion, foolish virgins with the wise, chaff and tares among Christ's wheat, and wolves and goats among his sheep; but then there will be an eternal separation, and no mixing together any more.

**Ver. 6.** *For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous*, etc.] The way in which he walks by faith, which is in Jesus Christ; the way in which he goes to the Father, and carries to him his sacrifices of prayer and praise, which meet with acceptance through him; the way in which he seeks for and expects justification, pardon, and salvation, namely, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: and also it may denote his course, his walk and conversation; for the righteous man is a follower of God, he takes up the cross and follows after Christ: he walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, according to the rule of the word, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ: and this way of his in every sense the Lord "knows"; not merely as he is omniscient, for by his omniscience his eyes are upon the ways of all

men; he knows the way of the wicked as well as the way of the righteous; but the sense is, that the Lord approves of and is well pleased with his way of faith and holiness; he knows this person, so as to love him and take delight and pleasure in him; his countenance beholds him with a smile; he is well pleased with him in Christ and for his sake, on whose account he has respect to him and to his offerings, to his service and duty, to his ways and works; and hence he is a blessed man, is in a happy situation, and all he does prospers, for he and his ways please the Lord: and hence also it is that neither he nor his way shall perish; the way he is in leads to everlasting life, and he being a follower of the Lord in a way pleasing to him, he shall never perish, but have eternal life;

*but the way of the ungodly shall perish*; for his way is a wicked way, the way of sinners, (<sup><BOOK></sup>Psalm 1:1); it leads to destruction and death, and all that walk in it shall perish; for if is a way the Lord knows not, does not approve of, he abhors it; wherefore the man that continues in it will be unhappy, wretched, and miserable to all eternity. These last words therefore show the reason of the happiness of one sort of men, and the unhappiness of the other; and prove and confirm the same: the Lord knows, approves of, loves, and delights in the one; he does not approve of and delight in the other.