

# PSALM 29

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 29

### *A Psalm of David*

In the Vulgate Latin version is added, “at the finishing of the tabernacle”; suggesting that this psalm was composed at that time, and on that occasion; not at the finishing of the tabernacle by Moses, but at the finishing of the tent or tabernacle which David made for the ark in Zion, (~~1067~~ 2 Samuel 6:17). The title in the Arabic version is,

“a prophecy concerning the incarnation, ark, and tabernacle.”

In the Septuagint version, from whence the Vulgate seems to have taken the clause, it is, at the “exodion”, “exit”, or “going out of the tabernacle”; that is, of the feast of tabernacles; and which was the eighth day of the feast, and was called  $\tau\rho\chi$  [ ], which word the Septuagint renders  $\epsilon\chi\omicron\delta\iota\omicron\nu$ , the word here used, (~~0236~~ Leviticus 23:36 ~~0235~~ Numbers 29:35); though it was on the first of the common days of this feast that this psalm was sung, as Maimonides <sup>f439</sup> says. Some think it was composed when the psalmist was in a thunder storm, or had lately been in one, which he in a very beautiful manner describes. Kimchi thinks it refers to the times of the Messiah; and it may indeed be very well interpreted of the Gospel, and is very suitable to Gospel times.

**Ver. 1.** *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty*, etc.] The Targum refers this to the angels,

“give praise before the Lord, ye companies of angels, sons of the Mighty;”

these are mighty ones, and excel all other creatures in strength; and are the sons of the Mighty, or of God; it is their duty and their business to glorify and to worship him and his Son Jesus Christ, as they do continually; but rather the princes and great men of the earth are here meant, who are so called, (~~1820~~ Psalm 82:1,6,7 89:6,7 ~~4026~~ 1 Corinthians 1:26); and these, as they receive much honour and glory, both from God and man; and because

they are apt to seek their own glory, and ascribe too much to themselves, are called upon particularly to give glory to God; and the more, inasmuch as they may be the means of engaging their subjects, by their influence and example, to do the same, and who may be included in them; for this is not to be understood of them exclusive of others, as appears from (<sup><B90E></sup>Psalm 96:7-9); moreover, all the saints and people of God may be intended, who are all princes and kings; and may be said to be mighty, especially those who are strong in faith; and these are they who give most glory to God;

*give unto the Lord glory and strength*; give glory to Jehovah the Father, by celebrating the perfections of his nature; by commending the works of his hands, the works of creation; by acquiescing in his providential dispensations; by returning thanks to him for mercies received, temporal and spiritual; particularly for salvation by Christ, and, above all, for Christ himself; by exercising faith in him as a promising God; by living becoming his Gospel, and to the honour of his name: give glory to the Son of God, by ascribing all divine perfections to him, by attributing salvation to him, and by trusting in him alone for it: give glory to the Spirit of God, by asserting his deity, by referring the work of grace and conversion to him, and by depending upon him for thee performance of the good work begun: give “strength” to each person, by acknowledging that power belongs to them, which is seen in creation, redemption, and the effectual calling; or else strength may mean the same thing as praise and glory; (see <sup><B90E></sup>Psalm 8:2), compared with (<sup><D116></sup>Matthew 21:16); and both may design strong praise and glory, expressed in the strongest and with the greatest vigour and vehemency of spirit.

**Ver. 2.** *Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name*, etc.] Or “the glory of his name”<sup>f440</sup>: which is suitable to his nature, agreeable to his perfections, and which belongs unto him on account of his works;

*worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*; the Lord is only to be worshipped, and not any creature, angels or men; not Jehovah the Father only, who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; but the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost also, being of the same nature, and possessed of the same perfections; and that with both internal and external worship; and in true holiness, in which there is a real beauty: holiness is the beauty of God himself, he is glorious in it; it is the beauty of angels, it makes them so glorious as they are; and it is the beauty of saints, it is what makes them like unto Christ, and by which they are partakers of the divine nature; and

in the exercise of holy graces, and in the discharge of holy duties, should they worship the Lord; unless this is to be understood of the place of worship, the sanctuary, or holy place in the tabernacle; or rather the church of God, which holiness becomes; but the former sense seems best.

**Ver. 3.** *The voice of the Lord [is] upon the waters*, etc.] What follows concerning thunder, the voice of the Lord, gives so many reasons why he should have glory given him and be worshipped; the Heathens <sup>f441</sup> paid their devotion to thunder and lightning: but this should be done to the author of them; which may be literally understood of thunder, and is the voice of the Lord; (see <sup><1983></sup>Psalm 18:13 <sup><1809></sup>Job 40:9); and which is commonly attended with large showers of rain, (<sup><2403></sup>Jeremiah 10:13); and is very terrible upon the waters, and has its effect there, (<sup><1940></sup>Psalm 104:7); and this is the rather mentioned, because that there is a God above, who is higher than the mighty, who are called upon to give glory to him, and because that thunder has been terrible to kings and great men of the earth; or this may be figuratively interpreted of the voice of Christ in the Gospel, which reaches to many nations and people, compared to waters, (<sup><6715></sup>Revelation 17:15). The disciples had a commission to preach it to all nations, and the sound of their words went into all the world, (<sup><5018></sup>Romans 10:18);

*the God of glory thundereth*; this shows that thunder may be meant by the voice of the Lord, who is glorious in himself, and in all his works; and may be applied to the Gospel of Christ, who is the Lord of glory, and whose ministers, at least some of them, are sons of thunder; (see <sup><4118></sup>1 Corinthians 2:8 <sup><4017></sup>Mark 3:17);

*the Lord [is] upon many waters*; that is, his voice is, as before, which is thunder; and that this belongs to God, the Heathens were so sensible of, that they called their chief deity Jupiter Tonans <sup>f442</sup>.

**Ver. 4.** *The voice of the Lord [is] powerful*, etc.] Or “with power” <sup>f443</sup>; as thunder, in the effect of it, shows; and so is the Gospel, when it comes, not in word only, but is attended with the power of God to the conversion and salvation of souls; it is then quick and powerful, (<sup><8012></sup>Hebrews 4:12); and the word of Christ personal, when here on earth, was with power, (<sup><4032></sup>Luke 4:32);

*the voice of the Lord [is] full of majesty*; Christ, in his state of humiliation, spake and taught as one having authority; and now, in the ministration of

his Gospel by his servants, he goes forth with glory and majesty, (<sup><D6B></sup>Psalm 45:3,4).

**Ver. 5.** *The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars*, etc.] Such an effect thunder has upon the tallest, strongest, and largest trees, as to break them into shivers;

*yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon*; a mountain in the north part of the land of Judea, so called from its whiteness, both by reason of the snow with which some part of it is covered in summer, as Tacitus observes <sup>f444</sup>; and partly from the colour of the earth that has no snow on it, which looks as white as if it was covered with white tiles, as Maundrell <sup>f445</sup> says; and where the goodliest cedars grow; and to which may be compared proud, haughty, lofty, and stouthearted sinners, who are broken, brought down, and laid low, by the voice of Christ in his Gospel, his power attending it. The Targum renders it, “the Word of the Lord”.

**Ver. 6.** *He maketh them also to skip like a calf*, etc.] That is, the cedars, the branches being broken off, or they torn up by the roots, and tossed about by the wind; which motion is compared to that of a calf that leaps and skips about;

*Lebanon and Sirion, like a young unicorn*; that is, these mountains move and skip about through the force of thunder, and the violence of an earthquake attending it; so historians report that mountains have moved from place to place, and they have met and dashed against one another <sup>f446</sup>. Sirion was a mountain in Judea near to Lebanon, and is the same with Hermon; which was called by the Sidonians Sirion, and by the Amorites Shenir, (<sup><R8B></sup>Deuteronomy 3:9). This may regard the inward motions of the mind, produced by the Gospel of Christ under a divine influence; (see <sup><38B></sup>Isaiah 35:6 40:4-8).

**Ver. 7.** *The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire*.] Or “cutteth with flames of fire” <sup>f447</sup>; that is, the thunder breaks through the clouds with flames of fire, or lightning, as that is sometimes called, (<sup><D95B></sup>Psalm 105:32); and with which it cleaves asunder trees and masts of ships, cuts and hews them down, and divides them into a thousand shivers. Some refer this, in the figurative and mystical sense, to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai <sup>f448</sup>, on which the Lord descended in fire, and from his right hand went a fiery law; but rather this may be applied to the cloven or divided tongues of fire which sat upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, as an emblem of

the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit bestowed on them; though it seems best of all, as before, to understand this of the voice of Christ in the Gospel, which cuts and hews down all the goodness of men, and lays them to the ground, (<sup><3065></sup>Hosea 6:5); and is of a dividing nature, and lays open all the secrets of the heart, (<sup><3042></sup>Hebrews 4:12); and, through the corruption or human nature, is the occasion of dividing one friend from another, (<sup><0125></sup>Luke 12:51,52); and like flames of fire it has both light and heat in it; it is the means of enlightening men's eyes to see their sad estate, and their need of Christ, and salvation by him; and of warming their souls with its refreshing truths and promises, and of inflaming their love to God and Christ, and of setting their affections on things above, and of causing their hearts to burn within them.

**Ver. 8.** *The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness*, etc.] The ground of it, the trees in it, and the beasts that harbour there; and causes them to be in pain, and to bring forth their young, as the <sup>f449</sup> word signifies, and as it is rendered in (<sup><0329></sup>Psalm 29:9); all which effects thunder produces, and may mystically signify the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and the consequence of it. The Gentile world may be compared to a wilderness, and is called the wilderness of the people, (<sup><0415></sup>Ezekiel 20:35); the inhabitants of it being ignorant, barren, and unfruitful; and the conversion of them is expressed by turning a wilderness into a fruitful land, (<sup><2380></sup>Isaiah 35:1,2,6,7 41:18,19); and the Gospel being sent thither has been the means of shaking the minds of many with strong and saving convictions; which made them tremble and cry out, what shall we do to be saved?

*the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh*; which was the terrible wilderness that the children of Israel passed through to Canaan's land; the same with the wilderness of Zin, (<sup><0335></sup>Numbers 33:36); and was called Kadesh from the city of that name, on the borders of Edom, (<sup><0405></sup>Numbers 20:1,16); the Targum paraphrases it,

“The word of the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Rekam;”

in the Targum in the King's Bible it is,

“makes the serpents in the wilderness of Rekam to tremble;”

but that thunder frightens them, I have not met with in any writer.

**Ver. 9.** *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve*, etc.] Which being timorous creatures, the bringing forth of their young, which is naturally

very painful and difficult, is lessened and facilitated by thunder; they being either so frightened with it that they feel not their pains; or their pains, being hastened by it, become more easy; and naturalists observe, that the time of bringing forth their young is at that season of the year when thunder is most frequent; (see <sup><830></sup>Job 39:1-4). Thunder has a like effect on sheep, and makes them abortive <sup>f450</sup>: this may be applied to the Gospel, which is the means of bringing forth souls to Christ by his churches and ministers; who may very fitly be compared to hinds for their love and loveliness, their swiftness and readiness to do the will of Christ, and their eager desires after communion with him, (<sup><215></sup>Proverbs 5:19 <sup><98></sup>Psalms 18:2,3 42:1);

*and discovereth the forests*; or “maketh bare” <sup>f451</sup>: by beating off the leaves and branches of trees, and them to the ground; or by causing the wild beasts that frequent them to retire to their holes and dens; which effects are produced by thunder; and this aptly agrees with the Gospel, which is a revelation of secrets, of the thickets and deep things of God; of his council, covenant, mind, and will; and of the mysteries of his grace to the sons of men, and generally to babes, or men of their capacities; and of its stripping them of all their own righteousness, and dependence on it;

*and in his temple doth everyone speak of [his] glory*; either in heaven, where angels and glorified saints are continually employed in speaking of his glorious name, nature, and works; or in the temple, or tabernacle at Jerusalem, where the Levites stood to praise the Lord morning and evening, and where the tribes went up to worship, and to give thanks unto the Lord, (<sup><123></sup>1 Chronicles 23:30 <sup><121></sup>Psalms 122:4); or the church of God, which is the temple of the living God, whither saints resort, and where they dwell, and speak of the glory of God, of his divine perfections, and of his works of creation and providence; and of the glory of the person of Christ, and salvation by him; and of the glorious work of grace begun in their souls by the blessed Spirit; for hither such as have heard the voice of Christ, and have felt the power of it, and have found it to be a soul-shaking, an heart-breaking, and an illuminating voice, come, and declare it to the glory of the grace of God.

**Ver. 10.** *The Lord sitteth upon the flood*, etc.] Noah’s flood; which is always designed by the word here used, the Lord sat and judged the old world for its wickedness, and brought a flood upon them, and destroyed them; and then he abated it, sent a wind to assuage the waters, stopped up

the windows of heaven, and the fountains of the great deep, and restrained rain from heaven; and he now sits upon the confidence of waters in the heavens, at the time of a thunder storm, which threatens with an overflowing flood; and he remembers his covenant, and restrains them from destroying the earth any more: and he sits upon the floods of ungodly men, and stops their rage and fury, and suffers them not to proceed to overwhelm his people and interest; and so the floods of afflictions of every kind, and the floods of Satan's temptations, and of errors and heresies, are at his control, and he permits them to go so far, and no farther;

*yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever:* he is King of the whole world, over angels and men, and even the kings of the earth; and he is also King of saints, in whose hearts he reigns by his Spirit and grace; and the Gospel dispensation is more eminently his kingdom, in which his spiritual government is most visible; and this will more appear in the latter day glory, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth; and after which the Lord Christ will reign with his saints here a thousand years, and then with them to all eternity, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

**Ver. 11.** *The Lord will give strength unto his people,* etc.] His special people, his covenant people, whom he has chosen for himself; these are encompassed with infirmities, and are weak in themselves; but there is strength for them in Christ: the Lord promises it unto them, and bestows it on them, and which is a pure gift of his grace unto them; this may more especially regard that strength, power, and dominion, which will be given to the people of the most High in the latter day; since it follows, upon the account of the everlasting kingdom of Christ;

*the Lord will bless his people with peace:* with internal peace, which is peculiar to them, and to which wicked men are strangers; and which arises from a comfortable apprehension of justification by the righteousness of Christ, of pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; and is enjoyed in a way of believing; and with external peace in the latter day, when there shall be no more war with them, nor persecution of them; but there shall be abundance of peace, and that without end; and at last with eternal peace, which is the end of the perfect and upright man; and the whole is a great blessing.