

PSALM 30

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 30

A Psalm [and] Song [at] the dedication of the house of David

This is the first time that a psalm is called a song; some psalms are called by one name, some by another, and some by both, as here; and some are called hymns: to which distinction of them the apostle refers in (~~415B~~ Ephesians 5:19). A psalm was sung upon musical instruments, a song with the voice; it may be this psalm was sung both ways: the occasion of it was the dedication of David's house: the Targum interprets it of the house of the sanctuary, the temple; and so most of the Jewish commentators ^{f452}; which might be called his house, because it was his intention to build it; his heart was set upon it, he provided materials for it, and gave his son Solomon the form of it, and a charge to build it; and, as is thought, composed this psalm to be sung, and which was sung by the Levites at the dedication of it: others, as Aben Ezra, are of opinion it was his own dwelling house, made of cedar, which he dedicated according to the law of Moses, with sacrifices and offerings, prayer and thanksgiving, (~~415B~~ 2 Samuel 5:11 7:2 ~~415B~~ Deuteronomy 20:5); so Apollinarius calls it a new house David built; but since there is nothing in the whole psalm that agrees with the dedication, either of the temple, or of David's own private house, it seems better, with other interpreters, to understand it of the purging of David's house from the wickedness and incest of his son Absalom, upon his return to it, when the rebellion raised by him was extinguished; which might be reckoned a new dedication of it; (see ~~415B~~ 2 Samuel 20:3); and to a deliverance from such troubles this psalm well agrees. Theodoret interprets it of the restoration of the human nature by Christ, through his resurrection from the dead.

Ver. 1. *I will extol thee, O Lord,* etc.] Or "lift thee up on high" ^{f453}. The Lord is high in his name, he is the most High; and in his nature, there is none besides him, nor like unto him; and in place, he dwells in the high and holy place; he is above all, angels and men; he is above all gods; he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; he cannot be higher than he is: to extol him, therefore, is to declare him to be what he is; to exalt him in high

praises of him, which the psalmist determined to do, for the following reasons;

for thou hast lifted me up; or “drawn me up”, or “out” ^{f454}; from the pit of nature; the low estate of unregeneracy; the pit wherein is no water: the horrible pit, the mire and clay of sin and misery, in which all men, while unconverted, are; and out of which they cannot lift themselves, being without strength, yea, dead in sin: this is God’s work; he takes out of this pit, he draws out of it by his efficacious grace; he raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill; and this is an instance of his grace and mercy, and requires a new song of praise: or this may regard some great fall by sin, from which he was restored, through the grace and power of God; or deliverance from great troubles, compared to waters, out of which he was drawn, (⁴⁹⁸⁶Psalm 18:16); and was lifted up above his enemies; and agrees very well with his being brought to his palace and throne again, upon the defeat of Absalom;

and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me; as Satan does over unregenerate sinners, when he possesses their hearts, and keeps the house and goods in peace; and as the men of the world do over fallen saints, when forsaken by the Lord, and afflicted by him, and are under the frowns of his providence; but the conspirators against David were not suffered to succeed and rejoice over him, which they otherwise would have done; and for this he praises the Lord.

Ver. 2. *O Lord my God, I cried unto thee*, etc.] In the time of his distress and trouble; and whither should he go but unto his covenant God and Father?

and thou hast healed me: either of some bodily disease that attended him; for the Lord is the physician of the body, as well as of the soul; and that either immediately, or by giving a blessing to means used; and the glory of such a mercy should be given to him: or else of soul diseases, which are natural and hereditary, epidemical, nauseous, mortal, and incurable, but by the grace of God and blood of Christ; and the healing: of them either respects the pardon of them at first conversion; for healing diseases, and forgiving iniquities, signify one and the same thing; or else fresh discoveries and applications of pardoning grace, after falls into sin, which are an healing backslidings, and restoring comforts; and this is God’s work; none can heal but himself, and he does it effectually, universally, and freely, and which calls for thankfulness, (⁴⁹³⁰Psalm 103:1-3); or this may be

understood in a civil sense, of restoring him to his house, his throne and kingdom, and the peace of it.

Ver. 3. *O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave*, etc.] When his life being in danger, was near unto it, (~~882~~ Job 33:22,28); otherwise the soul dies not, nor does it lie and sleep in the grave; or “thou hast brought up my soul from hell” ^{f455}; that is, delivered him from those horrors of conscience and terrors of mind, by reason of sin, which were as hell itself unto him; (see ~~883~~ Psalm 116:3 Jon 2:4);

thou hast kept me alive: preserved his corporeal life when in danger, and maintained his spiritual life; and quickened him by his word, under all his afflictions, and kept him from utter and black despair;

that I should not go down to the pit; either of the grave or hell. There is in this clause a “Keri” and a “Cetib”; a marginal reading, and a textual writing: according to the latter it is, “from them that go down to the pit”; which some versions ^{f456} follow; that is, thou hast preserved me from going along with them, and being where and as they are: our version follows the former; the sense is the same.

Ver. 4. *Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his*, etc.] Such to whom he has been gracious and merciful, and has blessed with pardoning grace, and justifying righteousness, adoption, and a right to eternal life; and who are holy godly persons; in whose hearts principles of grace and holiness are formed; and who are kind and bountiful to others: all which the word ^{f457} here used signifies: and these are the Lord’s; they are set apart for him, and they are sanctified by him; and therefore should sing his praises, both vocally, and with melody in their hearts;

and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness; which is essential to him, and in which he is glorious; and which appears in all his ways and works of providence and grace, and both in the redemption and sanctification of his people; and besides this, there is the holiness of Christ, which is imputed to his saints, and the sanctification of the Spirit, which is wrought in them; and at the remembrance of each of these it highly becomes them to give thanks to the Lord, since hereby they are made meet to be partakers of his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 5. *For his anger [endureth but] a moment*, etc.] Anger is not properly in God, he being a simple, uncompounded, immovable, and unchangeable being; nor is it ever towards his people in reality, unless

anger is distinguished from wrath, and is considered as consistent with his everlasting and invariable love to them; but only in their apprehension, he doing those things which in some respects are similar to those which men do when they are angry; he turns away from them and hides his face, he chides, chastises, and afflicts, and then they conclude he is angry; and when he returns again and takes off his hand, manifests his pardoning love, and comforts them, then they understand it that his anger is turned away from them; for in this improper sense of it, and as his children conceive of it, it is but for a moment, or a very short time: he forsakes them but for a moment, and their light afflictions endure no longer, (^{<23547>}Isaiah 54:7,8 ^{<40417>}2 Corinthians 4:17);

in his favour [is] life; by which is meant his free love and favour in Christ towards his people; and designs either the duration of it, that it lives and always is, even when he seems to be angry, and that it lasts as long as life does, yea, to all eternity; neither death nor life can separate from it; or the object of it, God delighting not in the death but the life of a sinner; or rather the effects of it, it is what makes the present life to be properly life, and really comfortable; without it men may be said rather to be dead than to live, notwithstanding all enjoyments; and therefore it is better than life, abstracted from it, (^{<19518>}Psalm 63:3); it quickens the soul in a spiritual sense, and makes grace lively; it invigorates faith, encourages hope, and makes love to abound, and it issues in eternal life;

weeping may endure for a night; the allusion is to the time when afflictions are usually most heavy and pressing upon persons, when they most feel them, or, however, are free from diversion, and at leisure to bemoan themselves; and may point at the season of weeping, and cause of it, the night of affliction, or of darkness and desertion, and denotes the short continuance of it; weeping is here represented as a person, and as a lodger, for the word may be rendered “lodge” ^{f458}; but then it is as a wayfaring man, who continues but for a night; (see ^{<23174>}Isaiah 17:14);

but joy [cometh] in the morning; alluding to the time when all nature is fresh and gay, when man rises cheerful from his rest, darkness removes, light breaks forth, and the sun rises and sheds its beams, and everything looks pleasant and delightful; moreover, the mercies of God are new every morning, which cause joy, and call for thankfulness; and especially it is a time of joy after weeping and darkness, when the sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings; as it will be to perfection in the

resurrection morn, when the dead in Christ will rise first, and be like to him, and reign with him for evermore.

Ver. 6. *And in my prosperity*, etc.] Either outward prosperity, when he was settled in his kingdom, and as acknowledged king by all the tribes of Israel, and had gotten the victory over all his enemies, and was at rest from them round about; or inward and spiritual prosperity, having a spiritual appetite for the word, being in the lively exercise of grace, growing in it, and in the knowledge of Christ; favoured with communion with God, having flesh discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy, corruptions being subdued, the inward man renewed with spiritual strength, and more fruitful in every good word and work. This being the case,

I said, I shall never be moved; so in outward prosperity men are apt to sing a requiem to themselves, and fancy it will always be thus with them, be in health of body, and enjoying the affluence of temporal things, and so put away the evil day in one sense and another from them; and even good men themselves are subject to this infirmity, (~~1808~~ Job 29:18-20); and who also, when in comfortable frames of soul, and in prosperous circumstances in spiritual things, are ready to conclude it will always be thus with them, or better. Indeed they can never be moved as to their state and condition with respect to God; not from his heart, where they are set as a seal; nor out of the arms of Christ, and covenant of grace; nor out of the family of God; nor from a state of justification and grace; but they may be moved as to the exercise of grace and discharge of duty, in which they vary; and especially when they are self-confident, and depend upon their own strength for the performance of these things, and for a continuance in such frames, which seems to have been David's case; and therefore he corrects himself, and his sense of things, in (~~1807~~ Psalm 30:7).

Ver. 7. *Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong*, etc.] The psalmist found himself mistaken, and acknowledges it; that as it was not owing to his own merit that he enjoyed the prosperity that he did, so neither was the continuance of it owing to his goodness, power, and strength, but to the free grace and favour of God; as the church of God is compared to a mountain, and the several individuals of believers are like to Mount Zion, so the soul of a child of God may be called his mountain, which is made strong by the Lord as to its state in Christ, being set on him, the Rock of ages, and sure foundation, where it is safe and secure; and as

to its grace, whenever it is in any strong exercise, which is altogether owing to the favour of God, and continues as long as he pleases;

thou didst hide thy face, [and] I was troubled; the Lord may hide his face from his people, and yet their state be safe; their mountain stands strong in that respect; yet this generally produces a change of frames; it gives trouble, and faith and hope become feeble and languid in their acts and exercises; this shows the changeableness of frames, that they are not to be depended upon; that they are entirely owing to the pleasure of God, and that rejoicing only should be in him: very likely some regard is had to the affair of Absalom's rebellion, which came unawares, unthought of, when David was in the greatest prosperity and security.

Ver. 8. *I cried to thee, O Lord*, etc.] In his trouble, when the Lord had hid his face from him, and he was sensible that he had departed from him: he was not stupid and unaffected with it; nor did he turn his back upon God, and seek to others; but he cried after a departing God, which showed love to him, and some degree of faith in him, by looking again towards his holy temple, and waiting upon him until he returned;

and unto the Lord I made supplication; in the most humble manner; entreating his grace and mercy, and that he would again show him his face and favour.

Ver. 9. *What profit [is there] in my blood?* etc.] Should that be shed, and he die by the hands of his enemies, through divine permission: death is not profitable to a man's self by way of merit; it does not atone for sin, satisfy justice, and merit heaven; even the death of martyrs, and of such who shed their blood, died in the cause of Christ, and for his sake, is not meritorious; it does not profit in such sense: there is profit in no blood but in the blood of Christ, by which peace is made, pardon procured, and redemption obtained. Indeed death is consequentially profitable to good men; it is an outlet of all sorrows and afflictions, and the inlet of joy and happiness; it is the saints' passage to heaven, and upon it they are immediately with Christ, and rest from their labours: nor is there profit in the blood of the saints to them that shed it; for when inquisition is made for it, vengeance will be taken on them who have shed it, and blood will be given them to drink, as will be particularly to antichrist: nor is there any profit in it to the Lord himself; which seems to be what is chiefly designed, since it is used by the psalmist as an argument with him in prayer, that he might not be left by him, and to his enemies, so as to perish, since no glory could accrue to

God by it from them; they would not give him thanks for it, but ascribe it to themselves, and say their own hand had done it; so far, the psalmist suggests, would his death be from being profitable to God, that it would rather be a loss to the interest of religion; since he had not as yet fully restored religion, and settled the pure worship of God in order, and made the preparations for the building the house of God he intended. God may be glorified in the death of his people; either by their dying in the faith of interest in him; or by suffering death for his name's sake; but, in a strict sense, there is nothing either in life or death in which man can be profitable unto God; (see ^{<1821>}Job 22:2,3 35:7,8); some understand this of life; because the life is in the blood: as if the sense was, of what advantage is life to me? it would have been better for the if I had never been born, had had no life and being at all, if I must for ever be banished from thy presence, and go down to the pit of hell, which they suppose is designed in the following phrase;

when I go down to the pit; though the grave seems rather to be meant, and the former sense is best;

shall the dust praise thee? that is, men, whose original is dust, being reduced to dust again, as the body at death, when laid in the grave, and corrupted there, is; this lifeless dust cannot praise the Lord: the soul indeed dies not with the body; nor does it sleep in the grave with it; nor is it unemployed in heaven; but is continually engaged in the high praises of God: but the sense of the psalmist is, that should he die, and be buried, and be reduced to dust, he should no more praise the Lord in the land of the living, among men, to the glory of divine grace and goodness; so that this revenue of his glory would be lost. Shall it declare thy truth? either the truth of the Gospel, which lies in the word of God; or rather the faithfulness of God in the performance of his promises; (see ^{<1900>}Psalms 40:10 ^{<2338>}Isaiah 38:18,19).

Ver. 10. *Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me*, etc.] By lifting up the light of his countenance again upon him; by manifesting and applying his pardoning grace to him, and by delivering him out of all his afflictions;

Lord, be thou my helper; in this time of trouble; for he knew that vain was the help of man; and he was entirely in the right to betake himself to the Lord, who was able to help him, when none else could.

Ver. 11. *Those hast turned for me my mourning into dancing*, etc.] This, with what follows, expresses the success he had in seeking the Lord by prayer and supplication; there was a sudden change of things, as it often is with the people of God; sometimes they are mourning by reason of sin, their own and others; or on account of afflictions; or because of spiritual decays; or through the temptations of Satan; or, as it was the case of the psalmist now, because of the hidings of God's face; but this mourning is exchanged for joy and gladness when the Lord discovers his pardoning love, revives his work in their souls, takes off his afflicting hand from them, rebukes the tempter, and delivers out of his temptations, and shows himself, his grace and favour;

thou hast put off my sackcloth; which was used in mourning for relations, and in times of calamity and distress, and as a token of humiliation and repentance, (^{<01374>}Genesis 37:34 ^{<1001>}Esther 4:1 Jon 3:8);

and girded me with gladness; by these phrases the same thing is signified as before; (see ^{<23013>}Isaiah 61:3).

Ver. 12. *To the end that [my] glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent*, etc.] Meaning either his soul, the more noble and glorious part of him; or the members of his body, his tongue, which is the glory of it, and with which he glorified God; (see ^{<091619>}Psalm 16:9); compared with (^{<41212>}Acts 2:26), this was the end that was to be answered by changing the scene of things; and which was answered;

O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever; to the end of life, as long as he had a being, and to all eternity, (^{<091433>}Psalm 104:33). Jerom interprets the whole psalm of the resurrection of Christ.