

PSALM 31

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 31

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David

This psalm, according to Arama, was composed by David when in Keilah; but, according to Kimchi and others, when the Ziphites proposed to deliver him up into the hands of Saul; and who, upon their solicitations, came down and surrounded him with his army, from whom in haste he made his escape, and to which he is thought to refer in (¹⁸¹²Psalm 31:22). Theodoret supposes it was written by David when he fled from Absalom, and that it has some respect in it to his sin against Uriah, in that verse.

Ver. 1. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust*, etc.] Not in any creature, but in the Lord Jehovah; the Targum, “in thy Word”; the essential Logos, or Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, and so an equal object of faith, trust, and confidence, as Jehovah the Father: this act includes a trusting all with God, body and soul, and the welfare of them, in time, and to eternity; and a trusting him for all things, both of providence and grace, and for both grace and glory, and is a continued act; for the psalmist does not say, “I have trusted”, or “I will trust”, but “I do”; and this was a very consider able thing to do in this time of his distress: the Lord is to be trusted in at all times;

let me never be ashamed; neither in this world, nor in that to come. The believer has no reason to be ashamed of anything in this life but sin, and the imperfection of his own righteousness, and his trust in it; not of the Lord, in whom he trusts; nor of his Word, or Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom he believes as his Saviour and Redeemer; nor of the Spirit, and his work of grace upon him; nor of his faith, hope, trust, and confidence in them; nor of the Gospel, the means of faith, and of the support of it; nor of, the reproaches, afflictions, and sufferings, he endures for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; nor of his ordinances and his people; nor will he be ashamed hereafter at the coming of Christ, when he will appear in his righteousness, be clothed with white robes, have palms in his hands, and shall stand at his right hand, and be received into glory;

deliver me in thy righteousness; not in his own, by which he knew there was no acceptance with God, no justification before him, nor any deliverance and salvation from sin and death; but by the righteousness of God, which the Son of God has wrought out, God the Father accepts of and imputes, and the Spirit of God reveals and applies; by this there is deliverance from sin, its guilt, and damning power, and from the curses and condemnation of the law, and from wrath to come, and from the second death.

Ver. 2. *Bow down thine ear to me*, etc.] Which is said after the manner of men, who, when they give attention, and listen to anything, stoop, and incline the ear; and this for God to do, as he sometimes does, is wonderful condescending grace!

deliver me speedily; which shows that he was in great danger, and his case required haste: the Lord does help right early, and is sometimes a present help in time of need, and delivers at once, as soon as the mercy is asked for;

be thou my strong rock: for shelter and security from enemies, as well as to build his everlasting salvation on, and to stand firmly upon, and out of danger;

for an house of defence to save me; both for an house to dwell in, Lord being the dwelling place of his people in all generations, and a strong habitation to which they may continually resort; and for protection and safety, their place of defence in him being the munition of rocks, a strong hold, and a strong tower from the enemy.

Ver. 3. *For thou [art] my rock and my fortress*, etc.] What he prayed for he knew him to be, and to have been in times past, and could claim his interest in him; and therefore entreats that he would appear to be to him what he was in himself, and what he had been to him;

therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me; either as a shepherd does his flock, gently, as they are able to bear it; into the green pastures of the word and ordinances, and beside the still waters of divine love, and to the overflowing fountain, and fulness of grace in himself; or as a general leads and guides his army; Christ being a Leader and Commander of the people, and the great Captain of their salvation, and who being at the head of them, they fear no enemy; or as a guide leads and directs such as are ignorant, and out of the way. The psalmist desires the Lord would lead him

in the way of truth and paths of righteousness, according to his word; and guide him with his counsel, and by his Spirit, that so he might walk in the way in which he should go; and this he entreats he would do “for [his] name’s sake”; not for any merit or worthiness in him; but for the glory of his own name, and for the honour of his free grace and mercy, for which the Lord often does many things; he defers his anger, he purges away the sins of his people, he forgives their transgressions, and remembers their sins no more, for his name’s sake.

Ver. 4. *Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me*, etc.] The Ziphites, and Saul, and his men; the former intending treacherously to betray him, and the latter encompassing him about in order to take him; and such was his danger and difficulty, that he saw none but God could deliver him; and he it is that breaks the nets of men, and the snares of the devil, which they secretly lay for the people of God, that they may stumble, and fall, and be taken, and delivers them out of them;

for thou [art] my strength; the author, giver, and maintainer, both of his natural and spiritual strength; and who was able, and was only able, to pull him out of the net, and extricate him out of the difficulties in which he was.

Ver. 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit*, etc.] Either his life, as to a faithful Creator and Preserver, who was the God of his life, gave him it, and upheld his soul in it; or his soul, and the eternal salvation of it, which he committed into the hand of the Lord his Redeemer, where he knew it would be safe, and out of whose hands none can pluck; or this he might say, as apprehensive of immediate death, through the danger he was in; and therefore commits his spirit into the hands of God, to whom he knew it belonged, and to whom it returns at death, and dies not with the body, but exists in a separate state, and would be immediately with him. Our Lord Jesus Christ used the same words when he was expiring on the cross, and seems to have taken them from hence, or to refer to these, (²³⁴⁶Luke 23:46);

thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth; which may be understood, either of the temporal redemption of his life from destruction in times past, which encouraged him to commit his life into the hands of God now, who was the same, and changed not; or of spiritual and eternal redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and which the psalmist speaks of as if it was past, though it was to come, because of the certainty of it; just as Isaiah speaks of the incarnation and sufferings of Christ, (²³⁰⁶Isaiah 9:6 53:4-6);

and of which he was assured, because the Lord, who had provided, appointed, and promised the Redeemer, was the God of truth, and was faithful to every word of promise; and Christ, who had engaged to be the Redeemer, was faithful to him that appointed him; and having an interest therefore in this plenteous redemption, by virtue of which he was the Lord's, he committed himself into his hands.

Ver. 6. *I have hated them that regard lying vanities*, etc.] Soothsaying and divination, as Aben Ezra and others think; made use of by kings, and generals of armies, to know when it was proper to go out to war, and what success they should have; (see ^{<3622>}Ezekiel 21:21-23 ^{<3800>}Hosea 4:10); but such men and their practices David abhorred; he took no such methods when in distress, but applied to the Lord, and trusted in him; or rather idol gods, as Jarchi, and others, who are vanity, and the work of errors, and are nothing in the world; (see Jon 2:8); all will worship and superstition may be included in this phrase, which being not according to the will and word of God, is worshipping in vain, and carries off from true spiritual worship; and so is a lying vanity, and to be detested, and the abettors of it: as also all errors and heresies; these are great swelling words of vanity, and are lies in hypocrisy; and likewise all immorality and wickedness, which spring from the vanity of the mind, and promise much liberty and pleasure, but deceive, and therefore lying; yea, all worldly enjoyments are vanity and vexation of spirit, and are fallacious and deceitful when trusted in; and indeed every false trust and confidence may come under this name; such as trust in riches, in wisdom and knowledge, in carnal descent, and privileges, in a moral and legal righteousness, and even in a bare profession of true religion, and a subjection to Gospel ordinances; for there is no true object of trust, no Redeemer and Saviour, but the Lord: now such as regard those lying vanities are they that look to them, love them, embrace them, and put their confidence in them; and such are to be "hated"; not their persons, but their principles and practices, and they themselves are to be shunned and abstained from;

but I trust in the Lord; the God of truth, that cannot lie, deny himself, nor deceive; who is unchangeable, and without any variableness, or shadow of turning.

Ver. 7. *I will be glad, and rejoice in thy mercy*, etc.] Both because of the nature of it, which is large and abundant, free and sovereign, from everlasting to everlasting, and is communicated in and through Christ, and

is a good ground of hope and trust; and because of the effects of it, or what it has produced; for to it are owing the covenant of grace, and all the sure mercies of it; the mission of Christ, and redemption by him; regeneration, and the forgiveness of sins, and even eternal life and glory; besides a multitude of blessings, deliverances, and salvations in Providence; on account of all which there is great reason for joy and gladness; of which the following are particulars;

for thou hast considered my trouble; inward, arising from indwelling sin, doubts and fears, desertions and darkness, and Satan's temptations; and outward, from the world, and the men of it, and by reason of bodily afflictions: now the Lord looks upon the troubles of his people, and upon them in them, with an eye of pity and compassion; he sympathizes with them; he considers the nature of their trouble, their weakness to bear it, and the best way, in time, and time to deliver out of it; he working all things after the counsel of his own will; (see ^{<11818>}Exodus 3:7);

thou hast known my soul in adversities; that is, the Lord had took notice of him, approved of him, loved him, had visited him, and made known his love to him, and owned him for his own, and had chosen him in the furnace of affliction; a time and season when oftentimes friends and acquaintance are shy, and will not look upon men, know them, and own them; but the Lord does otherwise, and which is another reason of joy and gladness in his mercy.

Ver. 8. *And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy*, etc.] When in Keilah, in the wilderness of Ziph, and Maon, and encompassed about by Saul and his army, (^{<11827>}1 Samuel 23:7,13,14,24-26); nor does the Lord suffer his people to be shut up under the power of sin and Satan, so that they cannot come forth in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty: but he brings their souls out of prison, that they may praise his name;

thou hast set my feet in a large room; at full liberty from his enemies; Saul and his army being called off from pursuing him, by tidings of an invasion by the Philistines, (^{<11827>}1 Samuel 23:27-29); and this is the case of the saints when they are brought to Christ, to walk by faith at large on him; when grace is drawn forth into exercise, and spiritual knowledge is increased, and they are delivered from their enemies; or, however, can look upon them as conquered ones, and are sure of victory over them, and at last of an entire deliverance from them; (see ^{<11840>}Psalms 4:1 18:19 118:5).

Ver. 9. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble*, etc.] A sudden change of case and frame this! and so it is with the people of God; as soon as, out of one trouble, they are in another; these are what are appointed for them, and lie in their pathway to heaven, and are necessary; and under them it is quite right to betake themselves to the Lord, who is a merciful God; and it is best to cast themselves upon his mercy, having no merit of their own to plead with him; and they may freely tell him all their distresses, as the psalmist here does, and hope for grace and mercy to help them in time of need;

mine eye, is consumed with grief; expressed by tears; through the multitude of which, by reason of trouble, his sight was greatly harmed; according to Jarchi, the word signifies, that his sight was so dim as is a man's when he puts a glass before his eyes, to see what is beyond the glass: this shows that the invention of spectacles was before the year 1105; for in that year Jarchi died; and proves it more early than any other writer has pretended to ^{f459}; for the commonly received opinion is, that they were invented at the latter end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century; but the apostle, as A-Lapide thinks, respects them, in (~~<4632>~~1 Corinthians 13:12); and they are mentioned by Plautus ^{f460}, who lived almost two hundred years before the birth of Christ: the same Jarchi observes on (~~<4607>~~Psalm 6:7);

[*yea*], *my soul and my belly*; perhaps he could not eat his food, or digest it, which brought upon him internal disorders, and even brought his soul or life into danger.

Ver. 10. *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing*, etc.] Which shows the continuance of his troubles, and that his whole life had been, as it were, an uninterrupted series of sorrows;

my strength faileth because of mine iniquity; this opens the source and spring of all his grief and trouble; his sin, and the sin of his nature, in which he was conceived and born; indwelling sin, which remained and worked in him; and it may be also the sin of unbelief, which beset him, and prevailed in him, notwithstanding the instances of divine goodness, the declarations of grace, the discoveries of love, and the exceeding great and precious promises he had made to him; as also his daily sins and infirmities, and very likely some great backslidings, which had brought grief of soul upon him, and which grief affected the several parts of his body. Sin was the cause of the failure of natural strength in Adam and his posterity; of diseases and

death, by which their strength is weakened in the way; and was the cause of impairing moral strength in men to do that which is good, and has a very great influence on the spiritual strength of the Lord's people, in the exercise of grace;

and my bones are consumed; which are the firmest and strongest parts of the human body, and the support of it.

Ver. 11. *I was a reproach among all mine enemies*, etc.] This is a common case of the people of God; and though it may be the least of their afflictions, yet it is not grateful to the flesh; and it is as it is made: under divine supports saints rejoice, and take pleasure in reproaches, that they are counted worthy to bear them, and esteem them as great riches; at other times they seize and feed upon their spirits, and are ready to break their hearts;

but especially among my neighbours; who knew him, and knew he did not deserve to be so treated; and who ought, as neighbours, to have loved him, and done all good offices to him; so that this is an aggravation both of their sin and his distress;

and a fear to mine acquaintance; not that they were afraid that he should do them any mischief; but they were afraid to own him, and to do him any service; unless the sense is, that they were afraid that evil would befall him, that he should not escape with his life; which, though it may express the affectionate concern of his friends, yet shows the danger he was exposed to;

they that did see me without fled from me; as if he had something very pestilential and infectious about him.

Ver. 12. *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind*, etc.] Either by his friends, being out of sight, out of mind; as even the nearest relations and acquaintance are, in process of time, when dead, (²¹⁰⁵Ecclesiastes 9:5); or by the Lord; which shows the weakness of his faith, the uncomfortable frame he was in, through darkness and desertion; (see ¹⁹⁸⁵Psalm 88:5 ²³⁰⁴Isaiah 49:14-16);

I am like a broken vessel; or a "perishing vessel"^{f461}; or "a vessel of perdition"^{f462}; the Septuagint version renders it "a lost vessel"^{f463}; one entirely useless, wholly lost, and irrecoverably so; like a broken vessel, which can never be put together again, (²³⁰⁴Isaiah 30:14 ²⁴⁹¹Jeremiah

19:11); a most sad apprehension he had of himself, as if his case was desperate, and he a vessel of wrath; compare with this, (~~402~~Romans 9:22).

Ver. 13. *For I have heard the slander of many*, etc.] Both enemies and neighbours;

fear [was] on every side; his enemies were a “Magormissabib” to him, (~~203~~Jeremiah 20:3); encompassed him around, so that he was in fear from every quarter;

while they took counsel together against me; how to apprehend him, and what to do with him;

they devised to take away my life; nothing short of that would satisfy; but life is in the hand of God; men may devise, but God disappoints, and his counsel stands; hence the psalmist was encouraged, after all, to trust in him, in this time of imminent danger, as follows.

Ver. 14. *But I trusted in thee, O Lord*, etc.] His faith revived again under all the discouraging views he had of things, and was exercised upon the Lord; he committed himself to him, believing he was able to help him in his time of trouble, and deliver him;

I said, thou [art] my God; he claimed his covenant interest in him, and used it as an argument with him to have regard unto him, and as a support to his faith in his present distress; (see Gill on “~~300~~Psalm 7:1”).

Ver. 15. *My times [are] in thy hand*, etc.] And not in the hand of his enemies; as his time of life and death, which was only by the direction and appointment of God, was in his power, and fixed by him; nor could his enemies take away his life before his time, and without the will of his covenant God: the time of his coming to the throne, and what was gone over him during his reign hitherto, (~~100~~1 Chronicles 29:30); and all his times of trouble in it; times of prosperity and of adversity; of darkness, desertion, and temptation; and of joy, peace, and comfort; these were all in the hands of the Lord, at his disposal, and ordered by him for the good of his servant, and for the glory of his own name; and this was a quieting consideration to the psalmist under his present trials and exercises; the Targum is, “the times of my redemption”

deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me; a good man has many enemies, and even his very goodness creates him

such; for wicked men are enemies to all that is good; and those are persecuting ones, in one way or other; either by words or deeds; and deliverance out of their hands is by the Lord, who sometimes gives his people rest from adversity, and suffers not the rod of the wicked to continue on them; and therefore it is best to apply to him for it.

Ver. 16. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant*, etc.] In which he prays for the gracious presence of God, the manifestations of himself unto him, the discoveries of his love, the enjoyment of him in Christ, communion with him, the comforts of his Spirit, and joys of his salvation; (see ^{<1065>}Numbers 6:25,26);

save me for thy mercies' sake; not for any merit and righteousness of his own, but for the sake of the grace and goodness of the Lord; which is putting salvation, whether temporal or spiritual, upon its right foot and foundation; which is never wrought out by, or is for works of righteousness done by men, but according to the grace and mercy of God.

Ver. 17. *Let me not be ashamed, O Lord*, etc.] The same petition as in (^{<1300>}Psalm 31:1);

for I have called upon thee; who is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth, and is rich unto them, and has promised to help and save them; which should he not do, not only he would be made ashamed, but the promise of God would seem to fail: for the psalmist does not plead any duty of his, nor make a merit of his prayers; but has respect to the promise and faithfulness of God;

let the wicked be ashamed; as they will be, sooner or later, of their wickedness, and of their false trust and confidence; of their being incensed against Christ, and their rage against his people, and persecution of them;

[*and*] *let them be silent in the grave*; as all are that are there; and the sense is, let them be brought to the grave, where they will be silent, or cease ^{f464}; that is, from their evil words and works, and particularly from troubling the saints, (^{<1307>}Job 3:17).

Ver. 18. *Let the lying lips be put to silence*, etc.] Being convicted of the lies told by them, and so silenced and confounded; or being cut off and destroyed, as all such will be in the Lord's own time, (^{<1913>}Psalm 12:3). It is very likely the psalmist may have respect either to Doeg the Edomite, who loved lying rather than righteousness; or to others that were about Saul,

who lying said to him that David sought his harm, even to take away his kingdom and his life, (^{<HEB>}Psalm 52:3 ^{<QUB>}1 Samuel 24:9);

which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous; meaning himself; not that he thought himself righteous in the sight of God by any righteousness of his own, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; (see ^{<HEB>}Psalm 143:2 ^{<ROM>}Romans 4:6). Though he may have regard here to the righteousness of his cause before men, and assert himself righteous, as he might with respect to the “grievous things”, the hard and lying speeches, which were spoken against him, in a proud, haughty, and contemptuous manner. And it is no unusual thing for such false charges to be brought against righteous men; nay, such hard speeches were spoken by ungodly men against Jesus Christ the righteous himself, (^{<JUD>}Jude 1:15). The Targum interprets it of “reproaches”.

Ver. 19. [*O*] *how great [is] thy goodness*, etc.] Not the natural and essential goodness of God; for though that is large and abundant, yea, infinite, as every perfection of his is, yet it cannot with propriety be said to be laid up and wrought out; but rather the effects of his goodness, and not those which appear in Providence, for they, though very large and plenteous, are common to all, and are not restrained to them that fear the Lord, and trust in him; but such as are displayed in a way of special grace and favour to his own people, and which the psalmist saw his interest in and was affected with; and which supported his faith under his present troubles, and appeared to be so great, both for quality and quantity, that he could not well say how great the blessings of his goodness were;

which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; both grace and glory; the blessings of grace were laid up in God’s heart, in his thoughts and purposes, from everlasting; and in Christ, in whom the fulness of all grace dwells; he was loaded with the blessings of goodness, and his people were blessed in him with all spiritual blessings, and had all grace given them in him before the world was; and these were likewise laid up in the covenant of grace, ordered in all things, and sure; eternal glory is the hope and crown of righteousness laid up in heaven, where it is reserved for the saints, who are heirs of it: and the laying up of all this goodness shows it to be a treasure, riches of grace, and riches of glory; and that it is an hidden treasure, and riches of secret places, which are out of the view of carnal men, and not perfectly seen and enjoyed by the people of God themselves as yet; and also that it is safe and secure for them, and can never be lost;

and it expresses the paternal care of God, his great love and affection for them, to lay up so early so much goodness for them: and this is said to be “for them that fear [him]”; not naturally, but by his grace; for the fear of God is not in man naturally, but is put there by the grace of God; and such who have it are those who are brought to a true sight and sense of sin, so as to loathe it and forsake it; for the fear of the Lord is to hate evil, and by it men depart from it, and because of it cannot sin as others do; such have an humble sense of themselves, their own insufficiency and weakness, and trust in the grace of God and righteousness of Christ; they have a filial reverence of God, and worship him in spirit and in truth: but now this fear of the Lord is not the cause of goodness being laid up for them, for that only is the will of God; and besides the fear of God is a part of the goodness which is laid up in promise in the covenant of grace, (³⁸²⁹Jeremiah 32:39,40); and it is the goodness of God displayed in the blessings of it, such as pardon of sin, etc. which influences, promotes, and increases the fear of God, (³⁸³⁵Hosea 3:5 ³⁸⁰⁴Psalm 130:4); but, goodness being manifested to and bestowed upon them that fear the Lord, it appears eventually to be laid up for them;

[which] thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! by which may be meant the work of redemption, in which the goodness of God greatly appears; in calling and appointing Christ unto it, in sending him to effect it, in strengthening him as man and Mediator to do it; and in the work itself, in which many things are wrought, the law is fulfilled, justice satisfied, a righteousness brought in, peace made, pardon procured, and everlasting salvation obtained. And whereas this is said to be “wrought for them that trust in” the Lord, it is not to be understood as if trusting in the Lord was the cause of this work being wrought out, which is the love of God and grace of Christ; but inasmuch as those that trust in the Lord have openly an interest in redemption, and they that believe in Christ shall be saved; therefore it clearly appears in the issue of things to be wrought out for them. The phrase “before the sons of men”, may be connected either with the goodness wrought, and so signifies that the work of redemption was done in a most public manner, openly before men, even the enemies of God’s people; nor was it in the power of men and devils to hinder it; or else with trusting in the Lord, and so is expressive of a public profession of faith and confidence in the Lord before men, which ought to be done: moreover this goodness wrought may include the good work of grace upon the soul; and the Lord’s fulfilling the good pleasure of his

goodness in the hearts of his people, and the work of faith with power on them; and also the many deliverances of them out of afflictions and temptations, and the many salvations from their enemies he works for them in the earth, before the sons of men.

Ver. 20. *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence*, etc.] That is, those that fear the Lord and trust in him; and therefore they are called his “hidden ones”, (^{<483B>}Psalm 83:3); these the Lord preserves in times of trouble and danger, and when his indignation is out against others; and so the Targum is, “in the time of thine anger”; (see ^{<233A>}Isaiah 26:20); the presence of God is their protection, he himself is a wall of fire round about them, his favour compasses them as a shield, and they are kept as in a garrison by his power; (see ^{<490E>}Psalm 91:1); and that “from the pride of man”, which otherwise would at once oppress, bear them down, and destroy them, (^{<8C0E>}Psalm 124:1-5);

thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues; which areas a sharp sword, and from whence proceed devouring words, such contradiction of sinners as Christ endured; not that the saints are kept free from the reproaches of men, from the lash of their tongues, but from being harmed by them; and sometimes, through the strivings and contentions of men with one another, they privately escape and are preserved, as the Apostle Paul was, (^{<423D>}Acts 23:9,10).

Ver. 21. *Blessed [be] the Lord*, etc.] A form of thanksgiving, in which the psalmist calls upon himself and others to bless and praise the Lord for the singular mercy granted him, expressed in the next clause; (see Gill on ^{<498E>}Psalm 18:46”);

for he hath showed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city; either in the city Keilah, so Jarchi; a city which had gates and bars, where Saul thought he had David safe, and he could not escape his hands; but notwithstanding that, and though the inhabitants of that place intended to deliver him up, yet he was marvellously saved; as he also was from the Ziphites; and when Saul and his army had encompassed him about, by a surprising incident, a messenger coming to Saul just as he was about to seize him, informing him that the Philistines had invaded the land, (^{<0237>}1 Samuel 23:7-29). Or the city of Jerusalem, which was fortified both by nature and art, whither he was brought and placed as king, and enjoyed rest from all his enemies round about him, (^{<408E>}2 Samuel 5:6-9 7:1). Or this may spiritually design the church of God, which is called a strong city,

being built on Christ the Rock, and having salvation for walls and bulwarks, (^{<231>}Isaiah 26:1): where the Lord displays his banner of love, makes discoveries of his marvellous kindness, and commands his blessing for evermore. Some render it “as in a strong city”^{f465}, and take the sense to be, that he was safe, through the kindness of God showed to him in the salvation of him, as if he was in a fortified city^{f466}, and this was marvellous in his eyes, as every instance of providential goodness is to the people of God; especially his lovingkindness showed in spiritual things, in choosing them in Christ, saving them by him, regenerating them by his Spirit, and taking them into his family; which love is free and sovereign, distinguishing, unchangeable, from everlasting to everlasting; and so wonderful and astonishing; and which was hid in God until revealed; and sometimes the manifestations of it are withdrawn, and then it is showed again, and fresh discoveries of it are made, and effects of it applied, and the blessings of it bestowed, which occasion thankfulness.

Ver. 22. *For I said in my haste*, etc.] When he made haste to get away for fear of Saul, (^{<1236>}1 Samuel 23:26); and so the Targum renders it, “I said when I sought to flee away”; or else he said this hastily and rashly, in the hurry of his mind, being in the utmost confusion and distress, as in (^{<1311>}Psalm 116:11);

I am cut off from before thine eyes; his case was very bad, he was reduced to the utmost extremity, and his faith was as low; he thought it was all over with him, and there was no way of escape, nor hope of it; and that he was like a branch cut off, ready to be cast into the fire; that he was cut off from the house of God, and from communion with him; that he would never look upon him more, and he should never enjoy his presence: this instance of weakness and unbelief is mentioned to illustrate the goodness of God, and to make his kindness appear to be the more marvellous in the salvation of him; so sometimes the Lord suffers his people to be in the utmost distress, and their faith to be at the lowest ebb, when he appears to their help, and makes it manifest that their salvation is by his own arm, and of his own good will, and not by them, or for any goodness of theirs;

nevertheless, thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee; for though faith was very low, and unbelief strongly prevailed, yet he was not so far gone as to stop praying; for though he saw no rational way of escape, and feared the Lord would take no notice of him; yet he knew that nothing was impossible with him, and therefore he still

looked up to him, as Jonah did when he thought himself in a like condition, (Jon 2:4); and such was the grace and goodness of God, that he did not despise but regard his prayer, though attended with so much weakness and unbelief.

Ver. 23. *O love the Lord, all ye his saints*, etc.] To whom his goodness extends; who are favoured with the blessings of his grace, as pardon, peace, and righteousness; and who particularly are sanctified by his Spirit, and have principles of grace and holiness wrought in their hearts: these, even all of them, are called upon to love the Lord, having that grace implanted in their souls; that is, to express it, not by words, but by deeds, under a sense of the love and kindness of God to them; and to join with the psalmist in an affectionate reverence of him, trust in him, and thankfulness to him, on account of his marvellous kindness showed him;

[for] the Lord preserveth the faithful; such as trust in him, believe in Christ, and are faithful to his word and ordinances, abide by them, and stays near his people; these he not only preserves in a providential way, but he preserves them in a way of special grace; he keeps them “from evil”, as the Targum; from the evil of sin; from a total and final falling away by it; from the evil of the world, so as not to be drawn off from Christ and his ways, either by its frowns or flatteries; and from the evil one, Satan, from being destroyed by him and his temptations; and these are preserved safe to the kingdom and glory of Christ, by the mighty power of God: some render the words, “the Lord keepeth faithfulness”¹⁴⁶⁷; he will never suffer his own faithfulness to fail; he is a covenant keeping God, and is always true to his word and promise;

and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer; such as all self-righteous persons are, and all that speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the truly righteous, (⁴⁹¹⁸Psalm 31:18); who bear hard upon them, and oppress them; and such as antichrist and his party, who exalts himself above all that is called God; but in what those deal proudly, God is above them, an more than a match for them, and he sets himself against them; he resists them, and will reward them according to their works.

Ver. 24. *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart*, etc.] (See Gill on “⁴⁹⁷⁴Psalm 27:14”); by this instance of God’s wonderful kindness to the psalmist, he would have the saints take heart, and be of good cheer, even in the greatest distresses, since their case cannot be worse than his was; and yet he had deliverance out of it;

all ye that hope in the Lord; for the eye of the Lord is on such, and he takes delight in them, (~~Ps~~ Psalm 33:18 147:11). The Targum is, “who hope for”, or “trust in the word of the Lord”; the essential Word, the promised Messiah.