

# PSALM 49

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 49

### *To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah*

Aben Ezra says this psalm is a very excellent one, since in it is explained the Light of the world to come, and of the rational and immortal soul; and Kimchi is of opinion that it respects both this world and that which is to come: and indeed it treats of the vanity of trusting in riches: of the insufficiency of them for the redemption of the soul; of the short continuance of worldly honour and substance; of the certainty of death, and of the resurrection of the dead. And the design of it is to expose the folly of trusting in uncertain riches, and to comfort the people of God under the want of them.

**Ver. 1.** *Hear this*, etc.] Not the law, as some Jewish writers<sup>f639</sup> interpret it, which was not desirable to be heard by those that did hear it; it being a voice of wrath and terror, a cursing law, and a ministration of condemnation and death; but rather *ad atywj a*, “this news”, as the Targum; the good news of the Gospel; the word of “this” salvation; the voice from heaven; the word not spoken by angels, but by the Lord himself: or *hmkj h taz*, “this wisdom”, as Kimchi interprets it; which the psalmist was about to speak of, (~~194B~~ Psalm 49:3); also the parable and dark saying he should attend unto and open, (~~194B~~ Psalm 49:4); and indeed it may take in the whole subject matter of the psalm;

*all [ye] people*: not the people of Israel only, but all the people of the world, as appears from the following clause; whence it is evident that this psalm belongs to Gospel times; in which the middle wall of partition is broken down, and there is no difference of people; God is the God both of Jews and Gentiles; Christ is the Saviour and Redeemer of one as well as of the other; the Spirit of God has been poured out upon the latter; the Gospel has been sent into all the world, and all are called upon to hear it;

*give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world*, or “of time”; so the word is rendered “age”, the age of a man, (~~194B~~ Psalm 39:5). The inhabitants of this

world are but for a time; wherefore Ben Melech interprets the phrase by *mw̄h yçna*, “men of time”, the inhabitants of time; it is peculiar to the most High to “inhabit eternity”, (<sup><25715></sup>Isaiah 57:15). Under the Gospel dispensation there is no distinction of places; the Gospel is not confined to the land of Judea; the sound of it is gone into all the world, and men may worship God, and offer incense to his name, in every place; and whoever fears him in any nation is accepted of him.

**Ver. 2.** *Both low and high*, etc.] Or “both the sons of Adam and the sons of men”. By the sons of “Adam” are meant the multitude of the people, as Ben Melech explains it; the common people, the meaner sort, the base things of this world; and such are they, generally speaking, who are called by grace under the Gospel dispensation: and by “the sons of men” are meant the princes, nobles, and great men of the earth; men of high birth and illustrious extraction: so Adam is rendered, “the mean man”, and “Ish”, the word here used, “the great man”, in (<sup><21119></sup>Isaiah 2:9). And though not many, yet some of this sort are called by grace; and all of them have a peculiar concern in many things spoken of in this psalm; (see <sup><39112></sup>Psalms 49:12,16,17,20);

*rich and poor together*: these are called upon to hearken to what is after said, that the one may not be elated with and trust in their riches, and that the other may not be dejected on account of their poverty; and seeing both must die, and meet together at the judgment day; and inasmuch as the Gospel is preached to one as to another; and for the most part the poor hear it, receive it, and are called by it.

**Ver. 3.** *My mouth shall speak of wisdom*, etc.] Or “wisdoms”<sup>f640</sup>; of Christ, who is so called, (<sup><30113></sup>Proverbs 1:20 9:1). He being as a divine Person the wisdom of God, and the only wise God; and having all the treasures of wisdom in him, as man and Mediator: of him the prophet spake, and of him the apostles and all Gospel ministers speak; of the glories of his Person, of the fulness of his grace, and of his wonderful works; especially of that of redemption and salvation by him, in which there is an abounding of wisdom and prudence. Or the Gospel may be meant, and all the truths of it, in which there is a glorious display of divine wisdom; it is the wisdom of God in a mystery; hidden and ancient wisdom; and which, when truly understood, makes a man wise unto salvation; (see <sup><41116></sup>1 Corinthians 2:6,7);

*and the meditation of my heart [shall be] of understanding; or “understandings”<sup>f641</sup>*; and this is in order to the former; what the heart meditates the mouth speaks. If the heart meditates on understanding, the mouth will speak of wisdom; and a man should think before he speaks, especially the ministers of the Gospel: they ought to meditate on the word of God, the Gospel, and the truths of it, that their profiling may appear to all; that they may understand divine things themselves, and deliver them out to the understanding of others: their concern should be, that through meditation they may have a good treasure of wisdom and knowledge in their hearts, that out of it they may bring forth things pleasant and profitable unto others.

**Ver. 4.** *I will incline mine ear to a parable*, etc.] In which way of speaking the doctrines of the Gospel were delivered out by Christ, (<sup><403></sup>Matthew 13:3,35). Wherefore the prophet, representing his apostles and disciples, signifies that he would listen thereunto, that he might attain to the knowledge thereof, and communicate it to others;

*I will open my dark saying upon the harp*; the enigmas, riddles, and mysteries of the Gospel, being understood by the ministers of it, are opened and explained in a very pleasant and delightful manner; they are made clear and evident, and are as a lovely song upon a harp; (see <sup><403></sup>Ezekiel 33:32).

**Ver. 5.** *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil*, etc.] This is the principal thing that all are before called to hearken to. This is the wisdom and understanding the psalmist had been meditating upon, and was about to utter; this is the parable he inclined his ear to, and the dark saying he would open; namely, that a saint has nothing to fear in the worst of times; which is a riddle to a natural man. Aben Ezra interprets “the days of evil” of the days of old age, as they are called, (<sup><213></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:1), which bring on diseases, weakness, and death; in which a good man has no reason to fear; as that he should want the necessaries of life, since they that fear the Lord shall want no good thing; or that he should not hold out to the end, seeing God, who is the guide of youth, is the staff of old age, and carries to hoary hairs, and will never leave nor forsake; and though the wicked man in old age has reason to be afraid of death and eternity at hand, the saint has not; but may sing, on the borders of the grave, “O death! where is thy sting?” etc. (<sup><455></sup>1 Corinthians 15:55). Also days in which iniquity abounds, and error and heresy prevail, are days of evil; and

though the good man may fear he shall be led aside by the ill example of some, or by the craft of others; yet he need not, since the foundation of God stands sure, and he knows them that are his, and will take care of them and preserve them. Moreover, times of affliction and persecution are evil days; (see <sup><4516></sup>Ephesians 5:16 6:13); and such will be the hour of temptation, that shall try the inhabitants of the earth, (<sup><4610></sup>Revelation 3:10). Yet the righteous man need not fear, since it is always well with him, let his case and circumstances be what they will. Yea, the day of death, and the day of judgment are days of evil to wicked men; and therefore they put them away far from them, (<sup><3063></sup>Amos 6:3); but believers have reason to rejoice at them, the day of their death being better than the day of their birth; and the day of judgment will be the time of the glorious appearing of Christ to them. It is added,

*[when] the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about;* that is, the sins of life and conversation; “heels” denote “steps”, and the word is sometimes so rendered, as in (<sup><4566></sup>Psalm 56:6); and “iniquity” intends sin committed in walking; and so designs not original sin, as some have thought, but actual sins and transgressions: and these may be said to “compass [the saints] about”, when they are chastised for them, and so are brought to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and to be humbled for them; and then they have nothing to fear in a slavish way, since these chastisements are not in wrath, or in a way of vindictive justice, or punishment for sin; but the fruits of love and favour. Or the sense may be, when death, the fruit of iniquity, the wages of sin, surrounds and seizes upon me; *ypwsb*, “in my end”, as the Targum; in my last days, at the heel or close of them, I will not fear; the saint has no reason to fear, when he walks through death’s dark valley; for death is abolished as a penal evil, its sting is took away, and its curse removed. Some render the words, “when the iniquity of my supplanters shall compass me about” <sup>f642</sup>; meaning his enemies, who either lay in wait for him privately, and endeavoured to supplant him; or that pursued him closely, and pressed upon his heels, just ready to destroy him; yet even then he signifies he should not fear: and then the sense is the same with (<sup><4271></sup>Psalm 27:1-3); to which agree the Syriac and Arabic versions, which render it, “the iniquity of mine enemies”; or, “when my enemies surround me”: and it may be literally rendered, when “iniquity surrounds me at my heels” <sup>f643</sup>; that is, when men, who are iniquity itself, encompass me, are at my heels, ready to seize me, I will not fear.

**Ver. 6.** *They that trust in their wealth*, etc.] In their outward force, power, and strength; their horses, chariots, and armies; (see <sup><49316></sup>Psalm 33:16 20:7 <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 31:1); or in their worldly goods and substance; which seems to be the sense of the word here, as appears from (<sup><4990></sup>Psalm 49:10). To “trust” in them is to set the eye and heart upon them; or to take up rest in them, to depend on them, to the neglect of divine Providence, with respect to future living in this world; and to expect eternal happiness hereafter, because favoured with many earthly enjoyments here: so to do is evil. Therefore the Targum is, “woe to the wicked that trust in their substance”. And it is also very weak and foolish to trust in riches, since they are uncertain, are here today, and gone tomorrow; and are unsatisfying, he that has much would still have more: nor can they deliver from evil, from present judgments, from the sword, the pestilence, and famine; nor from death, nor from the future judgment, and wrath to come; and are often injurious to the spiritual and eternal welfare of men; (see <sup><5081></sup>1 Timothy 6:9,10,17 <sup><41024></sup>Mark 10:24);

*and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches*; of their acquisition of them by their own diligence and industry; and of their having them because of some peculiar virtue and excellency in themselves; and of the abundance of them. Such rejoicing and boasting is evil; since riches are the gifts of God, the blessings of his Providence; and are often bestowed on persons neither wise nor diligent, and much less deserving; (see <sup><2023></sup>Jeremiah 9:23). The whole may be applied to the Romish antichrist and his followers, who trust in and boast of their temporal riches, which in one hour will come to nought, (<sup><6687></sup>Revelation 18:7,17); and of the treasure of the church, of merit; and works of supererogation; with all which they cannot redeem one soul from ruin and destruction, as follows:

**Ver. 7.** *None [of them] can by any means redeem his brother*, etc.] That is, “with their substance”, or “riches”, as the Targum and Jarchi supply. Some, according to the order of the words in the original, render them, “a brother redeeming cannot redeem a man”, or “anyone” <sup>f644</sup>: but, as Aben Ezra observes, **ja**, “a brother”, is the effect, and **çya**, “a man”, is the cause. The Targum is, “his brother that is a captive, a man redeeming cannot redeem with his substance”; or by any means redeem. Indeed a rich man may redeem his brother from debt, or from a prison, into which he is cast for it, by paying his debts for him; or from thralldom and bondage, being taken captive and becoming a prisoner of war, by giving a ransom for him. This he may do with respect to man; but, with respect to God, he

cannot, with all his riches, pay the debts he owes to the law and justice of God; nor free him from his bondage to sin, Satan, and the law, by whom he is held a captive. The sense here is, that he cannot redeem him from death; he cannot, with all his money, secure him from dying; nor, when dead, bring him back from the grave; and much less deliver him from eternal death, or wrath to come; this only God can do, (see <sup><B915></sup>Psalm 49:15);

*nor give to God a ransom for him*; a ransom to redeem from sin, and so from the curse of the law and eternal death, must be given to God, against whom sin is committed, the lawgiver that is able to save and destroy; whose law is transgressed by it, and must be fulfilled; and whose justice is affronted and injured, and must be satisfied; and who is the creditor to whom men are debtors, and therefore the payment must be made to him. Hence our Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of his people, paid the ransom price to God, and offered himself a sacrifice to him; (see <sup><B11D></sup>Ephesians 5:2 <sup><B11D></sup>Revelation 5:9). But this ransom is not of man's giving, but of God's; it is of his finding out in his infinite wisdom: he set forth and sent forth Christ to be the ransom or "propitiation" <sup>f645</sup>, as the word here used signifies; and Christ came to give his life and himself a ransom for many, and is the propitiation for their sins: and this is a sufficient one, a plenteous redemption, and there needs no other, not is there any other; there were typical atonements under the law, but there is no real atonement, propitiation, or ransom, but by the precious blood of Christ; not by corruptible things, as silver and gold; with these a man cannot give to God a ransom for himself, or for his brother.

**Ver. 8.** *For the redemption of their soul [is] precious*, etc.] Or "heavy" <sup>f646</sup>; it is, as Jarchi observes, "heavier than their substance": it is too weighty a matter for the richest man in the world to engage in; he is not equal to it; his riches are not an equivalent to the redemption of a soul which has sinned, and which is of more worth than the whole world: "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" or another for him? all the substance of his house would be utterly despised. It requires a greater price for the redemption of it than gold and silver, and therefore it is impossible to be obtained by any such means; and which may be the sense of the word here, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; and so it is used for that which is "rare", "difficult", yea, "impossible", not to be found or come at, in (<sup><B11D></sup>1 Samuel 3:1 <sup><B11D></sup>Daniel 2:10,11). The only price of redemption of the soul is the precious blood of Christ; his life is the ransom price, yea, he himself,

(~~118~~ 1 Peter 1:18,19 ~~118~~ Matthew 20:28) (~~516~~ 1 Timothy 2:6); nor is the redemption of the soul possible upon any other ground;

*and it ceaseth for ever*; that is, the redemption of the soul; it must have ceased, it could never have been accomplished, had not Christ undertook it and performed it; he has obtained eternal redemption, and in him we have it, and in no other. Or the words may be rendered, “and he ceaseth for ever”; the brother, whose soul or life is to be redeemed, he dies; (see ~~912~~ Psalm 12:1); and dies the second and eternal death, for aught his brother can do for him, with all his riches: or he that attempts to redeem him, “he leaves off for ever”<sup>f647</sup>; (see ~~1303~~ Psalm 36:3); whether he will or not, as Jarchi observes; he ceases from redeeming his brother; he finds he cannot do it; his endeavours are vain and fruitless. Some join and connect these words with the following, “and it ceaseth for ever, that he should still live for ever”, etc. that is, it is impossible that such an one by such means should live for ever. Gussetius<sup>f648</sup> renders and interprets the words quite to another sense, “but the redemption of their soul shall come”: the true redemption price by Christ; and which, being once paid and perfectly done, “ceaseth for ever”, and shall never be required more; so that he for whom it is made “shall live for ever”, as in (~~1900~~ Psalm 49:9), which is a truly evangelic sense.

**Ver. 9.** *That he should still live for ever*, etc.] Or “though he should live”, etc.<sup>f649</sup>. Though the rich man should live ever so long, a thousand years twice told, as in (~~2006~~ Ecclesiastes 6:6); yet he could not in all this time, with all his riches, redeem his brother; and at last must die himself, and so must his brother too, as his own experience and observation may assure him, (~~1900~~ Psalm 49:10). Or the meaning is, he cannot so redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him, that he should live a corporeal life for ever, and never die; since all men die, wise men and fools, rich and poor; and much less that he should live and enjoy an “eternal life”, as the Targum; a life of happiness and bliss hereafter, which is not to be obtained by gold and silver, but is the pure gift of God;

[*and*] *not see corruption*; the grave, the pit of corruption, the house appointed for all living: or “the judgment of hell”, according to the Chaldee paraphrase.

**Ver. 10.** *For he seeth [that] wise men die*, etc.] This is a reason convincing the rich man, that with all his riches he cannot redeem his brother from death; since he must see, by daily and constant experience, that none are

exempted from dying, no, not even the wise man; and therefore, not the rich, since wisdom is better than riches, and is said to give life, (<sup>2072</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:12); and yet wise men die, yea, Solomon, the wisest of men, died. Worldly wise men, such who are wiser in their generation than the children of light, know how, to get money and estates, and to provide for futurity, and yet cannot secure themselves from death: men that are wise in natural things, know the secrets of nature, the constitution of human bodies, what is proper to preserve health and life, as philosophers and physicians, and yet cannot deliver themselves from death: wise politicians, prudent magistrates, instructors of mankind in all the branches of useful knowledge, who are profitable to themselves and others, and are the most deserving to live because of usefulness, yet these die as well as others: such as are spiritually wise, wise unto salvation, who know themselves, and know Christ, whom to know is life eternal; and the wisest among them, such as are capable of teaching others the hidden and mysterious wisdom of God; even these wise men and prophets do not live for ever. The Targum interprets this of wicked wise men, condemned to hell; or as it is in the king's Bible,

“the wicked wise men, who die the second death;”

(see <sup>621b</sup>Revelation 2:11 20:6 21:8); and are condemned to hell;

*likewise the fool and the brutish person perish*; the worldly fool, who trusts in his riches, and boasts of them; his soul is at once required of him. The atheistical fool, who says there is no God, no judgment, no future state; has made a covenant with death, and with hell is at an agreement; this covenant does not stand, he dies, and finds himself dreadfully mistaken: the fool that is so immorally, who makes a mock at sin, a jest of religion, and puts away the evil day far from him; his great wickedness, to which he is given, shall not deliver him from death. Every man is become brutish in his knowledge; but there are some among the people more brutish than others, who are as natural brute beasts, and shall utterly perish in their own corruptions. The wise good man dies, but perishes not; he inherits eternal life; but the wicked fool and brute not only perish by death, but are punished with everlasting destruction in soul and body;

*and leave their wealth to others*; they cannot carry it with them, so that it will be of no service to them after death any more than at it: if the Judge could be bribed by gold, as he cannot, they will not have it with them to do it; they came into the world naked, and so they will go out, and carry



nothing with them, but leave all behind them; either to their babes, their children, and heirs, (<sup><1974></sup>Psalm 17:14); or to strangers, they know not who; and if they do, they do not know whether they will be wise men or fools, or what use they will make of it, (<sup><1916></sup>Psalm 39:6) (<sup><2128></sup>Ecclesiastes 2:18,19).

**Ver. 11.** *Their inward thought [is, that] their houses [shall continue] for ever*, etc.] This is the thought of their hearts, what they secretly imagine, and conclude within themselves; either that their families, which may be meant by their houses, (see <sup><1081></sup>2 Samuel 3:1); shall continue in succeeding ages, to the end of the world, to inherit their possessions, and perpetuate their name; though often so it is, that great families become extinct, and the seed of the wicked is cut off: or that their magnificent buildings, which they have erected to dwell in, and for their honour and glory, shall abide for ever; though in a little time, so it is by one means or another, like the buildings of the temple, not one stone is left upon another. Or the words may be rendered, “in the midst of them” (their heirs to whom they leave their wealth) “their houses shall remain for ever”, so Aben Ezra; that is, so they fancy they will; but this is not always true, for fine houses and large estates belonging to them often pass into other hands and families. The word **µbrq**, rendered “their inward part”, by a transposition of two letters in it may be read **µrbq**, “their graves”, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe; and to this sense the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render the words: and then the meaning is, that of all the houses they have built or been possessed of, they have only one left, and that is the grave; in which they shall dwell until the resurrection, and therefore is called “a long home”, (<sup><2125></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:5); (see <sup><1873></sup>Job 17:13 30:23);

*[and] their dwelling places to all generations*; which signify the same as before;

*they call their lands after their own names*; as Egypt was called Mizraim, Ethiopia was called Cush, and Palestine Canaan, from men who were the first possessors of them, (<sup><1016></sup>Genesis 10:6). Or “they proclaim their names throughout the land”<sup>f650</sup>; they seek to get a name, and spread and continue it in all part of the world; being unconcerned about their names being written in heaven, or about having a house not made with hands eternal there.

**Ver. 12.** *Nevertheless man [being] in honour abideth not,* etc.] Or Adam: and some understand this of the first man Adam, who was created and crowned with glory and honour; but it did not abide with him, nor he in that: so some Jewish writers <sup>f651</sup> interpret it. But whether the words will admit of this sense or not, the general view of the psalmist, which is to show the inconstancy and instability of worldly honour, may be exemplified in the case of the first man; he was in honour he was created after the image and likeness of God, and so was the glory of God, being his image; he was in friendship with God, as many instances show, and had dominion over all the creatures below; he had much knowledge of God, and communion with him, and was a pure, holy, and upright creature; but he continued not long in this state of honour and glory; “he lodged not a night” <sup>f652</sup>, as the words may be rendered; (see <sup><1281b></sup>Genesis 28:11); and as they are by some, who conclude from hence that Adam fell the same day in which he was created; and which is the sense of the above Jewish writers, who say, he was driven out of paradise the evening of that day; but though he might stand longer, and the word is sometimes used of a longer continuance; (see <sup><12513></sup>Psalms 25:13); yet by the account in Genesis it looks as if he continued in his state of honour but a short time;

*he is like the beasts [that] perish;* becoming mortal in his body, and brutish and stupid in his understanding. Or, “he is like the beasts”, “they perish”, or “[are] cut off” <sup>f653</sup>; the word being in the plural number, which shows that not a single individual person is meant, but men in general; or, however, such of the sons of Adam that come to honour; these do not abide long in it, their honour is a very short lived one, sometimes it does not last their lives: they that are in high places are in slippery ones, and are often cast down from the pinnacle of honour in a moment; and if their glory does abide with them throughout the day of life, yet it shall not lodge with them in the night of the grave; thither their glory shall not descend after them, (<sup><14917></sup>Psalms 49:17); and when they die, they perish like the beasts; as they are like them in life, stupid, brutish, and ignorant, so in death; as the beast dies, so do they, (<sup><21819></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:19); as the one dies without any thought of or preparation for death, so do the other; as the one carries nothing along with it, so neither do the other: as beasts that die of themselves, for such are here meant, as Junius well observes, are good for nothing but to be cast into the ditch; so are wicked men, notwithstanding all their riches and honours; yea, it is worse with them than with the beasts,

since after death comes judgment, and after that the second death, the wrath of God.

**Ver. 13.** *This their way [is] their folly*, etc.] This their last end becoming like the beasts that perish, which is the issue and event of all their confidence, ambition, and honour, shows the folly of their lives and conduct: or this their course of life, in trusting to their riches; boasting of their wealth; pleasing themselves with the thoughts of the continuance of their houses and dwelling places to all generations; and calling their lands after their own names; all proclaim their folly. Or, as some render the words, “this their way [is] their hope” or “confidence” <sup>f654</sup>; they place all their hope and confidence in their riches and honour, which is but a vain hope and a foolish confidence;

*yet their posterity approve their sayings*; they are of the same sentiments with their fathers; they say the same things, and do the same actions; tread in their steps, and follow the same track; though there have been such innumerable instances of the vanity and inconstancy of all worldly riches and grandeur.

*Selah*; on this word, (see Gill on “~~480~~ Psalm 3:2”).

**Ver. 14.** *Like sheep they are laid in the grave*, etc.] They are not in life like sheep, harmless and innocent; nor reckoned as such for the slaughter, as the people of God are; unless it be that they are like them, brutish and stupid, thoughtless of death, and unconcerned about their estate after it; and so die and go into the grave, like natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, (~~602~~ 2 Peter 2:12); or rather like sheep that have been grazing in good pasture in the daytime, at night are put into a dark and narrow pinfold or pound; so wicked rich men, having lived in great abundance and plenty in the day of life, when the night of death comes, they are put into the dark and narrow grave. And it is further to be observed, that the comparison is not to sheep prepared for slaughter, and killed for food; for these are not laid in a ditch, to which the grave may answer; but, as Junius observes, to those that die of themselves; to rotten sheep, and who are no other than carrion, and are good for nothing but to be cast into a ditch; so wicked men are laid in the grave; but as to be laid in the grave is common to good and bad after death, rather the words should be rendered, “like sheep they are laid in hell” <sup>f655</sup>; as the word is in (~~497~~ Psalm 9:17); a place of utter darkness and misery, where the wicked rich man was put when he died, (~~2169~~ Luke 16:19,22,23);

*death shall feed on them:* or “rule them” <sup>f656</sup>; as shepherds rule their flocks, in imitation of whom kings govern their subjects; the same word is used of both; and so death is represented as a king, or rather as a tyrant reigning over the sons of men; even over kings and princes, and the great men of the earth, who have reigned over others; (see ~~614~~Romans 5:14); or “shall feed them” <sup>f657</sup>, as the shepherd feeds the sheep; not by leading them into green pastures, into the Elysian fields; but where a drop of water cannot be obtained to cool the tongue; into utter darkness, where are weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; into the apartments of hell, and habitations of devils, to be guests with them, and live as they do: or “shall feed on them”; as the wolf on the sheep, devouring their strength, and consuming their bodies, (~~813~~Job 18:13); but as this is no other than what it does to everyone, rather the second, or an eternal death, is here meant; the wrath of God, the worm that is always gnawing, eating, and consuming, and never dies;

*and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;* the upright are such to whom the uprightness or righteousness of Christ is shown or imputed, and who have right spirits renewed, and principles of grace and holiness formed in them, and walk uprightly in their lives and conversations; these, in the morning of the resurrection day, when Christ the sun of righteousness shall arise, when the light of joy and gladness, shall break forth upon his coming, at the beginning of the day of the Lord, which will last a thousand years; they, the dead in Christ, rising first, shall, during that time, reign with him as kings and priests; when the wicked, being destroyed in the general conflagration, shall become the footstool of Christ, and be like ashes under the soles of the feet of his people; and the kingdom, the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints; (see ~~5016~~1 Thessalonians 4:16 ~~6115~~Revelation 20:5,6 ~~3010~~Malachi 4:2,3) (~~2072~~Daniel 7:27); and though this is a branch of the happiness and glory of the people of God, yet it is here mentioned as an aggravation of the misery of the wicked, who, in another state, will be subject to those they have tyrannized over here;

*and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling;* or “their form” <sup>f658</sup> and figure; diseases often destroy the beauty of a man, death changes his countenance, and makes a greater alteration still; but the grave takes away the very form and figure of the man; or, as it is in the “Keri”, or margin of the Hebrew text, “and their rock shall consume” <sup>f659</sup>; that is, their riches, which are their rock, fortress, and strong city, and in which they

place their trust and confidence; these shall fail them when they come to the grave, which is “their dwelling”, and is the house appointed for all living: and seeming it is so, rather this should be understood of “hell”<sup>f660</sup>, which will be the everlasting mansion of wicked men, and in which they will be punished in soul and body for ever; though rather the sense is, “when their rock”, that is, Christ, shall come “to consume the grave”, and destroy its power; when he, I say, shall come “out of his habitation”, heaven, then shall the righteous have the dominion, (<sup><S416></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:16).

**Ver. 15.** *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave*, etc.] The psalmist expresses his faith, that though he should die, and for a while be under the power of the grave, yet he should be redeemed from it in the resurrection; which to the saints will be “the day of redemption”, (<sup><A0F0></sup>Ephesians 4:30); their bodies then will be redeemed from mortality, weakness, corruption, and dishonour, which attend them now, and in the grave; and which will, be in consequence of the redemption both of their souls and bodies, through the blood of Christ; (see <sup><S834></sup>Hosea 13:14); or the words may be rendered, “but God will redeem my soul from the power of hell”; and so the Targum,

“David said by the spirit of prophecy, but God will redeem my soul from the judgment of hell;”

that is, will keep and preserve from the second death, from being hurt by it, or from its having any power over him; and Christ, who is the Redeemer of his people, and who, being God over, all, is an able and mighty one, has redeemed the souls of his from wrath to come, hell, or the second death, by destroying sin, the cause of it, by satisfying the law, the administration of it, and by abolishing death itself; all which he has done by giving himself a ransom price for them, whereby he has procured the redemption which rich men, with all their gold and silver, could never obtain for themselves or others. The reason why the psalmist believed Christ would do this for him, follows;

*for he shall receive me.* Or, “for he hath received me”<sup>f661</sup>; into his arms of love, into his grace and favour; which he does openly at conversion, and in the effectual calling; men being drawn to Christ by the cords of love, come to him, and are received by him, who casts none out; and the argument from hence is very strong, that such whom Christ receives by his grace, he will redeem from the grave, or raise at the last day to the resurrection of

life: or, “for he will receive me”; as he does the souls of his people to glory at death, when, during their separate state, they will be happy with him, and takes their bodies into his care and custody; from whence it may be strongly concluded he will raise them up again at the resurrection morn, and then will receive them soul and body to himself, and present them to his Father, and introduce them into his kingdom and glory; wherefore, as in (<sup><1945></sup>Psalm 49:5), the good man has no reason to fear anything in the day of evil; for when it goes ever so ill with others, it is well with him. The Targum in the king’s Bible is,

“he will lead me into his part or portion in the world to come.”

*Selah*; on this word, (see Gill on “<sup><1982></sup>Psalm 3:2”).

**Ver. 16.** *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich*, etc.] Who before was poor, or not so rich; but now become so, either by inheritance, or by his own diligence and industry, through the permission of Providence. This is to be understood, not of a good man, from whom oppression is not to be feared; but it may be hoped he will do good with his riches, by relieving the poor, and ministering to the support of the interest of religion, and using what power and authority he may have in defence of it: but it is to be interpreted of a wicked man; of one who neither fears God, nor regards man; who makes an ill use of his riches, power, and authority, to the oppression of the poor, and the persecution of the saints, and who seeks to be feared when he is not loved; (see <sup><1982></sup>Proverbs 28:12,28 29:2); but the people of God should not be afraid when this is the case, since God is their strength, their light, and their salvation; and since wicked men can go no further than permitted, and at most can do no more than kill the body; (see <sup><1971></sup>Psalm 27:1-3 <sup><1908></sup>Matthew 10:28); these words are an apostrophe of the psalmist, either to his own soul, or to the saints, and every particular believer;

*when the glory of his house is increased*; either the same with riches, so called, (<sup><1930></sup>Genesis 31:1 <sup><1924></sup>Revelation 21:24,26); because men are apt to glory in them, and for the most part obtain honour and glory from men by them; or children, and an increase of them, and especially when they come to honour; as also the advancement of themselves to high places of honour and trust; as well as additional buildings, large stately edifices, to make them look great, and perpetuate their names.

**Ver. 17.** *For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away*, etc.] Such men, with all their riches and honour, must die; therefore why should men be afraid of them? or wherein are they to be accounted of, whose breath is in their nostrils? nor can they carry either of them with them; their riches will be of no profit to them after death, when they will be upon a level with the poor, who will have nothing to fear from them; (see <sup><3487></sup>1 Timothy 6:7);

*his glory shall not descend after him*; either into the grave, the pit of corruption, the lower part of the earth, where kings, princes, counsellors, and peasants, are all alike, (<sup><1814></sup>Job 3:14,15,19); or into hell, where are no titles of honour, nor respect of persons; no Pharaoh king of Egypt, or Sennacherib king of Assyria, there; but plain Pharaoh, etc. (see <sup><3521></sup>Ezekiel 32:31,32).

**Ver. 18.** *Though while he lived he blessed his soul*, etc.] Praised and extolled himself on account of his acquisitions and merit; or proclaimed himself a happy man, because of his wealth and riches; or foolishly flattered himself with peace, prosperity, and length of days, and even with honour and glory after death;

*and [men] will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself*; or “but <sup>f662</sup>men will praise thee”, etc. both rich and poor, all wise men; when, as the Jewish interpreters <sup>f663</sup>generally explain the word, a man regards true wisdom and religion, and is concerned for the welfare of his soul more than that of his body; or “when thou thyself doest well”: that is, to others, doing acts of beneficence, communicating to the necessities of the poor; or rather, “when thou doest well to thyself”, by enjoying the good things of life, taking his portion, eating the fruit of his labour, which is good and comely; (see <sup><21618></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 6:1,2 11:9).

**Ver. 19.** *He shall go to the generation of his fathers*, etc.] Be gathered to them at death; or “to the dwelling place of his fathers” <sup>f664</sup>; either the grave, or hell, or both; the habitation of his wicked ancestors: unless the words be rendered, as they are by some, though “he shall come to the age of his fathers” <sup>f665</sup>; live as long as they have done; yet he must die at last, and leave all behind, as they have done;

*they shall never see light*; neither he nor his fathers; they shall never see light of the sun any more, nor return to the light of the living, but shall lie in the dark and silent grave until the resurrection; or rather, they shall never enjoy eternal light, glory, and happiness. The ultimate state of glory is

sometimes expressed by “light”; (<sup><B812></sup>John 8:12 <sup><S012></sup>Colossians 1:12); this the people of God, such who are made light in the Lord, and are the children of the day, shall see; but wicked men shall not; they will be cast into outer darkness, where are weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

**Ver. 20.** *Man [that is] in honour*, etc.] A wicked man, as the Targum; (see Gill on “<sup><B912></sup>Psalm 49:12”);

*and understandeth not*; from whence his riches and honour, come, and what use he should make of them, and for what end he has them; or that understandeth not spiritual things, which relate to the salvation of his soul; who does not know God in Christ, nor the way of salvation by Christ; nor has any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon his soul; nor has any spiritual understanding of the doctrines of the Gospel; nor knows himself, his state and condition, and what true happiness is:

*is like the beasts [that] perish*; (see Gill on “<sup><B912></sup>Psalm 49:12”).