

# PSALM 65

## INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 65

### *To the chief Musician, A Psalm [and] Song of David*

Some copies of the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions read

“a song of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, “sung” by the people of the captivity, when they were about to come out;”

and some copies have “Haggai”: but though it is possible it might be sung upon that occasion, it is certain it was not then composed, but was written by David, as the genuine title shows: as for Jeremiah; he was not carried captive to Babylon, and Ezekiel died before the return of the people from it; nor is there anything in the psalm relating to that captivity. The title of it, indeed, in the Arabic version, is concerning the captivity of the people; which it seems to have taken from some Greek copy; and Kimchi and Arama interpret it of the captivity of the people of the Jews; but then they mean their present captivity, and their deliverance from it. According to the title of it in the Syriac version, the occasion of it was the bringing up of the ark of God to Sion; and Aben Ezra is of opinion that David composed the psalm at that time; or that one of the singers composed it at the building of the temple, and which he thinks is right, and perhaps is concluded from (<sup><3961></sup>Psalm 65:1,3); and who also says it was composed in a year of drought; but it rather seems to have been written in a year of great plenty, as the latter part of it shows; and the whole seems to respect the fruitful, flourishing, and happy state of the church in Gospel times, for which it is a song of praise.

**Ver. 1.** *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion*, etc.] Who dwells in Sion, as Jarchi interprets it; and so the Targum; whose Shechinah, or glorious Majesty, is in Sion; (see <sup><3962></sup>Psalm 76:2); or else Sion, which designs no other than the church of God, and which is so called under the Gospel dispensation, (<sup><3822></sup>Hebrews 12:22 <sup><641></sup>Revelation 14:1); is the place where “praise” waits for God, that being the city of our solemnities, as well as the city of the great King; and not only a house of prayer, but of praise, where the sacrifices, both of prayer and praise, are offered to God through Christ

with acceptance: and praise may be said to “wait” for him here, because it is “due” to him here, as some render it, on account of many blessings and privileges of grace here enjoyed, through the word and ordinances; and because the people of God wait upon him here with their tribute of praise, which is comely in them to bring, and is “agreeable” and acceptable to him; and because it “remains”, abides, and continues here; or, in other words, the saints are continually praising the Lord here, giving thanks to him always for all things, (<sup>f849</sup>Psalm 84:4 <sup>f850</sup>Ephesians 5:20); some render the words “praise [is] silent for thee” <sup>f849</sup>; because there is no end of it, as Jarchi observes; or, because of the greatness of the works of the Lord, praise cannot reach him, as Ben Melech expresses it. The greatest shouts, and loudest acclamations of praise, are but silence in comparison of what ought, if it could be expressed, on account of the nature, perfections, and works of God. The Targum is,

“before thee praise is reputed as silence.”

In the king of Spain’s Bible it is,

“the praise of angels is reputed before thee as silence;”

perhaps it may be best rendered, “[to] thee [belong]”, or “[are due], silence [and] praise” <sup>f850</sup>: there ought to be first a silent and quiet waiting upon God for mercies wanted, and which he has promised to give; and, when they are bestowed, praise should be rendered unto him. Gussetius <sup>f851</sup> gives the sense of the words, and renders them,

“praise, which is thine image, which bears a likeness to thee shall be paid in Sion;”

*and unto thee shall the vow be performed*: that is, of praise and thankfulness for deliverance and salvation, made in a time of trouble and distress; (see <sup>f852</sup>Psalm 66:13,14).

**Ver. 2.** *O thou that hearest prayer*, etc.] So as to answer it sooner or later, in one way or another, and always in the fittest time, and in the best way; so as to fulfil the requests and supply the wants of men, so far as may be for their good, and God’s glory; which is a proof of the omnipresence, omniscience, and all sufficiency of God; who can hear the prayers of his people in all places at the same time, and knows all their persons and wants, and what is most proper for them, and can and does supply all their needs, and causes all grace to abound towards them; and it also shows his

wondrous grace and condescension, to listen to the cries and regard the prayers of the poor and destitute;

*unto thee shall all flesh come*; being encouraged by the above character of him. All sorts of persons may come to him; men of all nations, of every rank and degree, condition and circumstance; there is no bar unto nor bounds about the throne of grace; the way to it lies open through the Mediator; and all sensible sinners shall and do come thither, though they are but “flesh”, frail and mortal, corrupt and sinful creatures, and know themselves to be so; and they that come aright come through Christ, the new and living way, in his name, and in the faith of him, and of being heard for his sake, and under the gracious influences of the spirit of grace and supplication: it may be considered as a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles, and of their calling upon God through Christ, and of their coming to God in his house, which was to be, and is, an house of prayer to all people, (<sup><3807></sup>Isaiah 56:7 <sup><3821></sup>Zechariah 8:21-23).

**Ver. 3.** *Iniquities prevail against me*, etc.] Or, “are mightier than I”<sup>f852</sup>; this may be understood either of the iniquities of others, his enemies; their “words of iniquities”<sup>f853</sup> or iniquitous words, as in the Hebrew text; their calumnies, reproaches, false charges, and accusations, which prevailed against David in Saul’s court; or rather his own iniquities, inward lusts, indwelling sins, as well as open transgressions, which he considers as his enemies, as numerous and powerful, too mighty for him, which warred against him, and sometimes got the better of him, and threatened him with utter ruin and destruction; but amidst all this he spies atonement and pardon through the blood and sacrifice of Christ, as follows;

*[as for] our transgressions, thou shall purge them away*; not only his own, but others, which Christ has done by the sacrifice of himself; and when his blood is applied to the conscience of a sensible sinner, it purges it from all his sins, (<sup><3803></sup>Hebrews 1:3 9:14); it may be rendered, “thou shall expiate them”, or “make atonement for them”<sup>f854</sup>; which Christ, our propitiation, has done: this was the work appointed him, which he undertook, came into the world to do, and has performed, (<sup><2024></sup>Daniel 9:24) (<sup><3817></sup>Hebrews 2:17 9:26); or “thou shalt cover them”; with the blood and righteousness of Christ; or forgive them for the sake of them, (<sup><4901></sup>Psalms 32:1,2).

**Ver. 4.** *Blessed [is the man whom] thou choosest*, etc.] In eternity; both to grace and glory; for such have true faith in Christ given them, called the faith of God’s elect, and shall never perish: they are effectually called by

the grace of God, and are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and shall be glorified; or in time, for there is a choice in time, as the fruit, effect, and evidence of the eternal choice, and is no other than effectual calling; (see ~~<B159>~~John 15:19) (~~<A026>~~1 Corinthians 1:26); and happy are those who are both chosen and called; both election and the effectual calling are to grace and glory, and spring from the good will and pleasure of God; and the Targum in the king of Spain's Bible is,

“blessed is the man in whom thou art well pleased;”

*and causeth to approach [unto thee];* the same Targum supplies,

“unto the fear of thee;”

or unto thy fear and worship. The persons whom God has chosen for himself are, in their state of nature, at a distance from him by reason of sin; and through the blood and sacrifice of Christ, by which atonement is made, they are brought nigh to him; and in the faith of Christ the Mediator, their hearts are engaged to approach unto God, and come with boldness to his throne, and ask grace and mercy of him; and through the grace of Christ they have nearness to him, and communion with him, (~~<A028>~~Ephesians 2:18 3:12);

*[that] he may dwell in thy courts;* or “he shall dwell” <sup>f855</sup>; the man that is chosen of God, and brought nigh by Christ; he shall not only come into the house of God, and tread in his courts, but he shall dwell there, ever abide, and never go out;

*we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house;* even all that are like this man, chosen by the grace of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, brought into the house of God, and have a place and a name there, better than that of sons and daughters of men: by “the house” of God we are to understand the church of God; and by “the goodness” of it the provisions of grace in it, the word and ordinances, and the blessings of grace held forth in them, and especially Christ the bread of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed; of which true believers may eat, and do to full satisfaction; and blessed are they that have such food, and appetites for it, and are filled with it. The Targum paraphrases it,

“the righteous shall say, we shall be satisfied with the goodness of shy house.”

It follows,

*[even] of thy holy temple*: which means the same as the house of God; namely, the church; (see <sup>(412)</sup>Ephesians 2:21). Some, as Aben Ezra observes, interpret it, “thou Holy One in thy temple”; as if it was an address to God, and a description of him as in his temple.

**Ver. 5.** *[By] terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us*, etc.] Not by afflictive dispensations of Providence, which, though disagreeable to flesh and blood, and are sometimes terrible to good men, when they apprehend the wrath of God in them, and look upon them as punishments for sin; yet these are consistent with the love of God to them, are for their spiritual good, and, when viewed in this light, they rejoice and glory in them; but as afflictions are not prayed for, nor to be prayed for, there being no direction for it, nor example of it, they cannot be considered as answers of prayer; but the Lord answers his people in this way, by inflicting judgments on their enemies: by such terrible things did he answer the Israelites at the Red sea, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan, (<sup>(4507)</sup>Deuteronomy 10:17,21) (<sup>(4962)</sup>Psalms 106:21,22 66:5,6); and in this way will he answer his people in the destruction of antichrist and his followers, (<sup>(4019)</sup>Revelation 6:9 16:6 18:8 19:20). Moreover, by “terrible things” may be meant things stupendous, marvellous, and even miraculous; and by such things does God sometimes answer his people, in destroying their enemies and saving them; and which are so called, because they inject horror and terror into their enemies, and fill them with fear and reverence of God: and which are done “in righteousness”; in faithfulness to his promises made to his people; in the exercise of his vindictive justice upon their enemies; in goodness, grace, and mercy to them, as “righteousness” sometimes signifies, as in (<sup>(4514)</sup>Psalms 51:14); and not for their righteousness, who do not present their supplications to him for the sake of that; but for the righteousness of his Son, for the sake of which they are heard and answered;

*O God of our salvation*: not only temporal, but spiritual and eternal; which he has resolved upon, and chose his people to, and has settled the way and manner of, in which it should be brought about; has secured it in covenant for them, promised it in his word, sent his Son to obtain it, and his Spirit to give knowledge and make application of it; and from this character of his, and the concern he has in salvation, it may be concluded he will answer the prayers of his people for their good;

*[who art] the confidence of all the ends of the earth;* of all that dwell upon the continent, to the uttermost parts of the habitable world;

*and of them that are afar off [upon] the sea:* not only in ships upon the sea, but upon islands in the sea; and so the Targum,

“and of the islands of the sea, which are afar off from the dry land;”

and Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it in the same manner; such snare the isles in which we live: this seems to refer to Gospel times, in which the Lord is not only the “confidence” or “hope of Israel”, but of the Gentiles also; who are encouraged to hope in the Lord, and put their confidence in him, seeing with him there is forgiving mercy, and plenteous redemption; hath appointed Christ to be his salvation to the ends of the earth; has sent his Gospel into all the world declaring this; and Christ in it encourages all the ends of the earth to look unto him for salvation; and multitudes upon the continent, and in different isles, have been enabled to hope in him.

**Ver. 6.** *Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains,* etc.] In the first creation and formation of them, when they were settled on their basis so firmly that they are rarely removed, and when they are it is something extraordinary. Some understand this of the Lord’s preparing the mountains with the rain of his strength, for the bringing forth of herbs and grass for the service of man and beast, and of his adorning them with trees; and the Targum is,

“who preparest food for the wild goats of the mountains;”

others interpret them of kingdoms and communities, comparable to mountains, (<sup><2512></sup>Jeremiah 51:25 <sup><3047></sup>Zechariah 4:7 <sup><6170></sup>Revelation 17:9); but these are not set fast, they are not firm and stable, but in a course of time are removed, and give way to others; rather the church of God is meant; (see <sup><2112></sup>Isaiah 2:2); where the same phrase is used as here; and “mountains” may signify particular churches, or indeed particular believers; for all that trust in the Lord are like to mountains, (<sup><3012></sup>Psalm 125:1); and these are set fast in the everlasting love of God, by which their mountain is made to stand strong; in eternal election, which is the foundation of God that stands sure; in the covenant of grace, which is more immovable than hills and mountains; and on Christ the Rock, against whom the gates of hell can never prevail; and who are so established, settled, and kept by the power of God, that they cannot be removed by the most boisterous storms

and winds of the world's persecutions, Satan's temptations, or their own sins and corruptions;

*[being] girded with power*: not the mountains, but God himself; whose power, like himself, is infinite, and appears in the works of his hands, of nature, providence, and grace: the allusion is to a mighty man girded for battle; or for the performance of great undertakings.

**Ver. 7.** *Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves*, etc.] By a word speaking; as our Lord did when here on earth, and which was a proof and evidence of his eternal power and Godhead. These figurative expressions are interpreted by the next clause;

*and the tumult of the people*: of wicked men, who foam and rage against the people of God, and are like a troubled sea that cannot rest; but God can say to these proud waters, which threaten to go over their souls, Peace, be still; he can stop their opposition, quell their insurrections, restrain their wrath, and make them peaceable and quiet; wherefore the saints have no reason to be afraid of them, (<sup><D412></sup>Psalm 46:2,3 76:10 124:1-5).

**Ver. 8.** *They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens*, etc.] The tokens of his wrath and displeasure at wicked men, seen in the punishments inflicted on them, which cause them to fear and tremble. Some interpret them of the sun, moon, and stars, which are set for "signs", as the word <sup>f856</sup> used signifies; and which declare the glory of God to the uttermost parts of the earth, and strike men with awe and reverence of him; and others of thunder and lightning, which are sometimes very dreadful and terrible. Moreover, the word <sup>f857</sup> signifies signs and wonders, marvellous things, miraculous operations; and may be understood of those that were wrought in the first times of the Gospel, for the confirmation of it; some of which were wrought in the uttermost parts of the earth; or, however, were heard of there, and believed; which caused them to receive the Gospel with all reverence, not as the word of man, but as the word of God;

*thou makest the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice*; some interpret this of the morning and evening sacrifices; others of the sun that goes forth in the morning, and rejoices as a strong man to run his race, and of the moon and stars that appear in the evening, and both give pleasure and delight to the inhabitants of the earth; others of men who go forth in the morning cheerfully to their labour, and of the beasts that go out in the evening to seek their prey, (<sup><D415></sup>Psalm 19:5 104:20-23); but it seems

better to understand it of the rising of the stars before the sun in the morning, and the appearance of them after the moon is up in the evening; or of the rising and setting sun; of the east and west, which include the whole world, and the inhabitants of it; who are made to rejoice at the coming of the Gospel among them, which rings the good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, by Christ, whereby his name becomes great, and is praised among the Gentiles; (see <sup><3011></sup>Malachi 1:11).

**Ver. 9.** *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it*, etc.] So the Lord looked upon the earth, quickly after its formation, before rain came upon it, and he watered the whole face of the ground, (<sup><0005></sup>Genesis 2:5,6); so he cared for the land of Judea in particular, and watered it with the rain of heaven, (<sup><0111></sup>Deuteronomy 11:11,12); (see <sup><0201></sup>2 Samuel 21:1-14); to which some think reference is had here; and so he visits and waters the whole earth in general, at certain times and seasons, (<sup><4446></sup>Acts 14:16,17); this may be applied to the church and people of God in Gospel times, who are his husbandry, and the good ground on which the seed falls and is received, and brings forth fruit; and are comparable to the earth that drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for those that dress it, and receives a blessing from God, (<sup><3807></sup>Hebrews 6:7); thus the Lord visited his people, by the mission of his Son to redeem them, whose coming was as the rain, the former and latter, to the earth, (<sup><0068></sup>Luke 1:68,78 <sup><3063></sup>Hosea 6:3); so he visited the Gentile world, by the preaching of the Gospel by his apostles, whose doctrines dropped as the rain, and distilled as the dew and small rain on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass; and so made a wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water, (<sup><4454></sup>Acts 15:14 <sup><0532></sup>Deuteronomy 32:2 <sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 40:18); and in like manner he visits particular persons in conversion, and waters them with the graces of his Spirit, by which he regenerates, quickens, and sanctifies them, and makes them fruitful, (<sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 44:3 <sup><0005></sup>John 3:5 4:14 7:37,38);

*thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, [which] is full of water*; not Shiloah nor Jordan; but the clouds which are full of rain, which falling upon the earth, impregnate it with rich particles, which make it very fertile and fruitful; so the Targum,

“with a multitude of fruits thou enrichest it out of the river of God, which is in heaven, which is full of rain:”



this may mystically denote the river of God's everlasting love, which is full of the blessings of grace, and which flowing upon his people, makes them fruitful, and enriches them with the riches of grace and glory; (see <sup><916></sup>Psalm 46:4);

*thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it;* or because thou hast so prepared it <sup>f858</sup>; that is, the earth being disposed and prepared by the Lord, watered and enriched with the rain of heaven, produces corn in great plenty for the inhabitants of the earth; which may spiritually design either the fruitfulness of the saints, whose hearts are disposed and prepared by the grace of God to receive the seed of the word, which brings forth fruit in them; or the bread corn, that wheat of the Gospel, and Christ the sum and substance of it, which is of God's preparing for his people, and by which they are nourished and made comfortable; (see <sup><3017></sup>Zechariah 9:17).

**Ver. 10.** *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly,* etc.] Kimchi calls them the eminences of the earth, the little hills, the higher parts of ploughed land; those which lie between furrow and furrow seem to be meant, which being watered with rain become lower, and are made fruitful: these may denote such as are lifted up with their own imaginary purity and righteousness; and who, when the grace of God takes hold upon them, are humbled, and confess themselves the chief of sinners and the least of saints, renounce their own righteousness, and submit to Christ's;

*thou settlest the furrows thereof;* or "thou causeth [the rain] to descend into the furrows thereof" <sup>f859</sup>; which fills them, and makes them fruitful; and may design humble souls, whom the Lord fills with his good things, and makes them fruitful in every good work;

*thou makest it soft with showers;* which through drought is become like iron and brass, and, without large and heavy showers, as the word <sup>f860</sup> used signifies, and these repeated, it is so hard, that no impressions can be made upon it, nor anything spring out of it; and such is the hard heart of man, which God only can make soft by the means of his word, through the energy of his Spirit, and the efficacy of his grace; which coming in great abundance, like large showers of rain, removes the hardness of the heart, makes it susceptible of divine impressions, and of receiving the seed of the word, whereby it becomes fruitful;

*thou blessest the springing thereof;* the tender blade, when it first peeps out of the earth; this the Lord nourishes and cherishes; he preserves it from

the nipping frosts, by covering it with snow; he waters it with the dews of heaven, and warms it with the beams of the sun; he causes it to grow, and brings it to perfection: so the Lord takes great notice of the springing and buddings forth of grace, of the first acts and exercises of it in young converts, and takes care of them; and as he will not hurt them himself, nor break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; so he takes care that others should not; (see <sup><2711></sup>Song of Solomon 6:11 7:11 2:15); he gives them more grace, and strengthens what they have; causes it to grow, and brings it on to perfection. The word here used is the same by which Christ, the branch, is expressed, (<sup><3008></sup>Zechariah 3:8 6:12); and as the Lord has blessed him with the blessings of goodness, so he blesses all the branches which are in him, (<sup><4154></sup>John 15:4,5) (<sup><4008></sup>Ephesians 1:3).

**Ver. 11.** *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness*, etc.] The whole circling year, from one end of it to the other; particularly that season of it when the harvest is gathered in; the seed being sown, the earth watered, the springing of it blessed, and the corn brought to perfection, the year is crowned with a plentiful harvest: this may denote the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of the redeemed, the whole Gospel dispensation, (<sup><2702></sup>Isaiah 61:2 63:4); in certain seasons and periods of which there have been great gatherings of souls to Christ; at the first of it multitudes were converted in Judea, and in the Gentile world, which were the first fruits of the Spirit; and in all ages there have been more or less instances of this kind; and in the latter day there will be a large harvest, when the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in;

*and thy paths drop fatness*; the heavens, as Jarchi interprets it; or the clouds, as Kimchi; which are the chariots and horses of God, in which he rides, and are the dust of his feet, (<sup><1948></sup>Psalms 104:3 <sup><3015></sup>Habakkuk 3:15) (Na 1:3); and these drop down rain upon the earth, and make it fat and flourishing; and may mystically design the administration of the Gospel, and the administration of ordinances; which are the paths in which the Lord goes forth to his people, and directs them to walk in, and in which he meets them with a fulness of blessings, and satisfies them as with marrow and fatness.

**Ver. 12.** *They drop [upon] the pastures of the wilderness*, etc.] As well as upon the ploughed land, and turn them into a fruitful field; which may denote the Gentile world, whither the Gospel was sent by Christ, and preached by his apostles; and whose doctrines dropped as the rain, and

prospered to the thing whereunto they were sent, and made this wilderness as the garden of God;

*and the little hills rejoice on every side*; or “joy girds the hills”; or “they are girded with joy”<sup>f861</sup>; or “gird themselves with joy”, as the Targum; being covered on all sides with grass, herbs, and trees: these may denote the churches of Christ, and little hills of Sion, who rejoice when the interest of Christ flourishes, (~~f864~~ Psalm 68:14,15 14:7).

**Ver. 13.** *The pastures are clothed with flocks*, etc.] Of sheep, which are so thick, that there is scarce anything to be seen upon the pastures but them; which look as if they were clothed with them: these may intend the multitude of converts, signified by the flocks of Kedar, and rams of Nebaioth; which gathering about the church, and joining to her, she clothes herself with them as with an ornament, (~~23117~~ Isaiah 60:7,8 49:18) it may be rendered the “rams clothe”, or “cover, the flocks”<sup>f862</sup>; or the flocks are clothed, or covered, with the rams, as expressive of their copulation with them; and so the Targum,

“the rams ascend upon the flocks;”

which sense is favoured by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions;

*the valleys also are covered over with corn*; being made very fruitful with the rain, and bringing forth in great abundance; so humble souls are the most fruitful ones;

*they shout for joy, they also sing*; that is, the pastures, hills, and valleys, being laden with all kind of fruit for the use of man and beast, for necessity and pleasure, which occasion joy to the inhabitants of the earth: this may be expressive of the joy that will be among men, when the interest of Christ will be in a more flourishing condition in the latter day; (see ~~23113~~ Isaiah 49:13 55:9-13).