

PSALM 94

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 94

Some, as Jarchi and others, think this psalm was written by Moses; others, with greater probability, assign it to David; as do the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and which all but the Syriac version say it was composed to be sung on the fourth day of the week, on which day the Talmudists say it was sung; see the argument of the preceding psalm. This psalm and others, that go before and follow, are without any title in the Hebrew Bible: the title of it in the Syriac version is,

“a Psalm of David, concerning the company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; but spiritually, concerning the persecution against the church;”

not of the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt, as some; nor of the Jews in their present exile, as Kimchi; but rather of the people of God under the tyranny of antichrist; who are represented as complaining of his insults and cruelty, and as comforting themselves in the hopes of deliverance, and in the view of his destruction.

Ver. 1. *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth*, etc.] As it does to God, and to him only; not to Heathen deities, one of which has the name of Vengeance given it, (~~4804~~ Acts 28:4), nor to Satan, the enemy and avenger, and his spiteful principalities and powers; nor to men, who are not to exercise private revenge on their fellow creatures; only to civil magistrates, to whom public revenge belongs, they being God’s viceregents, and representing him; otherwise to God only it belongs, against whom sin is committed; and he will, in his own time and way, execute it; he is “the God of revenges” ^{f1339}, as the words may be rendered; and this is applicable to Christ, who is the true Jehovah, and God over all: it was he that took vengeance on Sodom and Gomorrah, and rained from the Lord fire and brimstone on them; and who took vengeance on the inventions of the Israelites in the wilderness; and when he came in the flesh, he came with vengeance to destroy Satan and his works, as it was promised and prophesied he should, (~~23504~~ Isaiah 35:4 61:2 63:4), forty years after his

death, resurrection, and ascension, he came in his power and kingdom, and took vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their unbelief and rejection of him, (^{<072>}Luke 21:22), and at the opening of the sixth seal his wrath came upon Rome Pagan in a manner intolerable to them, for their cruel persecutions of his church and people; and the cry of the souls under the altar was much like what is uttered in this psalm; (see ^{<009>}Revelation 6:9-17), and at the time of his spiritual coming and reign he will avenge the blood of his saints on Rome Papal, or antichrist, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and the saints will be called upon to rejoice, and will rejoice, when they see the vengeance, (^{<083>}Revelation 18:20 19:1,2) and his personal coming will be in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his Gospel, and when all the wicked will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, (^{<308>}2 Thessalonians 1:8 ^{<607>}Jude 1:7).

O God, to whom vengeance belongeth; which is repeated to observe the certainty of it, and to express the vehement and importunate desire of the psalmist, and those he represents, that he would show himself to be so, follows:

show thyself; or “shine forth” ^{f1340}, as in (^{<801>}Psalm 80:1) either at his incarnation, when he appeared as the dayspring from on high; yea, as the sun of righteousness; or, in the ministry of the Gospel, the great light which shone first on the inhabitants of Judea and Galilee, and then on the Gentile world; or in his gracious presence with his people, which is expressed by causing his face to shine upon them, (^{<807>}Psalm 80:7), or in the protection of them, and destruction of their enemies; which is a showing himself strong on their behalf, an appearing to the joy of the one, and the confusion of the other; and in this manner will Christ show himself in the latter day.

Ver. 2. *Lift up thyself, thou, O Judge of the earth*, etc.] A title very proper to Christ, and which is given him by Abraham, (^{<085>}Genesis 18:25), who then appeared to him in an human form, and with whom he was conversing; he judges his own people on earth, all judgment being committed to him by the Father; he judges and chastises them, that they may not be condemned with the world; he judges and distinguishes between them and the world; he protects and defends them, he pleads their cause, and avenges them on their enemies: and for this purpose he is requested to “lift up” himself; being in the apprehension of his people as one laid down and asleep, quite negligent and careless of them; and therefore they desire that he would awake and arise, and exert his power,

and show himself higher than their enemies; that he would mount his throne, and execute justice and judgment on the wicked, agreeably to his character and office:

render a reward to the proud; an evil reward, as the Targum; to proud persecutors of the church, who through their pride persecute the poor saints; and to render tribulation to them is but just with the Lord; to antichrist, that exalts himself above all that is called God, and to all his haughty and ambitious dependents and followers, cardinals, bishops, priests, etc.

Ver. 3. *Lord, how long shall the wicked*, etc.] The reign of antichrist is thought long by the saints, being the space of forty two months, or 1260 days or years and this tries the faith and patience of the church of Christ, (~~6135~~ Revelation 13:5,10)

how long shall the wicked triumph? in their prosperity, and in the ruins of the interest of Christ; the Targum is,

“how long shall they sit in tranquillity, or prosperity?”

the triumphing of the wicked may seem long, but it is but short, (~~3015~~ Job 20:5), the inhabitants of the Romish jurisdiction will triumph when the witnesses are slain, and send gifts to one another, as a token of their joy; but this will not last long, no more than three days, or three years and a half; and while antichrist is saying, I sit a queen, and shall know no sorrow, her plagues shall come upon her in one day, (~~6110~~ Revelation 11:10,11 18:7,8).

Ver. 4. *How long shall they utter and speak hard things?*, etc.] Against Christ, his person and offices, his ministers, his people, his truths and ordinances; this is very applicable to antichrist, who has a mouth speaking blasphemies, and which he opens, and with it blasphemes God, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in it, (~~6135~~ Revelation 13:5,6). The Targum is,

“will they utter and speak reproachful words?”

contumelies or calumnies; and such are uttered by the antichristian party against the true professors of religion in great abundance, as water out of a fountain, as the first word ^{f1341} used signifies; (see ~~6115~~ Jude 1:15),

and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves; the just character of the followers of antichrist, who work an abomination, and make a lie, and whose whole course of life, and even of religion, is a series of sin and iniquity, (⁴⁶¹⁷Revelation 21:27 22:15), these lift up themselves against, the Lord, like the high branches of a tree, as Aben Ezra; or praise themselves, as Jarchi; being proud, they are boasters; boast of their antiquity and precedence, of their wealth and riches, of their power and authority, of infallibility, and works of supererogation, and the like.

Ver. 5. *They break in pieces thy people, O Lord*, etc.] Not the Israelites, as Kimchi; but the church of Christ, by their anathemas, cruel edicts, and persecutions; by confiscating their goods, imprisoning their persons, putting them to cruel deaths; and by such means think to “wear out” the saints of the most High, the Lord’s covenant and peculiar people; which is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin, and as an argument with the Lord to arise on their behalf:

and afflict thine heritage; the church, styled God’s heritage, (⁴⁶¹⁸1 Peter 5:3), whom the Lord has chosen for his inheritance; and are dear to him, as his portion, his jewels, and even as the apple of his eye; and yet these are afflicted all manner of ways by their persecuting enemies, as Israel was of old in Egypt.

Ver. 6. *They slay the widow and the stranger*, etc.] Who are so both in a literal and figurative sense, such who are weak and feeble, helpless and friendless; or who are deprived of their faithful pastors, who were as husbands and fathers to them, and who profess themselves pilgrims and strangers here; these the followers of the man of sin have inhumanly put to death, supposing they did God good service:

and murder the fatherless; having slain the parents in a cruel and barbarous manner, murder their infants; or figuratively such who are as orphans, destitute of their spiritual fathers, who were the instruments of begetting them in Christ, and of nourishing them with the words of faith and good doctrine; with the blood of these the whore of Rome has often made herself drunk, and therefore blood shall be given her to drink, (⁴⁶¹⁹Revelation 17:5,6 16:6,7).

Ver. 7. *Yet they say, the Lord shall not see*, etc.] The blood they shed, the murders they commit, the mischief they do, the wickedness they are guilty of, so flattering themselves with impunity; such atheism reigns at Rome,

but God sees all their abominations, and he will let them know one day that he does behold them; (see ^{<900>}Psalm 10:10,14),

neither shall the God of Jacob regard it; the same as before; this title of “the God of Jacob” may be considered either as put in by the psalmist, as an argument strengthening the faith of the church of God; that being their covenant God, he would take notice and care of them, and resent the injuries done them, and avenge them: or else as mentioned by their enemies, sneering at their confidence in God, whom they called their covenant God; that notwithstanding he would not regard or take any notice of what was done unto them, so as to appear in their behalf; all this has been said, if not openly with the mouth, yet secretly in the heart; the language of their actions has abundantly declared this gross atheism of antichrist, and his abettors, who are addressed as follows.

Ver. 8. *Understand, ye brutish among the people*, etc.] Or the most brutish and stupid of all people; especially that profess themselves to be the people of God, or Christians, as the Papists do; and who seem to be the persons here addressed: “brutish”; to murder the servants of the Lord, and drink their blood, till inebriated with it; stupid to the last degree to think that hereby they did God good service: hence the pope, the head of them, is represented both in his secular and ecclesiastical power by two beasts; the one rising out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns, a monster in nature, most like a leopard, his feet as a bear’s, and his mouth as a lion’s, having the fierceness and cruelty of them all; and the other coming out of the earth with two horns like a lamb, but spake like a dragon, (^{<611>}Revelation 13:1,2,11), the exhortation to these brutish creatures supposes them to be without understanding, like the beasts by whom they are represented; or, however, that they did not make use of those intellectual powers which God had given them; had they, they would have learned more humanity to their fellow creatures, and more religion towards God; they would have known more of him than to have said and done what is before declared; wherefore they are called upon to “consider” (so the word ^{f1342} is sometimes rendered, (^{<602>}Psalm 50:22)) the reasonings about it to be laid before them:

and ye fools, when will ye be wise? “fools” they are to worship stocks and stones, the images of the Virgin Mary, and other saints; to give into the gross atheism they do; to disbelieve the omniscience of God and his providence, at least to behave as though they did; and think to do the vilest

actions with impunity; wherefore it would be their wisdom to relinquish such stupid notions, and do no more such foolish and wicked actions.

Ver. 9. *He that planted the ear*, etc.] In the human body, with so much art and skill, in so convenient a place, so capacious of receiving sounds, and fitted it with organs suited for such a purpose:

shall he not hear? the atheism spoke in the heart, in the actions and by the mouths of such blasphemers of him; the hard speeches spoken against his Son, his person and offices; and against his Spirit, his being, and operations; and against his people, the saints of the most High; in short, all those blasphemies and evil speakings of God, of his tabernacle, and those that dwell therein: it would be monstrous stupidity to imagine, that that God, that communicates a faculty of hearing to his creatures, should not hear himself; for none can give that which they have not:

he that formed the eye: in so curious a manner, with such exquisite parts; with such fine humours, nerves, and tunics; so adapted to receive all objects, and take the impress of them in so wonderful a manner:

shall he not see? all persons and things, all the ways and actions of men; certainly he must: clouds, rocks, and hills, are no obstruction to him; the darkness and the light are both alike to him; his eyes are everywhere, and all things are naked and open before him: it is the height of madness and folly to think that that God cannot see what men are doing here below, who has given to men eyes to see the heavens above, and all their host; and in this so small a compass to take in the sight of the largest mountains, as well as the most minute things: since the seeing eye, and the hearing ear, are both from the Lord, it may be most strongly concluded that he hears all that is said, and sees all that is done, against him and his people; (see ~~ⲁⲓⲙⲉ~~ Proverbs 20:12 ~~ⲁⲓⲙⲓ~~ Exodus 4:11). A Heathen ^{f1343} could say,

“truly there is a God, who hears and sees all that we do.”

Ver. 10. *He that chastiseth the Heathen*, etc.] As he did the old world, by bringing a flood upon it, and sweeping away its inhabitants at once; and Sodom and Gomorrah, by raining fire and brimstone upon them, and consuming them from off the earth; and the old inhabitants of Canaan, by ejecting them out of their land for their abominations, with other similar instances:

shall he not correct? such audacious wretches, guilty of such atrocious crimes, such horrid murders, and gross atheism? certainly he will, as he has both a right and power to do it. The Targum is,

“is it possible that he should give the law to his people, and, when they have sinned, should they not be corrected?”

and if these are corrected and chastised, then surely such daring and insolent wretches shall not go unpunished: or, “he that instructeth the Heathen” ^{f1344}; by the light of nature in things civil and moral, and therefore has a right to punish such who act contrary to it; (see ^{<4012>}Romans 2:12),

he that teacheth man knowledge; that has given him the light of nature; inspired him with reason and understanding; taught him more than the beasts of the field, and made him wiser than the fowls of the heaven; from whom he has the knowledge of all arts and sciences, liberal and mechanic, those of the lower as well as of the higher class; (see ^{<4009>}John 1:9 ^{<4308>}Job 32:8 35:11 ^{<4306>}Isaiah 28:26,29). The Targum is,

“has not the Lord taught the first man knowledge?”

that more perfect knowledge of things, which Adam had in innocence, was from the Lord; and therefore,

shall not he know? all persons and things? verily he does; he is a God of knowledge, of all knowledge; his knowledge and understanding is infinite; it reaches to all persons, and to all their thoughts, words, and actions: this clause is not in the Hebrew text; but is understood, and rightly supplied; (see ^{<4008>}2 Samuel 5:8), compared with (^{<4306>}1 Chronicles 11:6).

Ver. 11. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man*, etc.] He not only hears their words, and sees their actions; but he knows their thoughts, the secret thoughts of their hearts, though he is afar off from them, and, they from him; he is the searcher of the hearts and trier of the reins of the children of men; (see ^{<4012>}Psalm 139:2,23,24 ^{<4170>}Jeremiah 17:9,10), and so is Christ, who is the omniscient God, and is the Jehovah all along spoken to and of in this psalm; he knows the thoughts of men, and is a critical discerner of them, (^{<4008>}Matthew 9:3,4 ^{<43012>}Hebrews 4:12)

that they are vanity; either that their thoughts are vanity; the object of them is vanity, the riches and honours of this world, which are all vanity and vexation of spirit; and sinful lusts and pleasures, which are vain and useless,

yea, pernicious and hurtful: and so they are in their issue and event; they come to nothing, they are without effect; the Lord disappoints men's devices, and frustrates their designs; they think of this and the other, form schemes, but cannot execute them: or else the sense is, that they themselves are vanity, as man in his best estate is; even every man, whether of high or low degree; (see ^{<5916>}Psalm 39:5,6 62:9). The Syriac version is, "for they are a vapour"; with which compare (^{<5044>}James 4:14). Thales, an Heathen philosopher ^{f1345}, being asked whether men's deeds could be hid from God, answered, no, nor their thoughts.

Ver. 12. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord*, etc.] Much more happy now, and hereafter, than the proud insulting persecutor of him; he is chastened of the Lord, that he might not be condemned with the world; he is chastened not in wrath, but in love; not with the chastisement of a cruel one, nor indeed of a magistrate nor a master; but of a tenderhearted father, who always does it for his profit and advantage, and therefore is he "blessed", or happy; for these chastenings are tokens of God's love, evidences of sonship, or of a man's being an adopted child of God; are for, and do work for good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal, and even in every sense; and, besides, the Lord grants his presence in them, supports under them, and teaches by them, as follows:

and teachest him out of thy law; or "doctrine" ^{f1346}; and may be understood of the doctrine of the Gospel, as well as of the law; the Lord teaches by his Spirit, his word, and providences; and, even by afflictive ones, he teaches men their sins and transgressions, and shows them wherein they have exceeded; brings them to a sense and confession of them, repentance and reformation; he teaches them hereby their duty, both to himself and all men, which they have neglected, and departed from; he teaches many lessons of faith, patience, humility, self-denial, and submission to his will in the school of affliction; here they learn much of God, of his power and faithfulness, truth, goodness, grace, and love, and of evangelical doctrines; of his everlasting love, of eternal election, the covenant of grace, the righteousness of Christ, and salvation by him; which the Lord makes known unto them at such seasons, and on which account they are pronounced blessed, or happy persons.

Ver. 13. *That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity*, etc.] Or "evil" ^{f1347}; or "in the evil days", as the Arabic version; for through teaching men under afflictions, they become tranquil and quiet in them;

they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them; such men patiently bear them; and quietly submit to the will of God in them, and are still, and know that he is God, that does all things well and wisely: moreover, the Lord does not always chasten his people; when he has taught them by his rod, and the affliction has answered its end, he gives them rest or intermission from those days of affliction: God does not always suffer the rod of the wicked, or persecution, to be upon the lot of the righteous; he gives his churches rest at times: in all ages there have been some intervals of respite; and after the slaying of the witnesses, and their rising, there will be no more of those days of adversity; but the

times of refreshing, or rest, will come, which will make up the spiritual reign of Christ; and there remains a “rest”, or “sabbatism”, for the people of God, which will last a thousand years; and, after that, an eternal rest in heaven, which the light afflictions of the saints here are working, and are the means of making them meet for it: “until the pit be digged for the wicked”; hell, the pit of destruction, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: this pit and lake is dug and prepared by the sovereign will and unchangeable purpose and decree of God, for all wicked and Christless sinners; particularly for the beast and false prophet, and his followers, who shall be cast into it, and be tormented in it day and night, and have no rest; while the saints they here persecuted will be in the greatest repose, and utmost felicity; and when it will appear who are the blessed and happy persons, and who not.

Ver. 14. *For the Lord will not cast off his people*, etc.] The people whom he has foreknown, his chosen people, whether among Jews or Gentiles, (^{<510>}Romans 11:1,2), his covenant people, whom he has given to Christ, and who are redeemed by his blood, and called by his Spirit and grace: these, though he may not arise immediately for their help; though he may withdraw his presence from them for a time, may afflict them, and suffer them to be afflicted by others, (^{<5945>}Psalm 94:5), he will not cast them off, at least for ever, so as to be removed out of his sight, or off of his heart, or from his covenant, or out of the hands of his Son, or from being a part of his family, or so as to perish eternally; they are a people near and dear unto him; he takes pleasure in them, and will not eternally reject them; whoever casts them off, he will not:

neither will he forsake his inheritance; which he has chosen, and values and esteems as a goodly one; he will not give up his title to it, nor drop his claim upon it, nor relinquish his hold and use of it; he will not forsake his people for this reason, because they are his inheritance, as well as because he has promised that he will not: he may seem to forsake them, and they may think they are forsaken by him; but he will not forsake neither their persons in youth nor in old age, nor his work upon their hearts: the church, in the wilderness, and under the persecution of antichrist, might seem to be cast off and forsaken; yet is not, being nourished there for a time and times, and half a time, (^{<66214>}Revelation 12:14), the note of Arama is,

“at the coming of the Messiah all this good shall be.”

Ver. 15. *But judgment shall return unto righteousness*, etc.] Which may be understood either of the judgment and righteousness of God, which seemed to be parted, and stand at a distance from each other; his conduct and government of the world from his justice; the righteous being persecuted and afflicted, and wicked men suffered to prosper; which sometimes makes it difficult to reconcile the judgment of God, or his government of the world, to his justice; (see ^{<2411>}Jeremiah 12:1), but as this has been made manifest in the destruction of the Jews, and in the downfall of Rome Pagan, the first persecutors of the Christians; so it will be seen in Rome Papal, when the judgments of God will be manifest, and appear to be just and true; and these two, judgment and justice, will openly come together, in the sight of all; as they also will at the last judgment; (see ^{<66154>}Revelation 15:4 ^{<5116>}2 Thessalonians 2:6,7) or else of the righteousness of men, which, in times of general corruption, seems to be fled from them, and to stand at a distance, from their conduct and behaviour; as in the old world before the flood, and in the times Isaiah beautifully describes, (^{<2594>}Isaiah 59:14,15), and in the times of Christ and his apostles; and in the persecuting times of Rome Pagan and Papal; and as it will be at the time of the slaying of the witnesses; but upon the rising of them, which will not be long after, there will be a great pouring down of the Spirit, and a general reformation will follow throughout the world; all the Lord's people will be righteous, not only nominally, but really; every pot in Jerusalem shall be holy; and holiness shall be so common as that it is said it shall be upon the bells of the horses; and in the new heavens and new earth will dwell none but righteous persons; and then judgment and righteousness will come together indeed:

and all the upright in heart shall follow it; either judgment, as Jarchi; or righteousness, as Kimchi; not the righteousness of the law, but the righteousness of faith; or rather practical righteousness, works of righteousness, which both the grace wrought in them, and the doctrine of grace received by them, will teach, influence, and engage to pursue after with eagerness: or else the meaning is, that such who are “upright in heart”; who have new hearts and right spirits formed in them; who have the truth of grace, and the root of the matter, in them; whose hearts, words, and actions, agree; who are sincere souls, Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile; these will approve and applaud the righteous judgments of God upon antichrist; they shall follow the justice of God with their commendations and praises; (see ^{<665B>} Revelation 15:3,4 16:6,7 19:1,2). The words may be rendered, “and all the upright in heart shall be after him”^{f1348}, the Lord; they shall follow him whithersoever he goes, as sheep follow the shepherd, servants their masters, and soldiers their general; they shall follow him in his own ways, observe his commands, and obey his orders; see the description of such that will be with Christ, and follow him, before and at the time of antichrist’s ruin, (^{<664B>} Revelation 14:4 17:14 19:14). The Targum is,

“after him shall be redeemed all the upright in heart.”

Ver. 16. *Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?* etc.] These are the words of the psalmist, representing the church of God, under sore persecutions from the antichristian party; called “evildoers”, because of their thefts, murders, idolatries, sorceries, and all manner of wickedness committed by them, (^{<662B>} Revelation 9:21), intimating that she had looked all around her, and could not observe any that she could hope for assistance from, to fight her battles for her with the enemy, and deliver her out of his hands: the Targum is,

“who will rise up, for me, to make war with the evildoers?”

what the church here seems to say in a despairing way, the followers of antichrist say in a triumphant and insulting manner; “who is like unto the beast who is able to make war with him?” (^{<663A>} Revelation 13:4), or “who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” to contend or strive with them, as the Targum; suggesting, that she had no friends to appear for her, that had either courage or strength to engage in such a warfare; her case was like that of the oppressed, Solomon speaks of, (^{<200B>} Ecclesiastes 4:1), or the Apostle Paul’s, when none stood with him; but all forsook him,

excepting the Lord, (^{<5046>}2 Timothy 4:16,17) and so here the church had none to rise up, and stand by her, but the Lord; Michael, the great Prince that stands for the children and people of God, and who is a match for all the enemies of his church; and he will rise and stand up for them, and fight their battles; and overcome the beast and false prophet, with the kings of the earth, (^{<2700>}Daniel 12:1 ^{<6774>}Revelation 17:14 19:11-20).

Ver. 17. *Unless the Lord had been my help*, etc.] Against her enemies, which were so many and mighty, and her friends so few and feeble, and having no heart to defend her cause; especially this will be the case at the time of the slaying of the witnesses; but the Lord will appear, and help her; the Spirit of life, from him, shall enter into them, and cause them to live again, and to ascend up to heaven; and shall destroy great numbers of their enemies, and the rest shall be frightened, and give glory to God, (^{<6811>}Revelation 11:11-13),

my soul had almost dwelt in silence; or “within a little”, or “must quickly” ^{f1349}; not only have been, but must have dwelt, continued in silence, in the grave; (see ^{<4857>}Psalm 115:17) his case being desperate, like that of the apostles, when they had the sentence of death within themselves, (^{<6010>}2 Corinthians 1:10), this is to be understood not of the soul precisely, and abstractly considered, which dies not, nor is it silent after death; but of the whole person, being a part for the whole; and of the person, with respect to the mortal part, the body, which only dies, and while in a state of separation, or in the grave, is silent, and ceases from all operations of life: perhaps this may have some respect to the silencing of the witnesses, which is a principal thing meant by the slaying of them; a stop put to their ministrations, partly by the edicts of their enemies, and partly by the discouragement of their friends, their shyness, and negligence of them; and which silence will be almost total, if not altogether; though it will last but for a short time; they shall not dwell or continue in silence, but will open their mouths again; signified by the angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting Gospel, (^{<6846>}Revelation 14:6).

Ver. 18. *When I said, my foot slippeth*, etc.] There is no ground for me to stand upon; all is over with me; there is no hope nor help for me; I am just falling into ruin and destruction: such will be the desperate case of the church, at the time before referred to:

thy mercy, O Lord, held me up; the extremity of his people is the Lord’s opportunity; then is his set time to arise, and have mercy on them; then

mercy steps in, lays a solid ground and foundation for hope, and holds up in its arms a sinking people, and revives a dying cause.

Ver. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me*, etc.] The word for thoughts is used of branches of trees, thick and entwined, and so denotes perplexed and distressing thoughts; such as good men sometimes have concerning God; his awful and tremendous majesty; the perfections of his nature, particularly his power, purity, and holiness; concerning their relation to him, his presence with them, and good will towards them, which, because of their sins, they are ready to doubt of: thoughts concerning sin; that there are no sins like theirs, attended with such aggravated circumstances; that they are such as will not be forgiven; or they fear their corruptions will be too many for them, and they shall perish by them; or that they shall so fall as to bring dishonour on the ways of God; and sometimes that they have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost: thoughts concerning the law of God their sins are a violation of, of the holiness and spirituality of it; by comparing themselves with which, they find they are very deficient, and very carnal; and ready to fear that all the curses of it belong to them, and the condemnation of it will light upon them: thoughts concerning Christ, the Saviour; that he is the Saviour of others, but not of them; that he is able to save, but they cannot think he is willing to save such vile sinners as they are: thoughts concerning the work of the Spirit of God upon them; calling it in question, fearing it was never begun, because of the power and prevalence of sin and corruption in them: thoughts concerning their present and future state; how it is with them now, and how it will be with them hereafter; how they shall pass through the troubles and difficulties of this world, and pass over Jordan's river, or get through the valley of the shadow of death; and how they shall appear before the judgment seat of God; and how things will be with them to all eternity: these are some of the perplexing and distressing thoughts, a multitude of which rise up at times in the minds of God's people, who yet are favoured with the same gracious experience the psalmist was, expressed as follows:

thy comforts delight my soul; such as flow from the love of God, is shed abroad in the heart; from the presence of God enjoyed; from the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel; from Christ, and the things of Christ, shown, brought home, and applied by the Spirit; his person, offices, fulness, righteousness, blood, and sacrifice; all which are a fund of divine consolation to a distressed mind: these are the consolations of God, of

which he is the provider, author, and giver, and therefore called “the God of all comfort”; they come from Christ, the “consolation of Israel”, and by the Spirit the Comforter, who sheds abroad the love of God in the heart; reveals Christ, and the things of Christ; opens and applies the promises; wherefore these comforts are called the “comforts of the Holy Ghost”; and they are usually enjoyed by means of the word and ordinances, which are “breasts of consolation”; and these are not small, but strong, and even everlasting, and which “delight the soul”; worldly comforts may delight the animal part, and please the senses, but not delight the soul, especially a wounded spirit, a distressed mind; but these will satiate the weary soul, and replenish the sorrowful soul with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory: the psalmist may here represent the church in the latter day, when in the midst of her troubles, and having many distressing thoughts concerning the issue of things; the comforts of God, from his promises, will delight her; (~~1944~~ Psalm 94:14,15), that he will not cast off his people, nor forsake his inheritance; but judgment shall return to righteousness; that he will keep her in the hour of temptation, and avenge the blood of her slain.

Ver. 20. *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee*, etc.] Or “be joined with thee”, be “partner with thee”^{f1350}, as antichrist affects to be; who may well be called “the throne of iniquity”, since the dragon, the old serpent, and Satan, gave him his power, seat, or throne, and great authority: his coming is after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; he sits and enacts, practices and countenances, all manner of iniquity; he sits in the temple of God, showing himself as if he was God; he claims all power in heaven and in earth; takes upon him to dispense with the laws of God and men, and makes new laws, and binds the consciences of men with them; presumes to forgive sin, which none but God can do; and to open the gates of heaven to whom he pleases; (see ~~6832~~ Revelation 13:2 ~~5114~~ 2 Thessalonians 2:4,9,10), but can these things be allowed of shall not such pride and arrogance, and horrible iniquity be punished with the utmost severity? doubtless it will:

which frameth mischief by a law? does all manner of mischief to men, without control, as if he had a law for doing it; or makes a law that all men shall worship him, or receive his mark in their right hand, or forehead; or else shall not buy or sell, yea, be killed; (see ~~6835~~ Revelation 13:15-17), or “against law”^{f1351}; against the laws of God and man; for antichrist is **ο ανωμους**, “the lawless one”, spoken of in (~~5118~~ 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Ver. 21. *They gather themselves together*, etc.] As “in troops” ^{f1352}, as the word signifies; in great armies; so the antichristian kings and states will, at the instigation of Popish emissaries; (see ^{<667>}Revelation 16:17 19:19),

against the soul of the righteous; or “the life” of them; in order to take away their lives; to cut them off, root and branch, and destroy at once the whole interest of Christ; for it will be to make war with him, and them his followers, who are the righteous here meant, made so by his righteousness, that they will be gathered together in such great numbers:

and condemn the innocent blood; condemn innocent persons to death, shed their blood, and drink it, and to such a degree as to be drunk with it; for in them will be found the blood of the prophets and saints, and of all that are slain on earth, (^{<676>}Revelation 17:6 18:24).

Ver. 22. *But the Lord is my defence*, etc.] The defence of his church and people, of all the righteous, against those great armies of their enemies that gather together against them: the Targum, in the king’s Bible is, “the Word of the Lord shall be my weapon:”

and my God is the rock of my refuge; to whom recourse is had for shelter from the enemy, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail: both characters, rock and refuge, agree with Christ, the essential Word of the Lord.

Ver. 23. *And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity*, etc.] The just punishment of it; or cause the mischief they designed to others to fall upon themselves; or make retaliation to them; that whereas they had drank the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, blood should be given them to drink; or their own blood should be shed, (^{<666>}Revelation 16:6), the Jews ^{f1353} say, that the Levites stood on their desks, and recited this passage, both at the precise time of the destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and of the second by the Romans:

and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; in the midst of it, while slaying the witnesses, and triumphing over them, (^{<680>}Revelation 18:7,8), yea,

the Lord our God shall cut them off; the God of Jacob, who, they said, did not see nor regard what they did, (^{<997>}Psalm 94:7 ^{<695>}Revelation 19:15-21), and so this latter part of the psalm fulfils the former, and proves that God is

a God of vengeance, to whom it belongs; and he will exercise it in due time.